

IN BRIEF

Crab test high for domoic acid in Grays Harbor

Washington state officials have added Grays Harbor to the list of places where Dungeness crab must be eviscerated before they can be sold.

The state found domoic acid levels were high in the viscera of crab caught in the harbor on Feb. 24. Once the crab viscera — the guts — are removed, however, the remaining meat is considered safe.

The state is already requiring processors to remove the guts from crab harvested in waters from the Oregon and Washington state border north to Point Chehalis.

Oregon prohibits the sale of any whole crab that was harvested from waters outside of Oregon where testing has found unsafe levels of domoic acid in the viscera.

The start of the commercial crab season was delayed off the North Coast until February as the state attempted to coordinate an opening date with Washington, which was seeing high levels of domoic acid in crab.

Fireman's ball canceled in Gearhart for second year over virus

GEARHART — This year would have been the 60th annual fireman's ball in Gearhart, but like the 59th event, it will be canceled due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The fundraiser is highlighted by gaming, live music and dancing.

The ball raises funds for necessary equipment for the fire department.

"Unfortunately the Volunteer Fire Association has decided that the May firefighters ball will be a little bit too early because of COVID," City Administrator Chad Sweet said at Wednesday's City Council meeting.

Between donations, clothing sales, the actual fundraiser and the Gearhart Golf Links Tournament, the ball generates between \$17,000 to \$20,000.

Residents and supporters can make donations online or purchase sweatshirts, T-shirts and other merchandise at the fire hall.

County reports one new virus case

Clatsop County on Friday reported one new coronavirus case.

A man in his 60s living in the southern part of the county was recovering at home.

The county has recorded 784 cases since the start of the pandemic. According to the county, 18 were hospitalized and six have died.

The Oregon Health Authority reported 156,884 cases and 2,293 deaths from the virus statewide as of Friday morning.

— *The Astorian*

Vacasa sued by rival management company over alleged 'smear campaign'

A small rival filed a complaint against Portland vacation rental management giant Vacasa on Wednesday, alleging that Vacasa had embarked on a "smear campaign" in an effort to poach clients.

The court case spotlights the intense dynamics underlying the market for managing vacation getaways. Privately held Vacasa has grown enormously since its founding in 2009, primarily by acquiring small management companies in vacation destination communities and by winning clients away from other businesses.

Bend-based Meredith Lodging maintains just 700 homes, in destinations along the Oregon Coast and in central Oregon. In its complaint, filed in U.S. District Court in Eugene, Meredith alleges that Vacasa sales representatives have been badmouthing the smaller competitor to its clients.

— *The Oregonian*

DEATHS

March 3, 2021

DONOVAN, Loris Jean, 85, of Rochester, Washington, formerly of Warrenton, died in Rochester. Caldwell's Luce-Layton Mortuary of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

March 2, 2021

MATHER, Ted Raymond, 86, of Astoria, died in Vancouver, Washington. Caldwell's Luce-Layton Mortuary of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

Feb. 27, 2021
FICKEN, Sterling John, 71, of Astoria, died in Astoria. Caldwell's Luce-Layton Mortuary of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

MONDAY

Seaside City Council, 7 p.m., (electronic meeting).

TUESDAY

Clatsop County Planning Commission, 10 a.m., (electronic meeting).

Clatsop Care Health District Board, 5 p.m. (electronic meeting).

Lewis & Clark Fire Department Board, 6 p.m., main fire station, 34571 U.S. Highway 101 Business.

Warrenton City Commission, 6 p.m., City Hall, 225 S. Main Ave.

Highway 30 could get a new name honoring Oregon veterans

Designation from Astoria to Idaho border

By **KEVIN HARDEN**
Oregon Capital Bureau

Oregon's long stretch of U.S. Highway 30, from Astoria to the Idaho border, could become the Oregon Veterans Memorial Highway.

Senate Bill 790, introduced by state Sen. Tim Knopp, a Bend Republican, would rename Oregon's 477-mile section of the national highway. On Wednesday, the bill was referred to the Senate Committee on Veterans and Emergency Preparedness.

