

## IN BRIEF

## Housing needs to impact Gearhart firehouse land decision

GEARHART — A new firehouse and resiliency station on 30 acres on Highlands Lane just north of Gearhart will rely on a combination of planning and taxpayer support.

Navigating a complex web of state and local land use codes to bring the property into the city's urban growth boundary is the first hurdle.

"The city is evaluating planning and architectural proposals," City Administrator Chad Sweet said. "Staff will approach the council about those costs in June. It's possible that we will be ready for preliminary conversations with the Planning Commission."

If the costs for the resiliency station, which is categorized as critical infrastructure, are reasonable and the location is suitable, city staff will make a recommendation to the City Council to proceed to a bond vote in the fall.

"Ultimately it's the citizens of Gearhart that will choose in November," Sweet said.

The land exchange proposal for the firehouse comes as the city considers recommendations from a housing study calling for increased workforce housing opportunities.

The building and land inventory analysis delivered to the City Council in March showed a need for 234 new housing units by 2038. The study indicates a need for more rental supply for lower and moderately priced rental units.

— *The Astorian*

## Pacific County surpasses 1,000 virus cases

SOUTH BEND, Wash. — The Pacific County Health and Human Services Department reported a grim milestone last week, one that most probably thought was unthinkable just a year ago as local communities were largely being spared the coronavirus outbreaks others were facing throughout the country.

On May 14, the department reported that the county exceeded 1,000 reported cases of COVID-19 since the pandemic began in 2020, although the actual total is likely even higher.

Nearly 5% of the county's population has tested positive for the virus.

If you'd told Katie Lindstrom, the county's health director, a year ago that the county would hit 1,000 cases by May 2021, she would've said that was "crazy."

"A year ago, we were still barely trickling cases in. We really didn't see our cases surge until late fall," Lindstrom said. "A lot of other communities had way higher case rates than us, but then we really took off."

"I feel like we've been on a similar level as most other places since then; higher than I'd like, but lower than when we were at our surge."

— *Chinook Observer*

## Arborist hired after outcry about excessive tree cutting

Oregon is hiring a Pacific Northwest-based arborist to review the state's removal of trees in wildfire burn areas after recent concerns that the operation has been hasty and excessive.

The Oregon Office of Emergency Management announced Monday that Galen Wright has been hired as an independent contractor to review the hazard tree effort, Oregon Public Broadcasting reported.

Wright is president of Washington Forest Consultants Inc. He is tasked with providing a full assessment of Oregon's program and his recommendations are due in June.

"As this adaptive and evolving emergency response operation continues to make significant progress, Oregonians deserve to have confidence in the good work underway," said Mac Lynde, the Oregon Department of Transportation's head of the three-agency Debris Management Task Force. It has been coordinating the tree-removal program in the aftermath of the 2020 wildfires that burned over 1 million acres.

The state is in the midst of the giant effort to cut down an estimated 140,000 burned trees that could be dangerous to people on state roads or burned properties.

— *Associated Press*

## DEATHS

**May 16, 2021**  
**ROMAN, Stephen**  
 BERG, William, 82, of Gearhart, died in Portland. Hughes-Ransom Mortuary is in charge of the arrangements.  
**LEE, 74, of Astoria, died in Astoria. Caldwell's Luce-Layton Mortuary of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.**

## MEMORIAL

**Saturday, May 22**  
**AUTIO, Marvin, Robert** — Celebration of life at 2 p.m., Big Creek Lodge, 92878 Waterhouse Road.

## PUBLIC MEETINGS

**THURSDAY**  
**Clatsop Care Health District Board**, 3 p.m., budget review meeting, (electronic meeting).  
**Seaside Transportation Advisory Commission**, 6 p.m., 989 Broadway St.

# TSUNAMI SKIPPERS



**ABOVE:** Brody Brenden jumped rope while competing in a Double Dutch relay with fellow Tsunami Skippers Malory Dundas, Alona Whisenhunt and Ella Boles at the Oregon Coast Classic in Seaside on Saturday. **LEFT:** Over 70 people from Oregon, Washington state and Alaska attended the classic, which tested jumpers' speed and power through a series of individual and group events. **BELOW:** Kai Widmer from the West City Rope Ninjas in Seattle competes in the Last Man Sitting Rump Jump contest. The person who could bounce up and down while whipping the rope beneath them repeatedly for the longest amount of time won.

Photos by Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian



## Five more counties vote to consider joining Idaho

By SIERRA DAWN McCLAIN  
*Capital Press*

Five counties in Oregon voted Tuesday for officials to begin taking steps to become part of Idaho.

