

POINT of view

THE DAILY ASTORIAN // QUESTION OF THE WEEK

What do you think of the federal government shutdown?



"Oh, my goodness, can I say polite words? I think it's sad that we live in a country where the whims of the few override the needs of the many."
Carol Folk, Astoria



"It sucks. It's terribly selfish of one man to put that many people under the knife, so to speak."
James Brownlow, Astoria



"I think it's horrible. For one thing, national parks are closed."
Terry Leong, Astoria

Health experts expect measles outbreak to hit Oregon



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
The third day of a measles rash on a baby boy back in 1963.

By **KRISTIAN FODEN-VENCIL and CRYSTAL LIGORI**
Oregon Public Broadcasting

The count of confirmed measles cases in southwest Washington rose to 23 Tuesday, and Oregon officials say they expect the health crisis to cross the state line soon.

"We wouldn't be a bit surprised to see people with measles in Oregon," said Dr. Richard Leman, a public health physician with the Oregon Health Authority. "Getting vaccinated is perhaps the very best way to protect yourself against this."

Authorities know someone with measles attended the Jan. 11 Portland Trail Blazers game at the Moda Center, and they are tracking other potential exposures.

Clark County, Washington, has already declared a public health emergency. Dr. Alan Melnick, the county public health director, said the strain on resources may lead to a statewide declaration as well. That would

allow Washington to request federal help.

If untreated, measles can cause pneumonia and swelling in the brain that can lead to deafness. Immunizations are highly effective against the disease, but in Clark County, 22 percent of students are not vaccinated for it, Melnick said.

The number of unvaccinated children is even lower in some schools.

"This is completely preventable if we had better immunization rates," Melnick said. "But we're going to continue to have problems like this if the immunization rates are too low."

Catherine Kroll, the director of infection prevention at the PeaceHealth System, said the hospital had three families come in with the disease — before authorities recognized the outbreak.

She said providers take measles patients to a special room with negative air pressure.

"So it's not pushing measles virus out, because measles virus is airborne," she

said. "After they leave, the room sits for two hours. That allows for the virus to settle out of their air. Once the virus has settled out of the air, you're able to clean it off of surfaces and kill it with standard disinfection methods."

PeaceHealth is asking anyone who thinks they may have measles to call their health care provider before turning up at a hospital or clinic. That limits possible exposure for other people.

"We are on high vigilance," Kroll said. "As soon as people come in to seek services, we're doing a quick evaluation to assess them for measles. And anybody who has the potential of measles, we actually go back outside the facility with them, place a mask on them and bring them in through an alternative entrance to minimize the exposure to other patients."

PeaceHealth has set up its own incident command structure to deal with the outbreak and is sharing best practices with other health care providers.

Kroll said they are also notifying people who were in a clinic or hospital with measles patients about the possibility of being exposed. But she's not aware of anyone who has been exposed that way.

While hospitals and clinics are designed to deal with illness, schools in the area are doing what they can. Gail Spolar, the director of communications at Evergreen Public Schools, said they've had cases at four of their 37 schools.

Students who are not immunized cannot return to school until they are. At two Evergreen elementary schools, about 10 percent of students are being kept out.

Public health officials fear the emergency could last at least several more weeks.

"When you've been exposed to measles, if you're susceptible, the symptoms will begin somewhere between seven and 21 days after you've been exposed," Melnick said. "So we're looking at cases that could develop up until early February."

Eugene, Lane County plan would bring homeless off streets

Associated Press

EUGENE — Elected leaders for Eugene and Lane County are supporting an ambitious, expensive push aimed at lowering to zero the number of homeless people camping along local streets and in parks.

The Register-Guard reported that the series of 10 recommendations by Technical Assistance Collaborative, a Boston-based

consultant, includes construction of a 75-bed low-barrier homeless shelter and hundreds of additional units of supportive housing.

It also calls for the expansion or improvement of existing programs spread across numerous public agencies and non-profit providers to better help homeless people secure housing and keep them in it.

The Eugene City Council

voted Tuesday to have City Manager Jon Ruiz work with Lane County Administrator Steve Mokrohisky to develop a plan by May 1 to implement the consultant's recommendations.

The plan would require a large infusion of public money, likely running into the tens of millions of dollars, that elected leaders would have to identify to pay for both construction and annual operating costs.

Millions could be drinking water high in nitrates

By **COURTNEY FLATT**
Northwest Public Broadcasting

More people than expected are drinking water that could be harmful to their health. That's according to a new study that looked at a water contaminant that's been an issue in one of the Northwest's most productive farming regions.

The study, published in the journal Environmental Health, found more than 5.6 million Americans may be drinking water that's contaminated with nitrates. The study found Latino residents are disproportionately drinking water that's often more contaminated than other areas.

At high levels, nitrates can be harmful to infants, causing what's known as

"blue baby syndrome."

