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Photos by Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Todd Fox moves around the yard of City Lumber. The local hardware store has experienced numerous shortages throughout the past year.

State seeks county's help on homeless camps

Abandoned vehicles, trash on forestland

By NICOLE BALES
The Astorian

The state Department of Forestry is asking Clatsop County for help in addressing abandoned vehicles and trash left behind from homeless camps on forestland.

During a county Board of Commissioners work session Tuesday, the department's Astoria District presented the challenges and costs associated with cleaning up and removing vehicles, RVs and trash.

Since 2019, the state has spent more than \$50,000 on cleanup costs. So far this year, nearly \$10,000 has been spent cleaning up two sites.

Ty Williams, the district operations coordinator for the Astoria District, said the department started budgeting for cleanup costs in the past two budget cycles. He said the increasing costs are becoming unsustainable.

"Not only is this illegal practice unsightly, but it brings with it a possibility of contamination to soils and streams," Williams said. "There's also a risk to our employees or the recreating public from dirty needles and other contaminants. During certain times of the year, there is also a fire risk from this behavior."

"This problem is not unique to just ODF. Many of our fellow forestland owners, as well as communities around

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City scraps scooter plans

A unanimous vote by the City Council

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Astorian

Electric scooter company Bird won't be building a nest in Astoria.

The City Council decided not to proceed with a possible pilot program for the pay-to-ride vehicles in a unanimous vote at a meeting Tuesday night.

Bird needed permission to use city rights of way to stage scooters downtown and had proposed launching an initial test run of around 75 scooters in Astoria.

A company representative touted the scooters as a low-cost option for commuters and tourists, but city councilors were worried about safety risks and other problems that could arise, especially during the busy summer months.

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Global pandemic causes supply chain disruptions

Some businesses living shipment to shipment

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Astorian

With mask mandates lifted, people's lower faces have reappeared. Toilet paper is usually in stock in North Coast grocery stores and local coronavirus case numbers have dropped significantly.

But the pandemic is still exerting its influence in other ways.

Across businesses, it's been hard to keep some items in stock because of supply chain disruptions and labor issues tied to the pandemic, but also because companies elsewhere are shifting how they do business or have run through their back stock.

The Pet Works on 14th Street saw brisk business during the height of the pandemic last year. Now, however, they're having trouble sourcing pet travel crates as factories in southern China weathered a recent heat wave that required production to temporarily shut down and there is less shipping container space amid an increased demand for goods.

"Most everything you see (in the store) probably has some component that comes out of China," said Nick Thompson, the manager at The Pet Works. "China can only produce so much stuff."

He thinks also about how wholesalers still had plenty of product stocked at warehouses ahead of pandemic peaks last year.

Even as factories shut down and traditional supply chains faltered, stores like The Pet Works could still get what they needed. Now, that source has



Lumber prices have skyrocketed across the country due to supply chain issues.

run dry and wholesalers and retailers alike are more often living shipment to shipment.

Thompson said they've had to diversify the brands they carry and then call around to their different vendors to see what's coming in. Fortunately, the market for new crates is not huge right now — especially as prices have started to creep up — and the store planned ahead for its busy season.

Still, Thompson added, "It's just a matter of us playing the shell game and figuring out who has what in that week — if anyone has anything that week."

Across the street, Gimre's Shoes has seen major delays in shoe shipments. Customers may not be able to find the brand, style or size they want and it might be a long time before

owner Pete Gimre is able to get it in for them.

He's been told this situation could continue into next year.

It is not a unique problem right now, though, he said. Across businesses, he's heard some version of the same story.

'It's been a challenging year'

City Lumber has seen shortages in products throughout its hardware store and lumberyard, said owner Jeff Newenhof.

The pandemic was a major reason, but not the only one.

"There are all sorts of reasons, excuses — hurricanes in the Gulf Coast, ice storms in Texas, chemical plant explosions in the Midwest

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Professor biking to give back

Rojas-Galván begins monthlong fundraiser

By GRIFFIN REILLY
The Astorian

Somewhere in Oregon, a bandit is on the loose.

Fernando Rojas-Galván, a Spanish instructor at Clatsop Community College, is set to ride 1,600 miles around Oregon in July to raise money for student textbooks, a journey he's labeling the "Bandit Biking for Books."

Sponsored by the college foundation, his goal is to raise \$150,000 upon returning to Astoria at the end of the month. The goal represents enough money to provide at least one textbook to each student each term of the upcoming school year.

Rojas-Galván took the first strides of his trip in Seaside on Monday.

His motivation? The belief his trip can showcase the power and importance of an often-overlooked route to higher education — one that he almost neglected.

"Though I had always considered community college a second option, it was the only option I could truly afford. But looking

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A modified Astoria Regatta returns

Festival was canceled in May

By ALYSSA EVANS
The Astorian



Mitch Eckhardt

Mara Dowaliby, the 2019 Astoria Regatta queen, passes her crown on to Annalyse Steele, the 2020 queen.

The Astoria Regatta will be held as an "abbreviated festival" in August.

The festival was canceled in 2020 because of concerns about the coronavirus pandemic. In May, organizers announced this year's festival would also be canceled, but they reconsidered the decision.

"Just a few weeks earlier, the Astoria Regatta Board of Directors had canceled the historic event for the second year in a row," Melissa Grothe, a Lewis and Clark Elemen-

tary School teacher and president of the Astoria Regatta Association, said in a statement. "However, as COVID-19 infections have fallen and pandemic restrictions have lifted, the board reconsidered its earlier decision."

The Aug. 14 festival will include a memorial service and a boat parade. The memorial service will begin at 11 a.m. at the Seamen's Memorial at Maritime Memorial Park. The program will recognize the region's maritime history. It will also honor members of the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Navy, commercial fishermen, river and bar pilots and others who work in maritime industries.

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