

IN BRIEF

Fire season begins in Oregon

Fire season will begin on Wednesday. Permits are required for burn barrels. All open debris pile burning will close.

For more information, contact a local fire department or the local Oregon Department of Forestry office at 503-325-5451.

Discrimination lawsuit against mental health agency dismissed

A discrimination lawsuit against Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare has been dismissed.

Carole Purtle, a former adult foster home licenser at the mental health agency, filed a \$550,000 lawsuit in August alleging gender discrimination and retaliation. She claimed she was subjected to sexual harassment from a co-worker and that her complaints were ignored by her supervisor.

Purtle resigned in March 2018 but was fired before her resignation date, which she claimed was retaliation after she made reports to the state about the agency's misuse of Medicaid.

An attorney for Purtle declined to comment on the factors behind the dismissal. Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare also declined to comment.

The lawsuit was dismissed by Circuit Court Judge Cindee Matyas last week.

— *The Astorian*

Six virus cases tied to family gathering

LONG BEACH, Wash. — Six coronavirus cases in Pacific County were linked to a family gathering, the county Emergency Management Agency reported.

The county reported the latest case on Saturday. "The individual is self-isolating and close contacts of the individual are currently being contacted by our public health nurses with instructions to quarantine per (Department of Health) guidelines," the agency said in a statement. "Through contact tracing, this individual was identified as a close contact to the five cases reported earlier this week."

Pacific County has disclosed 18 coronavirus cases. — *Chinook Observer*

BIRTH

June 6, 2020

RUDOLFI, Brook and Tony, of Astoria, a girl, Raelyn Shae Rudolfi, born at Columbia Memorial Hospital in Astoria. Grandparents are Cindy and Tom Rudolfi and Kent and Shandy Moreland, all of Astoria, and Doug and Kim Schmidt, of Albany.

MEMORIAL

Saturday, July 4

MOILANEN, Steven Roy — Celebration of life and old hippie party at the property of his sister, Sandy Moilanen, near Quincy. For information, call 503-728-1252.

ON THE RECORD

Unlawful possession

• Jeff Baker Bolles, 22, of Hammond, was arrested on June 23 at Fred Meyer in Warrenton for unlawful possession of a firearm,

possession of methamphetamine and delivery of methamphetamine.

Criminal trespass

• Roy Douglas Hall, 44, of Astoria, was arrested Friday on the Astoria Riverwalk for criminal trespass in the second degree.

DUII

• Tlaloc Garcia, 23, of Astoria, was arrested Saturday on the Old Youngs Bay Bridge for driving under the influence of intoxicants.

• Donny Ray Sturgell, 45, of Warrenton, was

arrested Friday at the Warrenton Mini Mart for DUII, assault in the fourth degree, harassment, menacing and disorderly conduct.

• George M. Owen, 38, of Warrenton, was arrested Friday on Third Avenue and N. Roosevelt Drive in Seaside for DUII.

• Julius Yu Wong, 40, of Tacoma, Washington, was arrested Friday on U.S. Highway 101 for DUII, reckless driving and reckless endangerment.

• Kenneth Brick Gilman, 31, of Longview, Washington, was arrested Thursday on 31st Street and Marine Drive in Astoria for DUII.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

TUESDAY

Astoria Library Board, 5:30 pm, Astoria Library, 450 10th St.

WEDNESDAY

Seaside Improvement Commission, 6 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

Gearhart City Council, 7 p.m., City Hall, 698 Pacific Way.

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ON THE RIVER



Ben Davison

Ben Davison shared a photo of the Columbia River in Astoria.

Lawmakers tackle police reforms

First of two special sessions

By GARY WARNER
Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — One down and one to go.

The Oregon Legislature wrapped-up its first special session and headed for the exits out of Salem on Friday, leaving at least as many questions as answers from the three days of rapid-fire lawmaking.

While the state House and Senate met, Oregon's rate of new COVID-19 infections continued to climb, the state fell deeper into debt and officials churned through more of a record-setting mountain of unemployment applications.

Definitive answers on those issues will linger until Gov. Kate Brown announces the second special session.

"I anticipate calling the Legislature into a second special session to rebalance our state budget," Brown said on Saturday.

Oregon has to find a way to plug an estimated \$2.7 billion deficit caused by the economic hit of the coronavirus and steps taken in March to slow the spread that forced many businesses to shutter. The resulting layoffs led to 425,000 new unemployment applications, with some Oregonians still waiting for checks to arrive.

Brown said she wants to give Congress time to come up with a plan to send aid to state and local governments. Billions of dollars in aid has widespread support in the Democratic-controlled U.S. House, while its prospects are questionable at best in the Republican-controlled U.S. Senate.

Either way, Brown said state lawmakers will have to come back, most likely at the end of July or early August. She said her goals included the full \$9 billion in funding for public schools, which she said were still on track for students to return to classrooms this fall.

Plans for the largest cuts and possible tax increases are just now getting underway.

For the first session, lawmakers came to Salem to pass 24 policy bills, highlighted by a package of legislation banning chokeholds, limiting the use of tear gas and other law enforcement reforms.

