

## IN BRIEF

## County business leaders win awards

Clatsop Economic Development Resources presented its 2021 business awards virtually Thursday evening to a Zoom audience.

State Sen. Betsy Johnson and Rep. Suzanne Weber spoke at the event and commended the economic development group in helping businesses navigate the challenges brought by the coronavirus pandemic and related restrictions.

Chris Breitmeyer, the president of Clatsop Community College, surprised Jessica Newhall, the associate director of the college's Small Business Development Center, with an award for her transformative leadership. Breitmeyer said Newhall has been instrumental in providing community support to businesses.



Newhall

In a prerecorded video montage, Kevin Leahy, the executive director of the economic development group, and others involved in the organization presented 16 awards to business leaders.

Destiny Dudley, of Culinary Concierge, won as the business leader of the year for a new business, while Chris Laman, the director of Columbia Memorial Hospital-Oregon Health & Science University Knight Cancer Collaborative, won individual business leader of the year.

Terry and Todd Robinett, of Merry Time Bar & Grill, won business leader of the year for a small business in North County, while Mrs. Tami's Daycare & Preschool won the equivalent for South County.

The exceptional customer service awards went to Insomnia Coffee Co. for a small business in South County, to Purple Cow Toys for a small business in North County and to Cannery Pier Hotel & Spa for the large business division.

Good to Go in Astoria received the innovation award for a small business, while TLC, a division of Fibre Federal Credit Union, won the innovation award for a large business.

Economic impact awards went to Slurpalicious for a small business and to Hampton Lumber in Warrenton for a large business.

Meanwhile, community impact awards went to Columbia Memorial Hospital's Seaside clinic for a large business, to Papa Murphy's in Seaside for a small business in South County and to Raymond Graves, the owner of fishing vessel Ken & Al Inc., for a small business in North County.

Providence Seaside Hospital and Spruce Up Warrenton each received community supporter awards.

## Journalists from The Astorian recognized with regional awards

Journalists for The Astorian were recognized in the 2020 Northwest Excellence in Journalism contest.

Emily Lindblom won first place in the small newsroom division for her video of elk in Clatsop County.

Gary Henley won second place in the small newsroom division for sports feature for his story on Dick Miller, a Seaside High School graduate who starred for the University of Oregon as a runner.

The Society of Professional Journalists' contest honors work across a region that covers Oregon, Washington state, Idaho, Alaska and Montana.

## Virtual disaster preparedness training planned for families

Oregon State University Extension Service will host a virtual disaster preparedness training for families.

Experts will discuss communication plans, sheltering possibilities, evacuation planning and financial considerations during a live webinar at 6 p.m. on June 15.

The Astoria Fire Department is sponsoring the event.

People can register for the discussion through June 14 at [bit.ly/3ozXlOw](http://bit.ly/3ozXlOw)

— The Astorian

## ON THE RECORD

## DUI

• Taylor Deshaun Florance, 26, was arrested Thursday off of U.S. Highway 101 in Gearhart for driving under the influence of intoxicants and reckless driving.

## PUBLIC MEETINGS

## MONDAY

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

## TUESDAY

Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District Board, 5:15 p.m., 1225 Avenue A, Seaside.

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

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

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

## A Seaside maestro steps down

By KATHERINE LACAZE  
For The Astorian

SEASIDE — Over the past 19 years, under the direction of Terry Dahlgren, the Seaside High School band programs have thrived, performing concerts and claiming district and league titles.

Yet competitive success has never been Dahlgren's top priority.

For him, the relatively mammoth size of the band — which surprises judges at competitions and makes Seaside stand out among other 4A schools — is what he takes the most pride in.

"The mission is to teach music to as many kids as possible," said Dahlgren, who will be retiring at the end of the school year after a 32-year career as a high school band director, the majority of which was spent in Seaside. "I've really enjoyed being 'the monster band.' We're like the phenomenon. It's like, 'What's going on in Seaside?' That's been really fun."

Dahlgren remembers his first visit to the Oregon Coast. It was 1991 and he and his wife, Kathy, were traveling from Minnesota for their honeymoon. It was his first time seeing the ocean, and they quickly developed a love for the area.

Fast forward 12 years, when Dahlgren came across a listing for a job opening in the Seaside School District. The couple made the move and Dahlgren started as the sixth-through-12th grade band director in the fall of 2002.

"I remember that first group of kids very fondly," he said.

Coming into a smaller school district, he was willing to assess the attitude of the students and set goals for the program accordingly. However, about halfway



Katherine Lacaze/For The Astorian

Seaside band director Terry Dahlgren is retiring after 19 years of leading the band.

through the year, he said, it became apparent the students "were really eager to do as much as they possibly could."

That attitude, combined with the administrative support Dahlgren received from the get-go, gave him confidence there were no limits to how successful the program could be despite the size of the school district.

"They collectively decided, 'Let's give this guy a chance. Let's take this pretty seriously and see what happens,'" he said. "It just kept building year after year."

## 'Lightning in a bottle'

Dahlgren's unyielding optimism, high expectations and advocacy for the students are embedded in the motivation he passes onto them regularly. Some of his most common and heartfelt words of encouragement include: "I think you might be underestimating what you're capable of," and, "I know what you're capable of, even if you don't."

The eagerness and dedication of that first batch of students set the program on a firm foundation for future success.

Younger students witnessed their siblings playing at sports events and concerts and traveling for competition, and it motivated them to get involved.

