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CORONAVIRUS

County cautions against panic

First cruise ship to arrive in late March

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Astorian

The Port of Astoria is expected to host at least 35 cruise ships and around 75,000 passengers this year, starting with around 3,000 on the Grand Princess arriving March 31. The widespread outbreak of COVID-19, a novel coronavirus that appeared late last year in Wuhan, China, could lead to a repositioning of even more ships to the West Coast.

But local health and cruise officials caution against panic.

Astoria typically hosts cruise ships on day stops while transiting north or south along the West Coast between major ports.

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CORONAVIRUS

For general information on novel coronavirus, call 211 or visit the Oregon Health Authority's webpage at tinyurl.com/OHAcoronavirus

Jessie's files for receivership

Seafood processor in difficulty

By ASHLEY NERBOVIG
and LUKE WHITTAKER
Chinook Observer

ILWACO, Wash. — Jessie's Ilwaco Fish Co. has gone into receivership, leaving employees unsure of what the future holds.

With up to 65 employees depending on the time of year, Jessie's is one of the largest employers in Pacific County.

Receivership is similar to bankruptcy, but is handled under state law. The process is often used when a company is unable to meet its financial obligations. In Washington state, receivership means the court takes over management of a business, and then a receiver is appointed as an officer of the court.

Christopher Wain was appointed receiver on Wednesday by Pacific County Superior Court Judge Donald Richter, according to court documents. Jessie's is

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Photos by Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

A rainbow of handprints hangs against the window in one of St. Mary, Star of the Sea's unused classrooms.

Regulations present a barrier for child care

Finding qualified staff also a challenge

By NICOLE BALES
The Astorian

Despite the need for child care in Clatsop County, the private sector has not been able to meet demand.

In response to the downsizing of Shooting Stars Child Development Center in Astoria, the city could potentially expand day care options through Lil' Sprouts Academy. The city is able to increase capacity, in part, because government has some advantages over private providers, including access to space in government buildings and fewer regulatory requirements.

Shooting Stars, which served up to 50 children and made up 11% of all child care slots in the county, closed in Uniontown on Friday. Denise Giliga, the owner, said she will reopen in a private residence next week under a new license and with fewer children.

Giliga has worked with the state for several months after nearly closing last year due to too many noncompliance findings. She said the cost of renting a commercial building, paired with the lack of availability of qualified workers, makes it difficult for child care facilities to stay sustainable and keep up with state regulations.

Giliga chose to downsize and change the type of her license, which will lower the regulatory burden and



Shooting Stars closed a child care center in Uniontown.

give her more freedom to eventually expand.

"From the city of Astoria's perspective, adequate, safe child care for all of our working families is really important. It's important to our local economy. It's important to quality of life," Mayor Bruce Jones said.

"And it's really not a city (or) park mission to provide child care. We provide child care because the need is not being met by commercial providers, and it's an important service to the community. And so we're happy to continue providing that service as long as that need is not being met by commercial providers," he said.

Jones said he thinks the state should

look at regulatory requirements to see whether any could be eased without jeopardizing safety.

"Just from people I've talked to there seem to be a lot of barriers to entry to run a child care center," he said. "The regulatory requirements would be one, the cost of being compliant with the regulatory requirements, the cost of paying qualified staff an adequate pay to keep them so you don't have constant turnover in your day care provider staff."

Jones said there is a disconnect between the cost of providing day care and what many parents can afford to pay.

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Mayor Bruce Jones



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

The former Dooger's Seafood building will be taken over by MOD Pizza and Five Guys Burgers and Fries. A Chipotle will be added to the same shopping complex in Warrenton.

Popular eateries eyed for Warrenton

Chipotle, Five Guys and MOD Pizza

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Astorian

WARRENTON — Developers are planning a Chipotle Mexican Grill, Five Guys Burgers and Fries and MOD Pizza at the Old Youngs Bay Plaza.

Architectural firm Baysinger Partners submitted plans to divide the former Dooger's Seafood at the corner of Harbor Drive and U.S. Highway 101 between MOD Pizza and Five Guys. A Chipotle would be built between the former

Dooger's and E. Harbor Drive.

Atlas Investments, the owners of the shopping center, declined to comment. Dooger's closed its Warrenton location in May after 15 years. Doug Wiese, the founder of Dooger's, cited difficulties in reaching a fair extension with Atlas.

Tyler Benson, a spokesman for Chipotle, confirmed the company is planning a location later this year. Representatives for Five Guys and MOD Pizza were not available for comment.

Chipotle, founded in Denver and headquartered near Los Angeles, has grown to more than 2,500 locations, the closest in Vancouver,

Washington. The chain has been recovering from a spate of food poisoning cases in 2018 that sickened more than 700 customers after food was left at unsafe temperatures.

The new Chipotle building will be about 2,300 square feet. Instead of waiting in a traditional drive-thru, takeout customers will order online and pick orders up in the "Chipotlane" once notified they are ready.

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