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North Coast officials issue health safeguards for cruise ship visits

Cruise lines must show rigorous screening for virus

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Astorian

Cruise ships will not be accepted in Astoria unless cruise lines demonstrate rigorous screening for the coronavirus and there is the capacity for public health and emergency management to absorb patients from an infected vessel, local officials said.

The U.S. Coast Guard is the first line of defense for screening inbound ships. But officials from Astoria, Clatsop County and the Port of Astoria, recognizing that residents have

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Eric Risberg/AP Photo

The Grand Princess passes beneath the Golden Gate Bridge on Monday on its way to the Port of Oakland in California. Local officials confirmed they would not have allowed the ship to dock in Astoria during a scheduled visit March 31.

State orders stop to care home visits

Elderly at risk from coronavirus

By LES ZAITZ
Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — State officials on Tuesday mandated a stop to visits to the 30,000 Oregonians in long-term care facilities to prevent the spread of the coronavirus that has proven especially deadly for the elderly.

That means, for now, no more time with par-

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Washington Gov. Inslee bans large gatherings.

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ents, grandparents and others in licensed facilities except in special circumstances.

“Our No. 1 priority is to stop the spread of this virus,” said Fariborz Pakseresht, the

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Education and hunting emerge as strategies against elk

Animals have caused problems near Warrenton and Gearhart

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Astorian

A group tasked with finding solutions to problematic elk and human interactions near Gearhart and Warrenton has developed a list of recommendations that include both public education and the possibility of hunts.

The dozens of draft recommendations intended to address elk and human behavior, as well as related land use issues, are broad.

Data gaps, such as where elk roam in the Clatsop Plains area between Warrenton and Gearhart, what kind of habitat and forage they are looking for and why they tend to cross US Highway 101 in certain places, remain, said members of the Clatsop Plains Elk Collaborative at a meeting Tuesday.

However, a unified approach in rolling out the recommendations will be key.

“If we’re not going to pursue one, we need to consider how that impacts all the other tools,” said Vanessa Blackstone, a wildlife biologist with the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department.

There also needs to be flexibility, added Gail Henrikson, the community development director for Clatsop County. The county and the cities have their own individual characters and needs, she said.

The group, which includes city officials and state employees as well as private landowners and local law enforcement, gained the support of the governor’s office last year to address a growing urban elk population.

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Tanya Lambert

A curious elk encounters a cat in Hammond.

Mitchell will not run for reelection

Two Democrats hop into race

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Astorian

State Rep. Tiffany Mitchell, who was elected in an upset in 2018 and survived a recall drive last year, will not run for reelection.

The Astoria Democrat represents state House District 32 covering Clatsop and Tillamook counties, along with a small portion of Washington County. Her public announcement came hours before the Tuesday filing deadline for the May primary.

Debbie Boothe-Schmidt, a trial assistant for Clatsop County and a board member with the Sunset Empire Transportation District, will seek the Democratic nomination to replace Mitchell.

George Kiepke, a former Clatsop County commissioner who lives in Astoria, also filed in the Democratic primary.

Mitchell moved from Utah to Clatsop County in 2015 with her husband, Mitch, who works for Pacific Power.

“My husband Mitch has accepted an exciting job offer that will take us to Washington state in the coming year,” Mitchell said in a news release. “Since this job became a possibility, we looked at all the alternatives that would allow me to continue serving the people of the North Coast. But we have concluded that none are practical or appropriate past 2020. I will be able to serve out my term, but not beyond that.”

Mitchell, who worked for state Department of Human Services, scored an upset victory in the 2018 primary over Tim Josi, a former state representative and Tillamook County commissioner. Josi was backed by regional industries and

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Tiffany Mitchell

Brown takes action on climate change

Move comes after Republican walkout

By JAKE THOMAS
Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — Gov. Kate Brown on Tuesday directed state agencies to reduce Oregon’s greenhouse gas emissions through more stringent standards for fuels, new buildings and consumer appliances, imposing by executive order what she couldn’t get from the Legislature.

Her order doesn’t exempt any portion of the state from the mandates, a considerable change from

legislation that would have spared rural Oregon and some industries.

The impact on fuel prices and other costs for consumers and businesses won’t be clear until state agencies undergo a process that’ll spell out how Brown’s order is implemented.

Under legislative proposals, rural legislators and interests contended that fuel prices would go up, imposing a heavy burden on agriculture and areas of the state where long travel distances are the norm. State agencies weren’t prepared Tuesday to address what would happen under Brown’s order.

“While we are directing agencies to take these efforts to drive down emissions consistent with state goals, the precise policy design and how it’s implemented are to be determined,” said Kris-

ten Sheeran, director of the Oregon Carbon Policy Office.

She said that only then could estimates develop on impacts on prices. Under the order, state agencies are directed to report back in May on specific actions they can legally undertake.

Brown made the move in response to the Legislature — crippled by Republican walkouts — adjourning last weekend without passing legislation aimed at climate change.

The order updates Oregon’s existing emission-reduction goals in line with the goals drafted by legislators. She wants a 45% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels by 2035 and an 80% reduction from 1990 levels by 2050.

The scuttled legislation



Jake Thomas/Oregon Capital Bureau

Gov. Kate Brown, flanked by students and supporters, as she prepares to sign a sweeping order on climate change.

would’ve created a market where businesses could buy permits to emit greenhouse gases and sell extras they didn’t need. The legislation would’ve phased in requirements while providing credits and exemptions to low-income families and businesses exposed to

international competition.

Unlike the legislation, Brown’s order doesn’t take an economy-wide approach and instead gives direction to specific state agencies.

“Significant change doesn’t

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