

IN BRIEF

Boil water notice lifted for customers impacted by Astoria waterline break

A boil water notice tied to an Astoria waterline break last week has been lifted.

The notice is no longer in effect for water district customers in Willowdale, Riverpoint, John Day, Fernhill and Olney-Walluski.

"Water continues to be safe to drink for Astoria water customers and water conservation efforts are no longer needed," the city said in a statement. "Thank you for your patience and understanding during this disruption."

Local man, son, die in crash in Washington state

Michael Braxton, a manager at the Driftwood Restaurant & Lounge in Cannon Beach, and his son, Kobe, a first grader at Cannon Beach Academy, died as a result of a three-car crash south of Shelton, Washington, on Nov. 9.

Braxton, 43, of Buckeye, Arizona, was pronounced dead at the scene. Kobe Braxton, 7, died two days later from injuries he sustained in the wreck.

Braxton's fiancée, who lives in Seaside, and their young daughter were also in the car at the time of the crash.

"The Braxton family was in Washington and was in a car accident, and it was a fatal one," Ryan Hull, the interim director of the Cannon Beach Academy, said at Tuesday's meeting of the Seaside School District Board. "The father passed immediately, and his son, my first grade student, Kobe Braxton, sustained injuries so that they had to put him into a medically induced coma."

State discloses more virus cases at local schools

The Oregon Health Authority has disclosed three new coronavirus cases at schools in Clatsop County.

All three cases were students in the Seaside School District, according to the state's weekly outbreak report. Two were from Pacific Ridge Elementary and one was from Seaside High School.

The health authority, meanwhile, reported three new virus cases for the county on Wednesday and nine new cases on Thursday. Since the pandemic began, the county had recorded 2,554 virus cases as of Thursday.

Buoy Beer kitchen to remain closed for extended period

Buoy Beer Co. expects to keep its kitchen closed for an extended period.

Issues with the dock and pilings beneath the restaurant caused the company to shut down its kitchen in September. They don't foresee having anything completed until the end of next year at the earliest, said Dave Kroening, the president and one of the founders of Buoy Beer.

After laying off the bulk of their restaurant staff due to the coronavirus pandemic, the company had to lay off much of their remaining restaurant employees due to the closure, Kroening said.

Buoy will continue to serve beer, wine and cider, as well as limited food, while the kitchen remains closed.

"We're working through it and look forward to the days when we can get back to more of what people are used to," Kroening said.

—The Astorian

Oregon's fuel tax rises again

Increase takes effect in January

By ZANE SPARLING
Oregon Capital Bureau

Gas prices are up. They're about to get even higher.

Oregon drivers will pay 2 cents more on every gallon of gasoline beginning on Jan. 1 as the state's fuel tax rises to \$0.38 per gallon.

The price jump was baked into the omnibus \$5.3 billion transportation package passed by state lawmakers in 2017, which included three previous price hikes and a final 2-cent increase set for 2024, at which point drivers will be paying 10 cents more per gallon in tax.

There's also a separate 10-cent per gallon fuel tax collected by Portland, plus an \$0.184 federal gas tax, meaning Rose City consumers are paying roughly \$0.64 in taxes on every gallon of gas.

Oregon Department of Transportation data shows that state fuel tax revenue has recovered somewhat



John Jolley

Oregon's fuel tax will rise to \$0.38 per gallon.

from the COVID-19 slump, even though drivers are buying less gas.

As virus restrictions emptied public spaces and converted most white-collar commuters into home workers, gross tax revenue dropped from \$620 million in 2019 to \$589 million in 2020.

According to Daniel Porter, ODOT's budget manager, the state has collected \$486 million in fuel tax revenue through Septem-

ber, about \$20 million more than this time in 2019, with the final quarter of revenue yet to be tabulated. But the number of gallons of gasoline sold is lagging previous years, with 1.35 billion gallons sold through September compared with 1.38 billion in September 2019.

All told, some 1.8 billion gallons of gas passed through the pump in 2019, compared with just 1.6 billion last year.

"Annual comparisons

on revenue wouldn't quite be apples to apples," said Shelley M. Snow, an ODOT spokeswoman. "If you look at gallons sold we're still about 2% off of where we were in 2019."

Lawmakers have considered proposals to ditch Oregon's fuel tax in favor of a tax on every mile traveled, which would return electric vehicle users to the tax base, but so far it's just an idea.

Statewide, the average price for regular unleaded gas is \$3.78 per gallon, according to the American Automobile Association. That's nearly a buck and a quarter more than the average unleaded gas cost of \$2.59 a gallon from this time last year, though still less than the price peak recorded in 2008.

The Department of Motor Vehicles fees charged when drivers renew their vehicle tags, apply for a trip permit or vehicle title will also be rising about 3% next year.

The Oregon Capital Bureau is a collaboration between EO Media Group and Pamplin Media Group.

Johnson gathers \$2M for independent bid for governor

By GARY WARNER
Oregon Capital Bureau

State Sen. Betsy Johnson's independent campaign for governor flexed its fundraising muscle on Thursday, filing a state report that it has \$2.3 million on hand for the race.

Johnson, a longtime Democratic lawmaker, announced in October that she would forego the political party primaries and run as a nonaffiliated candidate. She will have to submit nearly 25,000 signatures to go directly onto the November 2022 ballot.

