

IN BRIEF

Vaccination rollout against virus speeds up

Clatsop County will begin vaccinating people ages 45 to 64 with underlying health conditions against the coronavirus on Monday.

Appointments will be arranged for 64-year-olds first, then 63-year-olds and so on. People should fill out the vaccine survey on the county’s website to enter the registry for a vaccine clinic appointment.

County health officials are urging people to take the first available vaccine.

Some people have requested the one-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine, but there are limited supplies of the vaccine locally. It is being reserved for individuals and groups with mobility challenges or other barriers to accessing vaccines through the regular vaccination clinics.

As of Friday, 14,075 doses have been administered in the county and 4,550 people are fully vaccinated. The county’s goal is to reach herd immunity against the virus is vaccinating 27,533 people.

Gov. Kate Brown on Friday announced that in light of increasing vaccine supplies from the federal government, Oregon will again accelerate its timelines for vaccine eligibility.

Front-line workers and people with underlying health conditions will be eligible on April 5. All Oregonians 16 and older will be eligible no later than May 1.

Park district opens new center for preschool classes

SEASIDE — Preschool classes begin Monday at the Sunset Recreation Center.

Staff has been working on transitioning youth programs to the facility, Skyler Archibald, the executive director of the Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District, said at Tuesday’s board meeting.

“Starting next Monday we will be able to have two preschool classrooms over there as well as our kindergarten classroom, two classrooms that are dedicated for that first-through-fifth grade,” he said.

Preschoolers will have “a little more room to stretch their legs” at the former Broadway Middle School, with the opportunity to use classrooms, cafeteria and gym space.

“The district is really working hard to provide programming during this time of COVID,” Archibald said. “Not a day goes by where I am not impressed by the work of staff in ensuring that we have a safe environment for our patrons.”

— *The Astorian*

Culvert replacement nearly complete

LONG BEACH, Wash. — Two-way traffic is expected to begin returning to normal on U.S. Highway 101 just west of the Washington state end of the Astoria Bridge.

The highway was undercut by a failing culvert during torrential rains over the winter, necessitating an emergency upgrade to improve storm drainage.

Work to correct drainage — which has been a chronic problem for years — resulted in long traffic delays starting March 16, with hundreds of vehicles lined up in either direction at some points during the repairs.

— *Chinook Observer*

DEATHS

March 24, 2021

VON SEGGERN, Jim Robert, 83, of Nehalem, died in Seaside. Caldwell’s Funeral & Cremation Arrangement Center of Seaside is in charge of the arrangements.

ON THE RECORD

DUII

- Juan Alberto Saballos, 62, of Seattle, Washington, was arrested Thursday at Pier 5 in Astoria for operating a boat under the influence of intoxicants following a water rescue. The Connor Foss, one of the responders to the scene, reportedly found an inflatable boat sinking at about 5:30 p.m. A person was located hanging on a chain of a boat anchor in front of the former Ship Inn restaurant and the Connor Foss crew helped the man out of the water.
- Brian Paul McCarthy, 43, was arrested Tuesday on Second Street and Marine Drive in Astoria for DUII, reckless driving and driving with a suspended license.
- Danny Benjamin Lee, 34, was arrested Tuesday on Second Street and Marine Drive in Astoria for DUII and reckless driving.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

TUESDAY

Gearhart City Council, 6 p.m., work session, (electronic meeting).

Light show likely the remnants of a failed rocket, experts say

By KALE WILLIAMS
The Oregonian

Bright flashes of light streaked across the night sky over much of the Pacific Northwest on Thursday night, leaving sky-gazers from Klamath Falls to Seattle curious about just what was happening.

An unexpected meteor? The arrival of intelligent life from another world? Secret military exercises?

It was likely none of the above, experts said.

Jim Todd, director of space science education at the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry, said the dazzling light show was the result of space debris entering the Earth’s atmosphere. More specifically, Todd said the lights were the remnants of a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket that failed to stay in orbit.

