

## IN BRIEF

## Unemployment continues uneven march downward

Clatsop County's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate dropped again in October to 7.3% from 8.5% in September, although the recovery from the initial waves of coronavirus-related layoffs has been uneven.

Seasonally adjusted employment rates compare expected with real changes in the economy. The county lost 410 jobs in October, 60 less than expected during the transition into a slower wintertime economy. Nonfarm employment stood at 17,740 positions.

Leisure and hospitality, the industry hit hardest by the pandemic, shed 180 jobs at restaurants, bars and lodgings. At 4,290 positions, the industry represents almost 30% of private employment in the county.

Between March and April, more than half of leisure and hospitality jobs in the county disappeared as the economy retracted with restrictions meant to stem the spread of the virus. The industry has since clawed back about 80% of precoronavirus employment.

Retailers, who cut 15% of positions in the county at the start of the pandemic, have almost reached previous levels of employment. The industry represents nearly 20% of the county's private employment.

Food manufacturing, namely seafood processing, lost 100 jobs to end up at 620 in October. That was still 50 more jobs from a year ago. Wood and paper manufacturing, at 240 and 720 positions, experienced only minor declines.

Local education, at 1,010 jobs, jumped in employment from October but was still down 80 from a year ago when more students attended classes on campus. Local governments, at 1,110 positions, experienced only minor changes. The federal government cut 40 jobs as work on the census wound down.

## County completes John Day Bridge project

Clatsop County and the Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce completed the construction of a new bridge on John Day River Road in Astoria.

The 60-foot span replaced two culverts where water backed up during high tides, flooding the roadway and blocking fish passage in the John Day River.

The flooding created potentially dangerous whirlpools and blocked some vehicles from being able to pass.

## County creates short-term rental complaint hotline

A bilingual hotline will address nonemergency related complaints about short-term rentals in unincorporated Clatsop County.

People with complaints can call 503-325-1001. The operator will reach out to the short-term rental's point-of-contact to resolve the situation. An online complaint form can also be found on the county's website.

The company, LodgingRevs, will document and provide county code compliance staff with the complaints for review and additional code compliance action as necessary.

— *The Astorian*

## ON THE RECORD

## Theft

• Kendall Oscar Archer, 35, was arrested Sunday on the Astoria Riverwalk at 30th Street for theft in the second degree and interfering with a police officer.

• Rene Munoz Harow, 48, of Hillsboro, was arrested Sunday at Walmart in Warrenton for theft in the second degree.

• Iddo Dechter, 28, was arrested Saturday at Walmart in Warrenton for theft in the second degree, criminal mischief in the third degree and criminal

trespass in the first degree.

## DUII

• Cameryn Sagen, 19, of Seaside, was arrested Sunday for driving under the influence of intoxicants, reckless driving and unlawful possession of a firearm after driving off of W. Marine Drive in Astoria over an embankment into Youngs Bay.

• Scott Lyon, 54, of Astoria, was arrested Nov. 19 on 12th and Duane Street in Astoria for DUII and theft in the third degree.

## PUBLIC MEETINGS

## TUESDAY

**Community Center Commission**, 10 a.m., Bob Chisholm Community Center, 1225 Avenue A, Seaside.

**Clatsop County Board of Commissioners**, noon, work session, (electronic meeting).

**Seaside Library Board**, 4:30 p.m., Seaside Public Library, 1131 Broadway.

**Astoria Library Board**, 5:30 p.m., Astoria Library, Flag Room, 450 10th St.

**Seaside Planning Commission**, 6 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

**Miles Crossing Sanitary Sewer District Board**, 6 p.m., 34583 U.S. Highway 101 Business.

## the Astorian

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## THE PLUNGE



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

**Clatsop Community College President Chris Breitmeyer sinks into an ice bath outside of Patriot Hall on Nov. 16. Breitmeyer agreed to take the plunge if more than 80% of employees participated in the Employee Giving Campaign for the Clatsop Community College Foundation, and 87% donated.**

## Deschutes County adds court for veterans

By GARRETT ANDREWS  
*The Bulletin*

Scott Weaver had trouble returning to civilian life in 1999 when he left the U.S. Navy after six years as a hospital corpsman.

Diagnosed with depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder, he struggled for years to process a sexual assault at the hands of a naval chaplain.

Like many veterans, Weaver turned to alcohol to self-medicate and isolated himself from everyone he was ever close with.

