

IN BRIEF

Razor clamming to reopen on North Coast

Razor clamming will reopen on the popular Clatsop beaches between Warrenton and Seaside on Friday. The area was closed to clamming for an annual conservation closure during the summer, but has not been open to clammers since last October. High levels of domoic acid shut down digging last year and kept the area closed through the spring. Clammers will be allowed a daily harvest limit of the first 15 razor clams dug, regardless of size or condition. Razor clam harvesting in Oregon opened elsewhere on the coast last week, from the California border to Tillamook Head south of Seaside.

Corder named to school board in Seaside

SEASIDE — Chris Corder was named to fill a vacancy on the Seaside School District Board on Tuesday. Along with retired teacher Chuck Mattocks, he was one of two to apply for the position of director for Zone 3, Position 1 in Gearhart.

Corder fills the seat that became vacant after A.J. Wahl stepped down to serve as a county judge. Corder is a local business owner who’s active in the community and coaches youth sports, Brian Taylor, the school board president, said. Corder was unanimously selected by the board. “I am looking forward to making a difference in the education experience for the students of the Seaside school system with the current administration and board members,” he said after the meeting.

— The Astorian

Pacific Transit eyeing across-the-board fare hikes

SOUTH BEND, Wash. — Local residents can catch a round-trip ride on a Pacific Transit bus from Ilwaco to Astoria for the low price of four quarters, or a crisp dollar bill. That looks likely to change come January, however. On Sept. 16, the Pacific Transit System’s Board of Directors held the first of three public hearings on proposed fare increases that would affect every bus route and pass offered by Pacific Transit. If approved by the board, the increases are expected to go into effect on Jan. 1. If the new increases go into effect as proposed, round-trip rides from Ilwaco to Astoria, Raymond to Aberdeen and South Bend to Astoria to Ilwaco will increase from \$1 to \$3. Round-trip rides on route 20, which stretches from Ilwaco to Oysterville, and route 32, from Raymond to South Bend, would increase from 70 cents to \$2. Paratransit and dial-a-ride round-trip fares would also increase from 70 cents to \$2. Passes would also see a rise in cost. Regular monthly passes for adults would increase from \$20 to \$36, while student passes would go from \$10 to \$18.

Pacific Transit Director Michael Wagner and the board agreed that people with tokens or punch cards should be able to use their remaining rides once the fare increases go into effect.

Pacific Transit officials said they’ll work on placing new signage on their buses to alert passengers of the changes. Regarding the across-the-board fare increases, Wagner said there were two options for the board to consider: gradually increase the fares over a longer period of time “and sort of cook the frog in the water, if you know what I’m saying,” or make the jump right away “and assume it’s going to be painful for a while, and then it’s OK.” Julie Struck, a board member and the South Bend mayor, said that even with the proposed increases, Pacific Transit’s fares are still much less than what other transit agencies offer. “We are still greatly reduced in fare, even with the increases,” Struck said.

— Chinook Observer

ON THE RECORD

Menacing

• Justin Charles Vitetoe, 34, of Westport, was arrested on Friday on McLean Hill Road in Westport for menacing in the first degree, coercion, criminal mischief in the

first degree and a hit-and-run on property.

Theft

• Shaina L. Wooton, 25, of Seaside, was arrested on Saturday at Walmart in Warrenton for theft in the second degree.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

TUESDAY

Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District Board, 5:15 p.m., Bob Chisholm Community Center, 1225 Avenue A, Seaside.
Astoria Planning Commission, 5:30 p.m., City Hall, 1095 Duane St.
Seaside Airport Advisory Committee, 6 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.
Warrenton City Commission, 6 p.m., City Hall, 225 S. Main Ave.
Cannon Beach City Council, 6 p.m., special meeting, (electronic meeting).

THURSDAY

Clatsop County Recreational Lands Planning Advisory Committee, 1 p.m., (electronic meeting).

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Jane Winckler Webb

A harvest moon shined over Cape Disappointment.



Kristyna Wentz-Graff/Oregon Public Broadcasting

Coronavirus case rates are climbing for children.

Oregon children now more likely to have virus than elderly

By TED SICKINGER
The Oregonian

Coronavirus case rates among Oregon children ages 9 and younger are slightly higher in September than for someone who is in their 60s, 70s, or is 80 and older — something that’s never been true before — according to an analysis of reported COVID-19 cases by The Oregonian. Young children remain far less likely to be infected than teens and most adults. And young children with infections remain incredibly unlikely to be hospitalized or to die, with two fatalities — both infants — out of more than the 18,000 confirmed or presumed infections identified by health officials since the start of the pandemic.

