

IN BRIEF

Dogs harmed by fire at Coast Guard housing

Firefighters responded to a structure fire Tuesday at U.S. Coast Guard housing on Klaskanine Avenue in Astoria.

Officials say the occupant of the home reported the fire after seeing it on video from the security cameras set up in the home.

Two dogs were in the home when the fire started. One dog died, and another was taken to the veterinarian.

— *The Astorian*

Oregon state senator predicts court battle over pipeline proposal

SALEM — A state senator told demonstrators opposed to a plan to build a natural gas pipeline and marine export terminal in Coos Bay that he expects the battle to go to the courts if the Trump administration tries to ram the project through despite a lack of state permits.

Gov. Kate Brown’s office told The Associated Press late Tuesday she “would consider all available options” if the federal government tried to preempt state permitting processes.

Demonstrators gathered outside the Department of State Lands on Tuesday to thank its director, Vicki Walker, for refusing to grant another extension to Pembina, an energy company based in Calgary, Canada, for a decision on a removal-fill permit. The permit is required to dredge sediment out of Coos Bay for the marine export terminal and to construct a 230-mile feeder pipeline through and under waterways in southern Oregon.

Pembina reacted by withdrawing its application for the state permit. Another state agency, the Department of Environmental Quality, has already denied a water quality certification for the proposed Jordan Cove natural gas export project.

Jordan Cove said it is awaiting a final determination by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission on Feb. 13 before deciding how the company will proceed. The Trump administration in August proposed streamlining approval of gas pipelines and other energy projects by limiting states’ certification authorities under the U.S. Clean Water Act.

State Sen. Jeff Golden, a Democrat and former river guide in the Rogue Valley, told the several dozen red-shirted demonstrators that he sees a court battle on the horizon.

“I think the evidence is very clear that the strategy now for this project is to wholly ignore Oregon and its requirements and to have the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission approve it, and somehow have the courts rule that Oregon law, that quite clearly can’t be preempted by the federal government, can be,” Golden said.

— *Associated Press*

Oregon health leaders declare a climate emergency

More than 500 Oregon health professionals and organizations are declaring climate change a public health emergency and are calling on the governor and state lawmakers to take action.

The Oregon Public Health Association and 40 other health organizations on Tuesday announced their unified front on climate action. They are recommending 10 policies in their “Call to Action” plan that would move the state closer to meeting its climate goals.

This comes as Oregon lawmakers are convening in Salem with a proposal to regulate and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

— *Oregon Public Broadcasting*

DEATH

Feb. 1, 2020

JENNINGS, Mary Lou, 82, of Astoria, died in Astoria. Caldwell’s Luce-Layton Mortuary of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

MEMORIAL

Saturday, Feb. 8

BELLINGHAM, Marjorie L. “Marge” — Graveside service at noon, Fishhawk Cemetery, 10828 Fishhawk Road in Birkenfeld, followed by concluding rites and interment.

BIRTH

Sept. 26, 2019

HENNESSEE, Kasey, of Astoria, a boy, Torben Kane, born in Oregon. Older sister is Sophia Kane. Grandparents are Tawnya Atkins, of Reno, Nevada, and Karl Hennessee. Great-grandfather is Fletcher Hennessee.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

THURSDAY

Seaside Parks Advisory Committee, 7 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

Coronavirus disrupts crab exports to China

Local fallout from outbreak

By LUKE WHITTAKER
Chinook Observer

ILWACO, Wash. — The outbreak of a respiratory illness in China is impacting the commercial Dungeness crab fishery in the Pacific Northwest.

The novel coronavirus, first detected in the city of Wuhan in December, was responsible for 427 deaths and more than 20,000 confirmed cases, with the vast majority in China, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

China banned live-animal imports as a result of the outbreak, and restricted travel to and from the country.

The ban has been felt locally in the commercial crab fishery, where top dollar is fetched for live crab exported to the Chinese market, particularly during the monthlong Lunar New Year celebration in January.

The crab market is divided among four categories that each command a different price. Live crab is the most sought after and lucrative market, followed by whole, cooked and eviscerated crab. In Japan, Korea and China, live Dungeness can fetch as much as \$30 per pound.

“We were headed the right way with the live market, increasing in demand for the Chinese new year,” Ilwaco Landing Fishermen co-owner Mike Shirley said.

“The tariffs were lowered, the demand was good and the price was headed up, and then it just completely stopped. The coronavirus has spread significantly across China, where a lot of the live crab goes. At this point they have stopped all imports of any kind of live animals,” he said.

The impact of the live-import ban in China has already



Luke Whittaker/Chinook Observer

Crew of the F/V Cutting Edge offload crab on Sunday at Ilwaco Landing.

been felt by other fisheries worldwide.

“China isn’t taking any live seafood shipments from anywhere,” said Dean Antich, the general manager of South Bend Products. “Lobster fisheries are shutting down in Australia. China is the market for that and they’re not taking any because of the coronavirus.”

Some seafood companies are taking a wait-and-see approach.

“We haven’t really seen the dust settle on that one,” Bornstein Seafoods co-owner Andrew Bornstein said.

“Weather is the main adversary of the Dungy fleet right now,” Bornstein noted.

Commercial crab fishermen, now about a month into a storm-riddled season, are earning less for their dangerous catch as a result of the coronavirus.

“We were getting a really good live price about two weeks ago — a really good price (\$4.35) — but ever since that (coronavirus outbreak) we’re getting cooked price, about a dollar difference,” said Brian Cutting,

the captain of the F/V Cutting Edge, as he watched his catch unloaded Sunday.

