

# County reports new coronavirus case

By NICOLE BALES  
The Astorian

Clatsop County reported Friday that a woman living in the northern part of the county has tested positive for the coronavirus.

The woman is in her 50s and was recovering at home.

The county has tracked 46 cases since March 23. Forty-one have recovered and all of the others are convalescing at home.

The Oregon Health Authority reported 4,131 cases and 151 deaths from the virus statewide as of Friday morning.

The health authority tracked 1,513 test results in Clatsop County, including 45 of the positive cases.

Michael McNickle, the county's public health director, said during a Board of Commissioners work session Wednesday that 84% of the people who have tested positive in the county are Hispanic.

McNickle said that the

county has conducted more than 480 tests in the past three weeks. About half of the people were tested at the county's drive-thru community testing, he said, and the other half were tested at seafood processors.

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Commissioner Sarah Nebeker expressed concerns about the safety of Hispanic workers, especially in the hospitality industry as hotels begin to open.

McNickle validated her concerns and said it may be problematic.

"And, you know, these families who are intragenerational in these homes, may have several members who not only work in the back of the house of a restaurant, they

also may work in fish processing or maybe they have both those jobs," he said.

He said the question will be if businesses are able to provide enough personal protective equipment to workers and education about how

they can protect themselves.

McNickle said the county has reached out to the Lower Columbia Hispanic Council to figure out the best messages to encourage people to get tested, protect themselves, their families and friends.

The county Board of Commissioners voted Friday to follow the state's lead and approve extending the county's emergency order on the coronavirus until July 6.

The board also approved

an order to ease restrictions on lodging and camping on June 5, allowing them to open at 60% capacity for a minimum of 21 days before going to full capacity.

Vacation rentals with five or fewer guests can open at 100% capacity, while those with an occupancy of six to eight can allow up to five guests.

County Manager Don Bohn said the incremental approach to reopening lodging is being done in coordination with Astoria, Warrenton and Gearhart. He said the flexibility for vacation rentals is an effort to be equitable.

"You know, we still know that this is not what a lot of our lodging partners would like," Bohn said. "And we're trying to thread the needle about being sensitive to the economic challenges that the community is facing, but to still allow ourselves the ability and flexibility to respond if we start having more cases and having stress on our medical system."

# Warrenton: Residents, businesses and visitors all use police, fire services

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The city dispatched Police Chief Mathew Workman to research what other cities do. The seven cities that responded based their public safety fees on the size of water meters, he said.

"That would mean a hotel, or the (RV) park or something like that, would have a more substantial cost," Workman told the City Commission on Tuesday. "They would probably pass that on to the patron."

Basing the fee on police calls would disadvantage small businesses that generate a lot of calls but cannot absorb costs like Walmart or Fred Meyer, Workman said. Tying the fee to calls would also include nearby traffic stops the city reports at a certain address, he said.

Corvallis charged \$12.10 a month for the equivalent of every single-family water meter, costing a homeowner \$145 a year. A large grocery store, using the equivalent of four residential meters, paid more than \$1,000 a year, while churches or a four-unit residential complex paid \$580.

Workman found that Talent, a city of around 6,500 people in southern Oregon, generated around \$144,000 per year from public safety fees charged on utilities.

Workman argued that the fee should be borne by residents, businesses and visitors, as all three use police and fire services.

"There is no perfect ideology to use to determine the amount of a public safety fee," he wrote in

a report to the City Commission. "I do believe that charging large businesses more is fair, but I know that those costs will be passed onto the customers, which also includes residents."

Playing into the potential need for a public safety fee is the city's existing police operations levy, based on property taxes and bringing in around \$180,000 a year. The five-year levy was last approved by voters in 2018.

"If for some reason the operations levy failed or didn't go through, this would be the backup step, I would think, and the appropriate time to really jump that in to maintain a police force," Mayor Henry Balensifer said.

But the City Commission has tasked staff with looking at alternative sources of revenue, and property tax-based levies don't capture nonprofits and other organizations, City Manager Linda Engbretson said.

Commissioner Rick Newton said such a fee is necessary to help relieve locals of the cost of services for visitors.

Commissioner Mark Baldwin recommended exempting properties with small water meters to take the burden off the backs of residential customers, unless they're running commercial rentals.

Balensifer said it's a good time to start having such a conversation.

"Given the current situation, that's probably not what we're going to do right now," the mayor said. "But it needs to be a conversation on the table."

# Fireworks: Among long list of already canceled events

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The chamber had doubled its budget for the fireworks, securing several sponsors and planning the biggest show in Astoria to date.

"We believe our financial assets could be better spent in supporting our business community in this unprecedented time and continuing to provide the resources, service and encouragement our members have come to expect from us," Reid said.

Seaside announced earlier this month the cancellation of its annual fireworks show. The event can regularly draw tens of thousands of visitors to the North Coast. The cancellation of Astoria's show was expected, with large gatherings canceled by Gov. Kate Brown across Oregon through September.

The chamber had already canceled its largest event, the Crab, Seafood & Wine Festival, along with the 35th anniversary celebration of "The Goonies." Other prominent



Edward Stratton/The Astorian

The Astoria-Warrenton Area Chamber of Commerce has canceled the Fourth of July fireworks display.

events canceled over the pandemic include Warrenton's Old-Fashioned Fourth of July parade, Seaside's beach volleyball tournament, the Hood to Coast Relay, Astoria Regatta and the Astoria Scandinavian Midsummer Festival.

# Moving: 'Already planned'

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"At my age, I don't want to bother with a lease," he said. "So I will more or less be renting the basement of his building."

Moore plans to sell some of his VHS collection to Cummings and will take on the vinyl collection of the thrift store Mallternative.

Cummings is hopeful to open the new store sometime in July, but he said he wants to see how bad the pandemic is at that point.

"The move was already planned, but not until fall," Cummings said of the relocation. "But the pandemic just kind of (sped) things up, made it necessary. I knew I couldn't afford to stay where I'm at."

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## City of Astoria Historic Landmarks Commission

### Dr. Edward Harvey Historic Preservation Award

The City of Astoria Historic Landmarks Commission is seeking nominations for the Dr. Edward Harvey Historic Preservation Award. The award is presented to recognize a property owner who has completed exterior restoration or beautification of a building which exemplifies the historical attributes of the building or the architectural heritage of Astoria. The work must have been completed within the last two years. Nominations may include residential, commercial, public, and other types of buildings.

The awards will be presented by the Mayor at the July 6, 2020 City Council meeting.

Anyone wishing to submit a nomination should contact Tiffany Taylor at the City of Astoria by email, ttaylor@astoria.or.us, by phone, (503) 338-5183, or by mail, Community Development Department, City of Astoria, 1095 Duane Street, Astoria OR 97103. Nominations must be received no later than 5:00 pm on June 10, 2020. The Historic Landmarks Commission will consider the nominations at their June 16, 2020 meeting, beginning at 5:15 pm.

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