

A VERY SCANDINAVIAN WEEKEND

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ONE DOLLAR

EMPOWERING PRACTICE

CAMP RILEA SCHOOL JUICES ELECTRICAL WORKFORCE, PROVIDES PATH TO AN APPRENTICESHIP

By **EDWARD STRATTON**
The Daily Astorian

Between the retirement of baby boomers and the need to build and replace the nation's electrical infrastructure, the demand for power line workers is surging, with an expected 14 percent growth rate by 2026.

The next generation of workers is training in a pole barn and field of de-energized power poles inside the Camp Rilea Armed Forces Training Center.

The Vocational Outside Line Training Academy, sponsored by the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and National Electrical Contractors Association, was started in 2006 to increase the pool of qualified electrical workers, said Banjo Reed, director of the academy.

"With the baby boomers retiring, there's going to be a huge need for qualified electrical workers," Reed said, adding Camp Rilea is one of between 20 and 30 industry sponsored training locations throughout the U.S.

The academy, a precursor to a paid apprenticeship with a union, offers three \$8,500, 10-week programs a year for 30 students, mainly pulling from the Pacific Northwest. The students spend four days a week at Camp Rilea learning about electrical systems, equipment, climbing utility poles and doing the job safely. Many bring trailers and stay at Kampers West RV Park in Warrenton.



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

See **SCHOOL**, Page 5A Trainees practice working on electrical lines at Camp Rilea.

Lawsuit against mental health agency settled

Suit involved claims of discrimination

By **DERRICK DePLEDGE**
The Daily Astorian

Two former employees at Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare have settled a federal lawsuit against the mental

health agency that alleged top administrators engaged in discrimination and retaliation.

Richard Holmes, a case manager who resigned in 2015, claimed the agency failed to take action after a female case manager subjected him to homophobic slurs. Colleen Studinartz, Holmes' supervisor, claimed she was fired after she backed Holmes and called for an investigation.

The terms of the settlement were

not publicly disclosed. A trial in federal court in Portland that had been scheduled for late June has been canceled.

Amy Baker, the director of Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare, declined to comment.

Attorneys for Holmes and Studinartz did not respond to messages seeking comment.

The lawsuit was filed in 2016 against the mental health agency and Sumner Watkins, who was the execu-

tive director; Nick Benas, who was the director of business operations; and Lois Gilmore, the human resources manager. Watkins and Benas left the agency in 2016 in a management shakeup.

The agency, which holds the contract to provide mental health services in Clatsop County, was under siege at the time over internal divisions and public scrutiny over the quality of care.

A separate federal lawsuit by

Cheryl Varese, who worked in the agency's developmental disabilities unit, alleged retaliation for complaining about unethical and illegal management practices and a hostile work environment. A federal judge dismissed the lawsuit in March, but Varese is appealing.

Varese also filed a new lawsuit in Clatsop County Circuit Court alleging whistleblower retaliation and violations of state medical leave law.

County public works employee retires after 42 years



Sasha Raichl spent nearly 42 years at the county's Public Works Department.

Credits his co-workers for inspiration

By **JACK HEFFERNAN**
The Daily Astorian

Sasha Raichl spent nearly two straight days in knee-deep water making repairs inside the Clatsop County Jail during the Great Coastal Gale in 2007. Considering how long he'd held his job with the county Public Works Department, the confined setting seemed fitting.

"My wife says I got institutionalized," Raichl said. "I

EVERYDAY
people

wasn't sure I would make it out in the real world."

More than a decade later, he'll have to try. Raichl retired at the end of May after spending nearly 42 years at the department.

A county resident since he was a toddler, Raichl started working at a Seaside auto body shop when he was 13 years old. He made connections with county public works employees and, a few years later,

swiveled into the county fold. Raichl credits his former co-workers for his desire to remain at the department for most of his life.

"He loved the guys that he worked with, and he is very grateful to them for all the love they've given him," said Kimberly Raichl, his wife.

Raichl estimates only a fraction of the people he originally worked with are still alive. "I've been a pallbearer a lot," he said.

Starting out as a car mechanic, Raichl moved over to the county's shop — eventually becoming the shop

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