



INSIDE

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## Nonprofit hopes to partner with city on child care

A collaboration on Sprouts Learning Center

By NICOLE BALES  
*The Astorian*

A new Astoria nonprofit hopes to partner with the city in running Sprouts Learning Center, one of Clatsop County's larger child care facilities.

The city-run day care program serves about 30 children and operates at an unsustainable loss of around \$25,000 a month. With a desire to transition into a public-private partnership, the city in October requested proposals. There were no responses by the December deadline, but in the days following, an interested group approached the city.

Trudy Van Dusen Citovic, a co-owner of Van Dusen Beverages who serves on the Clatsop Community College Board, is one of the people behind the newly formed nonprofit, Clatsop Promise.

Citovic said several people started discussing a potential nonprofit solution after learning about the city's request for proposals.

If the city maintains and owns the facility, a nonprofit can focus on raising funds to operate, Citovic explained. With a partnership, there is no need to force a profit out of child care, she said, and a nonprofit can allocate more funds than the city could reasonably justify relative to the rest of its budget.

See Child care, Page A2



Joanne Rideout is retiring from KMUN but will continue to produce 'The Ship Report.'

## Rideout steps away from the mic

Veteran news director to retire in January

By ABBEY McDONALD  
*The Astorian*

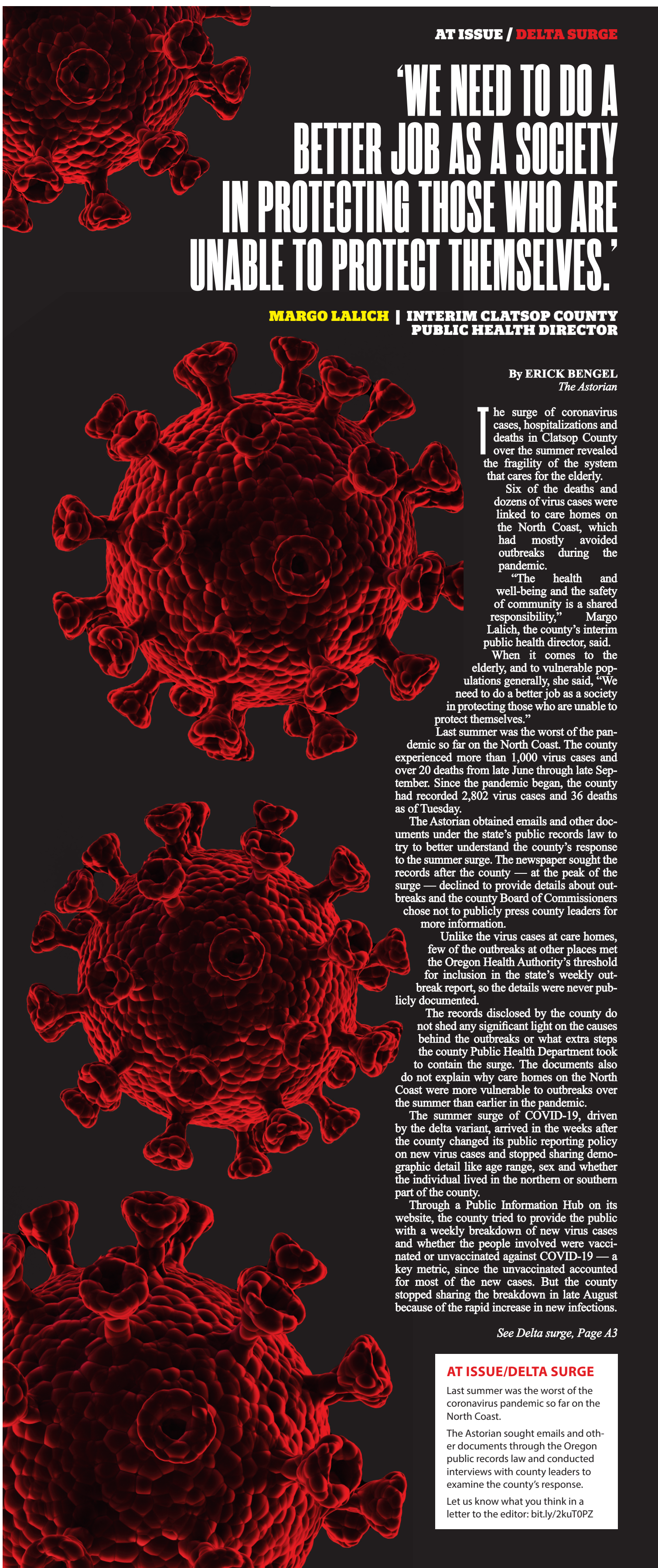
After nearly 20 years of bringing the morning news to the airwaves of the North Coast, Joanne Rideout is looking forward to sleeping in.

Soon, Katie Frankowicz, a former reporter at The Astorian, will be waking up early to take her place.

Rideout, a longtime news director at KMUN, is retiring in January.

"I'm just looking forward to sleeping late, and relaxing a bit and doing some things that I feel a lot of passion about," she said.

See Rideout, Page A2



AT ISSUE / DELTA SURGE

# 'WE NEED TO DO A BETTER JOB AS A SOCIETY IN PROTECTING THOSE WHO ARE UNABLE TO PROTECT THEMSELVES.'

MARGO LALICH | INTERIM CLATSOP COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DIRECTOR

By ERICK BENDEL  
*The Astorian*

The surge of coronavirus cases, hospitalizations and deaths in Clatsop County over the summer revealed the fragility of the system that cares for the elderly.

Six of the deaths and dozens of virus cases were linked to care homes on the North Coast, which had mostly avoided outbreaks during the pandemic.

"The health and well-being and the safety of community is a shared responsibility," Margo Lalich, the county's interim public health director, said.

When it comes to the elderly, and to vulnerable populations generally, she said, "We need to do a better job as a society in protecting those who are unable to protect themselves."

Last summer was the worst of the pandemic so far on the North Coast. The county experienced more than 1,000 virus cases and over 20 deaths from late June through late September. Since the pandemic began, the county had recorded 2,802 virus cases and 36 deaths as of Tuesday.

The Astorian obtained emails and other documents under the state's public records law to try to better understand the county's response to the summer surge. The newspaper sought the records after the county — at the peak of the surge — declined to provide details about outbreaks and the county Board of Commissioners chose not to publicly press county leaders for more information.

Unlike the virus cases at care homes, few of the outbreaks at other places met the Oregon Health Authority's threshold for inclusion in the state's weekly outbreak report, so the details were never publicly documented.

The records disclosed by the county do not shed any significant light on the causes behind the outbreaks or what extra steps the county Public Health Department took to contain the surge. The documents also do not explain why care homes on the North Coast were more vulnerable to outbreaks over the summer than earlier in the pandemic.

The summer surge of COVID-19, driven by the delta variant, arrived in the weeks after the county changed its public reporting policy on new virus cases and stopped sharing demographic detail like age range, sex and whether the individual lived in the northern or southern part of the county.

Through a Public Information Hub on its website, the county tried to provide the public with a weekly breakdown of new virus cases and whether the people involved were vaccinated or unvaccinated against COVID-19 — a key metric, since the unvaccinated accounted for most of the new cases. But the county stopped sharing the breakdown in late August because of the rapid increase in new infections.

See Delta surge, Page A3

AT ISSUE/DELTA SURGE

Last summer was the worst of the coronavirus pandemic so far on the North Coast.

The Astorian sought emails and other documents through the Oregon public records law and conducted interviews with county leaders to examine the county's response.

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