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CORONAVIRUS



NEOWISE

Comet Neowise glides over the Columbia River on Monday night. For the first time in 6,800 years, the comet has entered the inner solar system and is visible about an hour after sunset over the horizon to the northwest. The comet should be clearly visible until Sunday and will fade by early August.

Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Virus case reported at Seaside school site

Nearly a dozen other workers in quarantine

By R.J. MARX
The Astorian

SEASIDE — A worker on the new Seaside School District campus tested positive for the coronavirus, the school district reported Tuesday, potentially causing delays in construction.

The individual had contact with 11 other workers who are now on 14-day quarantine, according to Sheila Roley, the construction liaison for the project.

The worker who tested positive does not live in Clatsop County.

Project manager Jim Henry said the construction crew lost a day of work Tuesday because of a worker shortage. “Unfortunately, the folks that are in quarantine are working on critical, time-scheduled components of the project. Their work is kind of preceding other work behind it,” he said.

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CASE COULD DELAY THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COMPONENT THAT WAS SET TO BE COMPLETED BY THE END OF AUGUST.

Roley said at Tuesday’s citizen oversight committee on school construction that the positive case could delay the elementary school component that was set to be completed by the end of August.

Henry said work continues at the elementary school and middle and high school sites with social distancing measures in place.

“They’ve been following the state guidelines and they are requiring masks anywhere within the fence on-site,” he said. “Everybody, regardless if you’re 6 feet or 600 feet away from each other. The site is entirely masked, inside and out.”

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Merkley vows push for more local support amid coronavirus pandemic

A virtual town hall for county residents

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Astorian

In a virtual town hall Tuesday with Clatsop County constituents, U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley vowed to fight for more local support in the next round of federal coronavirus relief legislation.

The Senate reconvenes Monday and faces an epic political battle over relief money.

The Democrat-led House passed the Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions Act more than two months ago. The \$3.4 trillion legislation includes expanded unemployment payments until early next year, another \$1,200 stimulus check per person including dependents and more than \$1 trillion in aid to states and cities.

The bill has been blocked from the Senate floor by Senate



U.S. Sen.
Jeff Merkley

‘I THINK THAT THE ODDS (OF A COMPROMISE) HAVE INCREASED. THE REASON THEY’VE INCREASED IS NOT GOOD. THAT IS THE SURGE OF THE CONTAGION IN SO MANY SOUTHERN STATES.’

Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, a Kentucky Republican who has called it a “liberal wish list.” Merkley equated McConnell’s blockage of the bill with Republican leadership in Washington, D.C., allowing states to struggle on their own.

“When we reconvene next week, I’ll be doing everything I can as before to try to get that bill to the floor,” the Oregon Democrat said of the HEROES Act.

The bill would put an estimated \$6 billion in the hands of Oregon, Merkley said, and another \$3 billion in the hands of local

governments “that help sustain the fundamental programs to get us to the other side of this.”

Merkley waxed hopeful that after two weeks back home in their states hard-hit by the coronavirus, Republican leaders will return with a sense of urgency to pass more relief — maybe not to the level that Democrats want, but more than is being offered.

“I think that the odds have increased,” he said of a compromise. “Thereasonthey’veincreased is not good. That is the surge of

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Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Developer Mark Hollander wants to build a Fairfield Inn and Suites at the location of the old Ship Inn restaurant.

Hotelier fights for extension

Seeks more time for Fairfield project

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Astorian

Developer Mark Hollander, denied an extension on design and site review permits by Astoria for his proposed four-story Fairfield Inn and Suites on the waterfront, has appealed to the City Council for more time amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Hollander wants to build the

new hotel, a Marriott brand, at the site of The Ship Inn restaurant, a plot of land off Second Street between Marine Drive and the Columbia River. The site falls within the Bridge Vista section of the city’s Riverfront Vision Plan directing development along the waterfront.

The permits are set to expire in late December unless Hollander can get an extension. His attorney, Steven Hultberg, argued that the poor economic

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