Retired U.S. Army Lt. Col. Dick Tobiason of the nonprofit Bend Heroes Foundation is the driving force behind the bill. Tobiason, who served two tours during the Vietnam War as an Army aviator, and his one-man nonprofit operation led efforts on past legislation to rename eight Oregon highways to honor veterans. His legislative success rate is 100%.

"I've never lost a vote in 12 years doing these highways," Tobiason said.

It's simple math, he said.

The Bend Heroes Foundation raises all the money needed to create 4-by-8-foot signs to be posted along the highway with the veterans designation — probably more than \$10,000 for Highway 30. It pays the state Department of Transportation to install them. Not a dime of taxpayer funds goes into the effort.

"Why would the Legislature disapprove of this?" Tobiason asked. "It doesn't cost them a cent."

There are nearly 100 signs honoring veterans installed on eight Oregon highways stretching more than 3,000 miles across the state. Each designated highway has between 10 and 18 signs, he said. That means drivers could see one veterans highway honor sign every 65 miles.

Highway 30 extends 3,073 miles to Atlantic City, New Jersey, on the East Coast. It is the only major highway in Oregon not designated to honor veterans. It crosses 11 states and is the nation's third longest coast-to-coast highway.

Oregon's section of the highway that winds along the Columbia River from the Astoria Bridge through Scappoose and Portland before heading east as part of Interstate 84 is the beginning of Tobiason's plans for the road. He's working with veterans groups and lawmakers



Ron Baldwin

A signpost marks the intersection of U.S. Highway 30 with U.S. Highway 101.

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in 10 other states to get the same designation all the way to Atlantic City.

Tobiason's Bend Heroes Foundation has also asked Congress to designate the 3,365-mile U.S. Highway 20, which begins at Newport on the Oregon Coast and heads east to Boston, the National Medal of Honor Highway. Oregon's section of Highway 20 is already known as the Medal of Honor Highway.

SB 790 is also kind of an ending for Tobiason. He has proposed similar bills since 2008 and testified 14 times in favor of legislation. When he's finished with the Highway 30 project, just about every major highway in the state will honor veterans or service men and women missing in action.

Between World War I and wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Persian Gulf, 6,000 Oregon soldiers, sailors (including U.S. Coast Guard), Marines, merchant sea-

men and airmen were killed. During that same time, about 15,000 Oregonians were wounded in combat and nearly 1,000 were prisoners.

About 1,000 Oregonians remain missing in action from all of the conflicts.

Oregon highways Tobiason and the foundation has designated include:

- U.S. Highway 395, from California to Washington, is the World War I Veterans Memorial Highway.

- Interstate 5, from California to Washington, is known as the Korean War Veterans Memorial Highway and the Purple Heart Trail.

- A section of I-5 from Albany to Salem is the Atomic Veterans Memorial Highway.

- U.S. Highway 101, from Washington to California, is the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan and Iraq Veterans Memorial Highway.

- A section of U.S. Highway 26, from the Highway 101 intersection to Idaho, is the POW/MIA Memorial Highway.

Tobiason is already planning his Eastern Oregon trip later this year, when Highway 30 is officially designated the Oregon Veterans Memorial Highway. He's been to nearly every highway sign dedication ceremony, racking up more than 5,000 miles on his vehicle.

"We'll have a big ceremony in Ontario," Tobiason said. "We should have Idaho officials there, because their bill should be done about the same time."

The Oregon Capital Bureau is a collaboration between EO Media Group and Pamplin Media Group.

Consejo Hispano receives grant to hire new staffer

By **NICOLE BALES**
The Astorian



A grant will help Consejo Hispano hire a new case manager to provide one-on-one assistance for people trying to access resources and services.

Oregon Consumer Justice awarded the Astoria nonprofit with \$50,000 to assist rural Latino communities in Clatsop, Columbia and Tillamook counties impacted by the coronavirus pandemic and wildfires last year.

Consejo Hispano was one of 26 organizations that received funding from the advocacy group, which distributes unclaimed funds from class-action lawsuits.

"Our goal was to have an immediate impact on consumers who are most vulnerable in our state, so we structured our grant-making to get financial help quickly to these 26 organizations," Sayer Jones, a board member for Oregon Consumer Justice, said in a statement.

