

IN BRIEF

Astoria public works employee tests positive for coronavirus

An Astoria public works employee has tested positive for the coronavirus, city officials reported Friday.

The city is working with the Clatsop County Public Health Department to notify other people who have had close contact with the employee.

City Manager Brett Estes announced Tuesday that a staffer in the Astoria Police Department had tested positive. Estes declined to offer more information about either case.

The two cases have not impacted any city operations, Estes said.

Lil' Sprouts Academy, the city-run day care, is closed until September after an employee tested positive for the virus.

Youth programs close after park district staffer tests positive for virus

SEASIDE — Youth programs were closed Friday at the Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District after a staffer tested positive for the coronavirus.

The staffer has been off work since Monday, had minimal contact with others and will quarantine at home.

The youth programs facility was being cleaned on Friday.

The park district has been working with the Clatsop County Public Health Department and is taking precautions beyond those recommended to ensure the safety of staff and patrons.

Police investigate reported sexual assault in Seaside

SEASIDE — Police are investigating a sexual assault that was reported between midnight and 1 a.m. on Aug. 13.

The incident occurred near the Seaside Civic and Convention Center in a First Avenue parking lot. To report information, call 503-738-6311.

State closes Youngs River to Chinook salmon retention fishing

With poor projected returns of Chinook salmon to Youngs Bay, state fishery managers will close Youngs River and its tributaries to retention fishing for Chinook.

Youngs River is a tributary of the Columbia River and the closure will help maximize returns of Chinook destined for the basin's hatcheries, according to fish biologists.

The closure took effect Monday.

— The Astorian

DEATHS

Aug. 18, 2021

HARRIMAN, Daniel
Brian, 67, of Astoria, died in Astoria. Caldwell's Luce-Layton Mortuary of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

Feb. 19, 2021

EVALT, Paul H., 64, of Astoria and Coos Bay, died in Coos Bay. Nelson's Bay Area Mortuary in Coos Bay was in charge of the arrangements.

ON THE RECORD

Assault

• Aaron Joseph Sigeron, 35, of Astoria, was indicted June 17 for assault in the second degree, two counts of failing to perform the duties of a driver to injured persons, unauthorized use of a vehicle, reckless driving and recklessly endangering another person.

Aggravated harassment

• Celeste Ellaine Kristine Karge, 24, of Seaside, was indicted Tuesday for aggravated harassment, attempted aggravated harassment, criminal mischief in the third degree and criminal trespass in the second degree.

Harassment

• Jonathon Tyler Owen, 26, of Seaside,

was arrested Monday evening on U.S. Highway 26 for harassment and interfering with police.

Attempting to elude

• Chad Lee Mason, 49, of Astoria, was arrested early Monday at U.S. Highway 101 and Pacific Way in Gearhart for attempting to elude law enforcement in a vehicle and resisting arrest.

DUI

• Jennifer Kay Vangundy, 38, of Astoria, was arrested late Thursday afternoon on Lief Erikson Drive in Astoria for driving under the influence of intoxicants.

• David R. Adams, 51, of Newberg, was arrested Monday afternoon at the Shilo Inn in Warrenton for DUI.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

TUESDAY

Arts Council of Clatsop County, 11 a.m., 800 Exchange St., Suite 430, Astoria.

Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District, 5:15 p.m., Bob Chisholm Community Center, 1225 Avenue A, Seaside.

Astoria Planning Commission, 5:30 p.m., City Hall, 1095 Duane St.

Cannon Beach Planning Commission, 6 p.m., (electronic meeting).

Warrenton City Commission, 6 p.m., City Hall, 225 S. Main Ave.

the Astorian

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Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Dozens of people attended the groundbreaking for the Astoria Nordic Heritage Park on Thursday afternoon. Construction is expected to start in early September. A dedication is planned for June before the opening of the Astoria Scandinavian Midsummer Festival.

BREAKING GROUND

Mandate: 'COVID-19 poses a risk to our kids'

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The Oregon Health Authority recorded 35 new virus cases in Clatsop County on Friday and 26 new cases on Thursday. Since the pandemic began, the county recorded 1,664 virus cases as of early Friday.

The county on Friday reported a 12th death from the virus. The county said a 52-year-old man died Thursday at Legacy Emanuel Medical Center in Portland. No other information was immediately available.

Masks required

Brown had already announced she will require mask-wearing in school buildings in the coming school year. The governor directed school districts to offer in-person education.

"Our kids need to be in the classroom full time, five days a week," Brown said at a news conference on Thursday. "We need to do everything we can to make that happen."

Masks and vaccinations are critical tools in creating safe environments and ensuring minimal disruption to school operations, the governor said. With children under 12 still ineligible to receive a vaccine, Brown said it is up to the adults around them to provide that additional protection by getting vaccinated.