“Personally, it’s exciting because we get to tell the public what happened so they understand it,” Todd said. “It’s a great moment, especially because it didn’t cause any damage.”

Todd said that these types of objects usually reenter the atmosphere around 50 miles above the planet’s surface, well above where airplanes fly, and it was unlikely, though not impossible, that any



Joe Freeman/The Oregonian
A streak of white lights, believed to be a rocket having a de-orbit burn after a failed launch, streaked across the sky on Thursday.

of the debris would actually fall to the surface.

The first question Todd usually gets when unexpected lights appear in the night sky is whether the object is natural or human-made. With Thursday night’s display, it was quickly obvious to him that the objects were created by humans because of how slowly they were moving. Objects in orbit typically travel around

17,500 mph, Todd said, which doesn’t seem particularly slow unless you compare them to natural objects that enter the Earth’s atmosphere. Depending on the angle in which they enter, natural fireballs can travel thousands of miles per second, Todd said. The light show on Thursday was seen for more than 30 seconds, much longer than a natural fireball would have been visible.

Thursday night’s debris was likely the second stage of a rocket launched March 4, Todd said, as part of SpaceX’s Starlink project, which aims to launch thousands of satellites to provide internet service for hard-to-reach areas.

SpaceX did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The second stage of the rocket was designed to reenter the atmosphere at some point, Todd said, though it was likely planned to do so over the ocean.

“The only failure it had was it didn’t complete its de-orbit burn, so it didn’t come down when and where we expected it,” James Davenport, an astronomer from the University of Washington, told Seattle NBC-affiliate KING5. “It’s just been waiting to fall for the last three weeks and we got lucky and it came right over head.”

Outbreak: ‘There’s a false sense of security’

Continued from Page A1

with all CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) guidance.”

The Astorian contacted Pacific Seafood on March 12 after receiving information about potential virus cases at the Warrenton plant, but did not receive a response.

Clatsop County and Pacific Seafood signed a memorandum of understanding in late November after months of conflict over how to handle virus cases at the plant.



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian
Eight virus cases have been linked to Pacific Seafood in Warrenton.

In May, an outbreak at Pacific Seafood was tied to 15 cases — 11 workers and four contacts.

Another worker at Pacific Seafood tested positive in late June, prompting a clash between the county and the company over whether other workers should quarantine or continue working at the plant.

Ninety-five cases were tied to an outbreak at the plant in September, the county’s largest workplace outbreak during the pandemic.

The county has recorded 831 cases since the start of the pandemic. According

to the county, 18 have been hospitalized and seven have died.

Margo Lalach, the county’s interim public health director, attributed a recent spate of virus cases to loosening restrictions.

“And so as we open up, more kids are returning to school, businesses are opening up, we’re in spring break, we’re just going to see more of it,” Lalach said during a county Board of Commissioners meeting Wednesday.

“Also, I think there’s a false sense of security — and, of course, I don’t have data to back this up yet — that with vaccination and

more people getting vaccinated, there’s less risk of exposure in the community. And that’s definitely not the case. So we will continue with our messaging about prevention. And regardless of the vaccination coverage in the community, those prevention efforts will remain in place as they do during flu season and the prevention of other respiratory illnesses.

“So we’re monitoring those cases closely and we follow up with them as we have been. And the goal is to get as many people vaccinated as possible, keep businesses going, and that positive energy that people are feeling that things are getting better,” Lalach said.

“We want to keep that going, but do so safely. We’re used to seeing spikes and dips in the cases, and I think what we’re just going to see for the duration is just kind of those rolling hills. And it’s going to go up, and it’s going to go back down, and it’s going to go back up, and it’s going to go back down.

“But we’re hopefully less likely to see the extremes that we’ve been dealing with in the past.”

Rights of way: Second public hearing on April 14

Continued from Page A1

Allen Berry, the operator of the firewood stand at issue for neighbors, and others have claimed he was being personally targeted by the county, and that county officials close to the issue made the neighborhood dispute a county issue.

