

CORONAVIRUS

Bonamici sees more support for restaurants

A roundtable on virus relief

By **EDWARD STRATTON**
The Astorian

U.S. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici heard from restaurant owners Friday about the lack of effective support amid the coronavirus pandemic, but was hopeful about more relief under a Biden administration and Democratic Congress.

The Oregon Democrat has pushed for a \$120 billion bailout for restaurants, one of the industries hardest-hit during the pandemic. She convened a roundtable of restaurant owners Friday, including Chris Nemlowill of Fort George Brewery and Micha Lattek of Street 14 Cafe, to get their perspective.

Restaurateurs took aim at the Paycheck Protection Program, through which lenders distributed \$523 billion in potentially forgivable, government-backed loans to help keep people employed during the economic slowdown. The most recent stimulus package from Congress included another \$284 billion for the program.

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State scrambles vaccine priority list

Brown blames delay on Trump administration

By **GARY WARNER**
Oregon Capital Bureau

Oregon is once again scrambling the priority list for COVID-19 vaccinations, with some seniors' priority pushed from this weekend to March.

Gov. Kate Brown and health officials blamed the whipsawing schedule on unreliable numbers and statements from the Trump administration as it wraps up its final days in office.

Brown announced on Jan. 12 that the vaccine would be opened up to those 65 and older beginning Saturday.

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Fifth virus death reported in county • A6



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

A landslide closed Highway 30 east of Astoria this month.

State weighed landslide risk before logging off Highway 30

By **KATIE FRANKOWICZ**
The Astorian

A landslide that shut down U.S. Highway 30 east of Astoria this month appears to have stabilized despite several more days of heavy rain.

Rain is considered the primary trigger for the Jan. 4 slide about 3 miles east of the city that sent a pile of debris onto the road and trapped a passing truck. But some people in the community, including neighboring property owners, point to logging activities they believe left the area vulnerable when winter hit.

A harvest in 2018 cleared trees from the top of the slope down to the road. The area had just been replanted with Sitka spruce, Douglas fir and western hemlock in 2020 — most of them small plugs or 12-inch tall seedlings.

The parcel is one of a dozen units that make up a large piece of property off the highway owned and managed by the Oregon Department of Forestry. In 2017, it was a part of the Boiler Fleet timber sale.

In a report the state made ahead of the harvest, the parcel — Area 11 — was identified as a “high hazard landslide location” for shallow but rapidly moving slides with a risk to the public. The state required foresters to consult with the state’s geotechnical specialist before logging began.

The specialist determined that the slope above the highway should be a “leave area,” with trees left standing to keep the soil stable, but there was



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

The state weighed the risk of landslides before logging at Area 11 in 2018.

another risk to consider, said Ty Williams, the Astoria-based district operations coordinator for the Department of Forestry.

“Do you leave a tree that may stabilize soil or do you cut it if it might fall on the highway?” Williams said.

When these questions arise, the state defers to the owner at risk, the person whose property might bear the brunt of either scenario. In this case, that owner was also the state — the Oregon Department of Transportation. The property was Highway 30.

Normally, when there is logging along a highway, foresters leave a scenic buffer strip along the side of the road. This time, though, the two state departments agreed that due to the orientation of the slope there could be a danger of buffer trees falling across highway lanes during coastal windstorms. Some of the trees were large enough to potentially fall across both lanes of traffic, the state reported. This possibility outweighed the risk of a slide.

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Community volunteer hangs up his many hats

Francis retiring at Breakers Point

By **KATIE FRANKOWICZ**
The Astorian

By his accounting, Bruce Francis missed only one Clatsop County Planning Commission meeting in the 28 years he served on the volunteer board.

And he only missed that meeting because he didn’t know it had been scheduled, he said.

Francis recalled his nearly



unbroken streak at what ended up being his final meeting on Jan. 12. He recently announced he would be retiring from his many volunteer roles and from his longtime job managing the Breakers Point condominium complex in Cannon Beach.

“But I put that out there and I say, you know, when you get to a position like this in the county, take it seriously and really put some effort into it,” he said.

“Don’t treat it as a coffee

counter conversation piece,” he added. “There’s a lot of work that the county needs to have done, and I really appreciate everybody who steps up and volunteers their time.”

“I think it’s a very valuable thing to do, and I’m very pleased with the time that I’ve spent here.”

Born and raised in Australia, Francis settled on the Oregon Coast with his wife several decades ago. Over the years, he has become a familiar figure, especially in land use proceedings as the Planning Commission chairman who oversaw the often contentious hearings for a proposed liquefied natural

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Katie Frankowicz/The Astorian

Bruce Francis prepares to work his last day managing the Breakers Point condominium complex in Cannon Beach. Francis, who retires this month, has served on numerous community boards and committees in Clatsop County.

Nordic park passes \$1M in fundraising

Organizers have \$450,000 left to raise

By **EDWARD STRATTON**
The Astorian

The Astoria Nordic Heritage Park has surpassed \$1 million in funding through mostly individual donations, with \$450,000 left to raise before construction begins.

The Astoria Scandinavian Heritage Association has been working since 2015 to build a park to honor the impact of Scandinavian immigrants to the North Coast. Astoria has

approved the plans and provided a site at Peoples Park along Marine Drive and the Astoria Riverwalk.

Backers hope to begin construction in the fall.

Conceptual drawings of the Nordic park feature a large midsummer pole in the middle of a plaza surrounded by trees and shrubbery. Five granite slabs and flagpoles represent Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. An archway leads to a series of

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