Coronavirus: Nobody locally is being monitored for the virus

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"We suspect an increase of calls this spring due to redeployment of cruise ships providing Asian itineraries," Bruce Conner, the cruise ship marketer for the Port, wrote in an email. "There are several new Pacific Northwest cruise itineraries this spring in the making to accommodate the redeployed hardware.

"Keep in mind all future arriving cruise ships to Astoria will have called on previous U.S. and Canadian ports, adhering to all COVID-19 inspections and requirements before arriving into our beloved Astoria/Clatsop County," he wrote. "We daily monitor the progress of COVID-19 through our cruise industry networks and remain confident we will continue to protect our communities to include canceling ship calls if necessary."

Vessels destined for a U.S. port are required to report to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention any crew member or passenger showing one or more serious symptoms of a coronavirus. The U.S. Coast Guard has barred passenger-carrying vessels that had been to mainland China between mid-January and Feb. 2 from entering the U.S. for two weeks. Nonpassenger vessels were allowed entry, but their crews were mostly required to stay aboard.

Dr. Ellen Heinitz, a naturopathic physician and the county's community health project manager, said nobody locally is being monitored for coronavirus as of Thursday. Earlier this month, a sailor was taken to Columbia Memorial Hospital in Astoria with a likely respiratory tract infection. Rumors spread about a local diagnosis of COVID-19.

"He actually was not very sick," Heinitz said. "But all communication chains were followed. We all actually got together, talked about that incident and tightened all our systems even more. So we were definitely aware of that. And everyone agreed that it had nothing to do with COVID-19."

Regardless of the coronavirus, Columbia Memorial has a plan for passengers and crew coming from oceangoing ships with communicable illnesses, said Kendra Gohl, a nurse and the hospital's infection preventionist. The hospital includes a negative pressure isolation room to quarantine people with airborne illnesses, along with respirators, full-body suits and other protective equipment, she said.

Health officials are in a wait-and-see mode while the CDC gathers data and puts out guidelines to deal with COVID-19, Gohl said.

"I keep reminding people that this is just a new virus," she said. "The process is still very similar to what we walked through as hospitals when we did H1N1, when we've done SARS and Ebola and MERS."

Health officials have warned that the spread of COVID-19 throughout the U.S. appears inevitable. Symptoms can include fever, runny nose, cough and breathing trouble.

"We want to reduce the fear, because this is not worse than any flu you see normally," said Michael McNickle, the county's public health director.

Schools in Knappa and Jewell closed last year for deep cleaning to stem flu outbreaks. The county has the power to close schools and quarantine people, McNickle said, but uses that power judiciously.

The hospital, county, state and health officials are in regular communication about developments with the coronavirus, McNickle said. They advise people to stay home if they are sick, cover their mouth when coughing or sneezing, wash their hands and use hand sanitizer.

"Don't listen to social media, because that's not an accurate portrayal of what's happening," McNickle said.

Luke Whittaker/Chinook Observer

Astoria could see an even larger number of cruise ships this year, as cruise lines redeploy from Asia itineraries because of a novel coronavirus outbreak.

Jessie's: Owes about $10.5 million in secured and unsecured debts

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owned by Alber Seafoods Inc., a California company that also filed for receivership on the same day.

Jessie's management declined to comment.

Wain said she specializes in keeping companies running during a receivership.

Jessie's owes about $10.5 million in secured and unsecured debts and has assets with a book value of $7.1 million, according to the receivership petition, though the book value of the company's assets may be higher than the realizable value, Wain said. But he said he was not able to speak directly about Jessie's case as it is still in the early stages.

The firm's largest listed asset is fisheries quota with a stated value of $2.3 million and associated permits valued at about $100,000. Jessie's main plant is on property leased from the Port of Ilwaco and the state, but the firm claims $355,000 in improvements to the facilities. It owns outright two other small nearby properties assessed at $121,000. It owns equipment with a book value of $2 million and has on-hand inventory of $762,000.

In Wain's declaration in support of becoming the receiver for the business, he included a case study of the work he did for a commercial fishing and marine supply company, which had six operations in Alaska and Washington state. Business footprint expansion and falling fish prices contributed to the company's decline, Wain wrote.

Wain took control of the company and in seven weeks was able to "stabilize operations, negotiate a sale agreement and transfer the company assets, in a form that allowed the buyer to continue business operations." In that example, the clams of preferred creditors — who are usually employees owed payment, secured creditors and landlords — were recovered in full and there was a distribution of 34 cents on the dollar to unsecured creditors.

Secured creditors, who are first in line for payment because they hold recorded mortgages and other types of formal liens, include Craft3 Capital Corp., of Astoria, which is owed $3.7 million; Authentic Canadian Seafoods Inc., of Mount Pearl, British Columbia, owed $3.1 million; GemCap Lending 1 LLC, of Malibu, California, owed $1.9 million; and two smaller liens amounting to about $70,000. Jessie's customers owe the company $967,000, with an additional $473,000 in notes receivable.

One of Jessie's largest unsecured creditors, at about $559,000, is Independent Packers Corp. in Seattle. The corporation's owner, Jeff Buske, said Jessie's stopped paying him about four or five months ago. Buske's business was supplying Jessie's with scrap from the packers' production for Jessie's to use in making pet food.

"Never good to be lied to," Buske said. "It was broken promise after broken promise."

However, Independent Packers is a healthy company that will survive the disruption, Buske said.

The list of Jessie's unsecured creditors includes: Pacific County Treasurer, owed $92,000; the FV/Tradition, owed $37,183; the FV/Beachcomer, owed $31,180; the FV/Miss Pacific, owed $18,996; the City of Ilwaco, owed $17,300; the FV/Dream, owed $12,899; the Port of Willapa Harbor, owed $7,938; and the Port of Ilwaco, owed $6,968, according to the receivership petition.

Alber Seafoods purchased Jessie's from the Marchand family. Among the unsecured creditors is the A. Pierre Marchand Jr. Living Trust, which is owed $105,000. Pierre was the son of company matriarch Jessie Marchand. Another Marchand family member, Doug Ross, is owed $160,000 through his company PDP LLC.