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CORONAVIRUS

AIRPORT RENOVATION UNDERWAY

The \$2 million project could wrap up by fall

By EMILY LINDBLOM
The Astorian

The Port of Astoria has several projects planned at the Astoria Regional Airport, including the renovation of 5.5 acres of the airport's ramp.

Matt McGrath, the Port's deputy director, said the ramp, where small airplanes traverse and tie down, has been there since World War II and was in need of an update. He said there were times when planes would drive over it and the concrete would move back and forth.

"The base began to fail, which required the ramp project to be undertaken," McGrath said.

Columbia Pacific Construction, of Woodland, Washington, is responsible for rebuilding the ramp.

Chris Martinez, the project manager with Columbia Pacific, said the ground at the airport is so wet and the crews who built the original ramp didn't have the technology that's available today for firming up the ground and stabilizing it.

"If you were standing there and a plane landed on the other end of the airport, you could feel that bump, kind of a ripple," Martinez said.

The construction crews are repurposing the existing concrete surface, crushing it and putting it back into areas where they can use it.

"Then once we run out of it we will cement-treat the rest of the base out here," Martinez said.

He explained that if someone fills a bucket with concrete and it solidifies, it will still fit inside the bucket. But if someone takes out the solid concrete, smashes it up and tries to put it back into the same bucket, it will no longer fit because of all the jagged edges and the air between the pieces. That's called the "air void," and is what requires the cement-treated base to compensate for those gaps.

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Photos by Emily Lindblom/The Astorian
TOP TO BOTTOM: Matt McGrath, the Port of Astoria's deputy director, explains that the water infiltration issue needs to be fixed before the development of the Scouler fishmeal processing plant can begin. Excavators are reusing old concrete to renovate the ramp at the Astoria Regional Airport. Crews work on renovating the ramp.



State to lift most virus restrictions

A milestone in the pandemic

By NICOLE BALES
The Astorian

Most coronavirus restrictions in Oregon will be lifted by Wednesday as the state nears its vaccination goal, a milestone in the pandemic.

Gov. Kate Brown announced Friday that the statewide risk-level framework and other safety protocols will end by Wednesday or when 70% of Oregon adults receive at least one dose of vaccine, whichever comes first.

Her announcement came as Oregon faces a heat wave and thousands of people prepare to travel for the Fourth of July holiday.

"As I have detailed before, that means no more statewide mask mandates in most settings, no required capacity limits and no required physical distancing. It means, effectively, Oregon is 100% open for business," the governor said during a press conference. "This is a pivotal moment for Oregon."

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Warrenton requires training against harassment

Move comes after exchange over gender pronouns

By NICOLE BALES
The Astorian

WARRENTON — The city has required training against harassment and discrimination after a library board member and planning commissioner complained about a library employee's preferred gender pronouns.

In a column in The Columbia Press in May, Kelly Knudsen, the director of the Warrenton Community Library, introduced the new library assistant youth coordinator using the employee's preferred pronouns, "they" and "them."

Mary Ann Brandon, who was serving on the library board, sent an email to Christine Bridgens, a planning commissioner, describing the column as "disturbing."

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Executive director to remain at Liberty Theatre

Theater reopens after restrictions

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Astorian

Jennifer Crockett will remain at the helm of Astoria's historic Liberty Theatre.

In January, she announced she would be stepping down from the executive director position she has held for the past four years. She planned to continue with the theater until the board hired a new director. But, after the board failed to find a

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Jennifer Crockett | executive director of the Liberty Theatre

suitable replacement, she decided to stay for good.

"I kind of never left," she said.

In preparation for her departure, Crockett had added staff and refined processes at the theater, hoping to ease the transition for the new leader.

As the Liberty's board looked for Crockett's replacement, they interviewed candidates from across the country, but none of them had quite the right combination of skills and experience that running a theater

like the Liberty requires, said Josh Stellmon, the board president.

The Liberty Theatre is unique, Crockett said. It exists in a small town and is run by a small staff. The executive director needs to be ready to wear many different hats.

A number of the candidates the hiring committee interviewed came from larger organizations and were more specialized.

When the committee decided not to offer the job to either of the two

finalists it was considering, Stellmon talked to Crockett about staying on.

After all the changes she had made to make life easier for a new director, Crockett realized she'd made the job more feasible for herself. She asked herself, "What if I stayed?" And it felt good to think that.

"I loved the theater and I loved my job, but it had been overwhelming," she said.

Now, it wasn't. With a new front-of-house manager and other staff, Crockett wouldn't need to attend every theater event herself or take on all the same kinds of tasks as before. She could focus more on fundraising. A professional musician, she would also have time to pursue her own projects again.



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian
Jennifer Crockett is the executive director of the Liberty Theatre.

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