“When we started this ordinance process, there were really three goals,” County Manager Don Bohn said during a work session on Wednesday. “One was to protect public safety and community livability. The second was to limit and manage county liability. The third was to provide a clear direction for permitting and enforcement purposes.”

Bohn said that after discussion and feedback, the county is proposing to require permits for any right of way incursion. Commercial activity will be prohibited, but seasonal flower and produce stands will be allowed.

Other permitted activ-

ities may also be allowed, Bohn said. The county’s Public Works Department will look at all the requests and see how they fit into the ordinance.

“I just want to say ‘thank you very much’ to you and our staff for addressing this issue, because we are a rural community and a lot of people identify with these stands and enjoy seeing them and enjoy frequenting them,” Commissioner Courtney Bangs said. “I appreciate the fact that we have done such an astronomical effort to make sure to include our rural community’s hobby stands.”

Bohn said, “I will say that I have talked more about the right of way in the last two weeks than I have in the previous 29 years. So that could be a good thing or a bad thing depending on how you look at it.”

Mark Kujala, the chairman of the Board of Commissioners, also thanked staff for coming up with a policy that’s “fair and equitable and

addresses the concerns.

“We were all favorable to allowing flower stands and stands that can be operating without a safety concern,” he said. “I think a lot of the feedback that we’ve received — in fact, a lot of it — is from folks that live on state highways and state highways are not subject to this at all.”

The board will hold a second public hearing on the amended ordinance on April 14.

Following the first public hearing, Gary Smith, who has run one of the firewood stands on Ridge Road for about two years, told The Astorian he did not feel like county commissioners listened to his concerns.

He believes the problem with Berry’s wood stand involving neighbors should have been handled as an iso-

lated issue. Now, he believes he is the only one who is really affected.

“I have my business license, I have my permit, I did everything that was asked of me, but the people down the street from me — all the issues were down there,” Smith told the board during a meeting in February. “I had nothing to do with them. I have no part in what they were doing. I just got wrapped up in what they were doing.

“I’m not quite sure why (the county) shut me down, too, because I did nothing wrong. I mean, I was permitted, licensed and everything else. And I’ve done a lot of work out there. It has taken me a lot of time that I put in out there, and I’m just hoping that I can continue doing what I’m doing.”

theAstorian

Established July 1, 1873
(USPS 035-000)

Published Tuesday, Thursday
and Saturday by EO Media Group,
949 Exchange St., PO Box 210, Astoria, OR
97103 Telephone 503-325-3211,
800-781-3211 or Fax 503-325-6573.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to
The Astorian, PO Box 210, Astoria, OR
97103-0210

DailyAstorian.com
MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
MEMBER CERTIFIED AUDIT OF
CIRCULATIONS, INC.

Circulation phone number:
800-781-3214

Periodicals postage paid at Astoria, OR

ADVERTISING OWNERSHIP

All advertising copy and illustrations
prepared by The Astorian become the
property of The Astorian and may not
be reproduced for any use without
explicit prior approval.

COPYRIGHT ©

Entire contents © Copyright,
2021 by The Astorian.

Printed on
recycled paper

Subscription rates
Effective January 12, 2021

MAIL

EZpay (per month).....\$10.75
13 weeks in advance.....\$37.00
26 weeks in advance.....\$71.00
52 weeks in advance.....\$135.00

DIGITAL

EZpay (per month).....\$8.25

Call Anytime

Free Fast Estimates

Residential
Commercial
Cedar Roof Treatments
Exterior Repaint Specialist

Over 25 years local experience

503-440-2169

Jeff Hale, Contractor

LICENSED
INSURED
CBRT/9131

Please ADOPT A PET!

PRINCE

Min Pin/Dachshund Blend

A sprightly fellow full of intelligence, charm, wit and good cheer. He can even dance.

See more on
Petfinder.com

CLATSOP COUNTY ANIMAL SHELTER • 861-PETS
1315 SE 19th St. • Warrenton | Tues-Sat 12-4pm
www.dogsncats.org

This space sponsored by CLATSOP ANIMAL ASSISTANCE