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CORONAVIRUS



Photos by Nicole Bales/The Astorian

ABOVE: Astoria High School senior Xochitl Perez discusses the difficulties she has working from home during the pandemic.
BELOW: Community leaders met via Zoom on Thursday to urge people to work together to reduce the spread of the coronavirus.

Community leaders issue plea to stem virus

By NICOLE BALES
The Astorian

In a plea to the community, North Coast political, business, health, education and social service leaders on Thursday asked people to work together to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

“While we respect that there are different attitudes towards this crisis, we are concerned about our children, our economy and our collective health,” they said in a letter on the eve of Clatsop County again being categorized by the state as extreme risk for the virus on Friday. “This is a plea to all of us to

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take on this issue as a community, not as individuals, not as combatants.”

In a Zoom call, some of the most compelling accounts came from an emergency room doctor and from students who are trying to cope through the pandemic.

“We’re going to continue to bounce back and forth between extreme risk and high risk as long as people continue to engage in riskier practices every time

we drop to a lower risk level,” said Dr. Regina Mysliwiec, an emergency room doctor at Columbia Memorial Hospital in Astoria.

She attributed the rising number of virus cases, in part, to “COVID fatigue” — people who are tired of wearing masks and avoiding social gatherings.

“I think part of the fatigue comes in our county with the number of mild cases that we’ve had,” Mysliwiec said. “Anyone who gets the county alerts sees the number of cases rising, and they also see very few of those people had been hospitalized or have died, and

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County joins call to ease virus restrictions

By NICOLE BALES
The Astorian

The Clatsop County Board of Commissioners called on Gov. Kate Brown to reduce restrictions for counties at extreme risk for the coronavirus.

Indoor activity at restaurants, bars, gyms and entertainment venues is prohibited in counties categorized as extreme risk.

In a letter to the governor on Wednesday, Commissioner Mark Kujala, the board’s new chairman, requested capacity for indoor activity to remain the same as counties at high risk — 25% or 50 people, whichever is smaller.

“As a county that implemented early local restrictions to stem the tide of the virus, we are fully aware of the complex considerations required to balance the physical, mental, emotional and economic health of a community,” Kujala said. “We believe an iterative and calibrated approach, that thoughtfully weighs all these considerations, is the path forward.

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Virus outbreaks disclosed by state

New cases at care home, construction firm

By NICOLE BALES
The Astorian

Coronavirus outbreaks have been disclosed at Clatsop Retirement Village and Big River Excavating in Astoria.

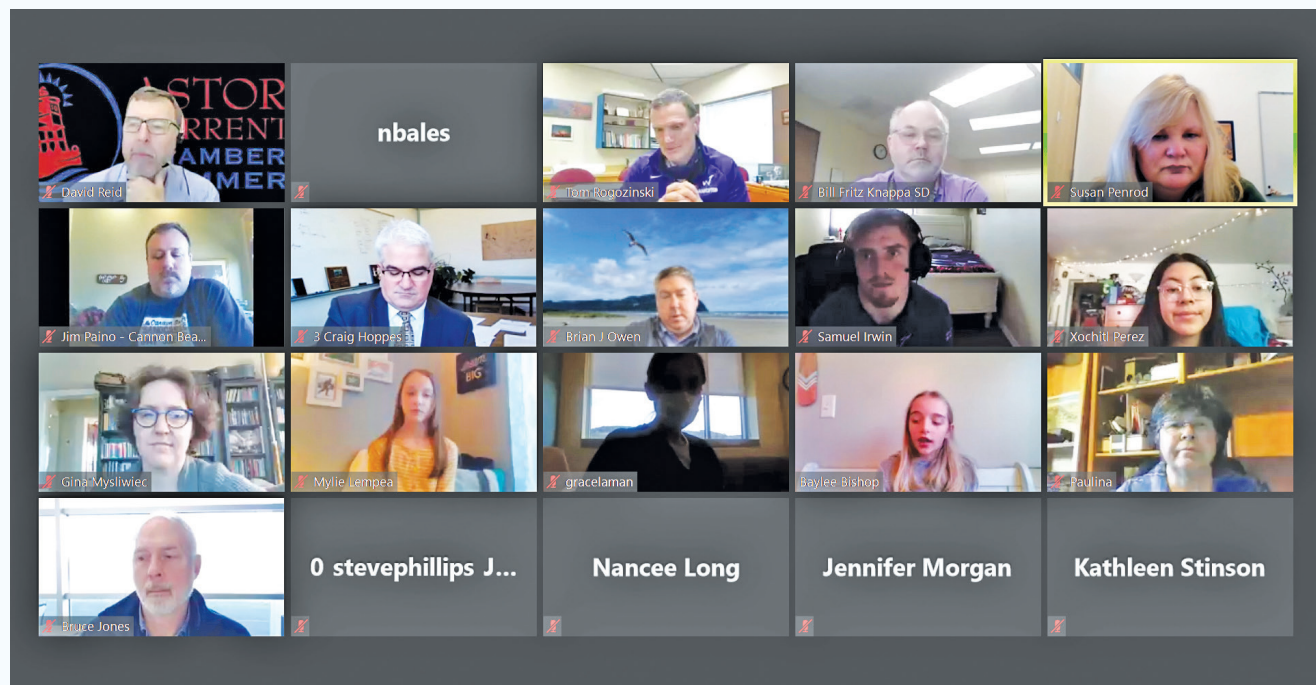
At least six coronavirus cases are tied to Clatsop Retirement Village, an assisted living facility which operates under the umbrella of Clatsop Care Health District. The cases date back to Jan. 5.

Seven cases have been reported at Big River Excavating dating back to Dec. 28.

The Oregon Health Authority disclosed the outbreaks as part of a weekly report released on Wednesday.

The health authority discloses outbreaks at businesses with 30 or more workers once five virus cases are reported. Outbreaks at assisted living and other care facilities are reported after three cases or one death.

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Port director returns after recovering from virus

Isom quarantined at home over holidays

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Astorian

Port of Astoria commissioners gave Will Isom, the Port’s executive director, a warm welcome back during a recent online meeting after he had been out sick from the coronavirus.



Will isom

Isom returned to the Port office Monday after becoming one of the highest-ranking local officials to test positive for the virus so far. Michael McNickle, Clatsop County’s public health director, tested positive for the virus in June.

“I don’t know what the source is,” Isom said. “According to the medical provider, (with) the community spread at this point, it’s hard to trace. I had started to get symptoms Dec. 23, and then I went in the 24th and got tested, and ended up testing positive.”

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Port facilities plan brings state support closer



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Repairs are needed at the East Mooring Basin.

Agency prioritizes maintenance projects

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Astorian

The Port of Astoria has completed a draft capital facilities plan, mapping out around \$20 million in needed maintenance and looking to the future of operations while taking one step closer to more financial support from the state.

The Port finished a strategic plan in February laying out how the agency will get on stable footing financially. Business Oregon, the state’s economic development agency, paid for the creation of a capital facilities plan to prioritize

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