

IN BRIEF

County unemployment claims top 4,000

Another 200 people in Clatsop County filed for unemployment last week, bringing the county's initial claims above 4,000 since coronavirus restrictions began in mid-March.

More than 38.6 million Americans have filed for unemployment, including more than 300,000 Oregonians, since mid-March. More than 2.4 million new Americans and 17,000 Oregonians filed for unemployment nationally last week, even as states began to reopen portions of the economy.

The rate of weekly new unemployment claims in the county peaked at 825 in early April and have trended downward since then, mirroring national trends. The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimated unemployment had reached 14.7% nationwide with 20.5 million job losses in April, the worst rate of job losses since the Great Depression.

State unemployment rates for April will be released next week.

Statewide, education has overtaken accommodation and food services as the industry with the highest rate of new unemployment claims. In the county, accommodation and food services comprised more than a quarter of last week's claims and more than 45% of claims since restrictions on such businesses began. More than 13% of claims since mid-March have been by workers in retail and more than 10% in health care and social assistance.

A recent survey by the Census Bureau showed that nearly half of all adults nationwide have either lost a job or have a family member who has lost a job since March 13. Nearly 40% said they would likely lose employment in the coming month. The survey found increasing rates of mental health issues related to the layoffs, along with decreased food and housing security.

Memorial Day goes virtual at Maritime Memorial Park

The annual Memorial Day service at Maritime Memorial Park in Uniontown has been canceled this year, but the community can still enjoy the longtime tradition.

Members of the Uniontown Association and other residents have prerecorded the service and the reading of the names engraved on the wall, thanks to the work of Jeff Daly, which can be accessed online at bit.ly/2ZIVDpr

Astoria Library to reopen book rentals in June

The Astoria Library will reopen Wednesdays and Fridays for book pickups beginning June 3.

The library, located at 450 10th St., will start accepting holds on books June 1. It will open from 2 to 6 p.m. Wednesdays and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Fridays for pickups. Patrons can place holds on books at astorialibrary.org or by calling 503-325-7323.

"We will be moving toward allowing browsing and at some point in the future will allow people to remain in the library during open hours," library staff wrote in a news release. "We look forward to seeing you and working together we will prevail."

Canadian man sentenced to prison after drug bust off Oregon Coast

A Canadian man was sentenced to more than three years in prison for possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine under the federal maritime drug law.

John Philip Stirling, 66, was apprehended during a drug seizure by the U.S. Coast Guard cutter Alert off the coast of Newport in April 2019.

Officials found 28 jugs on the vessel containing more than 7 gallons of liquid methamphetamine each and a duffel bag containing several plastic wrapped bricks of pentobarbital. Investigators later learned the drugs had been loaded onto the vessel from another vessel in the Sea of Cortez for delivery to Canada.

— *The Astorian*

ON THE RECORD

Assault

• Mitchell John Bye, 28, of Astoria, was indicted Thursday for assault in the second degree, assault in the fourth degree, strangulation, unlawful use of a weapon and menacing.

DUI

• David Dean Fisher, 43, was arrested Tuesday on N.W. Warrenton Drive in Warrenton for driving under the influence of intoxicants and reckless driving.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

TUESDAY

Astoria Planning Commission, 5:30 p.m., City Hall, 1095 Duane St.

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

Seaside Budget Committee, 6 p.m., (electronic meeting).

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VALEDICTORIAN



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Graham Nystrom of KMUN films Astoria High School senior and valedictorian Christina Campbell as she gives her speech to the camera and an empty Liberty Theatre on Thursday afternoon. Due to the coronavirus, the school's valedictorians and class president recorded speeches to share with the community and their families after their drive-in graduation ceremony on June 6.

Electric trucks could power rural Oregon

Several models headed to market

By ELLEN MORRIS
BISHOP

Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — It's unlikely that Main Street Motors or Milligan Motors will be selling electric vehicles anytime soon. But electric cars, from the sleek Porsche Taycan Turbo to the more practical Chevy Bolt, have been frequent summer visitors to Wallowa County.

More importantly for rural Oregon, electric trucks that can tow 14,000 pounds worth of horses or hay, travel 500 miles on a single charge, and accelerate from 0 to 60 mph in a head-snapping 2.9 seconds are on the horizon. Similar vehicles are already planned for production.

Why electric vehicles? Because carbon emissions from gasoline and diesel-powered vehicles contribute significantly to carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and hence to climate change. Each gallon of gasoline produces about 19.6 pounds of carbon dioxide. Each gallon of diesel fuel produces 22.4 pounds of CO₂, according to fueleconomy.gov.

Especially in Oregon and the Pacific Northwest, where more than 60% of electric power comes from a combination of hydro, wind, biomass, geothermal and solar, swapping petroleum-based vehicles for electric ones can reap significant greenhouse gas emissions benefits, reducing the average annual emissions per vehicle from more than 12,000 pounds to about 1,000 pounds, an 80% drop in CO₂.

Last year, fewer than 25 electric cars visited Wallowa County, according to estimates by lodging establishments that provide charging stations. However, rural Oregon is actually more prepared to fuel, if not service, electric vehicles than it might seem, with charging stations in communities from Meacham to Sumpter to Dayville, and in larger communities in between as well.

