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CARBON CREDITS BUFFER ASTORIA'S FINANCES

An investment at Bear Creek

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Astorian

Astoria's 3,700-acre Bear Creek watershed is a primary source of drinking water and revenue from both logging and sequestering carbon. But it needs a lot of maintenance.

A 70-acre swath of young forest over the hill from the Bear Creek Reservoir needs to be thinned to promote a healthy, diverse forest. A failing culvert on Cedar Creek just upstream of the reservoir needs to be removed and replaced with a bridge to return the stream to its natural state.

The city is deciding how to invest \$837,500 it netted from a November sale of carbon sequestration credits into forest stewardship and maintenance projects over the coming years, while buffering capital improvement funds against poor logging years.

Forest stewardship projects primarily involve thinning dense young stands of trees to promote better growth and species diversity that can make the forest more resilient to pests and pathogens, City Forester Ben Hayes said.

"The goal there is to create a for-

est that is more resilient in the face of heavy rainfall and weather extremes, and able to provide viable quantities of high-quality water for the indefinite future," he said.

The Great Coastal Gale of 2007 blew down 70 acres of trees on a western-facing hillside southwest of Bear Creek Reservoir, the city's main retainer of drinking water. The city replanted, but the young forest is now a jungle of more than a thousand trees an acre dominated by species such as hemlock and alder.

Hayes hopes to thin between 40 and 60 acres of the new forest, creating more space for trees to grow and become resistant to wind and extreme weather. Thinning would also allow foresters to pick and choose

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Industrial logging a risk to drinking water • Page A2

Photos by Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian
TOP: Hemlock and alder trees dominate the 70-acre section of land near Bear Creek Reservoir that was blown over in 2007. **BELOW:** Astoria is investing in forest stewardship projects in areas like the Bear Creek watershed.



Van Heusen closes in Seaside

Business attire store active since 2001

By R.J. MARX
The Astorian

SEASIDE — Santa made his last stop at Van Heusen on Christmas Eve as the business attire store at Seaside Outlets closed its doors.

The store had been in Seaside since 2001.

"It's tough out there," said Jeff Ter Har, owner of Ter Har's in Seaside and Cannon Beach. "Retailers are having a lot of problems. Everybody is."

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Local events face an uncertain new year

Local events, like the Astoria Regatta, face an uncertain 2021 because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

City weighs grant funding

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Astorian

Local cultural groups scrapped spring and summer events as the coronavirus pandemic shut down public gatherings and much of the region's tourism-based economy beginning in March.

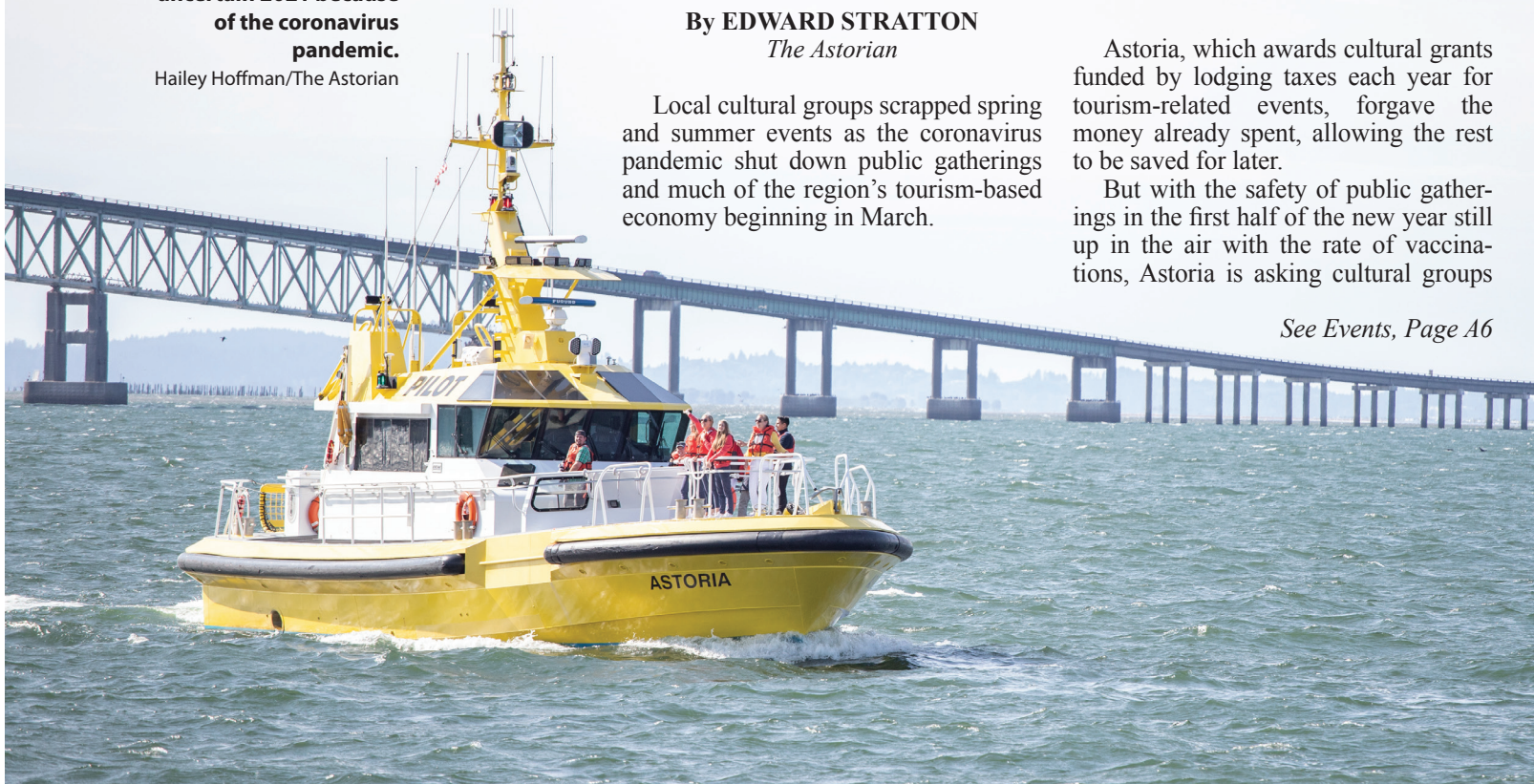
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County reports new virus cases • A6

Astoria, which awards cultural grants funded by lodging taxes each year for tourism-related events, forgave the money already spent, allowing the rest to be saved for later.

But with the safety of public gatherings in the first half of the new year still up in the air with the rate of vaccinations, Astoria is asking cultural groups

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After a move from Seaside, a tragedy

Rivera was killed in Portland shooting

By R.J. MARX
The Astorian

Gabriel Rivera was found dead in north Portland in early December of gunshot wounds. The

20-year-old former Seaside resident was the 48th homicide victim in Portland last year.

His family wants to make sure he is more than just another unsolved crime.

"Even though Gabe died as a young man, he will always be a child in my eyes," his cousin, Nourah AlJaber, said.

Rivera lived in Seaside in his teens and attended Seaside High School, where he made many friends, his grandmother, Rochelle Paputsis, said.

Rivera moved to Portland in mid-October with his fiancée, Ashlee Ruppert, to be closer to their families.

"We thought coming home would be good for him," Paputsis said. "He was coming home to his family. We didn't expect this at all."

Rivera worked 10-hour shifts as a forklift driver, as well as doing deliveries for DoorDash.

"He had dreams and plans, and



Gabriel Rivera, a former Seaside resident, was a victim of an unsolved homicide in Portland in December.

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