

IN BRIEF

Overnight RVs draw health, safety concerns in Seaside

SEASIDE — The city is “well aware” of the issue of RVs abandoned or left overnight — sometimes for weeks or months at a time — along roadways.

Necanicum between First and 12th, residents say, has become a long-term parking area and a safety and health hazard for residents.

“We’re concerned about the waste and the garbage,” Dave Eilenberger said at a City Council meeting in late April. “And these vehicles not moving.”

“I would reiterate: all the garbage, the sewage, the blocking of the streets,” resident Karl Schorr said. “What we’re wondering is why the city chooses not to enforce the code? ... We are getting fed up. And if we’re going to open up a free RV park, then let’s advertise it to the city of Portland.”

In the days before City Council meeting, according to police reports, an abandoned camp trailer, two abandoned motor homes and an abandoned truck were marked for tow by police.

“Just let me say the city is very well aware of this issue,” Mayor Jay Barber said. “We are working on it. And we’re going to deal with it in a way that will deal with the challenge.”

“It takes some time to be able to do the posting, and all the other things that are required that we are very much aware of it,” the mayor said. “I’ve been driving there every day. I’ve seen it with my own eyes. I know.”

Woman falls from cliff at Hug Point

A woman fell about 100 feet from a cliff Sunday evening at Hug Point State Park.

Officials say the 20-year-old was conscious and able to communicate with officers, but was in a lot of pain.

A U.S. Coast Guard aircrew hoisted the woman and flew her to Nehalem Bay State Airport. From there, she was flown to a Portland-area hospital.

The woman reportedly fell from a trail in the same location as another person who fell in early March.

Place Matters virtual conference to focus on health equity

The Clatsop Health Advocacy Resource Team and Clatsop County Public Health Department will host a virtual conference, Place Matters Clatsop County 2021, in May.

Place Matters Clatsop County is part of a nationwide initiative to improve health outcomes. The goals are to support health equity and an optimal quality of life.

The free conference will feature panel discussions with local and statewide experts. There will be a webinar at noon on May 20, at 4 p.m. on May 25 and at noon on May 27.

For information on how to register and attend, visit clatsopchart.org or contact Julia Hesse at jhesse@co.clatsop.or.us or 503-338-3756.

— The Astorian

Gray whale washes ashore along Klipsan Beach

A long-dead adult gray whale washed ashore near Klipsan Beach in late April.

The 40-foot whale was first reported April 27 about a quarter-mile north of the beach approach by beachgoers.

On April 29, Portland State University Research Assistant Dalin D’Alessandro conducted a brief exam and collected samples to help determine a cause of death.

“The whale was very decomposed,” D’Alessandro said. “The findings of the limited examination included signs of blunt force trauma.”

The gray whale was the fourth to be stranded on Washington state beaches so far this year.

— Chinook Observer

DEATHS

May 4, 2021

LOUIS, Suzanne Margaret, 75, of Seaside, died in Seaside. Caldwell’s Funeral & Cremation Arrangement Center of Seaside is in charge of the arrangements.

SPRING, Michael Paul, 78, of Warrenton, died in Warrenton. Caldwell’s Luce-Layton Mortuary of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

ON THE RECORD

Strangulation

Ronald Lawrence Dean, 26, of Seaside, was arraigned Monday on charges of strangulation, attempted strangulation and assault in the fourth degree.

37, of Astoria, was arrested Monday on Harrison Avenue in Astoria for driving under the influence of intoxicants and hit and run.

John Reed, 46, of Warrenton, was arrested Sunday on N.E. Skipanon Drive in Warrenton for DUII.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

THURSDAY

Gearhart Budget Committee, 5 p.m., (electronic meeting).

Astoria Design Review Commission, 5:30 p.m., City Hall, 1095 Duane St.

Seaside Parks Advisory Committee, 6 p.m., 989 Broadway St.

the Astorian

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County to remain at high risk

Others move back from extreme risk

By NICOLE BALES The Astorian

Clatsop County will remain at high risk for the coronavirus on Friday as virus case counts steady.

