

## IN BRIEF

## Two people injured in crash on Astoria Bridge

Authorities are investigating a crash on the Astoria Bridge on Friday that left two people injured.

Police say a driver was traveling southbound when the passenger reached from the back seat and grabbed the steering wheel, causing the driver to lose control.

The driver swerved up onto the bridge railing and slid along the rail and curb before rolling multiple times, coming to rest on the passenger side.

The driver and the passenger were taken to Columbia Memorial Hospital in Astoria.

## Boil water notice lifted near county fairgrounds

People who live near the Clatsop County Fairgrounds were advised to boil water after a mainline water break on Friday night.

An announcement from Astoria said people in Willow Dale, River Point and Cavalier Court were without water on Saturday.

"During a main break where water pressure is lost, it is possible for contaminants and bacteria to enter into the water system," Eric Bufkin, the city's water quality supervisor, said in a statement. "While the danger to public health is low, we are taking all necessary precautions to ensure the safety and health of the public."

"The city asks that customers in the referenced areas boil all water before using until further notice."

The city advised people not to consume tap water that has not been disinfected or raw food rinsed with tap water that has not been disinfected.

The boil water notice was rescinded on Monday.

— *The Astorian*

## DEATHS

June 12, 2020

FERGUSON, Ricky Joe Savage, 46, of Seaside, died in Seaside. Caldwell's Funeral & Cremation Arrangement Center of Seaside is in charge of the arrangements.

## ON THE RECORD

## Menacing

• Rickey Dewitt Cockrall, 64, of Aloha, was arrested Friday on U.S. Highway 30 for menacing and felon in possession of a firearm.

## Theft

• Jacob Kitzman, 28, was arrested Friday at Rite Aid in Warrenton for theft in the third degree and criminal trespass in the first degree.

• Patricia Bernal, 26, of Scappoose, was arrested Friday at Walmart in Warrenton for theft in the second degree and criminal mischief in the third degree.

## Eluding

• Ryan Wallace Kelly, 34, of Astoria, was arrested Friday on Lyngstad Heights Lane in Astoria for theft of services, driving while suspended and eluding a police officer. Kelly led police on a low speed pursuit that began at the Astoria Column and ended at his home in Astoria.

## DUII

• Kenneth Allen

Medjo, 50, of Hammond, was arrested Sunday on Fourth Street and Marine Drive in Astoria for unauthorized use of a motor vehicle and driving under the influence of intoxicants.

• Edwin Francis Thatcher, 63, of Astoria, was arrested Saturday on Commercial Street in Astoria for DUII, reckless driving, driving while suspended and was cited for driving uninsured and failure to install an interlock device.

• James Robert Moon, 23, of Seaside, was arrested Saturday on U.S. Highway 101 and Gearhart Lane for DUII and reckless driving.

• Cesar Ramirez Peon, 18, of Seaside, was arrested Saturday at the Warrenton Post Office for minor in possession of alcohol, DUII and hit and run.

• Ian Arthur Symmonds, 41, of Astoria, was arrested Friday on Fort Clatsop Road and U.S. Highway 101 for DUII.

## PUBLIC MEETINGS

## TUESDAY

**Union Health District of Clatsop County**, 8 a.m., Providence Seaside Hospital, Education Room A.

**Port of Astoria Commission**, 4 p.m., workshop, (electronic meeting).

**Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District Board of Directors**, 5:15 p.m., (electronic meeting).

**Astoria Historic Landmarks Commission**, 5:15 p.m., City Hall, 1095 Duane St.

**Seaside School District Board of Directors**, 6 p.m., 1801 S. Franklin, Seaside.

**Shoreline Sanitary District Board**, 7 p.m., Gearhart Herig Station, 33496 West Lake Lane, Warrenton.

## WEDNESDAY

**Seaside Tourism Advisory Committee**, 3 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

## THURSDAY

**Seaside Transportation Advisory Commission**, 6 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

## the Astorian

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PRIDE



Photos by Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Marco Davis, as Daylight Cums, waves as the Pride parade progressed down Commercial Street on Sunday. Tessa Scheller drives down Duane Street in her decorated van. Due to coronavirus restrictions, the Lower Columbia Q Center decided to alter the annual celebration to promote social distancing by switching from a walking parade to a car parade.

## State scrambles after food processor outbreaks

By JAMIE GOLDBERG  
*The Oregonian*

Coronavirus outbreaks at food processors and agricultural sites have infected more than 600 workers and close contacts in Oregon and southwest Washington since mid-April, with recent outbreaks at companies in Vancouver, Washington, and Newport infecting well over 100 people apiece.

