

# Warrenton man sentenced for throwing rock at young boy's head

## Stepper gets four years in prison in plea

By JACK HEFFERNAN  
The Daily Astorian

A Warrenton man was sentenced Tuesday to four years in prison for throwing a rock at a young boy's head.

In 2017, Brice Ray Stepper, 45, threw the rock at the boy, 6, while they were at a Seaside beach. Stepper was upset at the boy's behavior, Clatsop County Deputy District Attorney Steven Chamberlin said.

The boy was taken to Providence Seaside Hospital with a cut on his forehead. He origi-

nally told doctors that he fell on some rocks before eventually detailing the incident, Chamberlin said. The boy also said Stepper head-butted and kicked his mother — Stepper's girlfriend — in the stomach during a domestic dispute last year.

Stepper later admitted to both incidents to Seaside police, Chamberlin said.

Minutes before sentencing, Stepper pleaded no contest to attempt to commit a class B felony and fourth-degree assault.



Brice Ray Stepper

Stepper originally faced other charges related to a third episode in which he allegedly rammed his pickup truck into his girlfriend's car with kids inside. Those charges were dropped as part of the plea deal with the district attorney's office.

Kirk Wintermute, Stepper's court-appointed attorney, repeatedly asked his client to refrain from expressing his displeasure during the hearing. Stepper has anger and impulse control issues stemming from a childhood brain surgery, Wintermute said.

"He needs to get a better handle on how his cognition issues have affected him in his life," Wintermute said.

Stepper declined to give

a statement when offered the chance.

"I don't think the court would want to hear it if I had to say something," he told Circuit Court Judge Cindee Matyas.

He later said, though, that he had already sought mental health services and that it was making a difference. Matyas encouraged Stepper to seek further counseling in prison and said she was pleased by his previous efforts.

"Prison is not usually considered a place to improve your future, but in this case, it might be," Matyas said. "It may give you a chance to engage in some programs that, maybe, you didn't engage in before and give you some structure and give you some things to look forward to."

# Summer economy gives way to fall

The Daily Astorian



## Jobless rates for September\*

Area	Sept. 2018	Aug. 2018	1-yr. ago
Clatsop	3.8	3.7	4.3
Columbia	4.7	4.7	5.3
Tillamook	4.1	4.1	4.4
Oregon	3.8	3.8	4.2
U.S.	3.7	3.9	4.2

\*Preliminary, seasonally adjusted rates. Source: Oregon Employment Department Daily Astorian graphic

Clatsop County's economy transitioned from the busy summer season to a more locally based employment structure in September, according to state employment statistics.

The county's seasonally adjusted employment rate in September was 3.8 percent, a slight increase from August but one-half a percent lower than the year prior. It was tied with Deschutes County for the ninth-lowest unemployment rate in the state.

Seasonally adjusted statistics compare economic forecasts with real changes. The county was expected to lose 360 jobs in September, but only lost half that much. Nonfarm payroll employment was at 18,880, a gain of 350 from the year prior.

The private sector lost 360 jobs in September with the slowdown from summer, including 290 in lei-

sure and hospitality and 50 in retail trade. The government added 180 jobs, including 170 from the start of school. Professional and business services also added 60 jobs.

Over the past year, leisure and hospitality has added 190 jobs, retail trade 140, construction 50 and local government 70, excluding education.

# Health authority proposes \$784M in new alcohol, tobacco taxes in budget

By CLAIRE WITHYCOMBE  
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Oregonians could see significant increases in alcohol and tobacco prices if a state agency succeeds in raising millions from consumers in the next two years.

The Oregon Health Authority is considering seeking \$784 million in new tax money for the 2019-2021 state budget cycle.

That includes increasing taxes on beer, wine and cider by 10 percent, estimated to raise an additional \$491 million over two years.

Another \$293 million would be raised through a \$2 per pack tax on cigarettes, an excise tax on "inhalant delivery systems," and removing the limit on taxing cigars.

