

Virus wave crests

Experts caution recovery could extend into winter

By GARY WARNER
Oregon Capital Bureau

Oregon's record wave of COVID-19 cases appears to have crested, but the long recovery will likely stretch into the winter holiday season.

"I'm happy to deliver some promising news — daily cases and hospitalizations are slowly coming down from record highs," said Dr. Dean Sidelinger, the state epidemiologist, during a Thursday press call.

New infections and deaths also remain high but are trending down the past two weeks after eight weeks of rising numbers driven by the highly contagious delta variant.

But it will take as long to get down from the crest as it took to get there, about two months, according to state forecasts.

"The delta variant remains a formidable threat," Sidelinger said.

With more than 1,000 COVID-19 patients statewide — nearly all unvaccinated — hospitals are reeling and medical attention is delayed to not just virus patients, but heart attack victims, those injured in car crashes and other life-threatening incidents.

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Hood to Coast draws complaints

Some residents upset after relay's return

By R.J. MARX
The Astorian

SEASIDE — The return of Hood to Coast has triggered a new round of complaints from residents that the regional event is too large and disruptive for the city.

The iconic 198-mile relay from Mount Hood to the Prom, which was suspended last year because of the coronavirus pandemic, brought thousands of people to the coast in late August.

Several residents told the City Council that some runners were rude, that organizers failed to enforce virus precautions and control traffic and that hosting the event compounded the public health risk during a surge of new virus cases.

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A fresh coat of joy

Business owner spearheads community mural

Candy Yiu and artist Gary Hirsch stand at the top of the Botjoy mural on 11th Street.



By NIKKI DAVIDSON
The Astorian

As Candy Yiu gazed at the building she purchased behind the food carts on 11th and Duane streets, she giggled.

"It's just one of those things that I see, and it makes me smile," she said.

She was staring at an image not often seen in a historic downtown. A freshly painted mural of 73 goofy, joy-ridden robots. The words "keep smiling" appear to be coming from the mouth of one of the bizarre creatures. An army of the figures are seemingly dancing alongside the question, "What brings Astoria joy?"

It's just the beginning of Yiu's mission to turn the space into the city's newest hot spot for food. She and her husband are the owners of boutique hotel Near the Pier, along with local food delivery service Slurpalicious. Their love of food drove them to purchase the lot and building off 11th Street in April.

"I really love food carts and wanted this space to be cheerful and happy," Yiu said. "I always feel bad that my favorite food, people have to grab it and sit on the ground."

An upgrade

The first step to revitalizing the space was simple. Yiu added a few colorfully painted picnic tables between the food carts. When it came to the building itself, she felt the exterior needed a major upgrade. Originally built in 1940 as a service station, it had also served as a dental office and most recently a therapy treatment center.

"One thing that was always in my head was this building," she said. "It's really run down, not cared for, and it's hidden behind everything. No one actually noticed the building."



Nikki Davidson/The Astorian

ABOVE: Candy Yiu asks people to write what brings them joy on pieces of fabric beside the new Botjoy mural. LEFT: Candy Yiu's son helps paint a blue robot.



Yiu had a desire to create a project that would involve the community. Her thoughts immediately went to a mural she had passed in Portland, composed of several tiny robots. The artwork was

created by international mural artist Gary Hirsch.

"When I was kid, I used to have these terrible nightmares," Hirsch said. "My dad would ask me to draw them, so I have drawings from when I was 7 that are some of these robot figures. One day he asked me, 'Well, if you can make them, can you erase them?' That's how my nightmares got better, and that's how I became an artist because it ended up being so helpful."

As an adult, Hirsch found his former nightmares packed a powerful punch, actually sparking joy and confidence in strangers. He began donating tiny versions of the bots to kids who needed

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R.J. Marx/The Astorian

Vehicles parked in the lot north of Goodman Park on Necanicum Drive.

RVs near park cause headaches in Seaside

Residents want the city to take action

By R.J. MARX
The Astorian

SEASIDE — After a city crackdown on Necanicum Drive near 12th Avenue earlier this year, residents say that people living in

RVs have moved across the street to Goodman Park.

The park's popularity as a place to shelter grew after overnight street parking prohibitions and increased ticketing.

"We all came here in the spring to see most of you here," Robert Clark, a resident, told the City Council on Monday. "We got a

lot of nodding that you would be doing things. ... Now, it's worse than it was."

Karl Schorr, a resident, said

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