IN BRIEF

Long Beach mayor tests positive for virus

LONG BEACH, Wash. — City Hall was closed to the public Wednesday after Mayor Jerry Phillips tested positive for the coronavirus.

City Administrator David Glasson said the city was acting with an "abundance of caution" when it locked up the city offices on Bolstad Avenue. The closure was to ensure the building is clear of active virus particles before staff return, he said.

Phillips' test results came back Sunday, the same day a sample of Long Beach's sewer system showed virus concentration levels four times higher than a sample taken July 5.

Phillips plays a leading role in the local response to the pandemic as a member of the Pacific County Emergency Management Agency Council, which is comprised of the county's four elected mayors, three county commissioners and sheriff.

In a phone interview Thursday, Phillips said he did not wish to go into detail about his symptoms. His isolation is expected to end July 30.

Cottage Bakery gets new name

LONG BEACH, Wash. — Make way, Cottage Bakery signage. You've got some company.

On Thursday, a Long Beach dining institution saw a name change for the first time in over 40 years, as it was renamed Dylan's Cottage Bakery.

The new name honors Dylan Harrell, the daughter of the bakery's new co-owners, Jeff and Casey Harrell, who died in April after a 20-month battle with diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma, an incurable cancer.

— Chinook Observer

Inslee announces new virus restrictions

OLYMPIA, Wash. — Washington state Gov. Jay Inslee announced Thursday tighter restrictions on bars, restaurants, fitness centers, weddings and funerals as new confirmed cases of the coronavirus rise.

Thursday's announcements are the most sweeping rollback so far to the governor's original four-phase reopening plan.

And it comes as Washington saw its highest daily new cases of the pandemic. Almost every part of the state is "on the path to runaway transmission rates of COVID-19," state health officials said this week.

To counter that, Inslee announced a host of new restrictions that includes:

• Limiting indoor dining at restaurants to members of the same household. People meeting from different households can still dine outdoors.

• No indoor service at any bar, brewery, tavern, winery or distillery, regardless of whether food is being served.

• For counties in the third phase of the four-part plan, like Pacific County, restaurant table sizes must be reduced to five people, and indoor occupancy to 50%.

• Restaurants must also close down game areas, such as for video games, pool tables and darts, until their county has reached the fourth phase.

— Seattle Times

Knappa water flushing planned

The Knappa Water Association is flushing water mains from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. from Monday to Friday and Aug. 3 to Aug. 7.

Patrons may expect periods of low pressure and cloudy water. If these conditions persist, call the Knappa Water Association office at 503-458-6461.

— The Astorian

DEATHS

July 22, 2020

ALLEN, Sarah Marie, 89, of Astoria, died in Astoria. Caldwell's Luce-Layton Mortuary of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

ENGBRETSON, Brian Conrad, 57, of Seaside, died in Seaside. Ocean View Funeral & Cremation Service of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

July 9, 2020

ROSE, Virginia Wade, 96, of Warrenton, died in Warrenton. Ocean View Funeral & Cremation Service of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

ON THE RECORD

Criminal trespass

• Paul L. Roebuck, 48, was arrested Thursday at Wendy's in Warrenton for criminal trespass in the first degree.

DUII

• Jeremiah Minyard, 21, of Rainier, was arrested Wednesday on Broadway Street in Seaside for driving under the influence of intoxicants.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

MONDAY

Seaside City Council, 7 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

TUESDAY

Clatsop County Human Services Advisory Council, 4 p.m., 800 Exchange St., Room 430.

Seaside Airport Advisory Committee, 6 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

Astoria Planning Commission, 6:30 p.m., City Hall, 1095 Duane St.

the Astorian

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Tiffany Boothe/Seaside Aquarium

Intake pipes that provide saltwater to the Seaside Aquarium are adjusted during the summer.

Pacific County businesses received $19 million in pandemic relief loans

By BRANDON CLINE
Chinook Observer

LONG BEACH, Wash. — As the initial wave of the coronavirus pandemic swept across the country in the spring, hundreds of thousands of small businesses were thrown a lifeboat in the form of the forgivable loans via the federal Paycheck Protection Program.

New data released by the U.S. Small Business Administration in July showed that nearly 250 Pacific County businesses received at least $18.6 million from the loans in April, May and June. Peninsula businesses received about $10.8 million of the countywide amount.

