

IN BRIEF

Clinics for teenagers planned as pace of virus vaccinations slows

Clatsop County will begin holding clinics for teenagers who want to get vaccinated against the coronavirus starting next week.

The Pfizer vaccine will be administered at clinics in Astoria on May 15 and Seaside on May 22 to 16- and 17-year-olds and their families.

Pfizer has requested emergency approval of its vaccine for children 12 to 15. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is expected to give authorization soon. If the vaccine is authorized, the county's vaccine task force said it is prepared to vaccinate children 12 to 15 at the clinics as well.

The task force will continue Moderna vaccination clinics at the Clatsop County Fairgrounds and the old Seaside High School into June, but at a smaller scale.

The task force will focus on reaching people who have difficulty making or getting to appointments for vaccination. There are also plans for some smaller pop-up walk-in clinics, like one that took place at Jewell School on Friday.

People can fill out the vaccine survey on the county's website or choose from a list of upcoming vaccine clinics listed on the website and sign up directly.

Vaccines are also available through pharmacies at Fred Meyer, Walmart, Costco and Safeway. The one-shot Johnson & Johnson vaccine is available through Providence Seaside Hospital and will be available at Columbia Memorial Hospital primary care clinics beginning Monday.

"We are starting to wind down the mass vaccination clinics because as we have less people coming into those clinics to get first doses, we don't need to have the big clinics for the second doses," said Chris Laman, the director of pharmacy and cancer center services at Columbia Memorial Hospital in Astoria, who is leading the county's vaccine task force.

"We're trying to reduce the barriers to people. So if they're going to get health care, or if they're in their supermarket, like Fred Meyer or Safeway or Walmart, they'll be able to get vaccinated there. And then the task force is going to move into trying to be where people are at. And so in June, the clinics will be more like pop-up clinics."

As of Friday, 30,202 doses have been administered in the county and 13,588 people were fully vaccinated. The county's goal to reach herd immunity against the virus is vaccinating 27,533 people, or 70% of the population.

Laman said the number of first doses administered at each clinic has gone down dramatically.

"About a month ago we were giving 700 or so first doses at a clinic, and I think last night we were at about 150," he said. "It's been a little more than a week since we started allowing walk-ins because we're trying to increase that uptake."

"The task force has been doing the best we can, but ... we are — just like all the counties, and really the whole country — seeing a slowdown in the uptake in that kind of last 40% group. They're a little more hesitant or a little more adamant that they're not going to be getting shots. And so we're trying to come up with ways to reduce barriers and make it easier for people to get shots."

Margo Lulich, the county's interim public health director, asks everyone she vaccinates what it means to them. She said there are benefits people often do not realize.

"Generally speaking, they're fully protected, and it is a game changer in terms of whether or not they will have to quarantine once they're exposed to COVID," Lulich said. "They still want to be wearing their masks out and about in public. What it also means is if they're in a household or a community where everybody is completely vaccinated, meaning they've got two doses and they're two weeks post that second vaccination, they no longer need to be wearing that mask when they all come together."

— The Astorian

DEATH

May 6, 2021

BACKUS, Gouverneur, 92, of Seaside, died in Seaside. Hughes-Ransom Mortuary is in charge of the arrangements.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

MONDAY

Seaside City Council, 7 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

TUESDAY

Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District, 5:15 p.m., work session; 7 p.m., budget committee, 1225 Avenue A, Seaside.

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

Seaside Planning Commission, 6 p.m., 989 Broadway.

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

Clatsop Community College Board, 6:30 p.m., (electronic meeting).

Workshop focuses on Seaside parking issues

Parking structure, off-site shuttle among options

By R.J. MARX
The Astorian

SEASIDE — Got parking?

That was the question business leaders wrestled with at a workshop Tuesday at the Seaside Civic and Convention Center hosted by City Councilor David Posalski and City Councilor Randy Frank.

"What I want to hear is what are businesses and the community's perception that are issues with parking here in Seaside?" Posalski asked.

The city's last parking study was done in 2003 and 2004. "Ninety-six percent of them felt parking was a problem, and that was 17 years ago," he said.

Calling it a systemic problem, Posalski asked for a long-term view. "Where are we going to be in 10 years? And how are we going to deal



R.J. Marx/The Astorian

Even in the middle of the week, many parking spots in downtown Seaside are taken.

with it?" he said. "Because at least with the trends that I've seen, in the 10 years I've been here, it's gotten worse every year."

Lack of spaces

Attendees agreed on a lack of spaces within walking distance of downtown for visitors and residents, not only during the peak tourism season but throughout the year. Remedies centered on a multilevel parking structure, paid parking options, off-site parking and shuttles. Solutions included greater use of the upper level of the World-

Mark Seaside parking lot, more clearly marked signs throughout town and in parking lots, parking areas outside downtown and shuttles to shopping and the beach.

"I was here during the 2003 survey," Susan Deshon, of the Carousel Mall, said. "The problems have not changed, they have been augmented."

Deshon said RVs and buses seeking to find spaces have been problematic during an "astronomically busy time" for downtown during the coronavirus pandemic.

