

IN BRIEF

County clarifies state's disclosure of virus death

The Oregon Health Authority said on Thursday that a 28th Clatsop County resident had died of the coronavirus, but the county's Public Health Department said the person was from out of state and only happened to be visiting the area.

The health authority reported that the case involved a 60-year-old woman who died at Adventist Health Portland on Oct. 6, the same day she tested positive for the virus.

The number of COVID-19 deaths in Clatsop County remains 27, the Public Health Department said.

Margo Lalach, the county's interim public health director, said that such discrepancies are a normal occurrence in communicable disease investigations. "We're working with a lot of data, so of course there's going to be errors once in a while," she said.

Since the pandemic began, the county had recorded 2,389 virus cases as of Thursday.

Counties receive grants for needle exchange programs

A \$120,000 grant from the Columbia Pacific Coordinated Care Organization will fund needle exchanges in Clatsop, Columbia and Tillamook counties.

Clatsop County's harm reduction program, launched in 2018, will receive \$70,000; the other two counties, which started their own harm reduction programs earlier this year, will receive \$25,000 each.

Based at the county's Public Health Department, Clatsop County's program has exchanged about 1.5 million syringes, a critical step toward reducing the spread of needle-borne diseases. The program also distributes naloxone, an overdose-reversing medication.

— *The Astorian*

DEATHS

Oct. 13, 2021

JACOBSSEN, Lucianne Genara, 53, of Seaside, died in Seaside. Caldwell's Luce-Layton Mortuary of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

Oct. 11, 2021

HUNT, Randall William, 70, of Astoria, died in Astoria. Caldwell's Luce-Layton Mortuary of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

Oct. 9, 2021

HOUGHTON, Nadine Loraine, 80, of Astoria, died in Astoria.

Caldwell's Luce-Layton Mortuary of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

Oct. 8, 2021

ROBERTSON, David Jay, 79, of Nehalem, died in Seaside. Caldwell's Funeral & Cremation Arrangement Center of Seaside is in charge of the arrangements.

HANTHORN-MINKLER, Tana Michele, 60, of Soldotna, Alaska, died in Portland. Caldwell's Luce-Layton Mortuary of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

ON THE RECORD

Fleeing

Jacob Grealy Wentz, 21, of Warrenton, was indicted on Oct. 7 for two counts of fleeing or attempting to elude a police officer, two counts of recklessly endangering another person, reckless driving, failure to perform the duties of a driver — a count involving property damage — and criminal mischief in the second degree. The alleged crimes occurred in September.

Theft

Jennifer Kay Vangundy, 39, of Astoria, was arrested on Thurs-

day at Walmart in Warrenton for theft in the second degree.

Marco Antonio Trapala Gomez, 37, of Salem, and Rosa Maria Gomez Godinez, 32, of Salem, were arrested Tuesday at Walmart in Warrenton for theft in the second degree. Gomez Godinez also had warrants out of Salem and Hillsboro.

Joshua Evan Toomey, 19, of Carson City, Nevada, was arrested Oct. 8 at Walmart in Warrenton for theft in the second degree.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

MONDAY

Jewell School District Board, 6 p.m., Jewell School Library, 83874 Oregon Route 103.

Astoria City Council, 7 p.m., City Hall, 1095 Duane St.

TUESDAY

Port of Astoria Commission, 4 p.m., workshop, (electronic meeting).

Lewis & Clark Fire Department, 6 p.m., main fire station, 34571 U.S. Highway 101 Business.

Seaside Planning Commission, 6 p.m., work session, City Hall, 989 Broadway.

Seaside School District Board, 6 p.m., (electronic meeting).

the Astorian

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GRAZING ELK

Lydia Ely/The Astorian

A young bull elk scans for danger while a group of cows graze on Thursday in Cannon Beach.

Scientists use ancient trees to uncover seismic history

By JES BURNS
Oregon Public Broadcasting

Jenny White McKee is underwater and she can't see thing.

The air bubbles from her scuba rig rise from a cloud of mud and dead plant matter stirred up from the bottom of the lake. A large stump looms in front of her, rising to the surface.