But spread of the coronavirus has skewed more heavily toward young children in recent months, especially in September — coinciding with schools reopening. Not only are case rates per 10,000 people among young children higher this month than for elderly age ranges, but kids are also making up a growing share of total monthly cases.

Nearly 9% of Oregon’s cases this month are among children 9 and younger, a share not previously seen. The share of cases among Oregonians ages 10 to 19 also rose. Combined, Oregonians 19 and younger account for about 22% of reported cases in September.

Oregon’s shifting landscape of coronavirus spread mirrors what’s happening nationally, with the Beaver State so far posting numbers that show lesser impacts among kids and teens.

The American Academy of Pediatrics said 25.7% of reported cases nationally for the week ending Sept. 16

‘THE BEST WAY TO PROTECT KIDS THAT CAN’T BE VACCINATED IS TO HAVE ALL THE ADULTS AROUND THEM VACCINATED.’

Dr. Eliza Hayes Bakken | an associate professor at Oregon Health & Science University and medical director of the general pediatric practice at Doernbecher Children’s Hospital

were among children. That report highlighted the pediatric case share for kids 17 and younger, meaning Oregon’s case rates would look even better because the newsroom’s analysis also includes people ages 18 and 19.

No mystery

Experts say there’s no mystery behind the increase. The hypertransmissible delta variant will keep spreading until it exhausts the number of hosts who are either unvaccinated or have no natural immunity after a previous infection.

And the biggest pool right now are children, who through much of the pandemic were the least likely to get infected. Meanwhile, those 11 and younger are not yet able to be vaccinated, and vaccination rates among those 12 to 19 remain the lowest of all age ranges.

School also reopened in late August or early September for most students — perhaps putting Oregon behind other states with earlier start dates for child and teen spread.

“As kids touch these systems more, we’re going to find more cases,” Dr. Eliza Hayes Bakken, an associate professor at Oregon Health & Science University and medical director of the general pediatric practice at Doernbecher Children’s Hospital, said in an interview. “Kids are in more in-person settings. We’ve

seen some spread in schools. Luckily, our steps to quarantine a whole cohort seems to be working.”

Indeed, there have been isolated cases, and some widespread quarantining since in-person learning returned, but no large outbreaks at schools, where masks are mandatory statewide. It is also true that hospitalization and death rates remain very low for kids who do contract the disease.

One curious aspect of the delta variant, Hayes Bakken said, is that hospitals have not yet seen a wave of kids suffering from multisymptom inflammatory syndrome, a condition that causes inflammation of the blood vessels and multiple organs in the body. Most often that shows up weeks after a child is infected, and past surges have seen a clear uptick in those cases.

“Young children are resilient against COVID-19,” Chunhuei Chi, director of the Center for Global Health at Oregon State University, said in an email response to questions. “While we don’t want to see them infected, as they could spread to other family members, our main concern is to monitor deaths and hospitalization. So far, it seems all right.”

The Oregonian found case rates among children age 0 to 9 stand at about 76 per 10,000 people for the month of September, exceeding rates for the elderly, which topped out

at 71 per 10,000 for those 80 and over. Case rates for those in their 60s stood at 66 per 10,000 people, and for those in their 70s it was 64 per 10,000 people.

The newsroom provided its analysis to the Oregon Health Authority for comment, but officials said they did not review it. The agency conducts its own, separate, review of pediatric cases for children 17 and younger and said Thursday kids and teens were “disproportionately represented” in cases for the week ending Sept. 18.

The agency also noted similar numbers to the newsroom, finding that since Sept. 4 the share of cases statewide among children less than 10 “has risen to 10.7%; before that date, 6.2% of cases were among children of this age.”

Vaccine eligibility

Last week, Pfizer released the results of a trial showing its COVID vaccine was safe and generated a robust antibody response in children ages 5 to 11. Federal regulators have suggested a vaccine for that age group could be available by Halloween.

Oregon has about 235,000 residents ages 5 to 9 years old, with perhaps another 95,000 ages 10 or 11, census figures suggest.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, state data shows that children have had a much higher likelihood than adults of catching the coronavirus from members of their household.

To date, about 75% of Oregon adults are fully or partially vaccinated.

And that raises one other obvious point for Hayes Bakken, the OHSU physician: “The best way to protect kids that can’t be vaccinated is to have all the adults around them vaccinated.”

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