The loans, according to the data, helped businesses retain about 2,500 jobs in the county and prevent an even worse unemployment meltdown at the outset of the pandemic. Pacific County had one of the highest unemployment rates in the state in April and May, soaring to about 17%.

The loan program was established as part of the federal CARES Act. The loans can be forgiven if at least 60 to 75% of the amount is used by a small business to continue paying employees. The program was initially slated to expire in June but got extended until Aug. 8. About $132 billion in funds are still available for small businesses with 500 or fewer workers.

The biggest local beneficiaries of the program were the county's two hospitals, Ocean Beach Hospital in Ilwaco and Willapa Harbor Hospital in South Bend. Larry Cohen, the CEO of Ocean Beach Hospital, said the hospital received a $2.75 million loan, while Willapa Harbor Hospital received a loan of at least $2 million. This helped the hospitals retain more than 300 jobs.

Local full and limited-service restaurants, hit hard by the pandemic early on because of a statewide order to close dine-in service, received at least $1.2 million. The funds were spread across 27 dining establishments in Pacific County and helped retain about 240 jobs.

Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Ocean Beach Hospital received a federal Paycheck Protection Program loan.

THE BIGGEST LOCAL BENEFICIARIES OF THE PROGRAM WERE THE COUNTY'S TWO HOSPITALS, OCEAN BEACH HOSPITAL IN ILWACO AND WILLAPA HARBOR HOSPITAL IN SOUTH BEND.

Hotels also closed their doors early on during the pandemic in an effort to discourage out-of-county residents and nonhomeowners from visiting. Eleven hotels or motels received loans totaling at least $800,000, helping to retain 144 jobs. The biggest local recipient in the industry was Adrift Hospitality, which received a loan between $350,000 and $1 million.

Other industries that received loans totaling at least $500,000 include: supermarkets and grocery stores (at least $759,000); outpatient mental health and substance abuse centers (at least $700,000); logging (at least $618,000); shellfish farming (at least $562,000); pharmacies and drug stores (at least $544,000); and seafood processors (at least $538,235).

Lauded by business owners

For peninsula business owners, the federal relief program was key to keeping them from otherwise having to lay off or furlough large swaths of employees. Tiffany Turner, the owner of Adrift Hospitality, said if not for the loan her business would not have been able to bring back any of her staff in a full-time capacity until the order placing restrictions on hotels was lifted in May.

With the loan secured in mid-April, Adrift was able to bring back employees who had been unable to apply for or receive unemployment benefits. All employees were eventually brought back, and Turner said they used that time as a staff to do training on new health protocols and get used to things like wearing a mask on the job so they could be ready once the hotel was able to open its doors again.

Without the loan, Turner said Adrift would not have brought anyone back until they were able to reopen, which she said would have made for a much less safe environment and would have brought back fewer employees than they have right now.

"Ultimately, we would have survived it, but I think not only did it allow businesses that maybe wouldn't have survived it to survive, but also it allowed us to open safely," Turner said. "And that's critical to the health of our entire community."

Jeff Harrell, owner of Peninsula Pharmacies, which received a loan of at least $350,000, said without the funds the pharmacy would have had to make tough choices.

"If we wouldn't have been able to secure those funds … we would have had to reduce hours and more than likely lay off (employees)," Harrell said.

Because of the state restrictions on elective surgeries at the beginning of the pandemic, Harrell said they saw about an initial 10 to 15% drop in prescription volume. Over the past month or so, Harrell said Peninsula Pharmacies has been able to close the gap on that initial drop in volume. As Pacific and nearby counties entered less restrictive phases, more elective surgeries are taking place and have driven more patients to pharmacies to pick up prescriptions.

Banks step up

Both Harrell and Turner lauded their lender, Bank of the Pacific, and other banks in the community. Bank of the Pacific was the lender for almost one-third of all businesses that received a Paycheck Protection Program loan in Pacific County, more than double of any other bank and accounting for at least $8.7 million of the loans awarded.

"I think we're really lucky in this community in that we had multiple banks that really were working tirelessly for their customers," said Turner, especially when the program was initially rolled out. "I think that many businesses in our community would be facing a much different — at least immediate — future if the banks hadn't really just gone above and beyond to make sure that local businesses had access to that money."

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Volunteer Pick of the Week

Arwen

young female Domestic Shorthair/Tabby Blend

Plush, silvery fur; Sweet baby face - Who could resist falling in love?

(Read about the pet of the week on Facebook)

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