Then there's a sound, like the creak of an ancient door hinge: the eerie distorted twist of metal into wood.

The noise carries through the water, makes your skin crawl.

U.S. Geological Survey divers White McKee and Pete Dal Ferro are twisting a T-shaped tool called an increment borer into the submerged tree to remove a straw-sized plug of wood.

"That was brutal," Dal Ferro says, coming to the surface with the tree core sample. His face is covered in mud.

The diving conditions are tough, but the payoff should be satisfying. The tube of extracted wood will help researchers figure out when this tree died, and in the process when a massive earthquake shifted the ground on the Olympic Peninsula and formed Price Lake.

In the Pacific Northwest, there are dozens of earthquake faults. Most are far shallower and closer to where people live than the more-well-known Cascadia Subduction Zone offshore, which roughly parallels the coastline.

"They're not as big as Cascadia. If Cascadia ruptures — say a magnitude eight or nine — that would affect the entire West Coast. We'd feel it for sure inland," said geologist Steve Angster, who's with the U.S. Geological Survey's Earthquake Science Center in Seattle.

"But the amount of shaking here wouldn't be as intense as if a rupture on the Seattle fault occurred, mostly because we're so close to the Seattle fault," he said.

Despite the proximity of these shallow inland faults to communities, there's still a huge amount scientists don't know about their extent and how active they are.

Some of these answers can be found in the underwater ghost forest of Price Lake. The lake was created when the ground shifted along a fault during an earthquake, creating a natural dam across an ancient stream. The water backed up and flooded the forest, which remains to this day.



Brandon Swanson/Oregon Public Broadcasting

Dendrochronologist Jessie Pearl looks for old trees all over northwest Washington. The ancient wood allows her to date historic earthquakes and better understand frequency and extent of the seismic risk in the region.

On this day, Geological Survey dendrochronologist Jessie Pearl, who has since gone to work for The Nature Conservancy, is leading the expedition to collect samples from the earthquake-drowned forest of Douglas fir. For her, the trees are the key.

"They record, within the chemical and physical composition of their wood, everything that happens to them. Whether it's a big storm, whether it's a decade of drought, whether it's a big severe fire that came through," she said.

Tree ring growth is heavily influenced by climate. That means trees of the same species growing in the same region will put on similar patterns of rings.

"And so tree ring scientists like myself can use all these different clues that are within the trees to tell a story about what has happened to this landscape in the past," Pearl said.

Dendrochronologists create tree ring timelines — or chronologies — by matching up these patterns on older and older trees.

But Pearl has evidence to suggest the trees in Price Lake are around 1,100 years old, and the known Douglas fir chronology doesn't go back that far.

So she will need to use another tool — radiocarbon — and a phenomenon that's only been understood for about a decade.

"We've discovered that the radiocarbon in our atmosphere sometimes has these large events — what we call radiocarbon excursion events — and they're global," she said.

These are surges in

detectable Carbon 14 radiation, likely triggered by solar storms.

Every tree on the planet alive during one of these events will have a radiocarbon spike in that year's ring. Over the past 2,000 years, there have been at least two of these major events. One happened around the winter of 774-75 and another in 993-94.

For Price Lake, Pearl and University of Arizona dendrochronologist Bryan Black will look for the tree ring with the tell-tale radiocarbon spike — in this case from the pulse that occurred in 774-75. Then they'll count forward until they hit the outermost ring.

Using this technique for multiple samples, they'll be able to figure out the exact six-month period, more than 1,000 years ago, that this submerged forest died.

"With the tree ring analysis, we can ... determine whether these trees all died at exactly the same time, which would suggest a very large earthquake. Or whether these faults all slipped in rapid succession, maybe a few years apart. A megaquake versus a decade of terror kind of scenario," Black said.

It would give emergency planners a better idea of what to expect when the next earthquake hits the Puget Sound region.

2022 Medicare ????'s

Art Fleming
503-421-5844

artinportland23@gmail.com

License #6257252

VOLUNTEER PICK OF THE WEEK



Sonny

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