

IN BRIEF

New round of virus relief business grants available

Another round of coronavirus business relief grants with expanded eligibility has been made available by Clatsop Economic Development Resources.

State grants worth \$5,000 and more are now available to small businesses that have received less than \$100,000 in federal relief through programs like the Paycheck Protection Program and Economic Injury Disaster Loans.

Businesses with 25 or fewer employees are eligible if they were either forced to shut down by a state order or can demonstrate a 25% drop in gross revenue in a given month between March and August, compared to the same month in 2019.

Recipients of previous state relief grants are also eligible for the same amount, subject to a random selection process, and can fill out a short-form application.

The grant application is online at clatsopcc.edu/cedr and due by 5 p.m. on Friday. If the total amount of grant funds requested exceeds the available funds, a random selection process will be used.

For more information, contact cedr@clatsopcc.edu

Crash delayed traffic on Highway 101 near Gearhart

Traffic was delayed Thursday afternoon on U.S. Highway 101 near Gearhart due to a crash.

Officials say a Jeep Cherokee was rear-ended by the driver of a Chevy Tahoe while stopped on the highway southbound waiting to turn left onto Dellmoor Loop.

The Jeep Cherokee spun out into the northbound lane and caught on fire. The driver was able to get out and away from the fire.

The driver of a Toyota Sienna was heading northbound on the highway and reportedly swerved to try to avoid the Jeep Cherokee, but they still collided.

The drivers of the Chevy Tahoe and Jeep Cherokee were taken to local hospitals.

Coast Guard cutter Steadfast returns

The U.S. Coast Guard cutter Steadfast returned to Astoria on Sunday after a 57-day counternarcotics patrol to the eastern Pacific Ocean.

The crew boarded five suspected smuggling vessels, detained eight suspected drug traffickers and seized 3,905 pounds of pure cocaine, worth about \$67 million, according to the Coast Guard.

Astoria police officer promoted to sergeant

Astoria police officer Thomas Litwin was promoted to sergeant, replacing Brian Aydt, who retired in August.

Litwin has been with the Astoria Police Department for a decade, and has served as an officer and as a detective. He also represents the Astoria Police Department on the major crimes team.

— The Astorian

ON THE RECORD

Assault

• Monica Lynn Terrell, 58, was arraigned Wednesday for assault in the fourth degree and harassment.

Attempted assault

• Scott Martin Laforce, 40, of Warrenton, was arraigned Wednesday for attempted assault in the second degree, unlawful use of a weapon, criminal mischief in the first degree, two counts of menacing and disorderly conduct in the second degree.

Robbery

• Timothy Tylor Scovill, 27, of Astoria, was arraigned Wednesday for robbery in the third degree, interfering with a police officer, escape in the third degree and theft in the second degree.

Computer crime

• Anthony James Wagner, 26, was arraigned Wednesday for 14 counts of computer crime, five counts of forgery in the first degree, five counts

of theft in the first degree, 14 counts of identity theft, nine counts of theft in the second degree and five counts of forgery in the second degree.

Meth possession

• William Berkeley Waddell, 51, was arraigned Wednesday for unlawful possession of methamphetamine.

Disorderly conduct

• James Robert Kieweg, 29, was arrested Thursday on Ninth and Astor Street in Astoria for disorderly conduct in the second degree.

• Kevin Coats, 55, was arrested Wednesday on the New Youngs Bay Bridge for disorderly conduct and giving a false name to a police officer.

Unlawful entry

• Olavi Nauha, 25, of Astoria, was arrested Wednesday on Eighth Street and Astor Street in Astoria for unlawful entry into a motor vehicle.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

MONDAY

Youngs River Lewis & Clark Water District Board, 6 p.m., 34583 U.S. Highway 101 Business.

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

TUESDAY

Clatsop County Planning Commission, 10 a.m., (electronic meeting).

Warrenton City Commission, 6 p.m., City Hall, 225 S. Main Ave.

Lewis & Clark Fire Department Board, 6 p.m., main fire station, 34571 U.S. Highway 101 Business.



Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District

Broadway Middle School in Seaside.

Park district to buy Broadway Middle School

Potential for recreation and community events

By R.J. MARX The Astorian

SEASIDE — The Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District will purchase Broadway Middle School from the Seaside School District.

While the purchase price is undisclosed, park district board members approved a resolution to seek financing for up to \$2.5 million in a special meeting on Thursday.

"I think this is a really good opportunity and hopefully we'll be able to program recreational and community opportunities for people that live here," Skyler Archibald, the executive director of the park district, said. "It comes at a much more affordable price tag than the previous bond and (the cost of) new construction would be at any point."

Broadway Middle School, located off of U.S. Highway 101 and Broadway, is among school properties relocating this fall to a new Spruce Drive location outside of the tsunami inundation zone.

WHILE THE PURCHASE PRICE IS UNDISCLOSED, PARK DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS APPROVED A RESOLUTION TO SEEK FINANCING FOR UP TO \$2.5 MILLION IN A SPECIAL MEETING ON THURSDAY.

Marketed at \$2.9 million, 3 acres are zoned residential and 2.4 acres are zoned for commercial use of the 5.4-acre property. The 73,000-square-foot building includes the school with two gyms, cafeteria and kitchen.

In seeking tax-exempt debt financing, the park district is represented by a member of the Special Districts Association of Oregon, Archibald said, using financing options the district has used in the past to expand the Sunset Pool and acquire park district property.

A portion of funds will cover an undisclosed amount of earnest money to the school district and inspection costs, which are already underway.

