

IN BRIEF

State reopens some parks for day use, none at coast

Oregon state parks will remain closed to camping through at least May 25.

Some state parks — though none located on the coast — reopened Wednesday to limited day-use operations.

The state continues to urge people to stay home if they are sick, and to stay close to home, limiting travel to parks that are farther away. The state also asks people to visit a park only with members of their own household and bring all supplies, including food, water and hand cleanser, they might need for a shorter trip.

“If a park appears crowded, leave and come back at another time,” the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department stated in an online update.

“Day-use will keep people local to their homes and communities,” the department added. “We expect people to keep a safe distance from one another — at least six feet. If this does not happen, we may have to close the parks again.”

The ocean shore remains open throughout much of the North Coast. The city of Seaside, however, has continued to keep the ocean shores within its boundaries closed. Elsewhere, state park-managed parking lots and some beach accesses are closed or limited.

Seaside to host mobile graduation, parking lot ceremony

SEASIDE — This will be the first Seaside High School graduation to start with the turn of an ignition key.

On Tuesday, principal Jeff Roberts announced the protocol for the Class of 2020’s ceremony, to be held Monday, June 8.

“I met with both the senior class officers and the senior class on multiple occasions,” Roberts said. “This was their desire, and my commitment to them from the onset was to deliver on what they deemed would make this meaningful.”

Cars will line up at Broadway Middle School at 4 p.m., Roberts said. Graduates, assigned to the front passenger seat, may be accompanied by family members at the wheel and in the back.

For students or families who otherwise wouldn’t be able to participate due to the lack of access to a vehicle, Lum’s Auto Center will provide cars.

At 5 p.m. the procession will cross U.S. Highway 101 and down Broadway to the Turnaround where school board members will deliver diplomas.

The procession then heads onto Columbia to the Seaside Civic and Convention Center parking lot for valedictorian and salutatorian speeches. Graduates are expected to remain in their cars during the ceremony, Roberts said.

Family members or friends unable to attend can watch a livestream of the graduation. A video will be made available after the event.

In the case of rain: “A contingency plan is currently in the works in the event that inclement weather prevents the use of an outdoor venue,” Roberts said.

— The Astorian

Wahkiakum County confirms third coronavirus case

WAHKIAKUM COUNTY, Wash. — Wahkiakum County health officials confirmed the county’s third COVID-19 case on Wednesday.

The case comes exactly one month after the county announced its second case. The county said the third person is in self-quarantine. The person does not require medical care at this time and is at home.

Chris Bischoff, the county’s health and human services director, said the person was exposed at their workplace, which was outside of the county. No information was given about where the person worked or if the case is related to the outbreak of cases at Bornstein Seafoods in Astoria.

The county is working to identify those that might have been exposed to the disease.

— Chinook Observer

CORRECTION

Typo in letter — A letter to the editor on A5 on Tuesday titled “Good choice,” by Carl Dominey, of Astoria, contained a typographical error. The letter should have said: “We have an important election coming up. No, not the 2020 presidential election.”

ON THE RECORD

- Criminal mischief**

 - Lori Smith, 58, of Warrenton, was arrested Monday at Walmart in Warrenton for criminal mischief in the second degree.
- Disorderly conduct**

 - Matthew Corey Ruljancich, 31, of Seaside, was arrested Tuesday at Safeway in Astoria for disorderly conduct in the second degree.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

THURSDAY

Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District, 3 p.m., (electronic meeting).

Astoria contracts planner to finish building projects

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Astorian

Astoria faces a crush of approved building projects, including hotels, the conversion of the former Waldorf Hotel into workforce housing and Astoria School District’s school remodels.

Astoria has locked down a contracted plan reviewer for the next year to see those projects to completion.

The city has been working since June with Anthony Clifton, a building code reviewer who coordinates with applicants, architects and contractors on projects. The City Council on Monday approved an amended budget adding \$500,000 in revenue and expenses related to Clifton’s work, extending his contract through next June for an additional \$267,000.