"COVID-19 poses a risk to our kids," Brown said, "but kids need to be pro-

'I HAVE A BUNCH OF 12 (YEAR OLD) AND UNDER KIDS SHOWING UP TO SCHOOL THIS FALL UNVACCINATED.'

Craig Hoppes | superintendent of the Astoria School District

ected and they need to be in school."

Washington state imposed a similar mandate earlier this week, with vaccination required for all school and child care workers. Portland Public Schools has required staff to be vaccinated when in-person instruction starts in September.

Colt Gill, the director of the Oregon Department of Education, said the state would not withhold state funds from schools that push back against the vaccine mandate. The goal is to be able to offer in-person instruction, he said.

The Oregon Health Authority could levy civil penalties against school districts or employers who refuse to follow the mandate.

School districts on the North Coast had encouraged employees to get vaccinated, but did not keep records of how many people ultimately followed through.

Craig Hoppes, the superintendent of the Astoria School District, said he isn't sure how staff will respond.

"I guess it matters which teachers and staff you talk to," he told The Astorian. "There are some who are very pro-vaccination and some that are not."

Astoria and other school districts are waiting until an official rule comes down from the Oregon Health Authority. In the past, leadership for Astoria's teachers union had spoken in favor of vaccination against the virus for those who were able to get a vaccine.

For Hoppes, there's a bottom line.

"I have a bunch of 12 (year old) and under kids showing up to school this fall unvaccinated," he said. "Anything I can do to provide another layer of help and safety and support to them, I'm going to do. Whether that's masking or other things."

'Pretty dire'

The night before Brown's announcement, the Knappa School District's Board had voted to send a letter to the governor's office and state education and health agencies requesting local control over decisions about safety protocols tied to the pandemic.

Board member Will Isom had proposed sending the letter.

"I think local control over the type of situation we're in is really important," he said at the Wednesday night meeting.

The school district is not looking to circumvent rules, Isom clarified, nor is it taking an anti-mask stance. Things are "pretty dire" locally, which makes local control even more important when it comes to decisions that affect small communities like Knappa, he said.

"Just because things are going a certain way in Multnomah County or Marion County or Lane County, doesn't mean it works for the Knappa School District," Isom said.

The letter referenced an outbreak of the virus among seafood processing workers in Warrenton that impacted school operations in Knappa.

"To our knowledge, no workers at the plant live in the Knappa area and there was no direct risk of infection in our community due to the outbreak," the letter states, "yet the requirements at that point in time caused us to close school nonetheless."

The school district had several virus cases last school year. But, the letter states, "We were able to conduct school safely all year without any examples of COVID spread within our schools."

Case counts, classroom sizes and resources vary from community to community, the letter continues, "and decisions about safety can best be made by those who know all of these conditions best — the local district."

Shipwrecked: 'Our nonprofits are in need of support'

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fair, but has not determined a specific number or particular fair event or events because of the many overlapping events, workplaces and households that many of the individuals had contact with before and after the event," Tom Bennett, a county spokesman, said in an email.

According to Morrell Gasser, the United Way board had diverse opinions about how to proceed. One concern was that even though United Way would require all festival attendees to wear masks, the organization had limited options to enforce the rule as there is no state or local mandate to mask at outdoor events.

"Who is to say an affected person doesn't abide by our request to wear masks, and our requests to socially distance? All it would take is one person," Nye said. "If one

person gets sick, if one person dies, that would be on us."

Ultimately, the board put the decision to a vote Wednesday night. The majority voted to cancel.

"It was heart-wrenching. I'm going to try not to cry when I say this, but we know that our nonprofits are in need of support," Morrell Gasser said. "We know that our community is need of support."

In the past, United Way has relied on its most popular fundraiser, Iron Chef Goes Coastal, to raise money for more than a dozen local nonprofits. According to Morrell Gasser, the 2019 event raised \$100,000 for nonprofits. The DINE UNITED campaign they created last fall during the pandemic took in minimal funds.

The potential of losing money during a difficult fundraising year has prompted organizers to ask sponsors and ticket-holders to consider

making a donation instead of a refund if possible. Ticket prices for the event ranged from \$20 to \$65.

"After we cover the expenses the vendors need to take from us, those donations will go back to the nonprofits," Morrell Gasser said.

In Cannon Beach, Public Coast Brewing Co. made

a similar decision to cancel their HAYDAY! beer fest due to concerns about the spread of the delta variant of the virus. The festival was planned for Aug. 28, and, according to the brewery's website, ticket-holders will receive full refunds.

Griffin Reilly contributed to this report.



Astoria Public Library
New hours effective August 2, 2021:

Our open hours will be:

Monday 9-1 PM

Tuesday 9-5 PM

Wednesday 9-5 PM

Thursday 9-5 PM

Friday 9-5 PM

Saturday 9-1 PM.

Sunday Closed.

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