



## POLICING PROPERTY

Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian  
**Several properties in downtown Astoria have fences and other measures to deter loitering.**

### Business leaders say Property Watch has worked well, but issues persist

By JACK HEFFERNAN  
*The Daily Astorian*

As an Astoria police program meant to help businesses monitor property enters its third year, it represents a small solution in the city's otherwise fluid response to homelessness.

Property Watch, which allows officers to supervise commercial and apartment properties after hours on the owners' behalf, was rebooted in 2017 to curb aggressive panhandling downtown. It attracted 36 participants in its first year. Last year, 68 businesses signed on.

Most of the businesses are located near the downtown core, where complaints have arisen about human waste, leftover garbage, camping and disorderly conduct. Since state law does not allow police to prevent people from using public spaces, owners can sign annual contracts authorizing officers to remove people without making new trespass complaints.

"The unwanted activity is most often happening after business hours," Astoria Police Sgt. Andrew Randall, the program's supervisor, said in a text message. "While the program isn't a fix-all solution, it has given Astoria police officers a tool to assist businesses and property owners in trying to reduce unwanted activity on their property."

Business owners are encouraged to alert police of recurring issues. They're also provided with window signs warning against behavior such



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian  
**A shopping cart full of belongings sits unattended in front of a downtown business.**

as loud noise, fighting, littering and loitering. Officers, in return, keep eyes on those locations and deal with any activities that owners would not approve.

The owners of Phog Bounders Antique Mall joined the program last year when suitcases and bags of junk kept appearing outside the store's basement in the morning. Since then, the junk has disappeared, said Debbie Schmidt, a co-owner of the store.

"Now if the cops drive by and see someone in the doorway, which they do sometimes, they can shoot them away," Schmidt said. "They can investigate it without getting us out of bed."

Certain problems — like vandalism, human waste and intimidation

— persist, but others — like aggressive panhandling — have subsided for the time being, said Sarah Lu Heath, executive director of the Astoria Downtown Historic District Association.

"I think it's doing what it's supposed to," Heath said. "It's a doozy of a situation, but everyone is doing what we can."

About a year ago, Randall noticed that while the program had helped temporarily quash some issues, it might have led to more people camping in the woods. A few months later, the City Council banned camping in woods after much debate.

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**'WHILE THE PROGRAM ISN'T A FIX-ALL SOLUTION, IT HAS GIVEN ASTORIA POLICE OFFICERS A TOOL TO ASSIST BUSINESSES AND PROPERTY OWNERS IN TRYING TO REDUCE UNWANTED ACTIVITY ON THEIR PROPERTY.'**

Astoria Police Sgt. Andrew Randall

## State law shields doctors from scrutiny on opioids

### Little teeth in drug monitoring program

By CLAIRE WITHYCOMBE  
*Oregon Capital Bureau*

SALEM — State officials know of 160 doctors with suspicious prescribing patterns but Oregon law shields those doctors from further scrutiny.

Legislators put little teeth into a 2018 law that requires doctors to register for a program that monitors drug prescriptions. Doctors, for instance, face no sanction if they don't join, according to state officials.

Doctors identified as perhaps improperly prescribing opioids only get a letter from the state suggesting more education. Doctors can and do ignore even those mild letters with no fear of a sanction.

Under the program, retail pharmacists report prescriptions of controlled substances such as OxyContin and Xanax to the state within 72 hours of dispensing them. The state maintains three years of prescription data.

The issue of prescriptions has been central to government efforts to reduce the number of overdose deaths attributed to opioids.

In 2016, Oregon doctors wrote 3.1 million opioid prescriptions at a rate 13 percent higher than the national average.

That year, 312 Oregonians died from an opioid overdose, a rate of about 7.6 per 100,000 people, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse. Nationally, the rate was 13 people in 100,000.

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## Local builders to reopen hardware store

### A new venture in Warrenton

By EDWARD STRATTON  
*The Daily Astorian*

WARRENTON — A local builder is restarting the former Warrenton Builders Supply on Main Avenue as a construction office, hardware store and commercial shop rentals.

Ken Culp, co-owner of Culp & Sons Builders Inc. with his son, Matthew, recently leased the long-vacant former Ace Hardware franchise from the family of Dick Walter, who opened the store in 1968 and died in 2009.

Culp intends to buy the building and lumber storage spaces across Main Avenue. He is moving the offices for his construction company in the coming weeks, and hopes to reopen a hardware store in the space within the next couple of months.

"Our shop is super, super small," Culp said. "It's a 24-by-24(-foot) building, and our office was a little bit bigger than our bathroom. We needed a little more room, and this thing had been sitting here for ages."

Warrenton Builders Supply closed shortly after Walter's death, according to his wife, Marilyn, who still lives in a house next to the store.

"Part of it was losing Dick," she said. "He was the real workhorse of it."

The store was also affected by the opening of Home Depot nearby in the 2000s. When the store closed, the family left everything in place, including about 80 percent of the inventory, forklifts, dump trucks and other equipment.

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## Buoy Beer Co. acquiring Pilot House Distilling

### An expansion into craft liquor

By EDWARD STRATTON  
*The Daily Astorian*

Buoy Beer Co. is entering the craft liquor market, acquiring Pilot House Distilling in a bid to help the startup and find a new area for growth amid a tightening beer scene.

Pilot House and its co-founder, Larry Cary, are being brought under Buoy Beer's parent company, River Barrel Brewing Inc., as partial owner and director in the distillery. His existing business partner, Todd Shelton, of Michigan, will be bought out.

Cary will still run distillery opera-

tions, while Buoy Beer will provide capital and administrative support to help him grow. His wife, Christina, helps operate Pilot House. The two still own a related but separate company, Grumpy Dog Shrub Co., making drinking vinegars and other mixers.

"We don't see any changes to what Larry's making now, or any changes to recipes or anything like that," said David Kroening, president and general manager of Buoy Beer. "He's the expert. He's got a good following. He makes stuff that we like."

While Buoy Beer has experienced a lot of growth, the craft beer scene is getting tighter, with more than 6,000 breweries nationwide, Kroening said.

"Craft breweries are starting to come up against it a little bit, just like the

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The Daily Astorian  
**Pilot House Distilling, co-founded by Larry Cary in 2013, is being acquired by Buoy Beer Co.**