Lower exposure levels to nitrates can contribute to other health problems, like birth defects and some cancers, said Laurel Schaidler, the study's lead author and an environmental chemist at Silent Spring Institute.

That's why researchers decided to look at nearly 40,000 community water systems across the country.

"I think that merits further investigation into whether the drinking water standard is adequately protecting everyone," Schaidler said.

Nitrates in drinking water has long been an issue for Washington's Lower Yakima Valley, where private wells have sometimes shown high levels of contamination. Some 25,000 people use private wells to get water, according to the

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Researchers in this study did not look at private wells, rather they surveyed water sources that served at least 25 people.

The study found drinking water across the U.S. had elevated nitrates for different reasons, from agriculture to fertilizers to sewage treatment plants.

In earlier research based in Cape Cod, Massachusetts, Schaidler found water with elevated levels of nitrates often had elevated levels of other contaminants, like pharmaceuticals or other chemicals found in consumer products. Similar studies could be done in more agricultural areas.

"Nitrate pollution might be a good indicator of impaired water quality in general," Schaidler said.

FIVE-DAY FORECAST FOR ASTORIA

TONIGHT	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
40	51 37	52 37	53 38	52 37
Partly cloudy	Intervals of clouds and sunshine	Intervals of clouds and sunshine	Sunshine and patchy clouds	Partly sunny

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ALMANAC

Astoria through Tuesday.

Temperatures

High/low 53°/41°
Normal high/low 50°/38°
Record high 62° in 1981
Record low 16° in 1943

Precipitation

Tuesday 0.92"
Month to date 4.74"
Normal month to date 7.52"
Year to date 4.74"
Normal year to date 7.52"

SUN AND MOON

Sunset tonight 5:07 p.m.
Sunrise Thursday 7:47 a.m.
Moonrise today 8:39 p.m.
Moonset today 9:40 a.m.

REGIONAL WEATHER

Shown is tomorrow's weather. Temperatures are tonight's lows and tomorrow's highs.

UNDER THE SKY

Tonight's Sky: The Double Clusters of Perseus is high above the western horizon after sunset.

Source: Jim Todd, OMSI

REGIONAL CITIES

City	Today	Thu.	W	City	Today	Thu.	W
Baker City	42 30	44 25	pc	Olympia	53 40	51 37	c
Bend	50 28	48 28	s	Pendleton	51 37	47 34	c
Brookings	52 44	58 42	s	Portland	55 41	53 38	pc
Eugene	55 38	52 36	pc	Roseburg	51 41	52 37	pc
Ilwaco	52 43	50 41	pc	Salem	56 40	54 36	pc
Klamath Falls	46 27	46 21	s	Seaside	52 41	51 40	pc
Medford	51 37	55 30	s	Spokane	38 25	36 30	c
Newberg	54 39	52 37	pc	Springfield	54 39	52 36	pc
Newport	52 41	52 39	pc	Vancouver	53 41	51 36	pc
North Bend	55 42	56 39	s	Yakima	52 29	47 29	c

TOMORROW'S TIDES

Astoria / Port Docks

Time	High	Time	Low
3:55 a.m.	9.1 ft.	9:45 a.m.	1.9 ft.
3:31 p.m.	9.4 ft.	10:12 p.m.	-0.5 ft.

TOMORROW'S NATIONAL WEATHER

Shown are noon positions of weather systems and precipitation. Temperature bands are highs for the day.

ON THE RECORD

Assault

• At 2:51 a.m. today, Taylor Falconer, 25, of Astoria, was arrested in the 1400 block of Commercial Street on one count of assault in the fourth degree. Falconer allegedly clawed the victim's face during a domestic dispute. The victim was also arrested on a warrant out of Multnomah County.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

WEDNESDAY

Clatsop County Board of Commissioners, 6 p.m., Judge Guy Boyington Building, 857 Commercial St., Astoria.

Warrenton-Hammond School Board, 6 p.m., special session, Warrenton High School library, 1700 S. Main Ave.

THURSDAY

Sunset Empire Transportation District Board, 9 a.m., Astoria Transit Center, 900 Marine Drive.

Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce, 12 p.m., 818 Commercial St., Suite 203.

Cannon Beach Planning Commission, 6 p.m., City Hall, 163 E. Gower St.

LOTTERIES

OREGON

Tuesday's Pick 4:

1 p.m.: 7-4-7-8
4 p.m.: 8-5-9-8
7 p.m.: 5-0-1-3
10 p.m.: 7-3-5-6

Tuesday's Lucky Lines: 1-6-11-13-20-21-25-30
Estimated jackpot: \$25,000

Tuesday's Mega Millions: 4-15-37-59-64, Mega Ball: 16
Estimated jackpot: \$96 million

WASHINGTON

Tuesday's Daily Game: 8-6-9
Tuesday's Keno: 05-11-14-15-17-18-26-29-31-39-41-43-44-50-56-58-62-68-69-72
Tuesday's Match 4: 02-10-13-14

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