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## Schools urged to curtail activities

Caution could help slow the spread of coronavirus

By GARY WARNER  
Oregon Capital Bureau

Schools should cancel or curtail some extracurricular activities to help Oregon maintain what appears to be the beginning of a decline from record high numbers of COVID-19 infections, Gov. Kate Brown said. Multiple forecasts over the past week showed a peak in the two-month surge of infections driven by the highly contagious delta variant.

Hospitals remain nearly full and virus case reports are still 12 times what they were in early July.

The fragile ebb in the worst of the crisis will be challenged by the flood of students

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## Gearhart firehouse bond off ballot

Complaint by residents delays vote past November

By R.J. MARX  
The Astorian

GEARHART — A bond measure to finance a new firehouse will not be on the November ballot because a court hearing on a complaint challenging the \$13 million request extended past the election filing deadline.

Clatsop County Clerk Tracie Krevanko said she would pull the bond measure from the ballot after speaking with the secretary of state's office about the timing of the legal challenge.

In the complaint filed in Circuit Court by residents Jack Zimmerman and Harold Gable in late August, the two asked the court to suspend the bond measure until costs for the project are determined.

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## Quake sensor could offer up early warning

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ  
The Astorian

A new monitoring station could give Astorians precious extra time to prepare for an earthquake.

At a meeting Tuesday night, the City Council approved the installation of a seismic sensor on city property off Pipeline Road near a Verizon tower.

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Dean Guernsey/The Bulletin

The co-owners of Sparrow Bakery in Bend, Whitney, left, and Jessica Keatman, are shown with their sons, Brooks and Abel, at the Scott Street bakery location, which is closing due to a worker shortage.

## Workers in short supply amid year of job growth

Labor shortage, housing complicate economic recovery

By SUZANNE ROIG  
The Bulletin

BEND — With record job growth in Oregon, Whitney Keatman never imagined she would have problems finding workers for her Scott Street location of Sparrow Bakery.

And she didn't. It was getting them to stay that has plagued her longtime Bend business.

In the past year, Keatman, a co-owner, made 117 job offers, and most were accepted. But after just three months, only about 42 workers remained. The bakery needed a minimum of 20 workers at the Scott Street location, and by the end of this summer, there were six.

So she made a hard decision: She will close the bakery at the Old Iron Works Arts District.

"We've been struggling for seven years with moments of success," Keatman said. "Over the years, we've had

on-again and off-again good managers. When you don't have the right management, you have a hard time retaining workers.

"It's common for people to come and begin training and then get another job offer that competes with wages," Keatman said. "There's no allegiance. It's a competitive market for employees."

During a year of record job growth, employers like Keatman have had the hardest time finding workers to fill positions. Across the state, companies, particularly in the leisure and hospitality industries, are struggling to find workers.

The hospitality, hotel, restaurant and tourism-related industries added 6% more jobs this year, economists say. Hiring is more competitive than ever as employers raise wages and offer signing bonuses, referral bonuses, improved benefits, even subsidies for housing. But those incentives also have to compete against federal unemployment benefits, an increase in household income from federal stimulus funds and retirements.

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Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Masudur Khan is a Seaside hotelier.

## Seaside hotelier navigates pandemic uncertainty

By ETHAN MYERS  
The Astorian

SEASIDE — When Masudur Khan came to the coast and got involved in the hotel industry, he saw a problem with how employees were hired and managed.

Workers were brought on for the busy tourism season and then laid off in the winter. There was often no loyalty in either direction.

"I found that wasn't the right way to do it because we are a team and family," Khan said.

As he took over Seaside Lodging LLC and came to oversee more than a dozen hotels along the coast, he made it a policy not to lay off workers. The result was low turnover and high retention rates for more than a

decade.

When the coronavirus pandemic struck, many in the hospitality industry laid off workers. Khan said he had to furlough around half of his employees.

As government restrictions to contain the virus lifted and hotels welcomed back more guests, many have reported a significant labor shortage, which has disrupted the recovery.

But Khan has, for the most part, eluded that issue and said he was able to hire back the majority of his furloughed employees.

"There is a huge demand and this is a market for the employee," he said. "So I had to sit down with my management team and say, 'OK, look at their

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*'IT SHOULD BE A PRIORITY FOR INDUSTRY LEADERS LIKE ORLA AND EVERYBODY TO BRING THE WORKFORCE BACK AND MAKE THEM CONFIDENT IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY.'*

Masudur Khan | Seaside hotelier

### Worker Shortage



FIRST IN A 5-PART SERIES