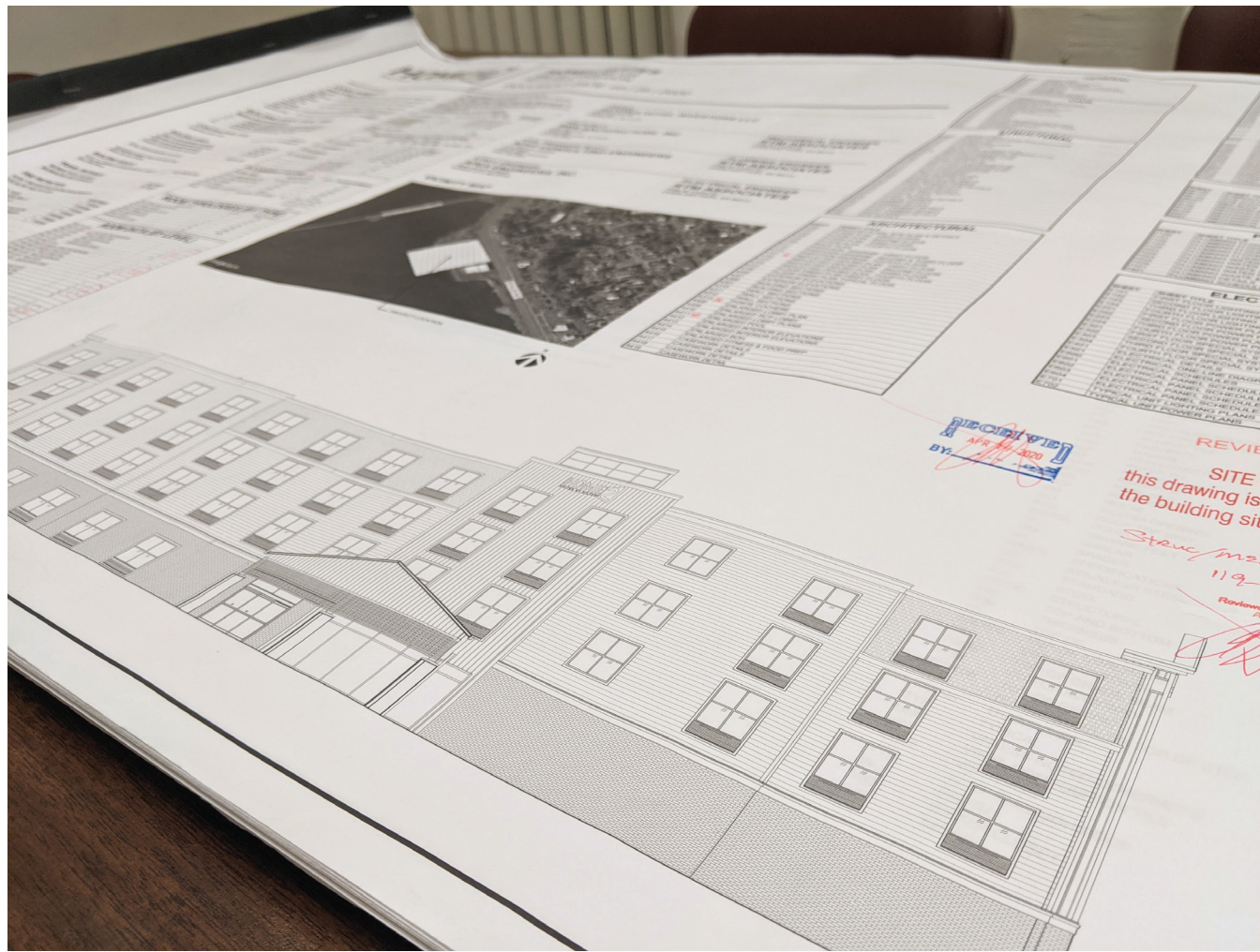


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Photos by Katie Frankowicz/The Astorian

Plans for a 90-room, Hilton-brand hotel on the South Slope are still going forward.

HOTEL PROJECTS IN THE WORKS

Developers eye downtown, South Slope

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Astorian

A controversial riverfront hotel project in Astoria is waiting on a verdict from the state after developers failed to land a permit extension from the city, but two other hotel projects are moving forward.

Both are located in zones where hotels are allowed as an outright use: a large Hilton-brand hotel at the base of the South Slope and a smaller hotel behind Fort George Brewery downtown.

A local property development group, Rose Tree LLC, which also owns the former Home Bakery building in Uppertown, plans to turn the former Angel Medical building on 15th Street behind Fort George into a 13-room hotel.

