

## IN BRIEF

## Cannon Beach sees visitors despite beach closure

CANNON BEACH — A beach closure did not keep visitors away over the weekend.

Police asked around 700 people to leave the beach Saturday and around 111 more on Sunday, according to Cannon Beach Police Chief Jason Schermerhorn. The city closed the beach Saturday and Sunday in conjunction with the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department because of concerns about the coronavirus pandemic.

City leaders worried the nice weather would be an irresistible draw and that beach closures in Seaside and restricted access elsewhere could funnel people to Cannon Beach.

The city erected signs saying the beach was closed on the highway, ahead of stop signs at city entrances and elsewhere. The closure was initially set to extend until Tuesday, but ended Sunday night.

"It was very clear," City Manager Bruce St. Denis said.

Everyone who was asked to leave, left, he added, and police did not issue any citations or make any arrests.

"Everybody was compliant and willing to work with us," Schermerhorn said.

He believes the majority of people police interacted with were visitors and said many told officers they weren't aware of the closure. Despite the many signs erected outside and inside the city, Schermerhorn noted that some people simply walked down from houses and may not have noticed the signs.

The city has no immediate plans to close the beach again.

"If we were to face a situation like this again, we would consider it. But right now the beach is open," St. Denis said.

## Gearhart cancels Fireman's Ball

GEARHART — The annual Fireman's Ball is another casualty of the coronavirus pandemic.

The fundraiser, in its 59th year, is highlighted by gaming, live music and dancing and raises money for necessary equipment at the fire department.

"Unfortunately, we made the call to go ahead and cancel the Fireman's Ball for this year," City Administrator Chad Sweet said at Wednesday's City Council meeting.

Firefighters were "pretty bummed," he said.

Donations, clothing sales, the actual fundraiser and the Gearhart Golf Links tournament generate between \$17,000 to \$20,000, Fire Chief Bill Eddy said.

— *The Astorian*

## DEATHS

May 8, 2020

STUTESMAN, Carol Joyce, 65, of Seaside, died in Seaside. Caldwell's Funeral & Cremation Arrangement Center of Seaside is in charge of the arrangements.

## ON THE RECORD

## Theft

Alexander Sur-ovec, 26, of Seaside, was arrested Sunday at Walmart for theft in the second degree.

Nicholas Remington, 40, of Portland, was arrested Friday at Walmart in Warrenton for theft in the second degree and criminal mischief in the third degree.

Sarah Smith, 39, of Portland, was arrested Friday at Walmart for theft in the second degree and criminal mischief in the third degree.

Levi Trent Smith,

32, was arrested Thursday at the Clatsop County Jail for theft in the third degree and disorderly conduct in the second degree. Smith was taken to jail by police following a citizen's arrest at Joe's Mobil in Astoria. Police say Smith was apprehended and handcuffed by citizens and that officers found cause for the arrest upon arrival.

## Criminal trespass

David Dean Fisher, 43, was arrested Saturday on Marine Drive in Astoria for criminal trespass in the second degree.

## PUBLIC MEETINGS

## TUESDAY

**Union Health District**, 9 a.m., budget meeting, (electronic meeting).

**Clatsop County Planning Commission**, 10 a.m., (electronic meeting).

**Gearhart Budget Committee**, 5 p.m., (electronic meeting).

**Warrenton City Commission**, 6 p.m., City Hall, 225 S. Main Ave.

## WEDNESDAY

**Clatsop Soil & Water Conservation District Board**, 10 a.m., (electronic meeting).

**Clatsop County Budget Committee**, 12 p.m., (electronic meeting).

**Clatsop County Board of Commissioners**, 6 p.m., (electronic meeting).

## THURSDAY

**Gearhart Planning Commission**, 6 p.m., (electronic meeting).

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## AT THE DRIVE-IN



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

John Wedell watches himself on the big screen at a showing of 'Helmet John: Astoria is Home,' a film by Jeff Daly. The film was shown at a pop-up drive-in at Heritage Square in Astoria on Saturday night. The film depicts Wedell's life as a homeless man living in Astoria during the coronavirus pandemic.



