



INSIDE

Astorian

149TH YEAR, NO. 49

DailyAstorian.com // THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2021

\$1.50

VACCINE MANDATE

Most county firefighters vaccinated

Minor staffing losses reported at fire departments

By ERICK BENGEL
The Astorian

Most firefighters in Clatsop County were vaccinated against the coronavirus by Gov. Kate Brown's deadline on Monday, but minor staffing losses could cause disruption for smaller fire departments in rural areas.

Brown ordered health care workers, teachers and other school staff to get vaccinated to help deter the spread of COVID-19 and keep businesses and schools open during the pandemic. Some state and local leaders had warned the governor's mandate would cause many firefighters — who also provide emergency medical response — to quit and leave pockets of the state vulnerable.

Keith Walling, Westport's fire chief, who was involved in the department for almost 21 years, retired this week. "The mandate was definitely a big part of my decision," he said.

"I couldn't reach a place where I could require people to provide personal health information that I didn't agree with them

See Mandate, Page A3

MORE INSIDE

Most school staff vaccinated • A2

Labor shortage squeezes health care

Lack of housing, pandemic fatigue among factors

By ABBEY McDONALD
The Astorian

Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare has moved to a four-day work week. The mental health agency has also raised wages, provided retention rewards and started offering signing bonuses up to \$1,000. They even plan on renting a house to give new hires a temporary place to live.

The incentives have not been enough to fill open positions during a health care labor shortage impacting facilities throughout Clatsop County.

See Labor, Page A6

City rejects church annex appeal

Some neighbors have fought the project

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Astorian

Bethany Free Lutheran Church will proceed with plans to build a 5,000-square-foot annex on a vacant lot in Uppertown over objections by some neighbors and one longtime Astoria family.

At a hearing Monday night, the City Council upheld the Planning Commission's approval for the project and rejected an appeal by the

MORE INSIDE

City to appeal state ruling on hotel project • A2

Tadei family and other neighbors. The group can appeal the city's decision to the state.

The Tadei family argued that the church annex, planned for a vacant lot off Lief Erikson Drive across from Safeway, is too large and will be incompatible with the historic neighborhood above.

Church leaders say they plan to use the annex as a community space to benefit more than the congregation. They also hope to get the annex designated as an emergency center. The project highlighted the ten-

sion between property rights and what others consider quality of life considerations. After multiple public hearings before different city boards, neighbors expressed frustration and exhaustion with the process and the back-and-forth community discussions.

"This seems like it's gotten really out of hand," said Jason Hall, who lives adjacent to the church lot, as he explained his reason for speaking impartially about the project even though he had signed on to the appeal against the annex.

His main concern was the distance between the project and his property. City consultant Rosemary Johnson noted the annex was being built with even more space than the city requires between the structure and neighboring properties.



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Bethany Free Lutheran Church wants to develop a 5,000-square-foot annex on this plot of land in Uppertown.

Under earlier site plans, the annex would have blocked 89-year-old Vince Tadei's view of the Columbia River. His family home is next to the church's property. Bethany Lutheran opted to reposition the building and is working with the city to possibly relocate a sewer easement — and shoulder the cost — to ease the family's concerns.

Several neighboring homeowners, including Tadei, say they will lose access to the back of their prop-

erties if the annex is built. They have relied on access across the church property over the years, but never established formal easements to ensure ongoing access if Bethany Lutheran decided to develop the lot.

One person who spoke against the project at Monday's hearing worried construction at the base of the hill may exacerbate landslide issues above. According to city maps, the

See Church, Page A3



Gary Peterson
Photography

'I WASN'T AN ATHLETE BEFORE'

An adaptive surfer has dreams of the Paralympics

By NIKKI DAVIDSON
The Astorian

CANNON BEACH — Monique Kelley never expected to become a surfer. The Brookings native grew up watching from the sand as others caught waves. The murky, cold water made her uneasy. Then something happened that changed her definition of fear forever.



Nikki Davidson/The Astorian

TOP: Monique Kelley uses her upper body to ride a wave in Cannon Beach. **ABOVE:** Kelley has dreams of qualifying for the Paralympics.

She woke up pinned to the ground, trapped in her SUV after it slid, hit a tree and flipped on black ice in 2017. Her then 5-year-old son miraculously escaped the vehicle uninjured. He saved Kelley's life by waving down help.

The accident broke her ribs, punctured a lung and caused a burst fracture. Rescuers were able to free Kelley from the wreckage, but the accident left her paralyzed from the waist down.

Determined to get the best recovery care possible so she could eventually independently raise her son, Kelley moved to Portland. She was fueled, in part, by grief from another tragedy. Her accident happened just three weeks after her brother was killed in a road rage crash on Interstate 5 in Medford.

See Kelley, Page A6

'I THINK THAT AFTER WHAT I'VE EXPERIENCED I WOULD HAVE EVERY EXCUSE TO WALLOW IN SELF-PITY, BUT I TOLD MYSELF FROM THE GET-GO THAT THE SUN RISES AND SETS WITHOUT ME EACH DAY. SO IT'S UP TO ME TO MAKE THE MOST OF IT. WHAT GOOD WOULD IT DO ME OR ANYBODY ELSE IF I CHOOSE TO WALLOW WITH THAT?'

Monique Kelley

