

Candidates debate issues in Seaside

By BRENNA VISSER
The Daily Astorian

SEASIDE — Candidates running for state House District 32 and Seaside and Gearhart offices made their cases to voters Wednesday night in an election forum at Seaside City Hall.

Affordable housing, homelessness, environmental protection and emergency preparedness all surfaced as priorities for the 10 candidates.

In Seaside, most of the attention was focused on the contested mayoral race between Mayor Jay Barber and John Chapman, the owner of KSWB Radio Clatsop. Tita Montero, Dana Phillips and Steve Wright, all incumbents running unopposed, were also present.

Appointed in January 2017, Barber said his decision to run was driven by his love of the city. He believes his leadership skills paired with his civil relationship with council would help drive future progress for the city.

“We face difficult issues, but it takes leadership to get them done,” Barber said.

Chapman believes his experience working and volunteering with people from all walks of life around the community would be an asset to the council. He emphasized his commitment to transparency and accountability if elected. His decision to run for mayor is driven by a desire to give back to a community that welcomed him 27 years ago.

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Jeff Carlsen gives a tour of the new construction at the center.

Photos by Brenna Visser/The Daily Astorian

THE END OF AN ERA

CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE CENTER DIRECTOR STEPS DOWN AFTER 35 YEARS ON THE JOB



Katie Frankowicz/The Daily Astorian
Richard Curtis will take over as interim fire chief of the Astoria Fire Department.

Astoria names interim fire chief

Search has taken longer than expected

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

The fire chief position has been open since Chief Ted Ames officially retired last November. Ames continued to serve as interim chief through March, when Deputy Chief Paul Gascoigne took over the roll of interim chief until his own retirement last week, not long after Curtis arrived at the station.

The search for a new chief has taken longer than expected, Gascoigne noted in a final report to the Astoria City Council. The city still must replace two other department head positions in Community Development and Parks and Recreation.

After he retired from a career in firefighting this summer, Richard Curtis spent about three weeks on yard and house projects before he decided to go right back to work — this time at the Astoria Fire Department.

Curtis will serve as the department’s interim fire chief as City Manager Brett Estes continues the search for a permanent hire.

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By BRENNA VISSER
The Daily Astorian

CANNON BEACH — After more than 22 years as executive director of the Cannon Beach Christian Conference Center, Jeff Carlsen is ready to retire.

“Why now? I’m tired,” he said wryly.

First as program manager and then as director, Carlsen has served in a leadership role at one of Cannon Beach’s largest employers for more than 35 years, overseeing what has been a period of immense expansion and change for the 73-year-old Christian retreat.

Since he started in 1996, a staff of 22 has grown to between 70 and 150, depending on the season. Yearly guest attendance has doubled from about 7,000 to more than 15,000 people.

Carlsen has been involved with the purchase of five new properties, the building of two new structures — with the third set to be complete in 2020 — and starting a Christian preschool, an after-school program and the Christian Culinary Academy. In 2008, he faced the realities of keeping a nonprofit afloat during an economic recession.



Jeff Carlsen looks over a model of the new center.

So he’s ready for his downtime, he said. At the end of the year, he will hand the organization off to Marc Hagman, who will begin as executive director starting in January.

“Even with the challenges, the ups and downs, it’s been a wonderful place to be. It really is all about the people, the relationships,” Carlsen said. “It’s so gratifying to watch people grow. It’s been a great 35 years.”

Coming to faith

Carlsen came to his faith at a time in his life not often associated with religiosity — freshman year of college.

He was studying to be a teacher at the University of Washington when an old high school friend introduced him to Christianity.

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Jeff Carlsen | retiring executive director of the Cannon Beach Christian Conference Center



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian
Traffic signals at the intersection on U.S. Highway 101 with Ensign Lane in Warrenton have been reprogrammed.

State makes changes at busy Warrenton intersection

Left turns caused seven crashes in one year

By JACK HEFFERNAN
The Daily Astorian

WARRENTON — Traffic signals on U.S. Highway 101 near Ensign Lane have new colors, leaving drivers turning left off the road feeling less blue.

The state Department of Transportation reprogrammed the signals Saturday on the northbound and southbound sides of the highway. In place of flashing yellow arrows that allow “permissive” left turns, the signals will display “protected only” green arrows.

“Basically just going back to the old-fash-

ioned way of getting people turned in there,” said Lou Torres, a spokesman for the Department of Transportation.

For the past few years, the department has installed more signals with flashing yellow arrows, which require drivers to yield to oncoming traffic before making a turn, in the northwest part of the state. But with rapid development in Warrenton and heavier traffic, the signals became less effective.

“I think there’s a lot of people who turn there that are confused. There’s so much going on at that intersection,” Warrenton Mayor Henry Balensifer said. “There are a lot of people not used to driving on busy roads.”

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