The city shares a building inspector with Cannon Beach and only recently hired Megan Leatherman as its new community development director after more than two years of searching. In the meantime, it has contracted with independent planners to oversee code amendments and other projects. Such contracts are necessary when the city faces a glut of work, said



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Construction of the Bowline Hotel near Buoy Beer Co. is one of many construction projects happening in Astoria this year.

‘THE AMOUNT OF PERMITS THAT WE’VE RECEIVED THIS YEAR IS THE LARGEST NUMBER OF PERMITS WE HAVE RECEIVED IN MY 12 1/2 YEARS AT THE CITY OF ASTORIA.

Brett Estes | Astoria city manager

City Manager Brett Estes.

The school district is in the middle of planning major remodels at three of its campuses. Construction is ongoing at the former Waldorf Hotel building, also known as the Merwyn Hotel, where Innovative Housing Inc. is creating 40 units of workforce housing.

Adrift Hospitality and owners of Buoy Beer Co. are developing the Bowline Hotel next to the brewery. A hotel company from Kansas City, Missouri is planning a 92-room development along Marine Drive at the site of Hauke’s Bay-side Sentry Market, which was recently demolished.



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

The Regatta, left, and the Seven Seas Mariner docked at Pier 1 in the Port of Astoria last year.

Port: Still has 19 cruise ship visits scheduled

Continued from Page A1

The Port and other local agencies chose to press the pause button on the lucrative business opportunity with cruise ships while the county Public Health Department responds to the outbreak.

“The county just wants to make sure they divert all their resources available to taking care of the outbreak, and doing the tracking, and those kinds of things that are necessary,” Isom said at a Port Commission meeting Tuesday. “They are not at the point where they can just deal with the added burden

of anything related to a cruise ship being here in town.”

The Port, county and Astoria worked cooperatively on canceling the first half of what was supposed to be a record cruise ship season over concerns about the coronavirus. The visits could have helped the Port make up for the loss of log export revenue from a trade war between the U.S. and China.

In March, Isom said the Port would consider hosting cruise ships that need a temporary place to dock while voyages are suspended over the virus.

Astoria Mayor Bruce

Jones said he and County Manager Don Bohn support the business concept of hosting idle ships for several months.

“Our only requirement would be that the crew, the minimal crew on the ship, would meet all the Coast Guard and public health requirements,” Jones said. “Unfortunately, it’s just terrible timing. If they could have got the ships in last week and tied up, it would be no problem at all.”

With most ports closed to cruise ship traffic through at least July, Isom expects the business opportunity

will be around for a while. He expected the Norwegian ships would have stayed for at least that long, potentially earning the Port more than \$1 million from services provided.

“Even if from a legal standpoint cruise ships are able to resume business, I do think from a public perception standpoint, there is going to be a hesitancy as restrictions are lifted to go jump on a cruise ship right away,” he said.

The Port still has 19 cruise ship visits with passengers scheduled for this year, starting in September.

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Emergency: Wash your hands, wear masks, stay home

Continued from Page A1

Several major events in and around Astoria have been canceled, including the Crab, Seafood & Wine Festi-

val, the Astoria Scandinavian Midsummer Festival and the 35th anniversary celebration of “The Goonies.” Astoria Pride, scheduled for early June, is organizing online

events on Zoom and YouTube for June 12 to June 14, said organizer Don Duncan.

“I’m very pleased that you’re working with us, and that we will be able to not return the funds, but be able to utilize those for next year,” he said.

The City Council also approved a 20-year lease for the placement of grain silos and a chiller by Fort George Brewery within a setback

along the Astoria Riverwalk in Uniontown.

Similar agreements have been signed in the past with Astoria Brewing Co. and Buoy Beer Co. Fort George recently purchased the Astoria Warehousing property, where it is establishing an expanded production brewery, canning line, distribution and cold storage.

Nicole Bales contributed to this report.

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