The move would set up a rare three-way race between the winner of the Democratic and Republican primaries in May.

Johnson's campaign finance report included a number of large contributions from business interests.

Her campaign underlined

the support from both top political parties. Contributors include Mike Bonetto, the then-Republican who served as chief of staff to former Gov. John Kitzhaber, a Democrat.

Republicans include Antoinette Hatfield, the wife of Mark Hatfield, the former U.S. senator and governor, along with former Eugene Mayor Jim Torrey and former Portland area state Rep. Jeff Helfrich.

"I'm grateful to everyone from across party lines

and across Oregon for helping our independent campaign get off to a strong start," Johnson said in a statement. "I only wish I had more time (to) return calls — we'd have even more in the account!"

Johnson represents Senate District 16, which

includes the North Coast.

Some of Johnson's big donors locally, according to the filing, include Paula Teevin, who is married to Shawn Teevin of Teevin Bros. Paula Teevin contributed \$100,000. Hampton Lumber, which has a mill in Warrenton, gave \$100,000.

Pacific Seafood, which has a plant in Warrenton, contributed \$50,000. Van Dusen Beverages Inc. gave \$25,000. Englund Marine & Industrial Supply contributed \$25,000 and owner Jon Englund gave \$25,000.

Earlier this fall, the secretary of state's website showed Johnson with \$521,605 in available cash, the bulk coming from money she rolled over from her state Senate campaign finance committee.

The governor's race is

already attracting significant money for candidates.

Former New York Times columnist Nicholas Kristof, who lives in Yamhill County, has raised \$1.2 million since announcing last month that he would run as a Democrat.

State House Speaker Tina Kotek, a Portland Democrat, announced a run just before Labor Day. As of Monday, she had raised \$440,442.

Treasurer Tobias Read is running as a Democrat. His campaign reports raising \$661,018.

Among Republicans, Bud Pierce, a Salem doctor who lost a GOP campaign for governor in 2016, is the top fundraiser. He has taken in \$752,939 — with a significant percentage coming from his own funds.

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Betsy Johnson

DEATH

Nov. 17, 2021

MANLEY, John Phillip, 85, of Warrenton, died in Warrenton. Caldwell's Luce-Layton Mortuary of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

MEMORIAL

Saturday, Nov. 27

FICKEN, Sterling J. — Celebration of life at noon, Clatsop County Fairgrounds, 92937 Walluski Loop.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

MONDAY

Seaside City Council, 7 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

TUESDAY

Clatsop County Planning Commission-Countywide Citizen Advisory Committee, 9 a.m., joint meeting, (electronic meeting).

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.

Cannon Beach Planning Commission, 6 p.m., (electronic meeting)

Seaside Airport Advisory Committee, 6 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

Warrenton City Commission, 6 p.m., City Hall, 225 S. Main Ave.

WEDNESDAY

Astoria Parks Board, 6:45 a.m., City Hall, 1095 Duane St.

the Astorian

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Mandate: Some feel there is often a disconnect with public

Continued from Page A1

they would pull their children from the school district.

"I know that I have options, but I don't know if all the parents know they have options and the different options parents have for immunizations and exemptions," Finn said. "I would like for that to be something that we educate them on if we are going to potentially lose a lot of people if (a coronavirus vaccine) gets added to the immunizations."

In August, the school board penned a letter to Gov. Kate Brown asking for local control over virus protocols at schools. At Wednesday's meeting, Ed Johnson, the school board chairman, said that it was difficult to take any action, like they did with the letter, without knowing what was coming in terms of vaccine mandates for students.

Board member Will Isom did not speak during the discussion item, but made a comment about the issue during board member reports near the end of the meeting.

"I firmly believe that within these board meetings, these are business meetings, and we should be sticking to an agenda and every item that we go through, ultimately should lead us to a decision ... As a board member, within the meeting, I would like to see more hard information that I can make decisions on versus hypoth-



Lydia Ely/The Astorian

Some parents want the Knappa school board to stand up to any state vaccine mandate for students.

esizing about what may happen," he said.

Superintendent Bill Fritz said that at a recent state superintendents meeting, there was talk of potentially adding the Pfizer coronavirus vaccine to the list of mandatory vaccines for students in the fall, but there are a lot of steps needed in order to make that a reality.

Fritz added he has not heard any discussion about the potential separation of vaccinated and unvaccinated students in different classrooms, like several people mentioned during public comments.

Christopher Morey, the president of the Knappa Parents Organization, said there is an inability for people to have discussions with school board members and hear their feedback

during meetings.

"The school board's role, in my estimation, is to report to the citizens ... What I've noticed is, there is no mechanism, or at least I don't see one, where when people like myself and some of the other folks here come up and make a comment or have questions or complaints, that the school board, as a body, is expected to respond to," he said.

Morey told The Asto-

rian that he and several others in the organization feel there is often a disconnect between the community and the school administration and school board.

In his board member report, Isom empathized with Morey's concerns about an opportunity for back-and-forth dialogue between the community and the school board, and mentioned a town hall as a possibility.

VOLUNTEER PICK OF THE WEEK



Shasta

2 year old Staffordshire Terrier/Pharaoh Hound Blend

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