Overall, Dahlgren describes his experience with the band as "lightning in a bottle."

"I am very, very fortunate to have been able to be a part of it," he said.

However, as he reflects over a long and fruitful career — and many fond memories — he feels there has not been a more important time to positively impact the students than right now, amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Although trying to translate band into a virtual program at the start of the school year presented unprecedented challenges, Dahlgren is convinced it was worth the effort. He recalls discussing the option with the administration and expressing to them that, "I may not have the magic solution to make this go, but I think we need to try. To not try is unacceptable."

## The band plays on

Fortunately, lack of support — from the admin-

istration, parents and the community — hasn't been a problem for Dahlgren, which is not a given for performing arts programs at schools.

"Not every band director has that," he said. "I've been in schools where you can't even take band, because it doesn't even fit in the day."

Emboldened by this support, Dahlgren has been able to invest in making sure the band program makes it through the pandemic intact, without losing significant momentum or the fervor of the students.

"This, while the most challenging part of my career, has also been the most rewarding, because I really wanted to be the one to bring them back into the school," he said. "Any success we have this year is just golden to me, because no one has ever done this before. ... The goal is to get them back in the building and get them playing with each other; that is really the only goal."

He has about 65 high school students participating in band. They are split into five groups — four which meet on campus in the gym during the week socially distanced and wearing facial coverings specifically designed for musicians. One group of high schoolers, as well as the middle schoolers, are continuing online for the school year.

Although administrators and school board members have noted that Dahlgren's retirement creates a significant loss for the school district, he is confident the pieces are in place for the program to continue thriving, regardless of who takes over.

"The commitment is there," he said. "We're all on the same page. Everybody knows what needs to be done."

## New revenue forecast a boost for Oregon

By PETER WONG  
Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — For Oregon's state budget, and for taxpayers, it appears everything's coming up roses these days.

An economic surge as the coronavirus pandemic wanes will produce \$1 billion more for state coffers than state economists projected just three months ago. That will be enough to boost state spending, without cuts, as lawmakers finish work on the state budget for the next two years.

Meanwhile, that surge will result in an estimated \$1.4 billion — more than twice the amount projected in late February — going back to taxpayers next year in the form of "kicker" credits against their 2021 tax bills. The final figure will be determined in the September economic and revenue forecast, but the share of tax liability is projected at 13.6%.

For the average taxpayer with a household income of \$67,400, the credit will be \$636. For the median with household income between \$35,000 and \$40,000 — half are above and half below that range — the credit will be \$312.

"I have never seen such a strong outlook," State Economist Mark McMullen told

members of the state House and Senate revenue committees during his quarterly forecast on Wednesday.

"There are a whole lot more resources available than when we last reported in March, and even more than we reported at the beginning of the session, when the budget was drafted. It's quite a remarkable turnaround from a few months ago.

"When the pandemic hit, we saw these massive job losses that blew a \$2 billion hole in the budget. That hole was filled by the March forecast (on Feb. 24), and now we are past where we thought we would be even pre-pandemic."

Gov. Kate Brown proposed \$25.6 billion in spending from the tax-supported general fund and lottery proceeds, the state's two most flexible sources, back in December. Legislative budget writers, bolstered by \$2.6 billion in federal aid from President Joe Biden's pandemic recovery plan, unveiled a framework for almost \$28 billion in spending in March.

Brown said in a statement that the latest forecast, coupled with projections for the following two budget cycles, sets the stage for a better Oregon:

"Our anticipated state

revenues will allow us to fully fund our state agency base budgets, make investments prioritized by the Racial Justice Council, move forward with a \$9.3 billion school budget, fully fund the Student Success Act, and ensure no one is kicked off the Oregon Health Plan, among other things.

"These investments will help Oregonians recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and move Oregon toward a future where equity is realized and all are equal."

Some Democrats want to spend more; Republicans say spending should focus on one-time purposes. Budget writers have already proposed to save some of the federal aid for the 2023-25 budget period.

Senior economist Josh Lehner said what has helped prop up the economy in Oregon and other states is the massive federal spending during the pandemic, including payments to individuals and businesses. Biden's plan gave \$1,400 payments to an estimated 95% of Oregonians.

"It has been unprecedented outside of wartime," Lehner said. "It has allowed households and firms to keep their heads above water. It does not mean that some people haven't fallen through the cracks — they have — and some businesses have closed."

McMullen said economists have not seen the steep downturn triggered by the onset of the pandemic — Oregon's unemployment rate went from a modern-low 3.5% in March 2020 to a modern-high 13.2% the following month — and the equally speedy recovery. The rate in April was 6%; it has hovered around that mark for a few months.

McMullen said he still projects it will be the fourth quarter of 2022 before Oregon returns to its pre-pandemic employment levels, still shorter than the seven years following downturns in 1980 and 2007.

"Obviously, a lot of things can happen in two years," he said. "But right now we are on a pretty strong footing. The consensus (of economists) ranges from good to great."



## COMMUNITY NEWS

All Aboard for Astoria Citywide VBS

June 21-25 | 9:00 a.m. - NOON

Ages 3 years old to 5<sup>th</sup> grade

Event Place: 565 12th Street

Peace First Lutheran Downtown

Register at [www.peacefirstlutheran.com](http://www.peacefirstlutheran.com)

PLEASE REGISTER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE  
Due to the COVID-19 restrictions there is a cap of 48 kids, or four groups of 12 per group. There will be no onsite registrations this year. Please contact us if you have any questions.

## the Astorian

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