

# the Astorian

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Lydia Ely/The Astorian

A three-story, 39-room hotel is planned near Uniontown.

## New hotel proposed on riverfront

Project planned at NW Natural property

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ  
*The Astorian*

A new riverfront hotel is planned at the former NW Natural property near Uniontown.

The proposed three-story, 39-room hotel would extend from the back of an existing building near the Astoria Bridge. At a public hearing Thursday, the

project gained unanimous approval from the Design Review Commission, which praised the thoughtfulness of the design.

The proposal comes from Ganesh Sonpatki, the owner of Param Hotel Corp. His company owns a number of hotels in the Portland area and took over operations at the Astoria Riverwalk Inn above the West Mooring Basin in 2018 following a lawsuit against the Port of Astoria.

See Hotel, Page A6

## Hospital close to vaccination target

Small number to leave over state mandate

By ABBEY McDONALD  
*The Astorian*

Columbia Memorial Hospital announced that most of its staff would get a coronavirus vaccine by the state's deadline this month.

The Astoria hospital said 94% of its 725 employees would be fully vaccinated by the Oct. 18 deadline. More than 40 employees qualified for medical or religious exemptions, according to the hospital, while 11 will leave because they either refused to get vaccinated or had their exemption requests denied.

See Hospital, Page A6



Photos by Lydia Ely/The Astorian

Osarch Orak and Erin Carlsen sit with their son in the Beacon Clubhouse common area.

## For the homeless, a lifeboat downtown

Filling Empty Bellies, Beacon Clubhouse share space on Commercial Street

By ERICK BENGEL  
*The Astorian*

Homeless people now have a place downtown where they can gather indoors during the day.

Filling Empty Bellies, a nonprofit that offers food to anyone who is hungry, recently moved into an underground space on Commercial Street.

In the main area, visitors can sit at tables and enjoy the day's meal, prepared and served at noon primarily by Osarch Orak, the executive director.

"There's still a lot of people that don't know we're here yet," Orak said.

The coffee is on all day. A computer for personal use sits in a far corner. A closet stocked with donated clothing for people to pick out and keep just opened to the public.

A shower and laundry are all underway, Orak said. He wants to arrange for other local service pro-



Filling Empty Bellies maintains a closet with clothes to supply people in need.

viders dealing with housing and mental health care to have regular presences there. And he hopes that eventually, at night, he will be able to convert the dining area into a shelter that operates year-round.

### A permanent location

The space is Filling Empty Bellies' first permanent location

after years of serving out of cars at Peoples Park and Ninth Street Park. It also marks a major step toward establishing the kind of full-service resource center that many local homeless advocates and social services agencies have long envisioned for the region.

See Clubhouse, Page A6

## A Coronavirus Snapshot

Clatsop County recorded 422 COVID-19 cases in September, the second-highest month, after August, during the pandemic.

NUMBER OF CASES

422

SEPTEMBER 2021

SOURCE: Oregon Health Authority



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