Two things drive the demand for electric vehicles: avoiding the high cost of petroleum-based fuels, and the desire for lower greenhouse gas emissions.



Tesla

Tesla's otherworldly Cybertruck.

At the present, with low prices for crude and consequent low prices for gasoline and diesel, fuel prices are not so important for most vehicle owners. Furthermore, in Oregon, EV owners pay higher registration fees — \$110 more per year to support highway maintenance — work funded through taxes of gasoline and diesel fuel.

It's important that electric vehicles pay their fair share of the costs, according to the Oregon Constitution, "in a manner that is fair and proportionate to the costs incurred for the highway system," said David House, a spokesman for the Oregon Department of Transportation.

Silent performance

The features that seem to sell drivers on electric vehicles now are their lower atmospheric carbon production and also their snappy, but silent, performance.

The Porsche Taycan Turbo S accelerates from 0 to 60 in 2.6 seconds and tops out at 155 mph. Its price, a stunning \$250,000, makes it an unlikely everyday ride, however.

Chevrolet's Bolt, priced beginning at \$37,500, clocks 0 to 60 in a more pedestrian, though still respectable, 6.3 seconds. Tesla's \$42,000 all-wheel drive long range Model 3 sedan can achieve 0 to 60 in 4.4 seconds, with a 322-mile range.

But of course, in rural communities with robust winters, gravel roads and lots of real work to do, pickups rule the roads. Not to worry. There are plenty of EV pickups out there on the drawing boards and approaching production.

Because pickups are the largest selling type of vehicle, with SUV's in second place, electric vehicle manufacturers, including Ford and GM, have pickups on the drawing boards and soon to be in production.

The most work-worthy electric trucks announced

as of January bear unfamiliar names. These are not just glorified golf carts. They are being produced by startup companies devoted only to producing respectable trucks — some with more passenger friendly SUV's on the same frame. Bollinger. Nikola. Rivian. Fiskar. Atlys. Workhorse. Tesla. And yes, Ford and GM.

In terms of serious pickups, Ferndale, Michigan, electric vehicle manufacturer Bollinger already has a boxy looking four-door pickup — the B2 — with a 5'9" bed ready for production.

The B2's all-wheel drive, all aluminum body boasts 15 inches of ground clearance that can be raised or lowered by 5 inches using the hydraulic system in the vehicle. Dual electric motors, one on each axle, drive the wheels with 614 horsepower. The body style resembles the old International Scout crossed with the original Land Rover Defender.

The B2 has a 200-mile range 120 kilowatt-hour battery pack. The pickup can carry up to 5,000 pounds, and tow 7,500 pounds. Charging will take 8 to 10 hours with a level 2 charger. But a level 3 charger will fully power up the batteries in just 75 minutes. The B2 is expected to be available in 2021 to pre-ordered and commercial customers. Price: \$125,000.

Rivian, another Michigan company, offers the RT1, a five passenger, more conventional looking pickup. Its top of the line version offers a 400-mile range. The vehicle runs on four electric motors which allow the driver to control the amount of torque delivered to each wheel. Towing capacity: 11,000 pounds, carrying capacity 1,760 pounds. And a claimed 0 to

60 in 3 seconds flat. The company is backed with \$1.2 billion dollars worth of investments from Amazon and Ford. Sticker price: \$63,000.

Not to be outdone, Ford is planning to introduce an all-electric version of the F150, built on the Rivian platform in Ford's Dearborn, Michigan, plant. Range: about 300 miles. Price and specs probably similar to the Rivian.

Other pickups include Workhorse Endurance with a four-wheel drive, which will have a separate electric motor mounted inside each wheel, and the rebirth of the GMC Hummer as an electric SUV and also a light truck version. GMC has plans for a beefier, ¾ to 1-ton electric pickup as well.

Cybertruck

Tesla, the upstart startup that started it all, has a futuristic-looking pickup in the works. The most muscular and work-capable model EV on the drawing board is Tesla's futuristic trimotor, all-wheel drive, stainless steel unibody Cybertruck. You can reserve yours now for a refundable fee of \$100.

Tesla touts the vehicle as capable of towing 14,000 pounds, having a range of 500 miles, and whizzing from 0 to 60 in 2.9 seconds. Obviously, drivers won't be doing all these at once. But with a planned sticker price of \$63,000, the five-passenger Tesla Trimotor, with a 6.5-foot open bed, seems competitive with existing ¾ and 1 ton gas and diesel trucks. It might even make a good ranch vehicle providing that its space-age "the aliens just landed" appearance doesn't scare the livestock into the next field.

The coronavirus pandemic has reshaped the release timetable for electric trucks.

Tesla's Cybertruck was slated for production starting in early 2021. However, the Fremont, California, plant was shuttered by the coronavirus until opening in May. Similarly, Rivian, Bollinger and GM's Hummer EV pickup have all put their production plans on hold.

But sooner or later, electric trucks will be part of the landscape, and part of the equation to reduce CO₂ emissions and slow climate change.

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