

CORONAVIRUS



Photos by Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Clatsop County could soon lift restrictions on lodging over the coronavirus.

Regatta canceled over virus

A city tradition in August

By NICOLE BALES
The Astorian

The Astoria Regatta, the city's oldest annual celebration, is canceled over the coronavirus.

The Astoria Regatta Association decided to cancel the festival, scheduled to begin on Aug. 5, following Gov. Kate Brown's announcement earlier this month calling for all large events in Oregon to be canceled or significantly modified through September.

The governor said festivals, live sporting events with audiences, concerts and conventions cannot take place until there is a reliable treatment for the virus or prevention like a vaccine.

"We are incredibly disappointed that we will not be celebrating Regatta this year," Erik Thorsen, the CEO of Columbia Memorial Hospital and the president of the Astoria Regatta Association, said in a statement.

"Our newly selected Regatta Court, Regatta dignitaries and all our volunteers were looking forward to creating a fantastic 2020 Regatta celebration."

The festival honors the region's maritime culture and history and dates back to 1894.

This is not the first time the event has been canceled. Regatta was suspended during World War I, after the Astoria fire of 1922 and again during World War II.

See Regatta, Page A6

County, cities move to lift lodging restrictions over virus

Astoria, Warrenton, Gearhart in sync

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Astorian

Short-term lodging will resume at partial capacity across the North Coast starting June 5 under a plan released Friday by local leaders.

Clatsop County, Astoria and Warrenton have restricted lodging since March to discourage an influx of visitors from potentially spreading the coronavirus and overwhelming local hospitals. Gearhart, which never declared an emergency over the pandemic, falls under the county's orders.

See Lodging, Page A6



Astoria and other cities restricted visitors to hotels because of the coronavirus.

County reports three new virus cases

The Astorian

Clatsop County reported Friday that two women and a man living in the northern part of the county tested positive for the coronavirus.

The man is in his 40s, one of the women is in her 50s and the other woman is between 10 and 19 — the youngest person reported to test positive in the county so far.

The new cases bring the total in the county to 45.

Twenty-five of those people have recovered, according to the county, while all of the others are convalescing at home.

The Oregon Health Authority reported 3,864 cases and 147 deaths statewide from the virus as of Friday morning.

The health authority tracked 1,329 test results in Clatsop County, including 44 of the positive cases.

The county announced Friday that the Public Health Department lowered the age minimum for drive-thru community testing to 15 years old from 18.

Seaside lifts lodging restrictions

Guests welcome after Memorial Day

By R.J. MARX
The Astorian

SEASIDE — Following the lead of Cannon Beach, Seaside will rescind restrictions on hotels and short-term rentals after Memorial Day.

"I feel that our hoteliers and vacation rental groups have really worked hard to self-regulate and prepare themselves for opening," Mayor Jay Barber said. "This is a difficult decision to balance community health and economic health. My concern is for both. But ultimately I'm concerned if we don't time the opening of the economic engines in our community, we're not going to have much left as a tourist community."

See Seaside, Page A6



R.J. Marx/The Astorian

Airbnb to fix error in Seaside virus relief

Money was going to go to guests

By NICOLE BALES
The Astorian

SEASIDE — When the City Council voted in April to return first quarter lodging taxes to hotels and vacation rentals to help during the coronavirus pandemic, the city

notified Airbnb and other brokers to refund property owners.

But Airbnb said they were going to give the tax money back to guests instead.

The tax break was part of an economic relief package meant to help businesses and residents, not visitors.

Josh Money and Andrew Hura, who own vacation rentals in Seaside, began asking questions when they did not see a refund from Airbnb after a couple of weeks.

In a message to Money in late April, Airbnb said the city requested that the tax money be refunded to

guests and that is what the company was planning to do.

Jon Rahl, the assistant city manager, said the city encouraged Airbnb and other brokers to return the tax money to property owners.

"Ultimately, the city does not facilitate the contract between (an owner) and a third-party intermediary like Airbnb — that's between them," he said.

Rahl also said the city receives the tax money in one lump sum from Airbnb and has no way of knowing how much came from each host.



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See Airbnb, Page A6

Seaside provided lodging tax relief in response to the coronavirus.

