

Relief: Most federal help has expired

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“As soon as they vote, we’ll press send on the application process,” Leahy said.

The new round of relief grants comes with different requirements. Businesses and nonprofits must have been closed by government orders or prove they lost 25% of sales compared to a prior year between March and November because of the virus.

Jessica Newhall, a local business adviser, said businesses most impacted by the state’s recent two-week freeze on seated dining, fitness centers, museums and indoor entertainment will be given priority.

“That would include restaurants, gyms, those types of businesses,” Newhall said. “... Over the last several weeks, those are the businesses that we’ve been hearing from most aggressively. Although outside of that, restaurants tend to be anchor businesses in our community for retail, and so retailers and other businesses in core downtown areas are also seeing the ramifications, the impact of the two-week freeze.”

Before the freeze, fewer than 50 people per week on average in Clatsop County were filing new unemployment claims. But during the week ending Nov. 21, more than 150 new people applied for unemployment benefits. In the next week, more than 260 people applied for



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Virus relief grants are available to help businesses during the pandemic.

support. More than 90% of new claims came from people working in lodging and food services.

The new round of grants comes as most federal assistance has expired and Congress has stalled in negotiations for a new relief package. The Paycheck Protection Program, offered to companies to keep employees on payroll and off of unemployment, expired in August. Some companies are still using federal Economic Injury Disaster Loans as reserves, Newhall said.

“Business Oregon and the state of Oregon have gotten some funding into the small business community, as well as some of the local agencies,” she said. “And that’s helped, but it will be helpful to have

Congress pass an additional stimulus package aimed at small business support.”

Newhall said another challenge is programs like Pandemic Unemployment Assistance, which is set to expire by the end of the year. More than 9 million Americans received continuing support from the program as of mid-October, according to federal data.

“That will create a gap in funding for those businesses that are still unable to operate,” Newhall said. “If you look at event venues, or people in the catering industry, they have no ability to pivot their business. Those are the businesses that are really facing significant challenges moving into this next phase.”

County reports 18 new virus cases

The Astorian

Clatsop County reported 18 new coronavirus cases over the past few days.

On Monday, the county reported eight cases.

The cases include a man in his 30s, a man in his 40s and a woman in her 50s living in the southern part of the county. The others live in the northern part of the county and include two females under 10, a woman in her 20s, a man in his 30s and a woman in her 50s.

All eight were recovering at home.

On Saturday, the county reported 10 cases. The cases include a female between 10 and 19, a woman in her 30s, a

man and a woman in their 40s and a man in his 50s living in the northern part of the county.

The others live in the southern part of the county and include a male under 10, a male between 10 and 19, a man in his 40s and two men in their 80s.

One was hospitalized and the rest were recovering at home.

The county has recorded 418 cases since March. According to the county, 302 have recovered, seven have been hospitalized and one has died. The rest were recovering at home.

The Oregon Health Authority reported 85,788 cases and 1,045 deaths from the virus statewide as of Monday morning.

Bates: Wants to make home available for ‘Short Circuit’ fans

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plans to have a fence around the property and a pen similar to the one in the movie where guests can keep their pets.

“I’m basically going to go and prop the whole outside of the house as closely as I can to how it looked in the screen,” he said.

Bates, who has been collecting vintage action figures since he was a child, made national news five years ago when his pricey collection of “Star Wars” memorabilia was stolen. Police and a local resale shop helped return most of his collection, which he plans to put on display for guests. He secured a homestay lodging permit from the city and plans to start taking reservations early next year.

After the house and yard are finished, Bates plans a fundraiser to replicate Johnny 5, the robot from the movie.

“It’s easy for that movie to slip your mind, because they didn’t make a lot of toys for it,” he said. “I don’t think they knew how to

market it. So it kind of blurs the line of classic and cult classic ... This is my opportunity to make sure he lives on.”

Astoria has a checkered history with tourists flocking to famous local filming locations, namely the large crowds that pilgrimage up a dead-end street in Uppertown to get a photo in front of the house from “The Goonies.” Owner Sandi Preston threw tarps over the facade five years ago after claiming that some of the tourists were causing issues with theft, littering, vandalism and gridlock in the quiet neighborhood.

Bates said he has worked on Preston’s house and understands why she has tried to limit visitors. But he feels an obligation to make the “Short Circuit” home at least somewhat available to fans and doesn’t expect the same deluge of visitors on Hume Avenue.

“I think at best I’d want, like, 20% of her crowd on a bad day,” he said. “But it’s been really fun. I’ve had some visitors drive 1,000 miles to come here.”

Sweet: Could face imposition of driving charge

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Sweet said he is going to a treatment center that specializes in help for emergency responders.

Reports from the LifeSafer Ignition Interlock device indicate Sweet entered his vehicle several times in September with test results detecting alcohol. In October, the Umatilla County District Attorney’s Office filed a state notice of noncompliance with DUI diversion.

Sweet was driving a 2014 Toyota Tundra on Interstate 84 on Feb. 29 when he was pulled over for failure to stay in his lane. Police found an open container of alcohol in his vehicle. Sweet’s blood alco-

hol content was 0.15%.

Sweet pleaded no contest in June to driving under the influence of intoxicants. As terms of the agreement, he is not allowed to consume alcohol.

“This is an order to show cause to show why (the diversion program) should not be terminated,” Umatilla County District Attorney Daniel Primus said. “It’s to show cause why it should not be revoked or terminated based on negative reports.”

Sweet could face imposition of the driving charge as well as a sentence in a court hearing, Primus said. “It’s a show cause to see if anything should occur in regard to the actions that occurred. It would

be a hearing at this point to find out if he violated his diversion,” he said. “It’s up to the court to make a determination.”

Sweet was appointed city administrator in 2011. He is a volunteer at the Gearhart Fire Department and was the former director of the Surfsand Resort in Cannon Beach.

“This is a difficult time for many, with the ongoing pandemic now in its ninth month,” Gearhart Mayor Paulina Cockrum said. “It is a good time for us all to come together as a community during the holiday season. I know I feel grateful every day for being able to live in such a special place here on the coast.”



The **Astoria Riverfront Trolley team** wants to thank ALL trolley lovers for your understanding and continued interest in **OLD 300**. We miss seeing you all and relating our stories about our wonderful town, sights, and history. Hope to see you aboard the trolley just as soon as we can.

Thank you from the trolley volunteers:

Aletha, Amanda, Ann, Bill, Blake, Bob C., Bob K., Bob M., Bob W., Brett, Cameron, Carol, Caroline, Chad, Chuck, Craig, Dale, David K., David R., David S., David S., Doug, Ed, Frank, Fred, Gayle, Jeff, Jim, John, Ken, Kent, Larry, Lief, Lenard, Leonard, Loran, Lori, Matt, Mike A., Mike B., Pat, Paul, Richard, Rick, Rob, Roman, Ron, Russ, Sara, Seyrra, Stan, Steve A., Steve W., Ted, Tiffany, Wes, and Willis.

We will be back helping **Old 300** show off our wonderful waterfront to locals and visitors as soon as it is safe to do so.

If you have family and or friends visiting and want to show them the trolley (groups of 6 or less please), call Frank at 503 741 7436 and set up a time to view Old 300 at the Trolley Barn at 480 Industry (in the Port of Astoria area).

THANK YOU for your support!