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Chelsea Vaughn, curator for the Clatsop County Historical Society, chronicled the county's medical history into a new exhibit at the Clatsop County Heritage Museum.

Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

NEW EXHIBIT EXPLORES COUNTY MEDICAL CARE

A deep dive into hospitals — and some weird contraptions

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

When Chelsea Vaughn joined the Clatsop County Historical Society as a curator last year, she started getting acquainted with the collections.

What began as a fascination with medical oddities — examination tables with built-in stirrups for high heels, early electromagnetic diathermy machines and eye-testing equipment — led her on a deep dive into the region's medical history.

Her first exhibit, "Held for Observation: The Evolution of Medical Care in Clatsop County," will be up through the end of the year at the Heritage Museum.

Vaughn's exhibit, sponsored by Columbia Memorial Hospital, examines the history of local hospitals, starting with a maritime hospital dating to the mid-19th century.

The exhibit recounts the Sisters of Charity of Providence, a Catholic organization that in 1880 started Astoria's first general hospital in the converted Arrigoni Hotel at 15th and Duane streets. St. Mary's expanded into a grand Victorian at 16th Street in 1905 and evolved into what is now the Owens-Adair Apartments by 1931.

The exhibit touches on Columbia Memorial, started by the Finnish Lutheran community in 1927 at 16th Street and Franklin Avenue. The newer hospital group eventually bought out St. Mary's and expanded

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'Held for Observation,' a new medical history exhibit at the Clatsop County Heritage Museum, includes oddities such as old medicines and machines.

Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian



St. Mary's Hospital, started in 1880 in a former hotel, moved to a new Victorian building in 1905, allowing the Sisters of Charity of Providence to add a nursing school.

Clatsop County Historical Society

Sunset Empire pitches bus line to Portland

A state grant would help fund the line

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

The Sunset Empire Transportation District is trying to run a bus line from Astoria to Union Station in downtown Portland.

The transit district is applying for a two-year, \$738,000 grant from the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program. The district would provide a local match of \$82,000.

"The proposal is for three trips a day," said Jeff Hazen, the transit district's executive director. "I've also included in there the possibility of buying two used motor coaches to make the ride a little more comfortable."

The transit district runs the Lower Columbia Connector Route to Rainier, where riders transfer to a Columbia County Rider route between Kelso, Washington, and St. Helens, before transferring to a line into downtown Portland.

Of the more than 4,100 people who rode the Columbia Connector Route last year, Sunset Empire found that 32 percent were continuing on to Portland.

Sunset Empire has been covering the cost of the Columbia Connector Route as Columbia County Rider struggles with funding. Bypassing Columbia County's transit agency will allow the transit district to focus on improving finances, Hazen said.

Private transit provider MTR Western provides the other connection between the North Coast and downtown Portland, running a twice-daily, state-subsidized bus route on motor coaches from Astoria to Union Station via U.S. Highway 26.

The contract for that route is up for bid, and the state is interested in local transit agencies like Sunset Empire taking them on, Hazen said.

The potential expansion of the Columbia Connector Route comes shortly after Sunset Empire considered axing the route to save money during a federal government shutdown that sequestered more than half of the agency's operating fund.

But Hazen said the route has enough riders to warrant the expansion.

"We've had good ridership on that route with the connection" to Columbia County, Hazen said. "But any time you can make it a straight shot without transferring, riders prefer that."

Sunset Empire's grant will be reviewed this spring and summer, with a final decision in August and potential funding in October, Hazen said.



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

The Sunset Empire Transportation District is seeking a state grant for a bus line to Union Station in downtown Portland.

New York transplant finds passion in policing

By BRENNA VISSER
The Daily Astorian

Alex Whitney had two distinct passions from a very young age: becoming a cop, and the state of Oregon.

He isn't entirely sure what spurred his passion for law enforcement — maybe it was the flashing lights, he joked.

But his passion for Oregon has a clear beginning. Born and raised in a suburb three hours north of New York City, he first became curious about the state after playing a video game that was set in the Pacific Northwest.

After some research,

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people

Whitney determined his destiny by seventh grade: He was going to be a cop in Oregon. "I just never strayed from that," he said.

Whitney visited the region for the first time during a family vacation to Portland two years ago. He fell in love with Astoria after a spontaneous day trip to the coast, but figured working in the city was a long shot given the small

police department.

A little over a year after the trip, Whitney was back home when he saw a job posting for Astoria police. He decided to apply, despite being six months shy of the age requirement.

He was hired in June, five days after his 21st birthday.

"You know when a seventh-grader says they want to do something, and then they change their mind the next week?" Whitney said. "I think (my parents) were shocked that I kept on that for so long."



Brenna Visser/The Daily Astorian

Alex Whitney joined the Astoria Police Department in June.

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