

IN BRIEF

Seaside man dies after falling from cliff

A Seaside man died Sunday after falling from a cliff and into the ocean while hiking at Oswald West State Park.

Officials say Steven Gastelum, 43, was on the Devil's Cauldron trail when he climbed a tree on the cliff's edge to pose for a photograph.

A tree limb broke, causing him to fall about 100 feet into the ocean.

Emergency crews were called at about 1:48 p.m. A U.S. Coast Guard helicopter crew and Nehalem Bay Fire and Rescue located Gastelum and brought him back to shore.

He was taken to Tillamook Regional Medical Center, where he was pronounced dead.

Fire destroys workshop in Astoria

A workshop on Walluski Loop in Astoria was destroyed Saturday afternoon in a fire.

Firefighters were called at 12:45 p.m. to the fire, which had spread into the woods, effecting a few trees. Ammunition and propane tanks stored in the shop created some explosions.

Firefighters were able to keep the fire from spreading to the home.

The closest fire hydrant was at the Clatsop County Fairgrounds, so agencies throughout the county arrived on scene with water trucks to dump water into a port-a-tank.

The cause of the fire is under investigation. — *The Astorian*

Gov. Brown extends residential eviction ban through December

Gov. Kate Brown on Monday ordered an extension of the state's residential eviction ban through the end of the year, citing the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic and wildfires in September.

"Housing is a critical human need, and, as we enter cold and flu season during a pandemic—and as many students learn remotely from home—it is absolutely critical that people not be turned out of their homes," Brown said in a statement.

Oregon's residential eviction ban was originally issued on April 1. It had been due to expire on Wednesday.

The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention established a nationwide eviction ban earlier this month but required renters to take steps to demonstrate they qualify. That could exclude some people from the protections. — *The Oregonian*

DEATH

Sept. 24, 2020

BIRKHOLZ, Annette Marie, 58, of Seaside, died in Seaside. Caldwell's Funeral & Cremation Arrangement Center in Seaside is in charge of the arrangements.

MEMORIAL

Saturday, Oct. 3

KEITH, Harold — Celebration of life at 11 a.m., Hughes-Ransom Mortuary Chapel, 220 N. Holladay Drive in Seaside.

BIRTH

Sept. 11, 2020

SMITH, Katie and Anthony, of Astoria, a girl, Autumn Grace Smith, born at Columbia Memorial Hospital in Astoria. Grandparents are Roger and Susie Matson, of Ravensdale, Washington, and Andrew and Nina Smith, of Hammond.

ON THE RECORD

Theft

• David Dewayne Perez, 27, of East Palo Alto, California, was arraigned Thursday for theft in the first degree and unlawful entry into a motor vehicle.

Hit-and-run

• Grace K. Ogren, 25, of Astoria, was

arrested Thursday at Walmart in Warrenton for hit-and-run.

DUII

• Kevin Patrick Redinger, 47, of Warrenton, was arrested Sunday on Sunset Beach Lane for driving under the influence of intoxicants and reckless driving.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

TUESDAY

Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District, 4:15 p.m., work session, Bob Chisholm Community Center, 1225 Avenue A., Seaside.

Gearhart City Council, 7 p.m., work session, 698 Pacific Way.

Highway 26 designated memorial highway for military

By R.J. MARX
The Astorian

"He was a pretty fair scrapper himself when he attended Washington State College, but Darwin passes his admirations to the Marines who were stationed at Wake Island," read a newspaper report in the days prior to World War II.

The son of a Pullman, Washington, drug store owner, Darwin Meiners was a civilian contractor working with the U.S. Marines on Wake Island when the Japanese struck the island, hours after the Pearl Harbor attack on Dec. 7, 1941.

Forty-nine Americans and islanders were killed, and many more rounded up and captured, including Meiners. Meiners served 44 months in a Japanese prison camp in Shanghai, China, before his release and return. His nephews, John Meiners, of Astoria, and Darwin Meiners, of Lewis and Clark, were among those at Seaside American Legion Post 99 this month to designate U.S. Highway 26 as a memorial highway for prisoners of war and those missing in action. The dedication was on National POW/MIA



R.J. Marx/The Astorian

From left, Lou Neubecker, district commander of American Legion Post 99, John Meiners, Darwin Meiners and Albert Little, district commander for the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Recognition Day.

At 471 miles in length, U.S. Highway 26 is the second longest highway in Oregon and stretches from Seaside to the Oregon-Idaho border at Nyssa.

The Legislature voted unanimously in favor of House Bill 3452, signed into law by Gov. Kate Brown last year. The law requires the Oregon Department of Transportation to install POW/MIA Memorial Highway signs paid for by veterans.

The memorial highway joins a state highway system honoring veterans who served in conflicts from World War I to the wars in the Persian Gulf and Afghanistan.

George Carroll, state commander for the American Legion, Steve Adams, department commander, and Seaside Mayor Jay Barber attended the event.

Data sheds light on Oregon unemployment delays

By KATE DAVIDSON
Oregon Public Broadcasting

By August, Marita Juarez was desperate.