Bus parking will only worsen, said Keith Chandler, the general manager of the Seaside Aquarium. "We haven't had the problem because we don't have the groups that we have normally, because there's no school. When school gets back in session, all those bus drivers are going to park right downtown," he said.

Jeff Ter Har, the owner of Ter Har's, a clothing store, proposed an app that could provide available parking options to visitors and residents.

Workshop participants suggested parking at a location outside of the downtown area, possibly at the former Broadway Middle School, the former Seaside High School or an area east of U.S. Highway 101, with a park and ride to bring people downtown.

There are 160 parking spots in the WorldMark lot and 225 in the convention center parking lot, Frank said.

See Parking, Page A6

Embattled state forester resigns

Daugherty led agency since 2016

By TED SICKINGER
The Oregonian

Peter Daugherty, Oregon's state forester and the leader of the long-struggling Department of Forestry, has submitted his resignation to the state board that oversees the department, effective May 31.

Daugherty has led the agency since 2016, and his tenure has been marked by deep financial problems within the department, a dysfunctional relationship with the Board of Forestry and the loss of state lawmakers' confidence, even as the agency is looking for a massive infusion of new resources to better respond to the state's increasingly severe wildfire seasons.

The Oregonian in recent years documented many of the agency's troubles in its Failing Forestry series.

Daugherty's resignation comes in the wake of a scathing report from an outside accounting consultant, MGO, that described a fundamental lack of financial controls and oversight within the agency. The report was reviewed in a hearing this week before the natural resources subcommittee of the Ways and Means Committee, prompting some incredulity from lawmakers, who said they were aware of the problems in general but found details the firm uncovered eye-opening and troubling.

State Sen. Kathleen Taylor, D-Portland, laid a good deal of the blame on the Board of Forestry.

"It's no secret that I'm not a supporter of having a Board of Forestry," she said. "I don't support that. I believe the Legislature should be overseeing the Department of Forestry. The board has been given



Peter Daugherty has resigned as state forester.

this awesome responsibility by the public ... and I'm concerned the board did not do its duties of overseeing the department."

Rep. Jeff Reardon, D-Portland, said MGO's report was just the beginning of the actions that need to be taken.

Rep. Paul Holvey, D-Eugene, said many of the shortcomings called out in the report had been noted in an audit of the department by the secretary of state in 2015.

"We are six years later dealing with the same damn issue and I don't see any improvement," he said. "And so either the Legislature needs to step in and do something dramatic or ... I really appreciate (the report), but it just solidifies and exemplifies what we've been dealing with for years. I'm just so frustrated that I don't see any improvement."

Last straw

The airing of the report may have been the last straw for Daugherty. In his resignation letter, he said he had discussed the decision with the governor's office and decided it would be in the best interest of the newly reconstituted board and the department to select a new state forester. Daugherty said his last effective day in office would be May 28.

In an email to staff,

Daugherty said leading the department had been the highlight of his long career in forestry. He said the agency's "executive team is committed to supporting the transition and helping prepare Oregon's next state forester for the challenges and rewards that come with this role, both of which are immense."

The Board of Forestry has the authority to hire and fire the state forester, a fact that left the governor's office and legislators with less control as the agency's finances spun out of control in recent years and the board took no definitive action beyond putting Daugherty on notice and implementing a performance improvement plan. However, lawmakers did demand that Daugherty begin submitting monthly financial reports to the co-chairs of the Ways and Means Committee.

Frustration

Gov. Kate Brown, meanwhile, also expressed deep frustration last fall with her inability to remake the board and bring stronger financial expertise to its ranks, as lawmakers from timber-dependent counties joined Republicans to kill her slate of board nominees. That changed this spring, as the Senate confirmed three of her nominees to the board, effectively remaking it.

"The board will soon meet to discuss leadership during this time of transition," said Liz Merah, a spokesperson for Brown. "While the board has statutory authority in appointing the state forester, the governor is interested in a national search for someone who can further drive the agency as a national leader in fighting wildfires, while at the same time adapting to new technology and changing conditions on the ground."

Reached at his home in Eastern Oregon, the forestry board's new chair, Jim Kelly, said Daugherty's decision to resign was reached mutually and that the board would look to hire an interim replacement with strong financial expertise, as the agency needs to get its financial house in order before it can do anything else effectively.

"You cannot have an effective state forester unless they have the confidence of the governor and the legislature," Kelly said, "and clearly that isn't the case with Peter."

Kelly said he thinks the dynamics on the board have already changed.

"There's reason to believe we have the chance to create a highly functional board and have that trust reestablished," he said.

Bob Van Dyk, the Oregon policy director of the Wild Salmon Center, and a frequent critic of the department, said Daugherty's resignation was long overdue.

"Under Daugherty's leadership, critical voices on the Board of Forestry were marginalized and bullied," he said in a statement via email. "Oregon faces enormous challenges on our forests to protect water quality, manage fire and respond to climate change. I hope the board can take this moment to turn the page and move the agency into the 21st century."

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