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ONE DOLLAR



A group takes a tour of the tunnels under the streets of Astoria.

Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Tours take Astoria's history underground

A peek underneath the city

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

A steady stream of people made their way Saturday through the gate of a cyclone fence underneath the sidewalk on Marine Drive, aching to see the underbelly of Astoria.

Tour guide Mark Barsekian gave them a peek into the dark, gravel-lined passageway ending in a makeshift squatters camp piled with wood and half-buried tires, a re-creation of where some in the city used to lay their heads at night.

Saturday provided a preview of the underground Astoria tours set to debut in full on Thursday by Jeff Daly, a retired videographer and Astoria native known for his eccentric projects highlighting quirky points of the city's history.

Three years ago, Daly leased a subterranean garage at the corner of 11th Street and Marine Drive to use as his personal workshop. He received constant inquiries from people anxious to explore the city's extensive underground network of tunnels and chairwalls, built in the early 20th century to elevate downtown above the Columbia River tidal flats, he said.

"We all used to do this as kids," Daly said. "The entire underground was our playground."

Daly's tours start underneath the sidewalk of Marine Drive and meander along a rough gravel path past buried tires, broken glass and other detritus left behind through the years. He and his fellow



Clara Moore makes her way through a narrow tunnel during a guided tour.

TAKE THE TOUR

Tickets are available at brownpapertickets.com. For more information, visit oldastoria.com

guides tell visitors about the city's history, such as the fires that burned much of downtown in the 1920s and the concrete underbelly keeping downtown above water.

Barsekian and Daly, who met through Barsekian's work in the local service

industry, partnered on writing the script for the underground tours, testing them out on select groups and evolving the experience based on people's interests.

"When we finally got people down here, the dynamics of it changed, because we were able to play off their energy and their responses," Barsekian said. "Nobody's in charge of what we tell people or don't tell people, as long as it's the truth, to the best of our ability. So we can tell them whatever we want. This is our

See UNDERGROUND, Page 7A

Brown, Buehler eye Medicaid funding gap

Long-term solution sought for health plan

By CLAIRE WITHYCOMBE
Capital Bureau

SALEM — As Oregon stares down an \$830 million funding gap in the Medicaid program, both gubernatorial candidates say they want to find a long-term funding solution.

The Oregon Health Plan is jointly funded by the state and federal government and provides coverage to low-income Oregonians and other qualifying groups. About a million Oregonians are covered by the plan.

Voters approved the Legislature's plan for temporary funding for the program, Measure 101, in a special election last January.

However, many of the revenue sources in that legislation are expiring next year, and even if renewed, could not cover the entire anticipated shortfall. The shortfall is due to a number of factors, including declining federal financial support for people who gained eligibility under the Affordable Care Act.

A number of revenue options and cost-cutting measures have been suggested by a special work group focused on financing the Oregon Health Plan, led by the governor's senior health policy adviser, Tina Edlund.

Potential revenue sources include a tax on ambulatory surgical centers, a tax on medical claims, a tax on employers whose workers are on the Oregon Health Plan, and increasing an existing assessment on certain large hospitals.

Although the work group does not want to cut eligibility or benefits for the program, it is also looking at ways to contain costs.

Gov. Kate Brown, a Democrat, is fending off a challenge this November by state Rep. Knute Buehler, R-Bend.

Brown's health policy plan, released Friday, makes clear, among other priorities, that she wants to expand access to health insurance coverage and do so by "optimizing federal funds, funding the program from a broader revenue base and providing a longer and more stable funding timeline."

Buehler, an orthopedic surgeon, said in his July health care platform that he wanted "stable, long-term and broad-based" funding for the program.

"Knute believes that providing low-income Oregonians with health care and fully funding Medicaid is a value that we all share," Monica Wroblewski, a spokeswoman for Buehler, said in a statement. "He is open to a discussion about the best way to accomplish this, but any solution should be balanced, equitable and permanent. And we should start by making the current hospital assessments permanent."

A spokeswoman for Brown said in an email that some of the potential revenue options, laid out in a July work group presentation obtained by the EO Media Group/

See MEDICAID, Page 7A

Garden brings community together

Adams has a love of plants

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

EVERYDAY
people

HAMMOND — Not long after she moved to Hammond, Kathleen Adams stuck a note on the community garden gate.

She can't remember exactly what she wrote but it was something like, "I'm a really insane plant person. Can I get involved in this?"

The Hammond Community Garden off Pacific Drive got its start in 2008, when longtime

resident Ferne Berg donated an empty lot she owned in Hammond to the Warrenton Community Garden. The Hammond garden officially opened for business in 2009 and people are able to purchase a raised bed for the season and grow whatever they like. Several boxes, however, are reserved and under Adams' care, their produce destined for local food banks.

Adams, a special education teacher at Warrenton High School, took over management of the garden around four years ago when the previous manager moved away. He gave her a quick overview before he left.

"It was kind of like: 'OK, here's this stuff that needs to get done and there's those boxes over there where we grow produce for the food pantries and I'm leaving,'" Adams said of her introduction to the garden and her first whirlwind days as manager.

But Adams comes from a long line of gardeners. Her



Katie Frankowicz/The Daily Astorian

Kathleen Adams manages the Hammond Community Garden.



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