Thousands of voters across Sherman, Lake, Grant, Baker and Malheur counties in Oregon voted for measures that will require elected county officials to meet to consider a possible border move.

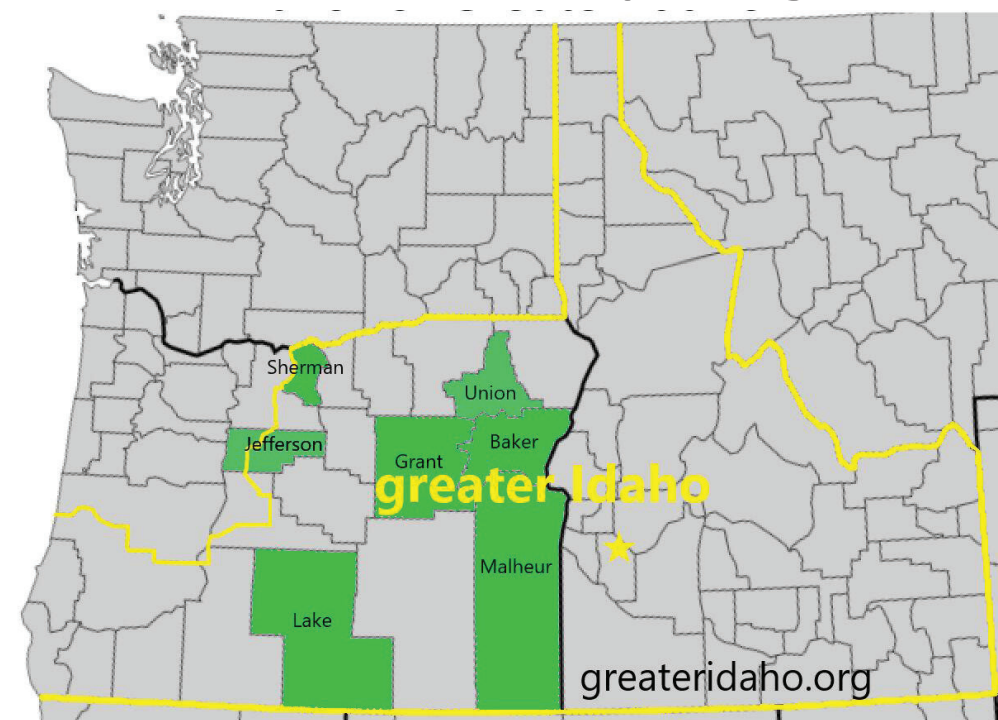
Sherman County's ballot measure went furthest in its language and requires county commissioners to promote realigning the borders. The other four counties simply voted that county commissioners are required to meet a few times a year to discuss the prospect of moving the state lines.

In the five counties, an average of 62% of voters favored the measures.

The five counties are joined by two other counties, Union and Jefferson, which had already voted in favor of the border negotiations last November.

Greater Idaho officials say voters in Harney and Douglas counties will vote on similar measures in future elections.

The ballot measures are the first major step in the Greater Idaho project, which would allow some Oregon counties to join Idaho, a state that advocates say



more closely aligns with residents' political and cultural preferences.

The project, if successful, would extend Idaho's jurisdiction over rural, conservative counties of eastern and southern Oregon.

Advocates of the move say Eastern Oregon has little in common with western Oregon and identifies much more with Idaho.

For example, Oregon has two Democratic senators in the U.S. Senate and has voted blue in presidential elections since 1988, while Idaho has two Republican U.S. senators and has voted red in presidential elections

since 1968. Eastern Oregon, like Idaho, runs red.

In a statement Wednesday, Mike McCarter, the president of Citizens for Greater Idaho, said the election results show the movement is gaining traction and has potential.

"This election proves that rural Oregon wants out of Oregon," he said. "If Oregon really believes in self-determination, the Legislature won't hold our counties captive against our will. If we're allowed to vote for which government officials we want, we should be allowed to vote for which govern-

ment we want as well."

But McCarter's optimism is about to face a series of tests. That's because this week's ballot measure votes are just the first steps in a complicated, multistep process that would ultimately require approval from the Oregon and Idaho state legislatures and Congress, which at present is controlled by Democrats.

Despite the long road ahead, the Greater Idaho project's advocates say they are happy to have support from Idaho's governor, the leadership of both Idaho legislative chambers and dozens of legislators.

## the Astorian

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