It was March when she filed for unemployment benefits, as the coronavirus pandemic slammed Oregon's workforce. Every day, the 69-year-old got up and cared for her vulnerable parents on the outskirts of Lake Oswego. She went to bed in an RV parked outside.

Five months went by. "That was just cruel," she said of the wait for benefits. "Cruel."

When her payments came through in mid-August, Juarez felt a surge of joy, Relief. And anger too.

"Thank goodness that I didn't have little kids and I was with my parents. I don't see how people could have survived," she said.

It's no secret that many Oregonians have endured massive delays getting unemployment benefits during the pandemic. Now, federal data is beginning to reflect those delays — and where Oregonians stand.

Data from the U.S. Department of Labor captures how long people have been waiting for benefits when their first payment arrives. It applies only to traditional unemployment insurance, not the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance federal benefits.

Nationally, about 18% of people who began receiving unemployment benefits in July had already waited a long time — more than ten weeks. In Oregon, the figure was substantially higher:



Kate Davidson/Oregon Public Broadcasting

Marita Juarez stands outside her RV in the outskirts of Lake Oswego last week. It took almost five months to get her unemployment benefits.

43% of Oregonians whose benefits came through in July had been waiting more than ten weeks.

By the time Juarez got paid in August, she was part of a long-suffering majority. Last month, more than 60% of initial payments in Oregon went to people who had waited more than 70 days.

"It's pretty horrific," said George Wentworth, a lawyer with the National Employment Law Project.

He pointed to the core purpose of unemployment insurance: to partially replace wages when workers lose jobs.

"Those benefits only mean something if they are paid out some time close to when the worker is unemployed," he said. "So, to have the majority of workers waiting longer than ten weeks to get their first unemployment insurance payment — it can be a tremendous financial burden."

By contrast, 34% of Washingtonians and 11% of Californians who started getting benefits in August had waited more than ten weeks.

Federal timeliness statistics are backward-looking. They show how long people waited to get benefits once those payments are made. They do not reveal how many people are still waiting — or where.

They are the rearview mirror, not necessarily the road ahead.

Without knowing the extent of other states' backlogs, the head of the Oregon Employment Department thinks the figures are a faulty way to compare states.

In fact, David Gerstenfeld sees something else in Oregon's seemingly grim statistics — progress clearing old claims.

When long-delayed claims are finally paid, they show up in the federal

data with their lengthy wait times. And even though new claims are generally paid more quickly now, Gerstenfeld said, workers are filing fewer of them. That means the percentage of claims paid on time every month is declining.

"As that backlog gets worked through," he said, "it's those older claims — the people that have been waiting longer — that actually drives the percentage down until all of those back payments have been worked through."

Last week, Gerstenfeld revealed a number that he believes better captures the agency's current challenge.

He told lawmakers that 49,000 Oregonians have all or part of their claims in adjudication. It's the first time the state has quantified that particular purgatory.

Adjudication is a federally mandated process for resolving issues with claims after initial processing. In Oregon, it can delay payment by months. The state has ramped up hiring and training but has also been challenged by the depth of experience adjudication typically requires of staff.

Federal data may be backward-looking, but it informs an understanding of the state's current adjudication quagmire. That's because the U.S. Department of Labor has timeliness standards for adjudication too.

According to the data, Oregon was not meeting those standards, even before the pandemic hit.

Biochar improves soil health from leftover trees

By MARGO CRAIG
Capital Press

In a forested area near the tiny town of Riddle on Oregon's west side, Ken Carloni kneels to examine a native orchid. His white ponytail juts out from under a newsboy cap. To the south, a mosaic of meadows, oak woodlands and conifer forests blankets the land owned by the nonprofit Yew Creek Land Alliance.

The timber industry knows Carloni, a forest ecologist and retired professor at Umpqua Community College, as an advocate of sustainable forestry management. His latest project with the alliance has given him an opportunity to put theory into practice.

For the past two years, Carloni and the alliance have worked on a restoration project that involves harvesting evergreens that have crowded the native oak trees and disposing of the leftover slash piles not by burning them but by making biochar.

Biochar is a special kind of charcoal known to improve soil health and sequester carbon.

What makes the alliance's effort particularly unique is the biochar is made from forest slash onsite and added directly to the soil. This eliminates the expense of hauling slash to stationary kilns that challenges the economic viability of biochar. And because biochar is mainly carbon, it may also be valuable for its role in carbon sequestration, Carloni and others say.

The project represents the first time the Conservation Stewardship Program under the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service has supported biochar production as a forest management tool on private land.

The alliance has 380 acres, and its mission is to improve management of the

forest and make biochar in a profitable way that creates jobs.

So far, the alliance has been successful.

"It's really gratifying to work on something that everyone supports," Carloni says.



YONG HONG ZHONG

In-person Watercolor Workshop

Oct 3rd & 4th 2020 9:30 am - 4 pm

www.astoriaartloft.com/workshops.php



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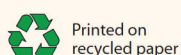
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