

# the Astorian

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## CORONAVIRUS

# Shooting death ruled justified

Burns was killed after break-in in December

By NICOLE BALES  
*The Astorian*

An investigation into the police shooting that killed an Astoria woman near Sunset Beach in December found it was justifiable homicide.

Alaina Burns, 31, was shot and killed by an Oregon State Police trooper after entering a home on Dec. 28 and later climbing onto the roof with a gun.

Clatsop County Chief Deputy District Attorney Dawn Buzzard released the findings of the investigation on Monday. The findings identified the state trooper involved as James Eslinger.

Based on interviews with Eslinger and other witnesses, viewing body and dashboard cameras, home surveillance systems and other evidence, the report concluded it was clear the trooper was justified in using deadly force. The report added that the trooper had reasonable belief Burns was going to use deadly force against him and other officers.

### A burglary report

At about 1:30 p.m. on Dec. 28, police and sheriff's deputies responded to a

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# State narrows virus case count at hospital

Revision disclosed in weekly outbreak report

By NICOLE BALES  
*The Astorian*

The Oregon Health Authority has narrowed the coronavirus cases tied to Columbia Memorial Hospital.

In a weekly report on workplace outbreaks released on Wednesday, the health authority listed 14 cases dating from Nov. 27 to Dec. 22. The state had previously detailed 27 cases from Nov. 27 to Jan. 14.

The health authority discloses outbreaks at businesses with 30 or more workers once five virus cases are reported.

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## A SNOWY FRIDAY

Astoria woke up to a light dusting of snow Friday.

Edward Stratton/The Astorian

### MORE INSIDE

Winter weather advisory issued • A2

# Astoria students go back to school after long wait



Katie Frankowicz/The Astorian

Children line up to enter Astor Elementary School on Thursday, their first day back into classrooms since the coronavirus pandemic shut down schools last March.

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ  
*The Astorian*

As Tristan Robinson went through the checklist his parents created to keep him on track each morning, he was thrilled to skip one particular step: Getting out the computer for his online classes.

Instead, Thursday was the kindergartner's "first day of school" — his first day being in a classroom in front of a teacher with other students since the coronavirus pandemic shut down schools and many day care and preschool centers last March. Robinson was among nearly 100 elementary school students who began to return to classrooms on Thursday as the Astoria School District slowly reopened to in-person instruction.

Over the next week, an estimated 507 children in kindergarten through fifth grade will return to classrooms at Astor Elementary and Lewis and Clark Elementary. If all goes well and case metrics remain low in Clatsop County, the school district plans to begin to do the same for middle school and high school students beginning March 11.

All students in the school district started the school year online, but the district brought a limited number of students back into buildings for specific classes and activities in recent months. In January, the school board voted in favor of a phased reopening beginning with the youngest students.

The district will continue to follow

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# A hopeful return for sports

By GARY HENLEY  
*The Astorian*

It's game on for Oregon school sports. Or, rather, game on, with safety precautions.

After a nearly yearlong absence, the Oregon Health Authority announced Wednesday it will be revising its guidance for the continuation of outdoor sports.

That opens the door for high school fall sports to begin the first week of March — with protocols in place.

Astoria athletic director and football coach Howard Rub is cautiously optimistic and pleased that there are now at least plans in place for sports.

"The premise is, we are excited, if we find that we can do all this stuff safely," he said. "Everyone is excited to put something together that will be safe and healthy for our kids, provided we can make sure to follow all the new guidelines that will officially come out on Friday, regarding contact sports like football. We will certainly try to move forward."

The revised sports schedule will have fall sports up first, with cross-country, football, soccer and volleyball. Practices for football officially begin on Monday, with practices for other sports to begin later this month. Games and events start March 1.

In a statement, Gov. Kate Brown said, "This has been a difficult year for Oregon's youth athletes and, as our COVID-19 numbers have dropped, I have been committed to working with our health experts to reevaluate our protocols for sports."

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Edward Stratton/The Astorian

Buoy Beer Co. has begun jacking up the roof of the former Video Horizons to house new brewing equipment, part of an \$8 million waterfront expansion.

# Buoy Beer, Scoular interested in enterprise zone

Investments could bring tax breaks

By EDWARD STRATTON  
*The Astorian*

Buoy Beer Co. and The Scoular Co. are offering to invest millions and create higher-paying jobs in exchange for tax breaks on new property.

The Clatsop Enterprise Zone offers companies tax breaks on new investments in return for improving property and creating

new jobs that pay at least 130% of the average county wage. The companies still pay taxes on existing property.

Fort George Brewery was approved for an estimated \$617,000 in tax relief over 15 years. The company promised to invest at least \$12.5 million to convert the former Astoria Warehousing campus in Uniontown into a new brewery and create at least 35 jobs.

Buoy and Scoular pitched their projects to local leaders Wednesday. Clatsop County, Astoria, Warrenton and the Port of Astoria need to

approve additions to the enterprise zone.

River Barrel Brewing, the parent company behind Buoy Beer and Pilot House Distilling, has begun an \$8 million expansion on the waterfront expected to finish by the end of the year.

Buoy Beer is raising the roof of

*See Enterprise zone, Page A2*



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