



INSIDE

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## CORONAVIRUS



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

People explore the underground portion of the new Astoria Food Hub building off of Marine Drive.

## Gearhart looks at bond for resiliency station

New facility outside tsunami zone

By R.J. MARX  
The Astorian

GEARHART — This could be the year that voters consider a bond to build a new resiliency station outside of the tsunami inundation zone on North Marion Avenue known as High Point.

The building will house the day-to-day operations of the fire department and police department.

At last Wednesday's City Council meeting, Mayor Paulina Cockrum said she would like to pursue a November bond "if all the necessary process steps fall into place by the filing deadline. Bond interest is quite low right now, and that is a big part of my reason for wanting to move forward at this time."

In 2018, after considering nine locations, the city's fire station committee recommended three concepts and locations to the public to help guide the decision-making process.

"Evacuation areas toward the ocean in Gearhart along Marion are relatively safe and may be good locations for a new station," the committee wrote.

A survey showed that 78% of the almost 1,000 who responded supported a new fire station and 75.5% supported a bond to pay

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## Foragers take on Astoria Underground

An artisan collective grows downtown

By EDWARD STRATTON  
The Astorian

A forest is growing in the Astoria Underground.

Foragers, an earthy collection of artisans, recently took over the center suite of the old Astoria-themed underground village on Marine Drive and 10th Street.

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## Food hub takes root at former Sears location

A nexus for producers and consumers

By EDWARD STRATTON  
The Astorian

In the 1930s, wholesale grocer Mason, Ehrman & Co. built a distribution hub in a concrete building between Marine Drive and what was then an active railroad spur running along the Columbia River waterfront. The building later became a storage center and then a Sears Hometown franchise until closing a year ago.

Now advocates are laying the roots of the Astoria Food Hub, a nexus for producers and consumers they hope to open in the fall.

Jared Gardner, the owner of Nehalem River Ranch and a central partner in the project, provides the grass-fed beef for Fort George Brewery's burgers, along with pastured pork. When the brewery runs out of meat, Gardner has to drive to cold storage he rents in Portland to retrieve more.

"There's a lack of infrastructure on the North Coast, which is what I'm trying to solve," he said.

The hub will include retail space along Marine Drive for locally grown and made products, along with educational and commercial kitchens for local producers and people learning to eat local. It will provide cold and dry storage and a distribution hub along the Astoria Riverwalk for community supported agriculture.

"It's a centrally located site where multiple producers can bring their



Library of Congress

The partners behind the Astoria Food Hub plan to restore the murals painted by artist Jo Lumpkin Brown on the back of the former Sears Hometown store.

*'THERE'S A LACK OF INFRASTRUCTURE ON THE NORTH COAST, WHICH IS WHAT I'M TRYING TO SOLVE.'*

Jared Gardner | owner of Nehalem River Ranch

things, store it, to have it distributed, have some retail," Gardner said.

### Recruiting

The food hub is recruiting producers and other partners who support its mission of enhancing the local food ecosystem to take up residence. One interested

partner is the North Coast Food Web.

For the past decade, the food web has provided technical assistance to producers and education to consumers. It runs a weekly market selling local goods from around 30 different producers.

Jessika Tantisook, the food web's executive director, said the business has quadrupled during the coronavirus pandemic because of the demand for local food. The group's board of directors is contemplating an expansion into the Sears building.

"We know that we need to expand our current cold storage, dry storage, freezer storage," she said. "... My idea as a director, would be that we co-locate with other community organizations and businesses that have commitments

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## A young leader in choir and cross-country

Parker to help lead the Gulls

By GARY HENLEY  
The Astorian

SEASIDE — If Kimber Parker's life was an album, the title track would be something like "Seeking Seaside."

It's the perfect place, right now, for Parker and her husband, Jesse. The Parkers moved to Seaside in 2017, when she landed a job as choir teacher at the high school.

Music has been a big part of Park-

er's life, along with running. And it's all come together in Seaside, where Parker is also the new cross-country coach for the Seagulls.

Running and music, music and running. Parker grew up with both, and now — just four years out of college — she is teaching teenagers both subjects. Her dream jobs come true.

"I come from a running family," she said. "I've been running since I was old enough to walk."

She ran for coach Billy Snow at Sweet Home High School, just east

of Corvallis, where the family moved from Los Angeles when Parker was 12.

As an athlete at Sweet Home, Parker said, "One of my fondest memories was running the 3-Course Challenge," the annual event at Camp Rilea, hosted by the Gulls. "I always associated Seaside with a really fun race."

Parker and co-coach Brett Duer — who built a strong cross-country program at Neah-Kah-Nie — took over the coaching duties in Seaside after Frank Januik stepped down last spring.

The Gulls have a small team this season — just seven runners — but it's a good year to break in a new coach and a new school, and possibly a new course.

"We're working out at the new

campus, which is really awesome," Parker said. "There's some really nice hills here, so we're getting a lot of hill workouts. There's still a lot of construction going on, so we haven't taken full advantage of the trails. Hopefully, we'll get to this fall. We'd like to eventually have a 5K course up there."

That's the outside part of the new campus.

Inside, for Parker, it's time for music — which also runs in the family.

"My dad is an incredible pianist — he can pick up any instrument," Parker said. "I learned to play the piano early, and started singing in a choir. My first year in choir was the seventh grade. I decided then that I



Kimber Parker

Kimber Parker, Seaside High School's choir teacher, is also their new co-coach in cross-country.

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