

Crimes: Problem described as cyclical

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city paid Oregon Janitorial \$28,000 a year up until June to clean both of them, along with the bathrooms at Tapiola Park and Evergreen Fields near Safeway, between two and four times a week.

When the contract ended in June, Oregon Janitorial didn’t bid again. Jonah Dart-McLean, Astoria’s parks director, said the cleaner got tired of drug paraphernalia and trash being left in stalls, feces smeared on walls and trash clogging toilets.

The city reached out to other cleaning companies and received one offer of more than \$100,000 to do the same work. The city went back to the previous cleaner and offered to more than double the payment, but he still wasn’t interested, Dart-McLean said.

The city ultimately settled on a contract with Associated Cleaning Services for more than \$46,000 to clean the downtown and Doughboy restrooms three times a week. “So far, we haven’t had any extreme vandalism or issues — lots of trash left in restrooms and minor damage to amenities,” Dart-McLean said.

The bathrooms lock at 6 p.m. daily. Police check on them after hours to ensure there is nobody camping in or vandalizing the spaces.

The increase in tourists during the summer doesn’t easily explain the rise in garbage or vandalism. The city last had a major rash of bathroom vandalism four or five years ago during the winter, Estes said, describing the problem as cyclical.

Mark Winstanley, the city manager in Seaside, said the city has noticed a similar increase in tagging and other vandalism.

“We’ve been able to get out and take care of them within hours,” Winstanley said. “We’re pretty diligent about that. Of course, the kind of economy we run, it doesn’t help us any.”

Graffiti

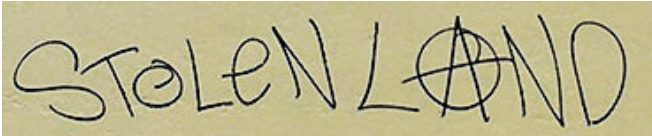
Astoria Police Chief Geoff Spalding said there have only been eight reports so far this year of graffiti, despite what appears to be a worsening problem.

“I suspect a lot of people are not reporting it or



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

‘Lift others up’ was spray-painted onto the back wall of Blaylock’s Whiskey Bar.



Astoria Police Department

Someone recently used markers to scrawl ‘Stolen Land’ at the base of the Astoria Column.



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Cleaners have often found drug paraphernalia and trash at public restrooms off of Exchange Street in Astoria.

they’re simply covering up as quickly as possible, which of course we encourage,” he told the City Council on Monday.

Local artists like Roger McKay have offered to cover up graffiti for free. Andie Sterling, who painted a mural in the 13th Street Alley, was back Thursday cleaning a “D” scrawled on a wall near the back door of Erickson Floral Co.

Heath said there is a belief among business owners that police don’t take such low-level offenses seriously. Spalding, while acknowledging the belief, said he wants to put more officer time toward the issue but needs more information from the public.

He is testing a new online reporting form on the police

department’s website for nuisance and other nonemergency offenses.

“If we don’t know where and when it’s happening, and some of the times, what have you, it does make it difficult for us to establish some crime analysis trends,” he said.

Cities around the country have dealt with more graffiti during the pandemic, some of it owing to the tense political climate created after the death of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police and in the lead-up to a presidential election. In Warrenton this summer, City Hall was tagged with “BLM” graffiti.

Both Heath and Spalding acknowledged an uptick in political messaging in graffiti and stickers. Spald-

ing noted the message “Stolen Land” that was recently scrawled across the base of the Astoria Column, the letter “a” replaced with an anarchy symbol.

Estes brought up measures other cities have taken, from banning the sale of spray paint to disallowing the possession of various graffiti-marking tools. Such measures have had mixed results in places like Chicago, which has had bans on spray paint since the early 1990s.

The city, in the belief that most of the bad behavior can be tied to a small group of people, has also recently explored a chronic nuisance ordinance and expulsion zones.

Heath said it seems simpler than trying to separately combat nuisance issues.

“There has to be some sort of tool,” she said. “I can’t think of another scenario where a small group of people are habitually interfering with civic life without any sort of guardrails on their behavior.”

But Spalding said the city might want to take a more cautious approach after a federal court recently ruled that Grants Pass citing people for camping or sleeping in public is unconstitutional if they don’t have reasonable alternative shelter.

“If you follow some of the logic there, you might be able to draw some of the conclusions that if someone doesn’t have the ability to use a restroom, they have to go somewhere, and we may not be able to enforce that at some point,” Spalding said.

The survey on Tuesday was one of 58 conducted coastwide this summer to assess razor clam populations and set upcoming recreational seasons. Nearly half of the samples occur along the Long Beach Peninsula’s ample 28 miles of sand.

“We try to do one transect per mile,” Ayres said.

Two teams involving three technicians each worked different tracts of Long Beach on Tuesday. The teams used a pump-sampling method learned from management officials in Alaska and now the preferred method in Washington and Oregon.