"Particularly for these first rounds of grants, we focused on helping those impacted by COVID-19 and last summer's wildfires. We selected nonprofits that serve

communities in geographical regions throughout the state, and we're incredibly proud of how many culturally-specific organizations we were able to connect with and support through this process."

Diana Niño, the communications manager for Consejo Hispano, said the organization has seen an increased demand for services since the start of the pandemic.

She said their receptionist was fielding phone calls, and found that many people needed someone to take the time to help with things like contacting entities that are difficult to reach, making appointments, filling out online forms and accessing benefits and services.

She said office closures and the move to virtual interactions during the pandemic have increased barriers for people who are not tech savvy or do not speak English.

Niño said staff has worked to meet these needs over the past year, but the new position will be dedi-

icated to assisting people and connecting them to services, including coordinating Consejo Hispano's stipend and financial assistance programs.

The organization received funding last year designated for financial food assistance and direct payments to undocumented people who were not able to access federal assistance during the pandemic. More money is expected this year.

The case manager will also be responsible for communicating with the county's emergency management department to coordinate disaster preparedness training and presentations and improve disaster response and communications for Spanish-speakers.

"When the wildfires happened, there was a lot of materials that were crucial for people to survive, and just manage the situation as best possible and they were not in Spanish," Niño said. "Everything was in English, and people were just disoriented."

"There were first responders telling them, 'You need to evacuate now.' So they understand, 'OK, we need to

save our lives.' But nobody was explaining in a language they understood. Where are they going? For how long? Can they take their pets? What happens if my property gets flooded?"

"There was just all of these questions and, unfortunately, there were no materials printed or online that people could understand. And a lot of the communications were also super wordy. So even for people who maybe know a little bit of English, they were like, 'I'm not sure what I have to do.'"

Niño said there are large Mexican and Guatemalan communities on the North Coast and sometimes people need help connecting with services at the consulates for the two countries.

She said the case manager will also help assess food insecurity in the Hispanic community, connect people with local food banks and pantries and help people sign up for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits.

"We're really excited to get this grant and looking forward to future collaborations with Oregon Consumer Justice," Niño said.

Seaside clarifies vacation rental complaint process

By **R.J. MARX**
The Astorian

SEASIDE — The Planning Commission has sought to eliminate confusion about who or where to call when the vacation rental next door is out of compliance.

Providing access to 24-hour local contacts has been a goal of the city's code compliance officer, Jeff Flory, whose job is to monitor vacation rental regulations and restrictions. Since he started about a year ago, he's worked with commissioners to tweak the rules to add responsiveness and accountability to the process.

For neighbors, the local contact information can be obtained online or by calling

the Planning Department.

If the emergency contact or homeowner doesn't respond within a reasonable amount of time — considered about two hours — then a complaint could be lodged with the city.

Failure to respond to a neighbor's valid complaint could lead to Planning Commission review of the property owner's conditional use permit.

Street parking, long a source of confusion for homeowners, neighbors and law enforcement, was also a matter of commission concern.

Visitors to a vacation rental property are allowed to use on-street parking, on a limited basis, for a limited period of time. Added

code language states visitors should not significantly increase traffic or negatively impact the surrounding neighborhood, since this is a violation of the vacation rental's condition of approval.

"The question becomes, as it always does for parking, 'How many is too much, how long is too long, what is OK,'" Chris Hoth, the chairman of the Planning Commission, said. "You can't say it's up to three cars for 45 minutes. It's a little subjective about what's considered to be a problem."

It will be up to the code enforcement officer to determine what's reasonable. "If this is a situation every weekend at a VRD where there's extra cars

there, we can argue it's having an impact on the neighborhood, and at that point, take a look at it on a specific case-by-case basis," Flory said.

"If it's something ongoing and continuous, that's something we'll want to address. If it's every once in a while, and it's a reasonable accommodation, I think we can explain it to the neighbors as such to try to keep on top of it. If it's a continuous problem, we'll come back to you guys and ask you to readdress that policy."

Other policy updates include conditions for applying for vacation rental permits, including neighborhood density and occupancy.

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