

Risk: County will be at moderate risk through June 3

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“The science is clear: vaccines are very effective in keeping people safe from COVID-19, and they are the key to returning to normal life and lifting health and safety restrictions statewide,” Brown said in a statement. “This disease remains dangerous for those in communities with high rates of unvaccinated individuals. That’s why I’m encouraging all Oregonians to roll up your sleeves, take your shot and get a chance to change your life. It’s never been easier to get vaccinated, and you may just end up a winner through the

Take Your Shot, Oregon campaign.”

Astoria Mayor Bruce Jones, along with the Astoria-Warrenton Area Chamber of Commerce and Warrenton Mayor Henry Balensifer, had called on the governor last week to eliminate the warning week for counties moving into lower risk levels for the coronavirus.

“We certainly expressed pretty strongly that we thought — at least going down — the warning week was ... harmful,” Jones said. “It didn’t help us and it did hurt us, so I’m glad that they removed it.”

Clatsop County is one of three counties that will be at moderate

risk through June 3. Fifteen counties will be at high risk and 18 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 moderate risk have a case rate between 50 and 100 per 100,000 people, and may have a test positivity between 5% and 8%.

As of Saturday, Clatsop County had 79 cases per 100,000 over a two-week period. Test positivity was 3.4%.

Capacity for indoor dining at

restaurants and bars in counties at moderate risk is 50% or 100 people, whichever is smaller, with an 11 p.m. closing time and a maximum of six people per table. Up to 150 people can dine outdoors. Tables must be limited to eight people.

Gyms, indoor pools, museums, theaters and other entertainment venues can operate at 50% of capacity or 100 people total, whichever is smaller. Indoor full-contact sports are prohibited.

Grocery stores, pharmacies, retail shops and shopping malls can operate at 75% of capacity.

Churches can convene at 50%

occupancy indoors or 150 people total, whichever is smaller, and 250 people outdoors.

Indoor social gatherings must be limited to eight people from two households in counties at moderate risk. Outdoor gatherings can have 10 people.

Indoor and outdoor visits are allowed at long-term care facilities.

Employers should recommend remote work if able.

The county has recorded 1,004 virus cases since the pandemic began. According to the county, 25 were hospitalized and eight have died.

Fireworks: Other events will return with limits

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Two other iconic Seaside events, the Seaside Beach Volleyball Tournament and Hood to Coast, will return with limited formats, Owen said.

The beach volleyball event is planned for the second week in August. “We still have questions about capacity size, so we’re going to open registration with about half the capacity and have the ability to expand as we get more authorization,” Owen said.

The tournament, which was canceled last year as a result of the pandemic, is the largest program for the chamber. In 2019, the tournament featured about 1,600 teams playing among three divisions.

“The volleyball event is not only one of the biggest things for our city but for our chamber,” Owen said. “It’s four days, with anywhere between 7,000 to 10,000 people a day. It’s incredible how much impact that has.”

The Hood to Coast relay returns Aug. 27 and Aug. 28, with 12-member teams running 199 miles from the top of Mount Hood to the beach. The relay team lottery has filled its limit, with 1,050 Hood to Coast running teams and 400 Portland to Coast Walk teams.

Hood to Coast will have a runners’ party at the beach, Owen said, with a beer garden hosted by chamber volunteers.



Seaside will not host Fourth of July fireworks this year.

Ky Jennings

Graduations: Astoria has several plans in place depending on risk level

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online classwork. In Jewell, seniors hit graduation requirements by February and many started taking college-level classes with the school district’s support.

“It was real evident from our seniors that they were ready to move on,” said Jon Wood, the Jewell School principal.

“They didn’t quite have it all,” he added. There was no senior prom, no homecoming. “But they had quite a bit and we’re going to try to make it as good a party for them as we can on the 12th.”

Some schools are planning for a return to more traditional graduation ceremonies in June, but are hedging their bets as the pandemic continues.

Astoria High School has several plans in place depending on the county’s risk level by the time the June 5 commencement arrives.

The number of guest passes each graduate is allowed will be based on whether the county is at a low, moderate or high-risk level. If the county moves into extreme risk, only 100 people will be allowed inside CMH Field, where the commencement and awards ceremonies will be held.

As of Tuesday, Lynn Jackson, the principal, was hopeful. Regardless, the ceremony will unfold “in a much more open manner” than last year’s graduation, he said.

Last June, Astoria graduates spent much of the ceremony in their cars. The ceremony itself was a sort of hybrid, rolling several traditional pieces of the usual festivities into one socially distanced event. This year,

graduates will enjoy a number of activities that the Class of 2020 had to forgo, including a senior breakfast, a grad walk and a more traditional commencement ceremony.

Masks and some social distancing will still be required. Like other school districts, Astoria plans to provide a livestream of the graduation ceremony.