Pump sampling is more sensitive to catching juvenile clams that may have been missed in the past, providing a more accurate picture of the clam population. The same method was used to assess razor clam populations to estimate how many clams were on each of the five management beaches on Warrenton’s outer coast, Ayres said.

have chlamydia have no symptoms.

“The take-home message is that if you have unprotected sex (e.g., not using a condom), and have multiple partners, or show any signs of infection, you should get tested for a sexually transmitted infection,” McNickle said in an email.

People can call the Public Health Department to schedule a confidential and private sexually transmitted infection test.

County reports new virus cases

The Astorian

Clatsop County reported Friday that a woman living in the northern part of the county has tested positive for the coronavirus.

The woman is in her 50s and was reportedly recovering at home.

The county reported Thursday that a man in his 70s living in the northern part of the county tested positive for the virus. The man was reportedly recovering at home.

The county has recorded 93 cases since March 23. Eighty-eight have recovered, according to the county, and the others were convalescing at home.

The Oregon Health Authority reported 24,421 cases and 414 deaths statewide as of Friday morning.

The health authority tracked 4,455 test results in Clatsop County, including 92 of the pos-

itive cases.

Gov. Kate Brown on Friday said she is prepared to impose new restrictions, including travel in and out of the state, if things don’t improve as the spread of the virus remains fairly steady in Oregon.

“If we cannot improve our trajectory over the rest of the month,” Brown said, “unfortunately I will need to add more restrictions.”

Brown defended her past decisions as a balancing act, and said, “unfortunately, it’s still not enough. Our infection rate is still too high to get all of our kids safely back in classrooms at most of our schools this fall.”

Under the latest projections, Brown said, it could be about 200 days before schools can reopen for classroom instruction. But with significant improvements, that figure can be cut as low as six weeks.

Ackley: Last day to file for November election is Tuesday

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community,” she said.

“It was a hard decision, but I can’t commit to four more years at this point in time. If the opportunity arose down the road and things are different, I would certainly run again.”

Ackley prevailed over challenger Ryan Lampi in 2016 by six votes in a recount.

As a commissioner, she led the task force for the revitalization of the Hammond Marina and took an active role in Spruce Up Warrenton. She said she plans to continue staying involved, and is particularly passionate about the marina.

“We have great vision for what that’s going to look like down the road once we get the marina dredged and we get the water line into Hammond so that we can actually look at developing Hammond into what it was years and years ago — a little fishing hub community, as well as maybe some more stores, retail, shopping,” Ackley said.

She also plans on staying on the budget committee and will remain involved with Warrenton-Hammond Healthy Kids. Mayor Henry Balensifer said he is thankful Ackley plans to stay involved.

“I want to thank Commissioner Ackley for all her dedicated and hard

and passionate work,” he said. “I know in talking to her she’s open to some appointed work potentially in the future, but I respect that decision for her not to run and she’ll be sorely missed.”

The last day to file for the November election is Tuesday.

Balensifer believes people who otherwise would be interested in running for office have been deterred because of personal hardship brought on by the coronavirus pandemic and seeing the demands it has had on elected officials.

“At this particular point in time in the world’s history with everything that’s going on — it’s a very tough time to be an elected official,” he said. “It’s a very personally demanding time.”

Commissioner Mark Baldwin and Commissioner Tom Dyer are also up for reelection in November. They have both filed for new terms.

The city has received an application from Allen Berry, who will run for Dyer’s seat.

Ackley said she believes a great mix of people are representing the city.

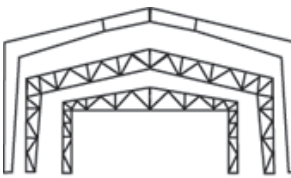
“I’ve enjoyed every single minute of it, good and bad. But there really is no bad. It’s just challenges that we face as public officials,” she said. “I’d do it again if I had more time.”

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Sandy, OR

STDs: Number of chlamydia cases remains a concern

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Public health officials declared a syphilis outbreak in 2017 after noticing an increase in positive cases over three years.

“A lot of folks think syphilis is an ancient disease that is no longer seen anymore, but that’s not the case,” McNickle said.

Syphilis is spread by contact with sores during vaginal, anal or oral sex, according to the federal Centers for

Disease Control and Prevention. The infection can have serious complications when left untreated and mothers can also transmit the infection to unborn babies.

Two people in the county tested positive for syphilis in 2014 after only two cases were reported in the previous seven years. The county reported three cases in 2015, eight in 2016 and four in 2017.

Eight more people tested positive in 2018 and five

people tested positive in 2019.

The number of chlamydia cases also remains a concern, McNickle said.

Eighty-one people have tested positive for chlamydia since January. There were 93 reported cases between January and August 2019.

Chlamydia is spread by having vaginal, anal or oral sex with someone who has chlamydia, according to the CDC, and most people who