

County reports new virus case

The Astorian

Clatsop County reported Wednesday that a man living in the northern part of the county tested positive for the coronavirus.

The man is in his 50s and was reportedly recovering at home. The county has recorded 82 cases since March 23. Sixty-five have recovered, according to the county, and the others are convalescing at home.

The Oregon Health Authority reported 19,979 cases and 338 deaths from the virus statewide as of Wednesday morning. The health authority tracked 3,653 test results in Clatsop County.

Moose Lodge: Increase in local cases concerning

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“As you know, we have implemented multiple cleaning and social-distancing measures during this outbreak of coronavirus and are committed to keeping you up to date on any potential health risks,” Davis wrote in the email.

“This is not a negative thing but a way to learn this issue is serious, it reinforces the need for mask and social distancing. Please be aware these practices are in place to keep us all healthy and safe today and going forward.”

Davis told The Astorian that the chapter took extra caution after Clatsop County entered phase two of Gov. Kate Brown’s reopening plan in June and chose not to open until July 18.

“We have a lot of older members who are at risk, and their safety is of the utmost importance to me and our board,” he said.

“But we also do a lot of good things and we want to be able to continue to contribute to the community and raise money for our own charities, both Mooseheart and Moosehaven, which takes care of kids and senior members. It’s tough in a pandemic. How do you continue in an organization to raise money and support the needs of your community?”

Davis said the increase in local virus cases and people visiting from outside of the region is concerning.

He believes it is important for businesses and organizations to disclose when



The Astoria Moose Lodge has temporarily closed as a virus precaution.

they have an exposure to the virus, even if the person who tests positive lives outside of the county. He said the potential exposure to residents can affect the entire county.

“If we’re not transparent in our own community then we can’t hold the people who are visiting accountable,” he said. “That’s the only way as a community that we can work together.”

Davis commended businesses that have disclosed positive cases. He said his hat also goes off to the county Public Health Department. He believes the county is doing the best it can and appreciates the work they are doing even more since going through the process.

During a county Board of Commissioners work

session Tuesday, Michael McNickle, the county’s public health director, said the county has had numerous virus cases involving people who live outside the county and state.

In most of the cases, he said, people come to the county for vacation or work, begin to show symptoms of the virus and then get tested at an urgent care.

“In some cases, we were able to make sure that they quarantined for 14 days. Other times, we were unable to make them stay. But we’ve done (the) best we can,” McNickle said. “And so we are seeing a lot of work that’s being done that’s not being reported trying to help these guys who are tested here and who don’t live here.”

On the Long Beach Pen-

insula in Washington state, Pacific County warned of a high possibility of coronavirus exposure to people who visited the Loyal Order of Moose in Ocean Park on July 23 and the Fraternal Order of the Eagles on July 24.

The Chinook Observer reported that the choice to put out an announcement about a possible exposure at the social clubs came after a person diagnosed with COVID-19 spent an extended period of time there while possibly contagious.

Both social clubs allowed visitors to choose whether to provide information for contact tracing. Because of that, the county was concerned the information provided might not capture all possible close contacts of the diagnosed person.

Astoria: City Council also has goals addressing homelessness

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The library, which has switched to to-go checkout service during the pandemic, faces around \$860,000 in deferred maintenance. But Jimmy Pearson, the library director, said it should be fine for the time being.

“Taking an emphasis off the library for a year is not going to put us in a situation where we can’t recover from it,” Pearson said. “I think it actually makes a lot of common sense, given our situation with the pandemic.”

Astoria, as part of a goal to increase disaster preparedness, has been exploring different locations to move the city’s public safety building at 30th Street and Marine Drive. Moving the building out of the tsunami zone will likely also take a bond measure.

“It’s slowed down a bit until we see the state of the economy,” Police Chief Geoff Spalding said. “We knew this wasn’t going to be the time anytime soon to be looking at a potential bond measure, so we kind of put it in a little bit of a holding pattern.”

The City Council also has goals around supporting efforts to address homelessness, increase the city’s housing stock, improve the long-term sustainability of the parks department, develop mixed-use housing and commercial space at Heritage Square downtown, generate more revenue and implement a five-year economic development strategy.

Housing

City councilors supported the existing goals and Jones’ suggestion of one around recovering from the pandemic. A majority took issue, though, when Estes mentioned during discussion of Heritage Square that

prior city councilors did not want to include lower-income housing in a mixed-use development there.

Estes said councilors at the time thought market-rate housing at Heritage Square would best support the downtown economy. City Councilor Tom Brownson said councilors felt that focusing on market-rate housing would make it easier to attract development at the challenging site, which includes a large pit.

Downtown development rules recently established as part of the Riverfront Vision Plan essentially nixed a recommendation of requiring affordable housing for buildings rising to four stories. Planning commissioners who recommended the change argued that downtown, with the most expensive property, is not the most opportune place to develop affordable housing.

But councilors Joan Herman, Roger Rocka and Jessamyn Grace West supported making at least part of any housing at Heritage Square lower-income, arguing that people who work in retail downtown are the ones facing the biggest shortage.

“I would support a mix of affordable housing and market-rate housing — mostly affordable, because I think if we get people living downtown, it is going to support the retail economy downtown, as well as throughout the community,” Herman said.

The City Council on Monday, acting as the Astoria Development Commission, also approved the purchase of a parking lot with 13 spaces near Wauna Federal Credit Union in Uniontown for \$85,000. The purchase is part of an effort to increase parking for businesses in a neighborhood that often lacks parking along the four-lane thoroughfare of Marine Drive.

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