

IN BRIEF

Airport receives FAA grant

The Astoria Regional Airport received \$900,000 from the Federal Aviation Administration's airport improvement program for apron reconstruction.

The Port of Astoria's airport, largely because of its military traffic through the U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Army, regularly receives grants from the program to keep up runways, taxiways and the surrounding apron. It most recently received nearly \$3.2 million in August to extend a taxiway and add lighting.

"This grant funds the first phase of much-needed rehabilitation of the airport apron," Gary Kobes, The Port's airport manager, said in a news release about the \$900,000 grant. "The original was constructed in the early 1940s and has served well but is approaching the end of its useful life. The Port of Astoria and the aviation community are grateful for the federal support in sustaining this regionally important infrastructure."



A rendering of The Lodge in Seaside.

Groundbreaking for new Seaside hotel

SEASIDE — Construction has started on The Lodge at Seaside, a 65-room luxury hotel.

For hospitality workers, construction workers, city and county officials, putting shovels to the ground was a way of marking the launch of the \$11 million project.

Seaside Lodging co-owner and managing director Masudur Khan called it a "dream come true," 10 years in the making.

"We are shooting for an upscale hotel," Khan said. "It's a new market in Seaside. We think everyone who comes to the hotel — young, middle-aged or older, regardless of their age — will have a good time."

Guests at the four-story property will have a swimming pool, game room, meeting room, ocean views and high-end amenities.

— The Astorian

DEATH

Sept. 30, 2019

ABRAHAMS, Donald D., 90, of Astoria, died in Astoria. Ocean View Funeral & Cremation Service of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

MEMORIAL

Sunday, Oct. 6

PURTLE, Jacquetta Jean — Memorial at 1 p.m., Peace Lutheran Church, 565 12th St.; reception follows at the church. Purtle, 84, of Warrenton, died Saturday, Sept. 28, 2019, in Portland. Springer and Son, of Aloha, is in charge of the arrangements.

ON THE RECORD

DUII

• Douglas Alan Portin, 65, was arrested Sunday on U.S. Highway 26 for driving under the influence of intoxicants. His blood alcohol content was 0.09%

• Steavan Wade, 58,

of Washington state, was arrested Saturday on the 500 block of Avenue A in Seaside for DUII.

• Thomas Shaffer, 39, of Cannon Beach, was arrested Saturday on S. Roosevelt Drive in Seaside for DUII.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

TUESDAY

Seaside Community Center Commission, 10:30 a.m., Bob Chisholm Center, 1225 Avenue A.
Port of Astoria Commission, 4 p.m., Port offices, 10 Pier 1 Suite 209.
Seaside Library Board, 4:30 p.m., Seaside Library, 1131 Broadway.
Clatsop Care Health District Board, 5 p.m., Clatsop Care Memory Community, 2219 Dolphin Ave., Warrenton.
Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District, 5:15 p.m., workshop, Bob Chisholm Community Center, 1225 Avenue A, Seaside.
Astoria Library Board, 5:30 p.m., Astoria Library Flag

Room, 450 10th St.
Miles Crossing Sanitary Sewer District Board, 6 p.m., 34583 U.S. Highway 101 Business.

Seaside Planning Commission, 7 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

WEDNESDAY

Seaside Improvement Commission, 6 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.
Gearhart City Council, 7 p.m., City Hall, 698 Pacific Way.

THURSDAY

Astoria Design Review Commission, 5:30 p.m., City Hall, 1095 Duane St.
Seaside Parks Advisory Committee, 7 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

Battling the spruce aphid on the North Coast

Pest attacks Sitka spruce

By KATHERINE LACAZE
 For The Astorian

SEASIDE — In light of the spruce aphid outbreak this year, local landowners and community stakeholders came together to gather insight on the pesky insect and how to defend against the damage it is causing.

"This is something that's happening in our own backyards, in our own neighborhoods," said Oregon State University Extension Forester Dan Stark, who organized an informational meeting held at the Bob Chisholm Community Center in September.

Christine Buhl, a forest entomologist for the Oregon Department of Forestry, gave a presentation at the meeting, which drew about 35 property owners, foresters, master gardeners and other individuals from across the North Coast.

Buhl's purpose was to both clear up misconceptions about the methods for dealing with the insect, which is most commonly hosted by Sitka spruce on the coast, and put the epidemic into perspective.

According to Buhl, the department started receiving calls early in the season from concerned citizens, park rangers and others who reported that a significant number of spruce trees along the coast seemed to be in poor condition. Upon further investigation, she identified the culprit of the noticeable defoliation to be the spruce aphid.

While the insect has a continual presence along the West Coast, from Canada to California, large-scale infestations — or outbreaks — only occur periodically, Buhl



'WE DO NEED TO KNOW HOW EXTENSIVE OF DAMAGE WE ACTUALLY CAN EXPECT TREES TO BOUNCE BACK FROM.'