Such mass workplace outbreaks have contributed to a recent spike in Oregon's COVID-19 cases. And that rise in infections was among several markers that prompted Gov. Kate Brown to pause the state's reopening plans last week, threatening the pace of Oregon's economic recovery from the pandemic.

State health authorities didn't issue a "playbook" on how to respond to outbreaks at food processing sites until early June, more than three months after Oregon detected its first coronavirus cases. They didn't send operational guidance to all employers until the beginning of June, either.

Even now, worker advocates say they doubt the state's rules are stringent enough to prompt food processors to take more aggressive measures to protect their employees and halt workplace outbreaks.

"I don't believe enough is being done to protect these workers and it's not just a local problem, it's a national problem," said Michael Beranbaum, secretary-treasurer of the Teamsters Local Union No. 670, which represents employees at two Oregon food processors that experienced outbreaks.

Pacific Seafood shut down operations at its five Newport locations on June 7 after 124 coronavirus cases were linked to its shrimp processing facility. That number has since risen to 132. It's Oregon's second-largest workplace outbreak, trailing only the big outbreak at the Oregon State Penitentiary, and threatens to create a public health and economic crisis in the small coastal town.

Fourteen of 24 active workplace outbreaks in Oregon are at agricultural or food processing facilities,

according to data released by the state this past week.

It has been evident from the beginning of the pandemic that the food processing industry is especially vulnerable to coronavirus outbreaks among workers. The work is typically done indoors, often in close quarters, in cool conditions that favor the virus.

"These workers are working close together, often on a processing line and often these shifts are long, 10 to 12 hours," said Dede Montgomery, a certified industrial hygienist who works with Oregon Health & Science University's Oregon Institute of Occupational Health Sciences. "You don't have a lot of spaces that aren't being utilized during that time. While we do have rules on the books about the physical distancing, it's very difficult to do that when you have to completely change up your operation."

**EVEN NOW, WORKER ADVOCATES SAY THEY DOUBT THE STATE'S RULES ARE STRINGENT ENOUGH TO PROMPT FOOD PROCESSORS TO TAKE MORE AGGRESSIVE MEASURES TO PROTECT THEIR EMPLOYEES AND HALT WORKPLACE OUTBREAKS.**

Additionally, the industry's low-wage workers — many of them immigrants and migrants — may not have the clout to demand better working conditions.

## Reporting the outbreaks

The meatpacking industry in other states experienced a succession of large outbreaks early in the pandemic. And this past week, the watchdog Environmental Working Group found that almost 1,200 food processing workers outside the meatpacking industry have been infected nationally since the middle of March.

The true number is almost

certainly higher, given the large number of cases in Oregon alone.

Initially, Oregon health officials had a policy of keeping workplace outbreaks secret. They reversed that practice at the end of May, under media pressure, following a second large outbreak at Townsend Farms in Fairview that produced a big spike in Multnomah County's daily count of coronavirus infections. The disclosures have revealed growing outbreaks at certain food processors, including Bob's Red Mill in Milwaukie, where confirmed cases jumped to 40.

Oregon officials say they have reacted to the state's recent spate of outbreaks by developing a response plan, providing employers with a toolkit of best safety practices and putting a greater emphasis on inspecting and enforcing regulations at these facilities.

ance on developing safety measures and creating contingency plans in the case of an outbreak.

"This is just a way of making sure everyone reads the same text and understands exactly what needs to be done," said Emilio DeBess, an epidemiologist at the Oregon Health Authority. "But we have been working with some of these facilities for a while, which is how the playbook actually came about, through learning from these facilities what needed to be done and how to minimize the likelihood of infection."

While the state has been engaging with food processors since March and the Oregon Health Authority has listed general guidance for agricultural employers on its website since May 1, Lauren Henderson, assistant director of the Oregon Department of Agriculture, said the toolkit wasn't finalized and sent to employers until June 5.

"The toolkit and the playbook by themselves are not going to ensure that we don't have any more positive cases and that's because COVID is a hard thing," Henderson said. "What it does do is it provides resources for the employers to be proactive and to look at their facilities and how they operate. ... If there is an outbreak, it ensures that there is a state and local response to that and that the facilities get the resources they need sooner rather than later."

Nikki Fisher, a spokeswoman for the governor's office, said the state has also been working with employers whose workplaces are more prone to COVID-19 outbreaks to significantly expand testing. The state helped Townsend Farms test 350 seasonal workers shortly after they arrived in late May. Fifty-six of the workers tested positive, marking the third-largest active workplace outbreak in the state.

"Some portion of the recent growth in cases counts is due to increased testing," Fisher said.

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