The health authority said in its preliminary budget documents that it would use \$49 million to expand alcohol and drug treatment programs. It budgets about \$29 million for tobacco and chronic disease prevention.

Robb Cowie, a spokesman

for the Oregon Health Authority, said the proposals were more of a "wish list" and are "preliminary." He also said the agency hasn't determined how the prevention money would be used.

"We're still working with legislative counsel to draft language that would direct funding for the 90 percent outside public health chronic disease prevention programs," he said.

The preliminary budget documents say the rest of the money from the proposed alcohol tax increase would generate funds for treatment services, cities, counties and the state's general fund.

But it's unclear, from the budget documents, how the remainder of the taxes generated by tobacco that aren't going to prevention would be spent.

The proposal comes as Gov. Kate Brown works on crafting a new state budget, due to legislators on Dec. 1. The state is facing an \$830 million funding gap for the Oregon Health Plan, the state's Medicaid program.

# Taylor to appear at town hall

The Daily Astorian

tonight at a town hall.

Dulcye Taylor, a candidate for Astoria mayor, will appear

Taylor will discuss city issues at KALA at 1017 Marine Drive. Doors open at 5:30 p.m.

# Consult a PROFESSIONAL

**LEO FINZI**  
Astoria's Best.com  
Microsoft REGISTERED Refurbisher  
We stock 1000's of parts, cables, accessories, etc. for phones, TVs, computers, and tablets.  
Mon-Fri 10-6, Sat 11-4  
Astoria, OR  
503-325-2300

**Q: I purchased a laptop with a small hard drive and it says I need to make more room?**

**A:** 1. Select the **Start** button, type **disk cleanup**, then select **Disk Cleanup** from the list of results.  
2. Select the check box next to the type of files you want to delete. (To view a description of each type of file, select the name.) By default, **Downloaded Program Files, Temporary Internet Files, and Thumbnails** are selected.  
3. To free up even more space, select **Clean up system files**, and then select the type of system files you want to delete.

**ASTORIA CHIROPRACTIC**  
Barry Sears, D.C.  
503-325-3311  
2935 Marine Drive  
Astoria, Oregon

**Q: Does the Oregon Health Plan cover chiropractic care?**

**A: Yes!** The Oregon Health Plan does cover chiropractic care with referral from your primary care physician.  
Call us today for more information or to schedule your appointment.  
Now accepting new patients.

**WANTED**  
Alder and Maple Saw Logs & Standing Timber  
Northwest Hardwoods • Longview, WA  
Contact: John Anderson • 360-269-2500

**BRUCE JONES FOR MAYOR**  
BRUCEJONESFORMAYOR.COM

**Steve Putman**  
Medicare Products  
503-440-1076  
Licensed in Oregon and Washington  
putmanagency@gmail.com

**Q: I have a "Stand-Alone" Medicare Part D prescription plan. My medications have changed. Can I review and change plans during the Annual Enrollment Period?**

**A:** Yes. I will help you review and change your plan during Annual Enrollment to see if another plan better fits your needs. The new plan will have a January 1, 2019 effective date. Call me today to get started.

**Northwest Wild Products**  
Ron Neva  
Northwest Wild Products  
Fresh Seafood Market  
354 Industry St, Astoria  
503-791-1907  
Daily 9am-7pm  
On the docks of the West Mooring Basin, by the Riverwalk Inn

**Q: Does smoking salmon take away from its nutritional value?**

**A:** There have been some serious studies on this. The conclusion is that the vitamin content, has well as the concentration of super healthy Omega-3 fatty acids, does not change during the smoking process. The only drawback to smoking is the added salt content. However, if you limit your salts by giving up other, less healthy foods, you can still take advantage of the convenience, flavor and longer shelf life of smoked salmon.

