

CORONAVIRUS

Locals rebuffed by state on stores

Warrenton mayor sought guidance

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Astorian

Warrenton Mayor Henry Balensifer has been seeking some guidance on how to oversee safety at grocery stores, among the few public gathering spots still allowed during the coronavirus pandemic.

He reached out to other local mayors and Michael McNickle, Clatsop County's public health director, who in turn reached out to the Oregon Health Authority and local grocers. McNickle was told to back off.

"In an effort to avoid confusion and ensure consistent messaging, please do not contact or inspect facilities that are licensed by" the state Department of Agriculture, wrote Brett Sherry, a program manager with the health authority, in an email to McNickle. "Grocery stores are under enormous pressure at this time and introducing additional layers of governmental entities can make an already stressful situation more difficult."

Gov. Kate Brown allowed grocery stores to stay open provided the stores designate staff to enforce social distancing to help prevent the spread of the virus.

The Department of Agriculture oversees food processing, storage and retail. The department has issued general recommendations to promote social distancing,

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Virus concerns play out in ocean fisheries

Low returns also an issue

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Astorian

Fishermen are looking at a reduced ocean salmon season this spring because of low salmon returns. But the industry is also hoping to buy time for seafood markets that are reeling from the impact of the coronavirus.

The industry has had to shift how it does business and many are still adapting as local restrictions due to the pandemic shutter usual seafood outlets.

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New planner sees unique opportunity

Leatherman worked in Idaho

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Astorian

EVERYDAY people Megan Leatherman, Astoria's new community development director, is moving in May from Idaho's Ada County, where she helps enforce development rules for nearly 400,000 people around the state's capital, Boise.

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AT EASTER, PRAYING THROUGH A PANDEMIC

Photos by Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Surrounded by bunnies and hidden Easter eggs, Genevieve Gaetano, 8, plays with bubbles outside Lisa and Randy Walker-Morley's home in Astoria on Sunday morning. Lisa Walker-Morley announced via Facebook that the Easter Bunny left eggs and other gifts in the front yard for anyone in the community to enjoy. **A congregant sits on top of her Jeep to watch the service.** People attended the service at Astoria First Assembly of God in person from their vehicles, while more watched online. **Pastors Stephen and Mary Jane Battista lead the group in Holy Communion at the end of the service.** Congregants were encouraged to bring their own bread and grape juice to minimize contact. Congregants raise their hands from their cars as pastors lead the group in worship at the drive-in Easter Sunday service at Astoria First Assembly of God.

