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Astorian

147TH YEAR, NO. 113

DailyAstorian.com // THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 2020

\$1.50

CORONAVIRUS

Brown extends school closures

Classes halted until April 28

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Astorian

Gov. Kate Brown has extended the closure of public schools in Oregon because of the coronavirus until late April, leaving educators and parents to scramble to help students at home. The governor had initially ordered K-12 schools closed through March to contain the spread of the virus. Now, classes are canceled until April 28. “I do not take the decision to extend school closures lightly,” Brown said in a statement Tuesday afternoon. “This will have real impacts on Oregon’s stu-



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian
Riley Pitts holds sack lunches for his children, Ivy, left, and Axel, at a school bus stop near Astor Elementary on Wednesday morning. The lunches included a sandwich, two milk cartons, carrots, applesauce, cookies and a breakfast bar for the next day.

dents, parents and educators. “But we must act now to flatten the curve and slow the rate of COVID-19 transmission in Oregon, otherwise we

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Astoria declares emergency.
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Authority reported 75 cases of the coronavirus statewide and three deaths. The Astoria School District’s board scheduled a special meeting for 1 p.m. on Thursday to discuss school closures, emergency preparedness and the academic calendar. It will be a virtual meeting where people will call in because of the virus. “First of all, I think we’re all concerned about the health of our kids and our families and that should be our No. 1 priority,” Astoria

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Virus brings new worries about food

Demand could increase at food banks

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Astorian

Fewer people than usual picked up food at the Clatsop Community Action Regional Food Bank in Warrenton last week. Around 60% of the food bank’s regular clientele are seniors, a demographic considered at higher risk of becoming very sick from the coronavirus. Dusten Martin, the chief operations officer for the food bank, thinks some of them were nervous as cases of the virus began to show up

in the Pacific Northwest and stayed home. But now everything has changed and Martin is bracing for increased demand at the food bank in the coming weeks. It is like a switch has been flipped, he said. Even though the coronavirus has been a global concern for months, school closures and the restrictions on large gatherings and bars and restaurants made the virus real for many North Coast residents seemingly overnight. Over the past few days, there was evidence of heightened anxiety about the virus and how it might interrupt daily routines.

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FOR LOCAL BARS AND RESTAURANTS, VIRUS IS A GUT PUNCH

A sudden blow to the North Coast’s economy

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Astorian

Jimbo DeFeo, the co-owner of Astoria Coffeehouse & Bistro and Carruthers Restaurant, went from nearly 50 employees to about four on Monday. Gov. Kate Brown’s announcement that bars and restaurants will be take-out-only for the next month punched restaurateurs, retailers and service sector workers on the North Coast in the gut, leaving many business owners contemplating how many employees to lay off, how to help them get unemployment and how to get creative to keep a trickle of income coming in. Businesses have been laying off

staff and transitioning to limited operations of to-go orders and deliveries. DeFeo said he and partner Anthony Danton decided to close Carruthers entirely for four weeks, making the coffeehouse a to-go counter. They removed the furniture, replacing it with taped grids showing people how to stay the recommended 6 feet from each other. Fort George Brewery, usually one of the busiest places in Astoria, was dead Monday night after co-owner Chris Nemlowill decided to close the Duane Street pub to the public, temporarily laying off about 120 people. Nemlowill described it as the hardest

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ABOVE: Casey Palmgren works behind the counter of the close-to-empty Astoria Coffeehouse & Bistro. The bistro removed furniture and marked the floor with bright yellow tape with ‘6ft Social Distance Protocol’ written in large letters.
LEFT: Kim Waites, Fort George Brewery’s front of house manager, works the front door for takeout orders at the popular brewery.
Photos by Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Circuit Court limits operations

Many cases are postponed by virus

By NICOLE BALES
The Astorian

The Clatsop County Circuit Court docket is thinning out as the court postpones

CIRCUIT COURT
Court updates are available online at bit.ly/3a5ZfhK

nonessential proceedings. Oregon Supreme Court Chief Justice Martha Walters ordered that court-houses statewide postpone most trials, hearings and limit in-person court

service to help slow the coronavirus. The restrictions will be in place until at least March 27, but may be extended. “Our goal is to do our part to help slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus and to minimize any health risks to court personnel, litigants, representatives and others who come to our courthouses, while meeting

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Johnson, Mitchell reflect on session

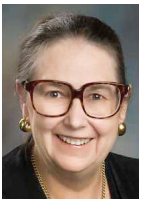
Derailed by Republican walkout

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Astorian

The short session of the state Legislature ended this month after an extended Republican walkout over a controversial cap-and-trade bill crippled the Capitol and



Tiffany Mitchell



Betsy Johnson

left all but three bills dead in its wake. State Sen. Betsy Johnson and Rep. Tiffany Mitchell, the region’s two Dem-

ocratic lawmakers, took away different lessons from a rather unproductive five weeks in Salem. The walkout came over Senate Bill 1530, climate change legislation that would have capped the state’s carbon emissions and required large polluters to buy allowances, investing the proceeds in climate-friendly initiatives.

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