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ONE DOLLAR



Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

John R. Alcantara, funeral director at Hughes-Ransom Mortuary & Crematory in Astoria, operates the cremator in the basement.

## Youth groups lose out on federal grant to fight drugs

Grant was worth \$625,000

By EDWARD STRATTON  
The Daily Astorian

A five-year, \$625,000 federal grant to help prevent youth drug and alcohol abuse on the North Coast was cut off after the local fiscal agent resigned.

North Coast Prevention Works, the coalition that was awarded the grant, said the fiscal agent, Warrenton-Hammond Healthy Kids Inc., resigned in February.

Unable to find another fiscal agent, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration,

the federal agency that provided the money, terminated the grant in the middle of the second year.

The Drug-Free Communities Support Program grant was worth \$125,000 a year for five years, with a possible five-year extension.

Julia Hesse, the chairwoman of the governing board for North Coast Prevention Works and Clatsop County's tobacco prevention coordinator, said Healthy Kids had become overwhelmed with overseeing the grant.

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AP Photo/Charles Krupa

Youth groups in Clatsop County have lost a federal drug and alcohol abuse prevention grant.

# DYING WHILE DESTITUTE

Funeral homes pick up tab for people who can't afford cremation

By JACK HEFFERNAN  
The Daily Astorian

A local man was found dead in his bed earlier this month. On top of dying alone, he had no death benefit, insurance policy, friends or family willing and able to pay for cremation.

Once the body was discovered and taken to Hughes-Ransom Mortuary & Crematory in Astoria, Funeral Director John R. Alcantara began the process of finding anyone who could pay, at least partially, for services.

No one came forward, leaving the funeral home with the responsibility — and the expense.

"It's just something that's a shared responsibility in a community," Alcantara said. "This is a safety net for people who have nothing."

Oregon has partially reimbursed funeral homes for indigent cremations and burials since 1993. The state Legislature altered the process in 2015, widening the criteria for a body to be considered indigent.

Still, after peaking at 443 in 2014, the number of indigent cremations and burials statewide grad-



Urns sit in a display case at the Hughes-Ransom Mortuary & Crematory in Astoria.

ually decreased to 332 last year. The drop comes as total deaths in Oregon have jumped from 32,771 in 2011 to 36,556 last year.

The figures are positive for funeral homes, which bear most of the financial burden.

When a body is discovered, law enforcement attempts to notify friends or family. Starting with potential spouses, officials then reach out to adult children, parents, siblings and anyone who may have the legal right or desire to oversee funeral services.

Hughes-Ransom, for instance, has only handled two indigent cases

in the past two years.

"I would say it's fairly rare that there's somebody we're not able to track down through various means," Astoria Police Deputy Chief Eric Halverson said.

Most local funeral homes have volunteered to be on an on-call list when officials cannot find next of kin.

When no one is tapped to pay, the funeral home performs cremations that typically would cost more than \$1,600, Alcantara said. The state Mortuary and Cemetery

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## Man sentenced for giving alcohol to teen killed on Highway 101

Secord's family says 10-day sentence too lenient

By JACK HEFFERNAN  
The Daily Astorian

A man who pleaded no contest to buying alcohol for a Warrenton teenager before the boy ran onto a highway and was killed received a 10-day jail sentence Tuesday, leaving the boy's family dejected.

Richard Edward Reinsch, of Warrenton, was accused of purchasing alcohol for Trevor Secord, a 15-year-old Warrenton High School football player, in January 2017.

Hours later, following

a night of drinking, Secord got out of a car parked on the shoulder of U.S. Highway 101 north of Gearhart, ran out onto the highway and was struck by a pickup.

Secord's family demanded an investigation into who provided the alcohol. His grandmother, Brenda McKune, said she contacted Warrenton police several times in the years before Secord's death regarding adults providing alcohol to teens.

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## Congress takes a shot at sea lions

Bill would protect salmon

By MOLLY SOLOMON  
Oregon Public Broadcasting

The U.S. House approved a bill Tuesday that makes it easier to kill a limited number of sea lions that threaten imperiled salmon and steelhead populations.

The legislation was co-sponsored by U.S. Reps. Jaime Herrera Beutler, a Republican from Washington

state, and Kurt Schrader, an Oregon Democrat.

"What we currently have on the Columbia River is an ecosystem seriously out of balance," said Herrera Beutler, who believes the bill is necessary to save fish runs on the brink of extinction.

"Our salmon runs are now fighting for survival. It's practically a miracle when a fish can make it upstream without getting caught between a sea lion's teeth," she added.



Rick Bowmer/AP

See SEA LIONS, Page 7A A sea lion eats a salmon at Bonneville Dam near Cascade Locks.

