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ONE DOLLAR

FOR THE RECORD

NEW STATE LAW LIKELY TO CHANGE HOW LOCAL PROSECUTORS SEEK INDICTMENTS



Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Grand jury proceedings will soon be recorded in Clatsop County.

By JACK HEFFERNAN
The Daily Astorian

A new state law that requires grand jury proceedings to be recorded will likely alter how the Clatsop County District Attorney's Office seeks many felony indictments.

The law will take effect in Clatsop County in July after it was signed into law by Gov. Kate Brown last year. While prosecutors typically seek secretive grand jury indictments in felony cases, many have said preliminary hearings, which are open to the public, will become more common.

"It's a pretty big change in the statute," Clatsop County District Attorney Josh Marquis said.

During grand jury hearings, a prosecutor calls witnesses to testify in front of seven jurors. They testify under oath, but a defense attorney is not present and witnesses are not subject to cross-examination. If five of the jurors find probable cause — a 50 percent or greater chance that the alleged crimes occurred — the case moves forward with an indictment.

Preliminary hearings, on the other hand, involve defense attorneys in the process. Instead of a jury,



Recording equipment in a cabinet in courtroom 300 at the Clatsop County Courthouse.

a judge rules on probable cause.

These hearings are useful for prosecutors when they believe a witness may change their statements or otherwise not be available later in the case, Deputy District Attorney Ron Brown said. Otherwise, they largely benefit defense attorneys, who have the ability to cross-examine witnesses.

During grand jury proceedings, one juror is designated to keep handwritten notes. When the new state law takes effect, prosecutors will need to either train a juror to record the proceeding using audio equipment or hire a certified shorthand reporter.

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Gubernatorial candidates answer teens' questions

By AUBREY WIEBER
Capital Bureau

PORTLAND — The most challenging force facing gubernatorial candidate Knute Buehler in his first debate wasn't incumbent Gov. Kate Brown. It was Rose Lawrence, a 15-year-old from Portland.

Lawrence took the stage at her Roosevelt High School after several other youth questioners Tuesday night. They each had appeared satisfied with the answers they received from Buehler, Brown and independent candidate Patrick Starnes.

Lawrence wasn't. She asked what the candidates would do to curb bullying of LGBTQ youth in schools. The candidates

answered. She asked again. Brown described being treated poorly as a bisexual woman. She talked about her "safe and secure" schools initiative, now being used as a national model.

Buehler, in a divergence from how he conducted himself through the rest of the debate, used his time to largely credit the work of his Democratic opponent, saying he would continue on her progress when in office.

Rose, part of the LGBTQ community herself, persisted, pressing her question a third time.

"What would you as governor do to make schools safe for LGBTQ?" she said, sternly.

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Jaime Valdez/Portland Tribune

State Rep. Knute Buehler, R-Bend, answers a question during Tuesday night's debate as Gov. Kate Brown looks on.

Tourism promotion funding reduced in Cannon Beach

Lodging tax dollars diverted to pay for Visitor Information Center funding, reserve

By BRENNIA VISSER
The Daily Astorian

CANNON BEACH — Fewer dollars will be going toward tourism promotion as a part of a new contract signed Tuesday night by the Chamber of Commerce and City Council.

In the past, the city diverted 70 percent of the revenue generated from the 1 percent lodging tax enacted in 2015 to

the chamber to promote tourism during the offseason.

But this year, the city has decided to cap promotion at \$300,000 -- about \$86,000 under what the city projected to bring in from this tax. The city plans to use the difference to pay for 50 percent of the expenses at the Visitor Information Center and to start a reserve fund.

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Columbia Memorial opens new primary care center

Looks to add more providers

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

Columbia Memorial Hospital has opened a primary care center in Astoria amid a growing number of patients and a need for more general practitioners.

The Astoria Primary Care Clinic inside the Park Medical Building opens this week. The suite includes 12 examination rooms that were formerly part of the hospital's chemotherapy clinic, which relocated to the nearby Knight Cancer

Collaborative.

In addition, much of the parking between the Park Medical Building and the main hospital now has a two-hour limit to increase availability.

The clinic provides routine screenings, management of chronic conditions, lab services, Medicare wellness visits, medication management, vaccinations, dietary advice and other preventative health services. The clinic also helps Clatsop Behavioral Health in providing medication-assisted heroin withdrawal treatment, along with therapy.

Drs. Kevin Baxter and Anisa Richardson, along with

nurse practitioner Mary Rizzo and physician's assistant Rachel Flescher, will be joined by two other providers to be hired later.

The hospital opened its first primary care clinic in the Warrenton Highlands shopping center in 2013. The clinic has grown from one provider covering 2,000 patients to six covering about 11,500.

"The Warrenton clinic was just overwhelmed with patients, and so we needed a second space," Rizzo said.

The clinic takes in patients from Wheeler north to Hoquiam, Washington, and

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Edward Stratton/The Daily Astorian

Dr. Kevin Baxter, left, nurse practitioner Mary Rizzo and physician's assistant Rachel Flescher are among the providers staffing Columbia Memorial Hospital's new primary care clinic in the Park Medical Building.