Gov. Kate Brown announced Tuesday that while virus cases and hospitalizations are still high across Oregon, the state hospitalization metric has been met, allowing counties at extreme risk to return to high risk.

“From the beginning, I have said that returning counties to the extreme risk level was about preserving hospital capacity and saving lives,” Brown said in a statement. “With our statewide hospitalization rate stabilizing, our hospitals should have the capacity to continue treating patients with severe cases of COVID-19 and other serious medical conditions in the coming weeks.”

“With Oregonians continuing to get vaccinated each week, my expectation is that we will not return to extreme risk again for the duration of this pandemic,” the governor said. “I know this will bring relief to many across the state. However, the lifting of extreme risk health and safety measures comes with great personal responsibility for us all. If Oregonians continue to keep up their guard, follow high risk health and safety measures, and get vaccinated as fast as possible, we should see our COVID-19 case and hospitalization rates decline.”

“Vaccinations are still our best path to protecting our loved ones, and staying on track to fully reopen



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Steve Siler prepares a syringe of Moderna vaccine at the Clatsop County Fairgrounds.

our economy by the end of June.”

Clatsop County is one of 24 counties that will be at high risk through May 13. Four counties will be at moderate risk and eight will be at lower risk.

Counties with a population of 30,000 or more are evaluated for risk based on virus cases per 100,000 over two weeks and the test positivity rate for the same period.

Counties at high risk have a case rate between 100 and 200 per 100,000 people, and may have a test positivity between 8% and 10%.

As of Saturday, Clatsop County had 155 cases per 100,000 over a two-week period. Test positivity was 6.3%.

Restaurants and bars can continue indoor dining at 25% of capacity — or up to 50 people — with an 11 p.m. closing time. Up to 75 people can dine outdoors, with a limit of six people per table from two households.

Gyms, indoor pools, museums, theaters and other entertainment venues can operate at 25% of capacity, or up to 50 people, whichever is smaller.

Grocery stores, pharma-

cies, retail shops and shopping malls can operate at 50% of capacity.

Churches can operate at 25% of capacity or 150 people indoors, whichever is smaller, and 200 people outdoors.

Indoor social gatherings must be limited to six people from two households in counties at high risk. Outdoor gatherings can have eight people.

Businesses should urge employees to work remotely if able.

Visits are allowed at long-term care facilities.

The county has recorded 955 cases since the start of the pandemic. According to the county, 24 were hospitalized and eight have died.

As of Friday, 12,513 people were fully vaccinated. The county’s goal to reach herd immunity against the virus is vaccinating 27,533 people.

The Oregon Health Authority has reported 188,417 cases and 2,509 deaths from the virus statewide as of Wednesday.

Margo Lalach, the county’s interim public health director, said many of the county’s new cases are tied to workplace and household

COUNTY REPORTS THREE NEW VIRUS CASES

The Astorian

Clatsop County on Wednesday reported three new coronavirus cases.

The cases include a woman in her 60s living in the southern part of the county. The others live in the northern part of the county and involve a man in his 40s and a man in his 60s.

All three were recovering at home.

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outbreaks.

“This is the new normal until we continue to increase our vaccination rate and more and more people develop passive immunity, which comes from actually being infected,” Lalach said during a county Board of Commissioners work session Tuesday. “Ideally, of course, we want as many people vaccinated as possible.”

“We continue to receive support on our case investigation and contact tracing from OHA (Oregon Health Authority). They partner with us seven days a week and it’s been a tremendous amount of help and support as well.”

Poll: Faith in democracy eroding across state

By ZANE SPARLING Oregon Capital Bureau

Faith in democracy has dimmed.

After years of tumult, riots, economic uncertainty and low-blow politics — not to mention a global pandemic — nearly 7 out of every 10 Oregonians believe democracy has weakened across the United States over the past four years.

