

'OUR TYPICAL PLANNING PROCESS WAS THROWN OUT THE WINDOW'

Organizers get creative as Regatta, beach volleyball return

BY NIKKI DAVIDSON

For months organizers behind the North Coast's biggest summer events lost sleep wondering what the future might hold. Now that it's here, there's no time to hit the snooze button.

When the state lifted COVID-19 restrictions in Oregon, organizers launched a chaotic race to the finish.

The Seaside Chamber of Commerce had hoped the Seaside Beach Volleyball tournament would return in 2021 for the 39th year, but couldn't move forward with planning until the state would issue permits for outdoor events on public beaches.

News that the town could once again host the world's largest amateur beach volleyball tournament didn't come until June. That left only two months to plan the four-day tournament that runs Thursday through Sunday.

"There were two feelings," said Brian Owen, CEO of the chamber of commerce.

"I was extremely excited, and then at the same time I thought, 'Oh, crud, we've got a lot of work to do.'"

Netting volleyball supplies

Seaside's population of about 6,700 people swells to host thousands of youth and adult volleyball players in a sand tournament with 185 courts. The four-day competition takes place on the beach, but a spike in supply costs has put planner's hopes of staying within their traditional budget in the literal toilet.

According to the chamber, the price of port-a-potties alone has increased 47%

since 2019.

"Inflation has hit us hard," said Owen. "Just like any other business, we've been challenged to find labor and sourcing materials. Our typical planning process was thrown out the window. We have been scrambling to make sure we have all the supplies necessary."

The biggest financial increase comes from the simple slabs of wood that make the tournament possible: the fence posts that string up the volleyball nets.

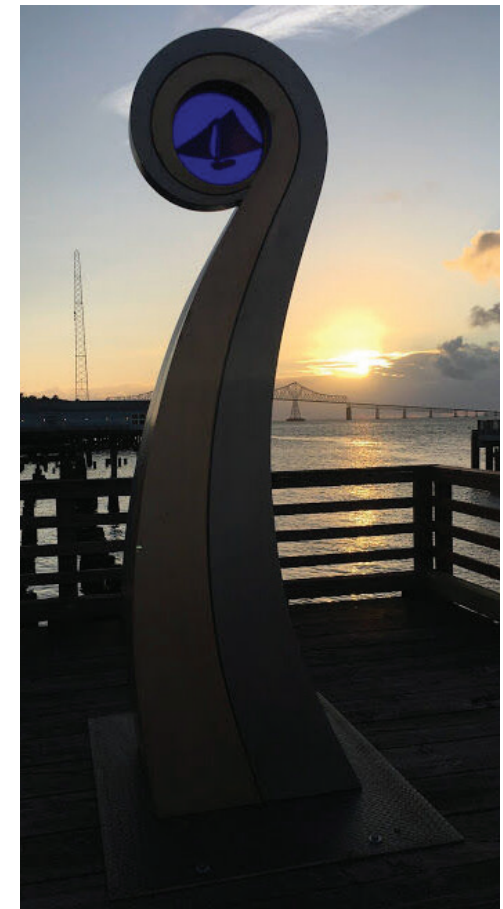
"Typically it would cost us about \$25 for a post, this year it's more than three times that cost and we have to have them special ordered," Owen said.

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Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Under a cloudy sky, Nola Morrison, 55, waits for the ball to drop before spiking it over the net during the Seaside Beach Volleyball tournament in 2019.



Alyssa Evans

Jeremy Furnish's sculpture celebrates the 125th anniversary of the Astoria Regatta.



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