

# Family displaced by fire in Hamlet home

By **BRENNA VISSER**  
The Daily Astorian

HAMLET — Two adults and three children lost their Hamlet home after a nearby generator caught fire on Tuesday afternoon.

At about 2:30 p.m., neighbors reported a fire burning in the home at 79721 Hamlet Rd. and used fire extinguishers to slow the flames until firefighters could arrive. No one was in the home at the time.

About half of the house was on fire by the time crews arrived, said Matt Verley, the chief of the Hamlet Volunteer Fire Department. A generator near the house appeared to catch fire, which then spread into the house.

Weather conditions and the structure of the home made it particularly hard to fight the fire, Verley said. Because the fire was trapped in a part of the attic difficult to access, it took firefighters almost six hours to put out the flames.



Matt Verley/Hamlet Volunteer Fire Department

Fire crews work to put out a house fire in Hamlet in wintry conditions.

“With 6 inches of snow on the ground, getting on the roof to ventilate was difficult,” Verley said. “Before

others got there I was using fire hoses to clear off the snow so we could work.”

The house is considered

a total loss, but crews were able to retrieve some personal items for the family after the flames were put out.

# Warrenton zone change could spur development

New apartments are possible

By **KATIE FRANKOWICZ**  
The Daily Astorian

WARRENTON — A 19-acre wedge of residential properties between U.S. Highway 101 and Spur 104 in Warrenton is now open for commercial development.

The City Commission approved a zone change for the area in a 4-1 vote Tuesday night. The change will allow for the development of high-density housing, such as apartments, as well as office and business projects.

Mayor Henry Balensifer voted against the change because of concerns about what develop-

ment could mean for traffic. The properties are near the city’s busy shopping area of Ensign Lane that includes Home Depot and other big box stores where residents already complain about traffic congestion.

Balensifer was also concerned about a lack of planning for what kind of development and design would be encouraged. He hoped, at least, that the commission would ask property owners to create some kind of master plan to guide future development decisions. He wondered if the reclassification of the existing residential zoning to commercial mixed use was too broad.

Official discussion of the Spur 104 zone change began in earnest last summer. But the move was delayed, first

to amend an initial traffic impact study to incorporate concerns from the Oregon Department of Transportation, and then tabled until the city’s new Transportation System Plan was adopted.

Proponents of the zone change, including Planning Commissioner Ken Yuill, who estimates he owns 20 percent of the property in the area, said the commission needed to move forward. Businesses that had been interested in building at Spur 104 last summer moved on after the issue was

tabled, Yuill said.

Many of the lots available for new development are smaller and will not be available to big box stores that could draw more traffic, Yuill added. The applications that do come in will all likely have to go through a public vetting process in front of the Planning Commission, he said.

But for Balensifer, who wants the commission to consider ways to encourage livability in Warrenton, “just because the carrot is dangled doesn’t mean we have to bite it.”

# Renter protections clear state Senate

By **ANDREW SELSKY**  
Associated Press

SALEM — The state Senate approved a bill Tuesday that aims to protect renters amid a statewide housing crisis, with the measure restricting landlords from terminating a tenancy and from imposing large rent increases.

The bill passed in a 17-11 vote. It now goes to the House. If passed, it would be one of the first statewide rent control laws in the nation.

State Sen. Tim Knopp, a Republican from Bend, said before he voted against the measure that it doesn’t address the supply issue. Oregon has a serious shortage of affordable housing.

Sen. Jeff Golden, D-Rogue Valley, told fellow senators before he voted “yes” that the alternative to the bill is to say: “Sorry Oregon renters, you’re on your own.”

The Oregon Rental Housing Association, which describes itself as the only state association whose focus is the smaller rental owner and operator, has a neutral position on the bill.

The bill prohibits landlords from terminating month-to-month tenancy without cause after 12 months of occupancy. It also limits maximum rent increases to once per year, and to 7 percent above the annual change in the consumer price index.

It also allows landlords to terminate tenancy with 90 days’ written notice and payment of one month’s rent, with exemptions in some cases. A landlord can refuse to renew a fixed-term tenancy if the tenant receives three lease violation warnings within 12 months and the landlord gives 90 days’ notice.

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**Q: I still haven't received my new medicare card with the new medicare number. When will they be mailed here in Oregon?**

**A:** The new cards have been mailed in all states now. If you haven't received yours, The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) suggest that you look for old mail around the house, you can log-on to MyMedicare.gov to find your number and print a card or Call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). TTY users can call 1-877-486-2048. There may be something that needs to be corrected, like your mailing address. You can still use your old card to get health care services until January 1, 2020.

**Steve Putman**

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