Christine Buhl | forest entomologist for the Oregon Department of Forestry

said. The most recent spruce aphid outbreaks occurred in Alaska from 2015 to 2016 and in Oregon in 1998 and 2005.

The good news is they typically run their course in two to three years. Other extensive epidemics have not wiped out all spruce trees, which Buhl said gives her "hope we will make it through this one."

Damage lingers

A single event of the intensity experienced this season, however, can create damage that lingers for several years. According to information from the Department of Forestry, aphids feed on the sap in needles, causing them to turn yellow, then brown, and finally fall from the tree prematurely.

In many ways, spruce trees are resilient. As a type of conifer, they possess several years' worth of needles at a given time. Spruce aphids only feed on the foliage produced in past years, not the current year foliage,

because concentration of terpenes is too high in new growth.

They tend to feed near the start of the growth season — or late winter and early spring — before the nitrogen from older needles has been allocated to cultivate other growth.

An outbreak that lasts for a single season is unlikely to lead to high tree mortality rates, even if devastating defoliation occurs, because buds are unaffected by aphid infestations and new growth flushes normally. A couple of consecutive years of high-intensity infestation, however, exponentially increases the probability of issues such as reduced shoot growth, radial and height growth and root mass, as well as, potentially, tree mortality.

The situation on the coast is further complicated, Buhl said, because of the statewide drought that has persisted since 2012. While drought stress does not make spruce trees more desirable for consumption, it does hin-

der their ability to rebound after an aphid attack.

In addition to sharing ways to identify the signs and symptoms of a spruce aphid infestation, Buhl also discussed a few methods for controlling the pest insect.

Natural controls

The best controls are natural ones, including predators such as ladybugs and patristic wasps. Additionally, a frost that drops temperatures to 14 degrees Fahrenheit or below can wipe out a large portion of the aphid population. Property owners can also boost a tree's natural line of defense through irrigation, but it is a measure that, once taken, must be sustained long term, Buhl said.

Insecticides and other chemical controls are expensive alternatives that must be used in a certain way to be effective. Common controls for large spruce trees, such as a soil drench or stem injection, must be applied in the early spring. According to Buhl, sprays are often ineffective as they easily drift and hit other insects and natural predators.

She encouraged property owners with heritage trees or other spruce trees they are concerned about to speak with someone from Department of Forestry's forest health program or a certified arborist. She also invited attendees at the meeting to become citizen scientists and help collect data that the state can use to monitor the aphid outbreak and the damage to trees.

"We do need to know how extensive of damage we actually can expect trees to bounce back from," Buhl said. "If it's a little bit lower than we thought, we need to take some added steps for preventative management, which is going to be really costly."

Judge overturns aerial spray ban

Reversal for Lincoln County

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
 Capital Press

A judge has invalidated Lincoln County's prohibition against aerial pesticide spraying because the ordinance is preempted by state law.

Voters narrowly approved the aerial spray ban in 2017, but two landowners filed a lawsuit challenging the ordinance for overstepping the county's authority.

Lincoln County Circuit Court Judge Sheryl Bachart has now ruled that Oregon's Pesticide Control Act disallows local government regulation of pesticides, including aerial spraying.

"Since the ordinance seeks by its very terms to regulate pesticide use, the county is completely preempted under state law from adopting any ordinance regarding pesticide use," the judge said.

The judge rejected arguments by supporters of the ban who argued the ordinance's legality was sup-



Associated Press

A helicopter prepares to apply pesticides. A judge has invalidated an ordinance banning aerial spraying in Lincoln County.

ported by the Declaration of Independence, U.S. Constitution and Oregon Constitution, calling these claims "misplaced and without legal precedent."

"There is simply no authority for the proposition that the people of Lincoln County are granted an inalienable right of local self-government which preempts any authority of the state," Bachart said.

The plaintiffs in the

est Practices Act and "right to farm and forest" law, the plaintiffs said.

Supporters of the ordinance argued that all power is inherent in the people under the Oregon Constitution, which trumps the state's preemption of local regulations.

Setting a "ceiling" on the protections from toxic chemicals violates the Oregon Constitution's "fundamental right" to local community self-government, according to Lincoln County Community Rights, a group of supporters who intervened in the case.

The authority for the local ordinance is derived from the Oregon Constitution, rather than state statutes, and thus can't be voided by the preemption laws, the intervenors claimed.

Lincoln County's ordinance is immune from state preemption laws, which were enacted at the behest of "corporate interests" to overrule the will of the people, according to the intervenors.

Lincoln County Community Rights has vowed to appeal the ruling and said the judge "did not substantively consider" its argument that local self-government "must prevail against state preemption when exercised to protect health, safety and welfare."

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EVENT HOST: ASTORIA WARRENTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Bridge will be closed to vehicles from 8:30 to 11 a.m.