The park district has 45 days to conduct due diligence, at which point the earnest money would become nonrefundable.

Inspection begins next week, and the park district could close on the property by Dec. 17.

"In the agreement, there is an opportunity for us or the school district to adjust the offer," Archibald said. "We don't anticipate doing that. We are hopeful we won't find anything that really changes our mind. But we wanted this longer due diligence so we can see the building with fresh eyes and get into some of the places we haven't been able to get into and see the condition of those spaces. We know it's an older building. We still don't want to find any big hidden surprises."

A \$20 million bond for a renovation and expansion of the Sunset Pool was rejected by voters in 2018.

A business plan for the purchase of the middle school

by the park district was presented last November.

In June, the park district board rejected pursuit of the project, citing potential remediation costs, rejection of the 2018 bond and a weak economy.

The board reversed its decision last month.

Potential partners going forward include the city, which leases portions of the property from the school district.

"The city has expressed an interest in maintaining that part of the property for the visitors bureau, chamber of commerce building as well as the public restrooms," Archibald said.

The school district has also shown interest in leasing part of the property as gym overflow and locker rooms for sporting events at Broadway Field.

Board members saw potential for commercial tenants on the property.

"There could be dance studios in there," board member Michael Hinton said. "There could be a doggie day care. I'm looking forward to seeing this develop. It's more than a landmark endeavor."

Some Oregon pumpkin patches almost got shut down

Johnson intervenes to save hayrides

By SIERRA DAWN McCLAIN Capital Press

SAUVIE ISLAND — Farmers say a lack of communication between government agencies and conflicting last-minute guidance issued to farms nearly shut down some Oregon pumpkin patch activities.

Farm advocates say visitors to Oregon pumpkin patches last weekend probably had little idea of the "crazy scramble" that happened behind the scenes to keep fall agritourism open.

Since spring, farmers have called the state Department of Agriculture and other agencies to ask how to safely operate pumpkin patches this fall.

Then at around 5 p.m. on Oct. 1, less than 48 hours before many pumpkin patches were set to open, the Oregon Health Authority issued a last-minute change to the Department of Agriculture's guidelines to some farms via email.

The health authority's rule, as interpreted by the Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Administration, which enforces workplace safety, would have disallowed hayrides, corn mazes, tractor rides and similar interactive activities for any county still in phase one of reopening from coronavirus restrictions. Washington, Multnomah and Clackamas



Kari Egger

Pumpkins at The Pumpkin Patch on Sauvie Island.

counties in the Portland area are in phase one, as is Malheur County in southeastern Oregon.

"ODA's previous guide for U-pick and pumpkin patch operations came out early this summer. So this OHA document came completely out of the blue," said Samantha Bayer, policy counsel at the Oregon Farm Bureau. "Why weren't the agencies coordinated on this?"

Emails obtained by the Capital Press show the new guidance was based on a chart from Gov. Kate Brown's office that farm groups say had never been released to the public.

Aaron Corvin, a spokesman for OSHA, told the Capital Press his agency has overall been nimble and worked hard to communicate clearly, but there have been a few minor hiccups.

"Every now and then, like this case demonstrates, you do ... you get a situation where there needs to be some clarification. But from

our end, you know, we're able to pretty quickly get things ironed out and move forward," said Corvin, who noted that the agencies corrected the miscommunication the next day.

Jonathan Modie, a spokesman for the Oregon Health Authority, told the Capital Press his agency works "really closely" with the Department of Agriculture and OSHA and that communication is "very fluid and collaborative."

"Oh gosh, we're working so hard to communicate clearly and listen to businesses. We definitely want to support our farming industries," Modie said.

The Pumpkin Patch on Sauvie Island, founded in 1967, was one of the farms that would have been impacted.

Kari Egger, who co-owns

the farm with her husband, Bob, said without a hayride option, the farm's profits would have been hurt because the pumpkin patch lies a third of a mile from the main entrance, and the pumpkins are huge and would be difficult for some visitors to carry.

The pumpkin patch brings in about half of the farm's annual sales.

The Eggers had prepared for months to open their pumpkin patch with new safety measures. They ditched a tractor-pulled ride for kids. They scrapped the hay maze and hay pyramid. They set up hand sanitizer stations, prepicked pumpkin displays and signs reminding visitors that masks are required. They even set up online ticket sales.

"We felt like we went over the top," Egger said.

So when Egger got the unexpected guidance on Oct. 1, she called state Sen. Betsy Johnson, D-Scappoose, who took up the farmers' cause.

Because of Johnson's help, just in time for the weekend, the Oregon Farm Bureau and the agencies crafted new rules for pumpkin patches that farmers say are simpler and more fair.

"Betsy Johnson and the farm bureau saved our hineys," said Egger, "and they saved Halloween."

the Astorian

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DIGITAL

EZpay (per month) \$8.00

Advertisement for Clatsop County Animal Shelter featuring a dog named Lola. Text includes 'Please ADOPT A PET! LOLA', 'Lola is a six year old American Staffordshire Terrier mix', and contact information for the shelter.

Advertisement for The Astoria Finnish Brotherhood Auxiliary. Text includes 'THE ASTORIA FINNISH BROTHERHOOD AUXILIARY presents DRIVE-THRU-PICK UP LAKSLODA LUNCH', 'Thursday, October 15 from 11:30-1:30 \$15 per box lunch', and location 'Suomi Hall 244 W. Marine Dr. Astoria, Oregon'. Includes a Finnish cross logo.