Brown called the session as many legislatures across the country met on the same issue following worldwide protests of the Memorial Day death of George Floyd. The Black man from Minneapolis was killed when a white police officer knelt on his neck until he was unconscious.

In addition to the police reforms, other bills voted on last week included protections for mortgage holders who can't pay on time,

a cellphone tax to pay for rural broadband and more than a dozen other topics.

Brown said the Legislature "shined" during the session.

Watching the numbers

The next task, she said, was to see how Oregonians respond to an alarming uptick in the rate of COVID-19 infections in the state as the Fourth of July holiday approaches.

The response will determine whether the reopening of businesses, allowing larger gatherings and lifting of other restrictions that can spur the economy can safely continue.

Oregon's overall official COVID-19 infection rate is among the lowest in the nation, at less than 5% of the population. But the rate of infections has been trending up in recent weeks.

maximum, Kotek tread lightly, but firmly in suggesting that some Republicans might move to their offices to make way for the several Democrats who had to come to the floor to introduce — "carry" — bills coming up for a vote.

"Carriers are in one caucus, that is just the way it is," Kotek said.

Republicans expressed their frustration at special session rules which allowed only the House speaker and Senate president — both Democrats — to submit bills.

Sen. Dallas Heard, R-Roseburg, said the session had resulted in some "good, worthy" legislation, but increased the animosity between the majority and minority parties. He acknowledged his own role in the tension.

ney asked Girod to ask the recalcitrant duo to cover up.

When the Senate next met on Friday, Linthicum had asked to be excused from the session, which was granted.

But a defiant Boquist once again took his seat without a mask.

"The flu is now the virus ... completely political — lacking zero science," Boquist said in an email. "Everything is the coronavirus. Every state that did not lock down is doing as good as or better than Oregon."

Boquist said lawmakers never should have been called to Salem for the agenda they were dealing with.

"Nothing about the special session is good — nothing," he wrote.

In the House, the main problem was herding lawmakers whose total numbers were double the 25-person limit set for the chamber floor.

That meant much coming and going from offices to desks, with gaggles of lawmakers sometimes passing close to one another in opposite directions.

Kotek admonished House members on Friday about getting lax on social distancing minimums of 6 feet, at one point saying if nothing else to think about one member who is pregnant.

House members often watched the proceedings on a live feed from their offices, then took the short walk to the House chamber to debate or vote.

The House normally uses an electronic voting system, much faster than the Senate's historic but sometimes tedious roll call. But the virus forced even voting in the House to be done in shifts.

In a nod to the COVID-19 reality, the House rules were changed so that members could go to the aisle or balconies of the chamber and signal their votes with a thumbs up or thumbs down.

Kotek frequently reminded lawmakers watching elsewhere in the building that if they wanted to get into the queue for debating a bill that they should text caucus leaders. Virtual committee meetings and video press conferences often were hung up by mute buttons and video feed issues.

But over 100 people testified remotely on bills and 600 documents and letters were entered electronically into the record. Staff dealt with multiple drafts of 24 bills and 90 amendments.

Same date,
different history

The police reforms were

See *Special session*, Page A3

OREGON HAS TO FIND A WAY TO PLUG AN ESTIMATED \$2.7 BILLION DEFICIT CAUSED BY THE ECONOMIC HIT OF THE CORONAVIRUS AND STEPS TAKEN IN MARCH TO SLOW THE SPREAD THAT FORCED MANY BUSINESSES TO SHUTTER.

"I am asking Oregonians to take this very, very seriously," Brown said. "The increase in cases is alarming. We have done a really good job so far."

If the infections cannot be kept in check, Brown said she would use all the "tools in the toolbox" to stop the virus from getting out of control as it has in several states in recent days.

"If we continue on this path, we will have to button down the economy," Brown said.

The coronavirus was rarely far from the minds of lawmakers, most of whom arrived wearing face masks or clear plastic shields to avoid spreading infection.

State leaders decided to go ahead with a session in the Capitol despite fears that the coming and going could spread the virus.

The session required calling 60 House members, 30 senators and scores of staff, security and press to travel from around the state to Salem. After working together for three days, they would then fan out to return to their homes and offices.

State House Speaker Tina Kotek, D-Portland, wrestled with a limit of 25 members on the floor at any time. Over the first two days, most shuttled between their offices and the floor. But on Friday, as the session ended, many members chose to sit at their desks.

Bumping up against the

"It is quite obvious that we have all grown to have quite a bit of contempt for each other," he said.

Heard said more respect was needed in Salem, otherwise the partisan divide would be "the cause of freedom dying and a lot of good will squandered."

Senate Minority Leader Fred Girod, R-Stayton, said that the decision to not allow the public into the Capitol for the session — while allowing for live video feeds — was not in keeping with what the building stood for.

"It's not ours, it's not the Legislature's, it is the people's," he said.

Maskless men

Politics and personal space and expected privileges clashed at times under the pandemic rules.

The 60-member House made masks or faceguards mandatory when in the chamber. Senate President Peter Courtney, D-Salem, made it a strong request.

Sen. Brian Boquist, R-Dallas, came to the Senate floor with no face covering twice during the session.

On Wednesday, Boquist and Sen. Dennis Linthicum, R-Klamath Falls, went without face coverings. Court-

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