Come Celebrate **Betty Russell's 90th Birthday**  
Oct. 27th 1-3 pm at Bethany Lutheran Church

**JEFFREY M. LEINASSAR**  
DMD, FAGD  
LEINASSAR DENTAL EXCELLENCE  
503/325-0310  
1414 MARINE DRIVE, ASTORIA  
www.smileastoria.com

**Q: What are dental sealants, who should get them and how long do they last?**

**A:** Dental sealants are a clear coating place in the deep grooves of teeth, protecting them from food and bacteria that can be hard to remove with brushing. We recommend having your child's permanent molars sealed as soon as they are fully erupted. You can expect sealants to last upwards of 10-15 years and are a safe, inexpensive way to help ensure your child's oral health. Call us today to make your appointment.

**John R. Alcantara - Funeral Director**  
**Hughes-Ransom Mortuary**  
Astoria: 576 12th St. 503.325.2535  
Seaside: 220 N. Holladay 503.738.6622  
www.hughes-ransom.com

**Q: When our family needed a mortuary we went to a discount funeral service provider who hit us with hidden costs after we were in the door and made us feel trapped and taken advantage of. What can be done so others don't go through the nightmare we did?**

**A:** As a professional a big part of what we do is informing people of their choices. Yet there are a very small percentage of professionals who use deception or "bait-&-switch" tactics to conceal things from consumers. The collateral damage of a few selfish imbeciles put the majority of hard working caring professionals in a perpetual state of defense. This is a sore subject with many in our industry but the bottom line is that you as a consumer have choices. If you feel like something sounds too good to be true it probably is. If you feel you're getting taken advantage of as more hidden costs are added to your bill, you have rights. Contact the Oregon Mortuary & Cemetery Board at (971) 673-1500 and visit their website https://www.oregon.gov/MortCem/pages/index.aspx to get a complete understanding of your rights.

**Seaside American Legion**  
1315 Broadway • Seaside • Oregon  
Saturday October 27th  
**Halloween Dance and Costume Party**  
Prizes for best Halloween costume!  
"THUNDER ROAD BAND"  
SALEM'S FINEST R&R/COUNTRY BAND • STARTS 8PM  
DINNER FROM 5-8PM  
"HALLOWEEN SPECIAL"  
PRIME RIB OR SALMON DINNER W/ BAKED POTATOE, GARDEN SALAD & DINNER ROLLS ONLY \$19  
A Fundraising "Public Welcome" event to support military veterans welfare & community. Call us @ 503-738-5111

**BRIM'S Farm & Garden**  
34963 Hwy. 101 Business Astoria • 503-325-1562  
For beautiful gardens & healthy animals  
www.brimsfarmgarden.com

**Q: Is there anything I can do now to reduce the slug population in the garden for next year?**

**A:** Yes, fall slug control is much more effective than just baiting in the growing season. Slugs hide underground in the warmer months, so you may not recognize a slug problem until the population has exploded. Baiting will kill off a good number of them; reducing the number of eggs that will be deposited in the soil to hatch out in next year's garden. We carry iron phosphate slug baits that are safe for birds and pets when properly applied, as well as other formulas. The Dr. Earth slug/snail spray also works well and is a non-toxic essential oil. If you have them, allowing chickens to clean up the vegetable garden this fall will also greatly reduce slug eggs in the garden.

**Erick Bengel**  
Coast Weekend Editor  
THE DAILY ASTORIAN  
949 Exchange St., Astoria  
503-325-3211

**Q: How do I get a story about my event in Coast Weekend?**

**A:** Coast Weekend plans feature stories anywhere from two to six weeks in advance, so let us know early if you have something going on that you think would make a good feature.  
For smaller stories, the deadline for getting press releases and photos to us is 5 p.m. Tuesday the week before the next Thursday's publication.  
Email your information to editor@coast-weekend.com, or call 971-704-1720. Be sure to include a contact name, email and phone number.  
If you want to post an event in the online calendar, go to the website, coastweekend.com, and follow the instructions for the Coast Weekend Event Calendar on the right.