“If we could still ship over to China, that price would maybe be \$1.25 or \$1.50 more. It was taking leaps and bounds there really nice,” he said. “What little bit you had you got paid well for it.”

The price difference between live and cooked crab can vary depending on volume.

“Just for the crabbers’ price alone, it’s almost a \$1 per pound difference between the live and cooked price, and that’s early in the season. Sometimes the price gets spread by \$3 or \$4, depending on the volume coming in,” Shirley explained.

“A lot of the fishermen utilize that to maximize their extra dollars,” he continued. “The cooked price (\$3.60) is a good price for the boats. It’s very comparable with where the live market was last year at the same time. They’re not getting the live (\$4.35) price but it’s 60 cents higher than last year, when cooked price was \$3. It’s a comparable year to previous years. The

biggest downfall has been the weather. It’s been brutal. They’ve only had about 11 or 12 fishable days out the entire month (of January) and that’s the big boats.”

Coronavirus is another blow to what has been an ongoing struggle for fishermen reeling from tariffs imposed on seafood exports to China in 2018.

“The live market has been limited for years because of the tariffs. It slowed it way down,” Cutting said. “They can’t pay us as much because they have to pay a 50% tariff. We’ve dealt with (the tariffs) the last couple years. Three years ago, at a high point, we got \$10 a pound in the springtime. It was a huge price. Ever since then we haven’t seen that big price. We were hoping the way things were rolling we could see it this year, until the coronavirus.”

Crab that would have been sent to China is now largely going to local retailers, restaurants and canneries.

“There’s a good and bad with everything,” Shirley said.

“The economics are the biggest hard fall from it,” he continued. “But at the same time, switching into cooking all of our crab, rather than sending it to China, is putting all of our crab right here in America. It’s going into all the retailers up and down the coast for the Super Bowl and Valentine’s Day, when typically this time of the year crab is starting to climb in price and it’s much harder for the retailers to afford.

“Every time it goes up a dollar, that many people less won’t buy, so it’s keeping it affordable. We’ve seen that immediately. We’re doing fresh, whole cooked for a lot of different retailers where typically we’re doing less this time of the year. What went to China before is now going into our freezers and local retailers and all over the West.”

EPA review supports glyphosate safety

By CAROL RYAN
DUMAS
Capital Press

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has issued a final interim decision to reapprove the registration of glyphosate under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act.

In its review, the agency determined there are no risks to human health for current registered uses of glyphosate and the herbicide is not likely to be carcinogenic to humans.

“EPA has conducted comprehensive human health and ecological risk assessments for glyphosate and has not received any information that would change the conclusion of its risk assessment,” the agency stated.

The American Farm Bureau Federation said glyphosate is an important tool used across many crops and growing systems as farmers continue their drive toward increasingly sustainable production.

EPA’s science-based decision reaffirms the safety and effectiveness of this widely adopted weed-control technology, the farm bureau said.

“This is a win for sustainable agriculture,” Zippy Duvall, the farm bureau’s president, said in a press statement.

EPA’s decision “means farmers can continue to use conservation tillage and no-till methods on their farms to conserve soil, preserve and increase nutrients, improve water quality, trap excess carbon in the soil and reduce greenhouse gas emissions,” he said.



Reed Saxon/AP Photo

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has found that glyphosate, the active ingredient in Roundup weed killer and more than 700 other products sold in the U.S., is safe if used as directed on the label.

“That said, safety is our first priority, and the science clearly shows that this tool is both safe and effective,” he said.

Glyphosate was first registered for use in the U.S. in 1974. It is one of the most widely used herbicides in the U.S. It is included in more than 750 products in the U.S. and is used in agriculture, forestry, lawns and garden, aquatic plants and industrial areas, according to the National Pesticide Information Center at Oregon State University.

In agriculture, glyphosate products are registered for use in the production of fruits, berries, nuts, vegetables, legumes, cereal grains

and other field crops and in glyphosate-resistant crops — corn, soybeans, cotton, canola, sugar beets and alfalfa.

The National Corn Growers Association also welcomed EPA’s decision, saying safety is a priority for all corn growers.

All products in use today have been tested by EPA, and many have been used for decades with no findings of harmful effects on human health or the environment when used properly.

Each product is thoroughly reviewed by the EPA every 15 years to ensure continued safety and account for any new information or data, the associa-

tion stated.

“The availability of safe products is critically important and allows farmers to continually improve the sustainability of their operations, while supplying a safe, secure supply of food for a growing population,” the association said.

Other organizations, however, contend EPA’s decision disregards a growing number of independent studies linking glyphosate to cancer.

EPA’s decision “underscores that the Trump administration’s willful ignorance of science and abject fealty toward the chemical pesticide industry knows no bounds,” Ken Cook, president of the Environmental Working Group, said in a press release.

The Center for Biological Diversity said EPA’s assessment contradicts a 2015 World Health Organization analysis of published research that determined glyphosate is a probable carcinogen.

“The Trump EPA’s assertion that glyphosate poses no risks to human health disregards independent science findings in favor of confidential industry research and industry profits,” Lori Ann Burd, the center’s director of environmental health, said in a press release.

In its reapproval of glyphosate, EPA is requiring risk-management measures to address off-target spray drift to protect non-target organisms such as pollinators. It is also working to implement an interim approach for assessing potential risk to listed species and their designated critical habitats.

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