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CORONAVIRUS

Federal loan program a lifeline for North Coast businesses during pandemic



David Stevens, right, helps a customer at Englund Marine & Industrial Supply in Astoria.

Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Loans have provided more than \$45 million in relief

By **EDWARD STRATTON**
The Astorian

The Astoria Co-op's new, larger store in the Mill Pond neighborhood was only open a few months before the coronavirus pandemic.

The co-op spent money on protective measures, paid workers an extra \$2 an hour in hazard pay and shut down a hot deli, sacrificing nearly one-quarter of store sales to help prevent the spread of the virus.

To help cover the losses, the co-op secured around \$450,000 from the federal Small Business Administration's Paycheck Protection Program. Approved by Congress and President Donald Trump as an economic lifeline, the program doled out more than \$45 million in nearly 700 loans to Clatsop County businesses to keep an estimated 6,300 workers on the books and off unemployment.

"We're a small grocery store without the same access to capital that larger stores have for themselves," said Matt Stanley, the co-op's general manager. "And we are also (in) a very fragile state, having just spent gobs of money on our new store, so certainly having a pandemic start just a few months into that was certainly not part of the plan."

The low-interest loans, based off a company's average payroll costs for 10 weeks, become grants for companies that use at least 60% of the proceeds on qualified payroll expenses within 24 weeks of receipt.

The U.S. Treasury last week released data on nearly 5 million loans worth a combined \$521 billion given out so far.

The Treasury did not name the 611 businesses in the county that each received less than \$150,000, totaling about half the loan proceeds and jobs retained. But businesses receiving at



Brown requires masks outdoors

Bans indoor gatherings over 10 people

By **GARY WARNER**
Oregon Capital Bureau

Face masks must be worn outdoors when social distancing is not possible and private gatherings must be limited to no more than 10 people,

Gov. Kate Brown announced Monday.

The new rules to fight the coronavirus pandemic go into effect Wednesday, expanding the directive that face masks

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Gospel tent gathering opens with small footprint • A2

Associated Press

Gov. Kate Brown, shown here in May, has expanded a mask requirement to help combat the coronavirus pandemic.

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Warrenton police officer finishes his last patrol

Fontana retires from the force

By **NICOLE BALES**
The Astorian

WARRENTON — After working as a police officer for nearly 40 years — 28 years with the Warrenton Police Department — Alfonso "Al" Fontana has retired.

Since joining Warrenton police in 1992, the city has transformed from mostly open fields to new housing developments and big-box stores. He has seen mental



Alfonzo 'Al' Fontana on his last call.

health issues, drug abuse and homelessness become more prominent. He has watched how technology has changed

and improved the way people in law enforcement do their jobs.

When he began his career

in Forks, Washington, in 1981, Fontana remembers asking a senior officer how officers know they are not rookies anymore.

"You know what to do when you don't know what to do," Fontana remembers the senior officer saying.

"It was so simple, it made so much sense," he said. "And that's what law enforcement is like after a while, you know what to do when you don't know what to do. It just becomes sixth sense to you."

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Investigation clears Warrenton officer

Reports he mocked Floyd's death unsubstantiated

By **NICOLE BALES**
The Astorian

WARRENTON — An independent investigation has cleared a white Warrenton police officer after reports that he poked fun at George Floyd, a Black man killed by Minneapolis police, while off duty at

Bubba's Sports Bar in June.

Robert Wirt was placed on administrative leave by the city on June 15 while an investigator looked into claims originally made on Twitter and Facebook. One widely shared Facebook post described Wirt and his "buddies at the bar poking fun at George Floyd yelling, 'I can't breathe,' while one holds his forearm on his neck."

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Former band director finds passion in painting

Peterson attributes his success to practice

By **MORGAN GRINDY**
The Astorian

As he wandered around the art galleries of Jackson Hole, Wyoming, Edward Peterson found himself admiring the work of a young painter named Carrie Wild. She was painting bison.

Curious, he stopped to talk. He would have never guessed that a year later he'd return with his own bison paintings for a

EVERYDAY
people

solo exhibition at Wild's gallery, Gallery Wild.

An art career was a new beginning for Peterson after 38 years as Snohomish High School's celebrated band director.

His exhibition has become one of the fondest moments of his life. "It still, you know, brings tears to my eyes," said Peterson, whose work is displayed at Tempo Gallery in Astoria. "You could've painted your whole life and be really good, and never get an opportunity like that."

At 88, he's been painting for nine years. Clocking 12 hours a day, seven days a week at the easel, he attributes his success to practice.

"Every painting has tremendous failures, and then finally, it works," he said. He likened the experience to a marriage; you disagree and scrap ideas, "but you always end up still madly in love."

Although his art career seemed to have been by accident, Peterson is sure this part of his life is meant to be. That's how he felt about being a band director, too.

In an adventurous time conducting the Panther Band at Snohomish High School southeast of Everett, Washington, he took his students to play con-

certs around the world.

Among the highlights, the band played the Montreux Jazz Festival in Switzerland in 1971, the same year as Aretha Franklin. They played for President Ronald Reagan in 1985. Three years later, they were invited to perform a concert on the Great Wall of China.

The band won Washington state championships in 1979, 1989, 1991 and 1992.

"I look back at that very honestly and I wonder how on earth did all of that really happen? And why did it happen?" he said. "I gave it everything I had, and that's the same thing that translates into my art. It's the best thing I can do."

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Edward Peterson stands with one of his acrylic paintings.