Neighbors of the yet unnamed hotel include the brewery, a dental office, Coast Community Radio, a bed-and-breakfast, residential homes and a massive rhododendron that rears up at the edge of the property.

Larry Bense, of Rose Tree LLC, hopes to start remodel work in November and have the hotel open in time for the peak tourism season next year.

Bense briefly considered



A former medical building on 15th Street will be the site of a new, smaller-sized hotel.

turning the building into a rehab center — an easier switch than a hotel because it would have been considered a similar use to what had existed before. But, he said, “I didn’t want to be the guy that put a drug rehab center downtown.”

A hotel seemed like a better fit for the neighborhood. He does not expect it to draw the same criticism as the four-story, 66-room Fairfield Inn and Suites proposed by Hollander Hospital-

ity at the site of the former Ship Inn restaurant on the waterfront.

“It’s a cute enough, small enough property and project,” Bense said of his hotel proposal. “All it’s going to do is improve the area.”

Rose Tree LLC does not plan to knock down the medical building, only remodel it, Bense noted. The building is located in zoning that allows for lodging.

See Hotels, Page A2

Vietnam memorial dedicated in Seaside

Small town made large sacrifice

By R.J. MARX
The Astorian

SEASIDE — Veterans, their families and residents gathered Saturday under a downpour at the Cove for the dedication of the Vietnam War Veterans Memorial in Seltzer Park.

The granite monument stands at the south edge of the park and pays homage to the 113 people from Seaside who served in the war.

“These are all veterans that went to Vietnam, and the families of veterans and families of the KIA (killed in action),” Mark Hansen, who helped organize the project, said.

Ky Jennings, the co-organizer, said he was among 17 students in the Class of 1963 to serve in the war.

“We lived in a time of peace, being post-World War II kids, and we like to say, ‘it was magic,’” Jennings said. “We knew each other so well, most of us having gone through 12 years of school together when Seaside was a small town community.

See Memorial, Page A2

Heat shrinks hop yields

Predictions of a below-average harvest

By BRAD CARLSON
and SIERRA DAWN McCLAIN
Capital Press

Growers are in the thick of hop harvest across the Pacific Northwest, where lower-than-average yields are predicted because of heat waves that scalded the region in June and July.

Across Washington state, Oregon and Idaho, the nation’s main hop-growing region, high temperatures brought losses, smaller hop cones and increased spider mite pressure. However, growers say the challenges were mild compared to 2020’s wildfires, windstorms and market disruptions.

“Heat waves, the delta variant — what’s next?” said Steve Carpenter, the chief supply officer for Yakima Chief Hops, a grower-owned dealer handling nearly 40% of the U.S. crop. “At least within our company, though, we’re seeing a good crop coming in and very encouraging numbers in terms of shipments. It encourages me that we’ve maybe come around the corner.”

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Social services worker helps reduce language barriers

Hernandez serves as a bilingual case manager

By ERICK BENDEL
The Astorian

Marcelo Hernandez stepped into his job as a bilingual case manager at Clatsop Community Action in summer 2020.

At that time, the nonprofit had taken on a new function doing wraparound services when people tested positive for the coronavirus.

Hernandez and other staff were helping exposed and



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infected individuals and families around Clatsop County ride out two weeks in quarantine. They moved homeless people from Seaside’s Helping Hands facility into hotels, did the same for tourists who caught COVID-19 while visiting, brought meals to them and to families in isolation, even transported people via emergency vehicles because public transit was off limits to virus cases.

It was a busy time. “We coordinated, all the

team here — not just me, all the team,” Hernandez said.

When COVID-19 vaccines became available earlier this year, the need for wraparound services began to wane. “We were happy — it was decreasing a lot,” he said. Then the state lifted many virus restrictions, vaccinated and unvaccinated alike began to reenter the world and the more contagious delta variant arrived, followed by a surge of new virus cases.

“And we start again,” he said.

As a social services worker, Hernandez helps people find assistance with rent, utilities, food, medical issues, transportation — the immediate needs that, once met, allow for other forms of fulfillment. “Small

things make big changes,” he said.

To a role already designed to touch people’s lives in difficult and desperate moments, the virus added a new and urgent dimension. Hernandez has clients many months behind in rent, for example, because their jobs disappeared during the pandemic.

Hernandez serves as a translator for the local Latino community at the COVID-19 testing site at Camp Rilea Armed Forces Training Center in Warrenton. He’s also been on the frontlines of the mass vaccination effort, translating between health care workers and vaccine recipients at county-run clinics.

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Erick Bengel/The Astorian
Marcelo Hernandez, a bilingual case manager at Clatsop Community Action, outside the Astoria office.