Because of the uncertainty about what may or may not be possible under state pandemic guidelines leading up to graduation, but also because of interest from students, Seaside High School opted to go with the same drive-thru, parade-style ceremony it held last year.

On June 10, graduates will arrive by car at the new high school then proceed to the Turnaround at the end of Broadway for their diplomas. The ceremony will conclude at the Seaside Civic and Convention Center parking lot.

The Warrenton-Hammond School District is also following last year’s script. Graduates will celebrate on June 11 with a vehicle procession from the Hammond Marina and through downtown to a drive-in ceremony.

Unlike last year, though, some pre-graduation ceremony traditions are able to return: There will be a homecoming week this year, as well as a homecoming carnival.

Knappa School District opted for an outdoor ceremony. Physical distancing and capacity requirements will still apply, but masks are optional. Seating will be designated by family.

The ceremony, which will take place on June 12, will also be broadcast on demand.

College: Designation could help enhance existing programs

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significant drop during the coronavirus pandemic.

Chris Breitmeyer, the college president, said “as the college develops its strategic enrollment management plan over the summer and into the fall, we hope to leverage opportunities brought about by being named a center of excellence.”

The designation does not alter the college’s plans for its maritime program, but it could enhance the ability to access grants or other types of funding to help with new projects, Breitmeyer added.

The designation also could help enhance existing programs, he said, “particularly if we gain access to equipment or form partnerships that allow for new types of educational experiences.”

Bill Antilla, a longtime instructor in the college’s maritime science program, had advocated for national recognition of the program for more than 17 years. Breitmeyer credited Antilla, who has retired, with playing a pivotal role in the college receiving

the center of excellence designation.

Antilla said the designation opens doors to important resources.

“Given the critical nature of maritime transportation to our economy, changes such as this that allow the industry to improve safety and efficiency of operations have the potential for significant economic impacts throughout the region,” he said.

The designation “recognizes the tremendous value that your institution provides to our nation by developing and preparing students for demanding careers in our vitally important maritime industry,” Lucinda Lessley, the acting administrator for the Maritime Administration, said in a message to the college.

“Your graduates have made outstanding contributions to the industry over the years,” she continued, “which is an excellent testimonial to the superior academic and professional education and training they received while attending Clatsop Community College.”



LEFT: Mikayla Parker cut off 13 inches of her hair to donate. MIDDLE: Chloe Parker cut off 10 inches of her hair to donate to other children. RIGHT: Katharine Parker cut off 14 inches of her hair to donate.

Donation: Girls got to dye their hair pink

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While the organization will accept as few as 8 inches of hair per donation, Parker, who is the head secretary at Seaside High School and serves on the Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District Board, was able to give 14 inches, with Mikayla donating 13 and Chloe 10.

This isn’t the first time Parker’s daughters have donated. About two years ago, Parker said, the girls started expressing a desire to cut their hair. As they were discussing how much hair the girls wanted to cut, Parker presented the option of growing it out a bit more to donate.

“I left it up to them, and they got really excited about being able to do that for another child,” Parker said. “They donated their hair

and they were really proud of that and really excited to make that contribution to somebody’s happiness.”

Although there are different organizations that accept hair donations, the Parkers chose Children With Hair Loss for a couple of reasons. First, the agency doesn’t charge their recipients for the wigs. Individuals can apply for a free wig every year until they turn 21. Additionally, that they are dedicated to children and young adults “resonated really well with our family,” Parker said.

She used the experience to explain to her daughters the reasons someone might need or desire to wear a wig. Children can lose hair as a result of cancer, alopecia, severe burns, trichotillomania and other rare diseases and disorders.

“It makes them think of the bigger picture outside of themselves,” she said.

Fast forward to last year, when the family was just preparing for their regular haircuts: Salons shuttered temporarily because of the coronavirus. As they waited — and their hair continued to grow — they revisited the idea of donating again. This time, however, they decided to do it as a family.

Parker left it up to her daughters how much they wanted to cut and donate.

“We’re not pushing them,” she said. “Yes, we want to make another child happy, but they also need to be happy in how they feel.”

According to the girls, that was exactly the outcome.

Mikayla said it “feels good to try something new. I like having short hair.” Plus,

she added, she appreciates the idea “that I’m giving to someone and making that person very happy.”

Chloe said she likes donating to others “because it makes them happy, and it makes me happy to be giving them hair.” She cut off the same length as the last time, so it didn’t make her nervous.

As a fun addition, the girls got to dye their hair pink after the donation.

While donating hair is nothing new, Parker said, she sees now as the optimal time for people to consider making the decision, since many have voluntarily or involuntarily been growing out their hair for the past year or so.

“Right now, with people like myself who grew their hair out crazy long, there is this opportunity,” she said.