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ONE DOLLAR



Photos by Brenna Visser/The Daily Astorian

Susan Romanski, executive director of the humanitarian aid group Mercy Corps, tells residents in Spanish how to prepare for an earthquake and tsunami.

Oregon stops new pot licenses

State pauses because of backlog

By **CLAIRE WITHYCOMBE**
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Oregon will temporarily stop accepting new applications for marijuana licenses to resolve a backlog of applications and renewals.

The Oregon Liquor Control Commission said Wednesday that it will prioritize applications received by June 15.

The state will set aside applications received after June 15 until the backlog is cleared.

Since April 2016, the commission has issued nearly 1,900 recreational marijuana licenses and nearly 29,000 worker permits. The number of applications has greatly exceeded expectations.

Under a law passed earlier this year, about 2,000 medical marijuana registrants are now required to register with the state's cannabis tracking system by July. The commission will be responsible for auditing and inspecting medical marijuana registrants using that tracking system.

People continue to steadily apply to get licensed to produce, sell or process recreational marijuana, and it now takes longer to get approved, the commission says.

"In order to ensure that the OLCC is fulfilling its regulatory duties and providing timely responses to businesses in the industry, we must focus on the current participants in the system and preserve for the Oregon Legislature its consideration of the necessity for further statutory controls on marijuana licensing in 2019," Steve Marks, the commission's director, said in a prepared statement.

Some believe there's more than the backlog at play.

"That's code for, 'We're going to put caps on licenses,'" said Donald Morse, chairman of the Oregon Cannabis Business Council.

Morse thinks the freeze means the agency will seek a cap on Oregon recreational marijuana licenses in the 2019 legislative session.

A spokesman for the agency, Mark Pettinger, said that was up to the Legislature to decide.

"Well, that's not our decision," Pettinger said. "And all we can do is provide the Legislature with facts and information."

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The Oregon Liquor Control Commission says with thousands of marijuana licenses and worker permits to renew and a steady stream of new applications that it is falling behind.

BREAKING THE BARRIER

County reaches out to Spanish speakers on emergency preparedness

By **BRENNA VISSER**
The Daily Astorian

There are some things that need no translation. Anyone watching a video of an earthquake or tsunami can see that's bad news.

But what is harder to translate is what to do in response. That is why Clatsop County Emergency Management, the Lower Columbia Hispanic Council and Mercy Corps partnered to host the first-ever Cascadia earthquake presentation in Spanish.

About a dozen Spanish-speaking residents filled Seaside High School library Wednesday to learn how to prepare for the devastating earthquake predicted to hit the coast.

"When we think of vulnerable populations, we think of people with classic, functional access issues: the elderly and children," Emergency Manager Tiffany Brown said. "But when I think about it, I think about people who don't speak English well. What renders one more vulnerable than not getting critical information in a language they understand?"

Over the past decade, the county's Latino population has increased by about 77 percent, according to a study done by Portland State University. Latinos make up about 8 percent of the population.

The county has long wanted to do more outreach to Spanish speakers on the coast, Brown said. While some preparedness literature has been available in Spanish for years, cultural barriers and the reality of having very few bilingual county staff members means little has been done



Preparedness literature sits on a table during a Spanish-only presentation about the Cascadia earthquake.

EMERGENCY PREPARATION

A second Cascadia earthquake presentation in Spanish is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. tonight at Clatsop Community College.

to engage the area's Latino population directly.

"Handing people written materials isn't the same as providing them an opportunity to ask questions or engage with the topic," Brown said.

Jorge Gutierrez, executive director of the Lower Columbia Hispanic Council, said there are a variety of factors that lead

to the disconnect between emergency preparedness efforts and the Hispanic community. Cultural barriers mean some in the Hispanic community are not even aware there is a system designed to prepare the public, he said. Unfamiliarity can also breed a lack of trust.

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'WHAT RENDERS ONE MORE VULNERABLE THAN NOT GETTING CRITICAL INFORMATION IN A LANGUAGE THEY UNDERSTAND?'

Tiffany Brown | emergency manager at Clatsop County Emergency Management

Human error led to vague warning

Alert was meant for Salem water

By **CLAIRE WITHYCOMBE**
Capital Bureau

SALEM — The Oregon Office of Emergency Management says that it failed to do a manual override that would have prevented the vague and clipped emergency message that went out to many Oregonians' cellphones Tuesday night.

A local drinking water hazard alert intended for Salem and surrounding communities was truncated and changed to a generic "civil emergency" message late Tuesday night, prompting con-

fusion until the state sent out a revised alert.

The message said a "Civil Emergency" was in place until 11:28 p.m. and instructed recipients to "prepare for action," but did not specify the nature of the emergency or the action that would be required. The message was sent to phones across Marion, Benton, Linn, Yamhill, Clackamas and Deschutes counties, far beyond the area impacted by the water hazard.

About half an hour later, the agency sent out a correct and complete alert about the water issues.

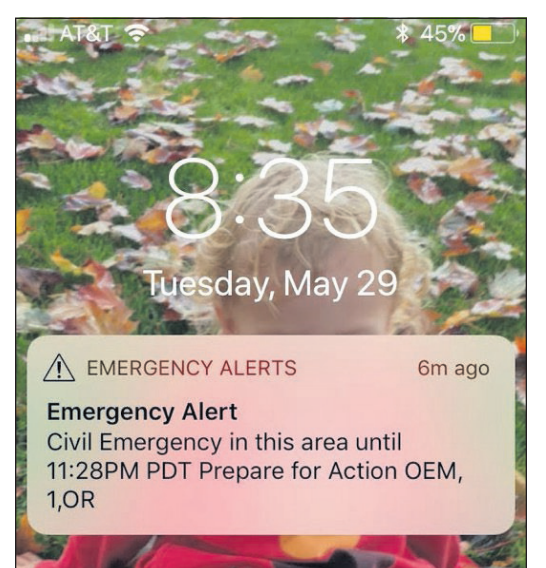
The state sent out the message on behalf of Salem, which wrote the text of the alert.

Local officials had asked the state to send out an emergency alert after learning the drinking water supply from the Detroit Reservoir tested positive for toxic blue algae in levels that are hazardous for children, nursing and pregnant women and other people with certain health conditions to drink.

Cory Grogan, spokesman for the Office of Emergency Management, said Wednesday that he didn't know how many employees were responsible for reviewing the alert before sending it out.

Paula Negele, another office spokeswoman, said that the department did not know that the manual override was necessary.

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The Office of Emergency Management says human error caused this vague warning to be sent to Oregonians in the Willamette Valley Tuesday.



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