In short order, he got two DUIIs, and a third in 2008. He hasn't been able to legally drive since, though he has picked up seven citations for driving on a suspended license.

In a larger city, he might have depended more on public transportation, he said.

"If I was in Portland, it might have been a different story," said Weaver, 47, a Bend tattoo artist and father of a 7-year-old daughter. "But living in central Oregon definitely has a unique set of problems."

With his record of honorable military service, the former medic might be an ideal candidate for a new program aimed at providing alternative justice and rehabilitation to veterans.

This month, Deschutes County District Attorney John Hummel announced the Veterans Intervention Strategy, a program devised by local leaders to add a veterans court, despite scarce judicial resources. Judges in Bend have lately been asking defendants at arraignment, their first court appearance, if any are military veterans so court officials can determine if they qualify.

"The traditional criminal justice system does not effectively address mental health illnesses or substance use disorders, so we continue to see the same individuals in court," Hummel said. "We needed to resolve this issue."

The intervention program will be essentially a treatment court without the courtroom. Under the program, when a participant fails to follow the rules, the district attorney's office will decide whether to kick the person out. In a typical veterans court, that call is made by the judge.

Defense attorney Shawn Kollie is optimistic the program will be less punishment-based and more treatment-based than traditional veterans courts.

"Oftentimes, when you



Ryan Brennecke/The Bulletin

**Scott Weaver, who had trouble returning to civilian life in 1999 when he left the U.S. Navy after six years as a hospital corpsman, is an ideal candidate for a new program in Deschutes County aimed at providing alternative justice and rehabilitation to veterans.**

slip up, a judge will impose jail time. It's a common tool to correct bad behavior, but I don't think it's often the best tool," Kollie, who worked on the team that developed the program, said. "In (VIS), we'll be able to be a little more creative than that, and that's because it's outside of a courtroom. Maybe we'll see more creative community services, like write a paper, or talk to folks, something more community-based."

U.S. Air Force veteran and activist Bill Minnix, a La Pine resident, is a believer in the traditional veterans court model, judge and all. He lobbied extensively on behalf of the Veteran Treatment Court Coordination Act, which passed Congress in 2019 and guarantees \$20 million to establish veterans courts around the country, as well as technical resources for developing a program.

But the new Deschutes County's veterans court alternative doesn't qualify for the program, so Minnix's energy has lately turned to convincing the Oregon Legislature to fund more judges in Deschutes County. He's been in touch with the area's legislative representatives and county commissioners.

"I feel like (VIS is) a really good start and it shows our community is committed to veterans," he said, adding that judges in treatment courts help reduce instances of bias and errors.

Kollie says the program might not be right for every veteran facing charges. Someone facing a minor misdemeanor charge for trespassing or theft might opt to take the conviction and spend a few nights in jail,

rather than sign up for an intensive treatment program that takes one to two years to complete.

Deschutes County has mental health and family drug courts that met regularly in a judge's courtroom prior to the coronavirus pandemic. But for more than a decade, a judge shortage has prevented Hummel and his predecessor, Patrick Flaherty, from adding a veterans court in Deschutes County, which is home to around 14,000 veterans, according to the most recent census data.

Specialty courts favor treatment over punishment and bring together people who are involved in rehabilitating a person. They are then required to fulfill certain obligations, like staying off drugs and attend counseling sessions. The specialty courts are said to reduce recidivism by addressing drug and alcohol abuse and mental illness, which are often noted as the root cause of criminal behavior.

The needs of veterans are unique, and the benefit of a veteran-focused court docket would have clear benefits, said Bend mental health counselor Shannon Kearney, whose clientele includes many veterans.

Veterans will be discharged and upon returning home, find that family dynamics have changed. They feel lost, and overwhelmed by their children and other responsibilities, she said.

"Overall, I think veterans need more support and services," Kearney said. "And not only combat vets. It's such a different world in the military."

Some veterans come back and struggle to find their purpose in a community with different standards, according to Kristin Gyford, director of Bend clinic Still Serving, which focuses on the mental health of veterans.

"It's a different degree of integrity and work ethic in the civilian world compared to the military," said Gyford, herself a 20-year military veteran.

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**The Astoria City Council wishes everyone a SAFE AND JOYOUS HOLIDAY SEASON!**

**Wear your mask and enjoy the lights and holiday festivities while social distance shopping in Downtown Astoria**

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## GAME MEAT PROCESSING



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