Edward Stratton/The Astorian

The East Mooring Basin causeway has been closed to vehicles and pedestrians because of rotting wood supports underneath.

## Port invests sweat equity in East Mooring Basin causeway

Closed off to vehicles and pedestrians

By EDWARD STRATTON  
*The Astorian*

The Port of Astoria is fixing the first 200 feet of the rotting supports under the East Mooring Basin causeway with recycled plastic lumber, hopeful the efforts will attract grants to repair the rest.

The causeway runs north from 36th Street over the marina to a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers seawall. It has been closed for years to vehicles and since last fall to pedestrians because of rotting wood supports underneath. The few remaining fishermen at the marina use skiffs to reach their boats, while people have to stay on the riverbank to watch the sea lions hauled out on some of the docks.

The Port announced a plan last year to redirect \$150,000 budgeted for dredging the West Mooring Basin into reopening the causeway to pedestrians. A total rebuild of the causeway is estimated to cost millions.

Last week, the Port Commission approved up to \$121,000 to fix the first 200 feet in November. About 40 plastic posts will go into the water, while most of the money will go toward pressure-treated wood in the substructure.

"This is at least a good-

*'WE'RE PUTTING WHATEVER WE CAN INTO IT RIGHT NOW, SO WE CAN GET THE REPAIRS DONE AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.'*

Matt McGrath | Port's director of operations

faith effort on the Port's part," said Matt McGrath, the Port's director of operations. "We're putting whatever we can into it right now, so we can get the repairs done as quickly as possible."

The repairs won't reach the finger piers 800 feet out, where a dwindling number of commercial boats tie up.

Port Commissioner James Campbell questioned the wisdom of another piecemeal repair that won't reopen access to boats, but ultimately voted to support the repairs.

Commissioner Scott McClaine attempted to abstain before voting in opposition.

Dirk Rohne, the president of the Port Commission, and Will Isom, the Port's executive director, said they sensed federal support for repairing the causeway after speaking with the office of U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden.

McGrath argued the more immediate repairs could be parlayed into several grant applications.

"I think we have a good chance of getting those grants, based on the need, the way that the east basin causeway supports the local

fishermen, the way it even supports Bornstein and Da Yang (seafood processors) ... and the fact that we're putting this effort into the causeway," he said. "I think it's a real positive on the Port's side that we're doing this, even in the midst of all the coronavirus and the slowdowns."

The Port can't afford the metal components to make the docks last longer, but is prohibited from treating cheaper timbers with creosote to help them weather the tides.

Recycled plastic lumber meets the federal guidelines for going in the water and will last 30 to 50 years, McGrath said. As it replaces the supports, the Port will also rip up the concrete poured over the pier's original wooden decking to reduce rotting.

The Port has assigned maintenance staff to various projects with a future payoff while the agency hunkers down amid the coronavirus and a trade war with

China that has decimated log exports.

Staff recently finished deconstructing the former Seafare Restaurant, a historical icon that had fallen into disrepair. The Port is contemplating whether to sell the rights to the building site and the Astoria Riverwalk Inn, while keeping the land, for some badly needed money.

Fixing the East Mooring Basin causeway is a main priority in the agency's strategic plan and will help efforts to expand a boatyard on Pier 3, Isom said. A small, self-serve boatworking area there has been squeezed by a log-processing yard now dormant by the trade war.

The Port has signaled a shift on Pier 3 away from once-lucrative log exports and back toward a more expansive boatworking center envisioned in the 2000s. The Port of Toledo, upriver from Newport, has captured millions in state and federal grants by investing in its boatyard.

"A big piece of that is going to be having space at the East Mooring Basin to have moorage," Isom said of improving the Port's boatyard. "But without a causeway that's operable and that folks can access, that's not going to be a reality."

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