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College sorts through enrollment challenges

A software system also poses problems

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Astorian

Low enrollment at Clatsop Community College, a pinch point in college board elections, is starting to creep back up.

Though not yet at pre-pandemic levels, enrollment for the fall quarter is showing signs of significant recovery, according to a recent report submitted to the college board. The fall numbers are on track with enrollment levels seen in the 2018-19 academic year.

"Additionally, both applications and admissions have surged compared to the previous year," the report stated.

In the spring, enrollment was reported down by around 37% — a drop the college could not sustain for long, Chris Breitmeyer, the college president, told the board at budget hearings in May.

"Enrollment and retention will continue to be a focus for us," Breitmeyer told *The Astorian*. He said the progress he's seen so far is encouraging.

But some issues continue with the college's software system, CampusNexus, another campaign theme in the May election.

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Virtue at the Pointe in Astoria offers addiction treatment.

'It's a loss-loss situation'

A lack of drug and alcohol abuse treatment options creates barriers to recovery

By NICOLE BALES
The Astorian

There are few options on the North Coast for drug and alcohol addiction treatment. People without private insurance have even less access to help.

The number of treatment facilities in Clatsop County has declined over the years as the facilities have become increasingly more challenging to operate financially.

Awakenings by the Sea, a women's only center in Seaside, and Virtue at the Pointe in Astoria, are the two inpatient rehabilitation facilities in the county. Neither accept public insurance. Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare, the county's mental health provider, provides outpatient treatment.

There are few inpatient treatment centers in the state that accept public insurance, so people on the Oregon Health Plan — the state's Medicaid program for low-income residents and the disabled — must look to facilities in the Portland metro area, Eugene and Hermiston.

Bridge to Pathways in St. Helens was the closest medical detox center that accepted public insurance, but it temporarily closed due to staffing challenges.

Amy Baker, the executive director of Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare, said it is difficult to find facilities that accept public insurance because the rate of reimbursement from Medicaid has long been substandard.

"The detox reimbursement rate is fine, which is why we have access to it," she said. "It's the residen-



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The number of treatment facilities in Clatsop County has declined over the years.

tial rate, which is abysmal, which is why we don't have access to it. It's the few programs around the state who figured out how to operate on a dime, or maybe they've negotiated a higher rate with their CCO (coordinated care organization). But I think that's the question we have to ask ourselves, is how can it be allowed to be so disparate?"

"But that's the reason why we don't have access. I couldn't run a residential program on that rate."

Baker added that while private insurance has a higher rate of reimbursement, commercial carriers have become more restrictive about what they are willing to authorize, making

it more difficult for providers to get paid.

Trista Boudon, an addictions counselor at Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare who leads the agency's mobile recovery ally team, said the lack of options for people on public insurance and the uninsured is often why people die instead of getting help.

The recovery ally team, known as the "Ra-Ra Team," is made up of four staffers who work with between 60 to 100 people at any given time. Almost all are on public insurance or are uninsured. Many are homeless.

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'I'M TIRED OF SEEING PEOPLE DIE BECAUSE WE DON'T HAVE ENOUGH RESOURCES TO KEEP THEM ALIVE.'

Trista Boudon | an addictions counselor at Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare who leads the agency's mobile recovery ally team

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County records 10th virus death • A6

Warrenton reduces spending on tourism promotion

Pares contribution to regional committee

By ETHAN MYERS
The Astorian

WARRENTON — The City Commission voted 4-1 on Tuesday night to reduce the amount of lodging tax money the city contributes to the Lower Columbia Tourism Committee.

The tourism committee markets Astoria and Warrenton as a combined destination and is funded by a percentage of lodging taxes from both cities. Warrenton had been distributing 6.8% of their lodging taxes to the committee, but will now only distribute 2%.

In May, the city's budget committee voted to zero out funding to the tourism committee and direct the revenue toward the Hammond Marina capital reserve fund.

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The Gearhart Ironwerks space, which the Speakmans plan to adapt into a gallery.

Gallery, residence space coming to Gearhart

Speakmans intend to display their art

By R.J. MARX
The Astorian

GEARHART — The Planning Commission has approved a local family's proposal to turn a former metal works into a gallery and living space off Pacific Way.

"By supporting local art-

ists, the city of Gearhart can play an important role in adding to the vibrancy and aesthetics of the local community," Jay Speakman wrote in a letter to the commission.

Speakman and his wife, Diane, own Sesame + Lilies, a home decor store in Cannon Beach. The store originally started on the corner of U.S. Highway 101 and Pacific Way in 2003 before moving to Cannon Beach in 2007.

The couple's daughter, Rachel, is a painter and illustrator, she said in the letter. At the Art Institute of Chicago, she specialized in ceramic sculpture. "It is her desire to return to this form of

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