Residents describe a slightly more fortified state of affairs closer to home, with roughly 6 out of 10 statewide saying democracy in Oregon has diminished over the last four years.

The Oregon Values and Beliefs Center, a nonprofit created by DHM Research founder Adam Davis, compiled those results after surveying 600 residents, selected to be statistically representative of the state, in early March. The margin of error is 4%.

• More than two thirds (69%) say American democracy has weakened in the past four years, compared with 22% who say it is stronger and 9% who were unsure. Seniors (77%) and self-identified liberals (78%) are more likely to see an attenuation of democratic strength, while conservatives (30%) and rural residents (33%) have a larger share who see American democracy as stronger now than before.

• Oregon democracy gets slightly higher marks, with one quarter of the population (25%) saying it has beefed up in the past four years, 61% saying it has weakened and 14% unsure. White people (63%) are significantly more likely to believe Oregon’s representative government has weakened compared to non-white people (48%). Democrats (37%) and college grads (35%) are more likely to see the system as bulking up.

Despite their belief in a faltering form of government, Oregonians are essentially split 50-50 when asked to rate their satisfaction with the way democracy actually performs, on Capitol Hill and in Salem.

• Nearly half (45%) are satisfied with American democracy, compared to 51% who aren’t and 4% who are unsure. Portland metro area (49%) and Democrats (57%) are more likely to be satisfied, compared with more than half of suburbanites (56%) and Republicans (55%) who said they aren’t satisfied.

• Once again, Oregon scores a tad higher than America as a whole, with 49% satisfied with Oregon democracy and 46% unsated and 4% unsure. Urban dwellers (59%) are statistically more likely to be satisfied than rural residents (34%).

The Oregon Values and Beliefs Center also asked poll

respondents to describe why they believe Oregon democracy has strengthened — or weakened — over the past four years.

It has strengthened: • “Because we have Democratic leadership. States with the GOP are severely hurting us.”

• “More acceptance of people of color.”

• “People in Oregon care about what is going on and take action.”

• “Because of our governor, Kate Brown.”

It has weakened: • “One party rule. GOP has become more irrelevant and radical. No real counter to Democrats.”

• “We don’t seem to care much that our governor’s ‘emergency COVID powers’ have gone on for a year.”

• “Liberals ... they want larger government, more controls and higher taxes.”

• “An uptick in violence in the larger cities.”

Lawsuit: ‘This is an effort to get the clarity that we need’

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“Concerned Friends had exhausted themselves trying to locate where these funds are going and what these tax dollars have been spent on,” he said. “And there’s been no consistent answer from the county as to whether or how that money can be spent. So this is an effort to get the clarity that we need to make sure that the taxpayers’ tax money is being properly handled.”

Neighbors in Lewis and Clark formed Concerned Friends for Clatsop County last summer in response to the county’s Resiliency Project, which involved plans to move the public works facility on Olney Avenue in Astoria and establish alterna-

tive routes to prepare for a disaster.

The county identified the 50-acre Warrenton Fiber sort yard for the relocation, and the nearby Lewis and Clark Mainline, a private logging road that runs parallel to U.S. Highway 101 and Lewis and Clark Road, as an alternative route.

Neighbors who challenged the project believe the construction of an alternative route would fundamentally change the landscape of the rural area and invite new development.

Last fall, the county decided not to pursue the northern portion of the Lewis and Clark Mainline — a portion residents use for recreation — but residents contin-

ued to challenge the project.

Earlier this year, the county scaled the project back to focus on relocating the public works facility without the alternative routes.

The county reset the project in January, hiring a consultant, Mackenzie, to conduct a facility needs

assessment and help identify the best place to relocate the public works facility. Mackenzie evaluated the sort yard, as well as other potential sites, including those the county had previously considered but ruled out.

The county expects to review the findings during a public meeting in June.

Please vote for the current Board of Directors at the Sunset Parks and Recreation District.

Susan, Celeste, Michael, Erika and Katherine.

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