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INSIDE THE MERWYN

TOP: A room on the fourth floor of the Merwyn Apartments features a view of Astoria. The workforce housing project downtown hopes to welcome residents soon. **RIGHT:** Innovative Housing Inc. held tours this week. **BELOW:** A Merwyn Hotel sign hangs in the lobby. The building next to City Hall was also known as the Waldorf Hotel.

Photos by Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian



Commercial activity in rights of way under review

From firewood to flower stands

By NICOLE BALES
The Astorian

Clatsop County may soon ban flower stands, firewood sales and other commercial activity in county rights of way.

A moratorium on permits for businesses operating within rights of way has been in effect since October after a neighborhood dispute over a firewood stand in Warrenton.

County staff have since drafted a policy to prohibit commercial use in rights of way. County commissioners on Wednesday conducted the first public hearing on the amendment to the ordinance. The board is expected to adopt the policy by the end of the month.

Complaints about a firewood stand along Ridge Road in Warrenton prompted the county to take action. Allen Berry has been operating the firewood stand for about three years in the right of way, which runs in front of his home.

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County hires lobbying firm to help in Salem

Pac/West Communications to work on priority issues

By NICOLE BALES
The Astorian

Clatsop County has hired a lobbying firm to help protect and advance policy interests in Salem.

The county Board of Commissioners approved a \$45,000 contract with Pac/West Communications in October to provide legislative consulting services in 2021 and 2022.

The board endorsed a legislative agenda guide earlier this year to give Pac/West a reference for goals, strategies and priorities.

Among the goals, the county prioritized coronavirus-related expenses, the county jail and juvenile corrections, workforce development, affordable housing, homeless services, rural broadband initiatives, child care, public health and mental health.

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Local businesses support each other through difficult economy

Finding partnerships on coast

By EMILY LINDBLOM
The Astorian

Several businesses and organizations on the North Coast aim to lift each other up by choosing to sell each other's products.

Short Wave is one shop in downtown Astoria with the goal of supporting other local entrepreneurs. Owner Ari Freitag took on the model of selling consignment goods from local makers when she bought Lode-star Goods from Emily Geddes in 2019.

"It was always built in that there would be a focus on locally-made things," Freitag said. Short Wave sells a variety of items, including waxed canvas bags from Shift + Wheeler, which has its own showroom a short walk away.

"I can point out their stuff and refer customers to their showroom, and Shift + Wheeler promotes my business too," Freitag said.

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Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian
Bob Neroni pours tamari into a pan of fried rice, which incorporates vegetables from local farms.

Gimre building signs woodworkers, Thai eatery

Target opening for early spring

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Astorian

Curry & CoCo Thai Eatery and Ashriver Woodworks are splitting the building next to Gimre's Shoes, vacant since the closure of the restaurant Albatross in the fall. Both hope to open in early spring.

Delaney Mahncke and his brother-in-law, Chris Bjorkman, moved with their family of 15 over the summer from Castle Rock, Washington, to a historic homestead in Svensen. They established a workspace for the company in the home's barn and began trying to get their name out.

Ashriver evokes the Toutle River, a sediment-heavy waterway flowing from the volcanic cra-



Emily Lindblom/For The Astorian
From left, Chris Bjorkman, Naomi Mahncke, Amy Mahncke and Delaney Mahncke are behind Ashriver Woodworks.

ter of Mount St. Helens. The partners specialize in reclaimed wood turned into tables imbued in the middle with a river of colorful epoxy resin, along with other custom furniture.

"We've been always kind of looking for a retail space when we were in Washington," Mahncke said. "And just kind of the draw to the beach was the major reason we moved over here." The partners said they liked the darker, reclaimed look of Albatross they saw on the restaurant's Yelp page and plan to make it their new showroom. There are

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