



Photos by Lydia Ely/The Astorian

Flooding has made driving treacherous on the North Coast.

Weather: North Coast schools closed Friday

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The school districts in Astoria, Warrenton, Knappa and Seaside canceled classes on Friday.

Craig Hoppes, the Astoria superintendent, said the school district made the decision because of a “lack of access to roads for buses — transportation. The weather report also came out as having high winds and the potential for power outages, but mainly lack of access to roads.”

Hoppes said the decision to close was made Thursday to help parents find child care options.

On Thursday, after implementing a two-hour delay, the Knappa School District canceled all classes. Several areas near Knappa faced significant flooding and landslides, as well as downed trees and other road debris that disrupted transportation and left bus drivers unable to complete their routes, Knappa Superintendent Bill Fritz said.

Fritz said the school district consulted with the Oregon Department of Transportation and the Clatsop County Public Works before making the decision.

“They indicated that road conditions would only get worse,” Fritz said. “So we decided to shut down classes to maintain the safety of students and staff.”

Schools in Warrenton and Seaside closed early on Thursday due to flooding.

Because of the flooding conditions in neighboring communities and a concern for safe travel, Clatsop Community College announced Thursday that all of its campuses would close at 5 p.m. and through the remainder of the evening.



ABOVE: A gate near the Necanicum River was partially submerged by floodwaters. BELOW LEFT: Cars crossed a submerged section of U.S. Highway 101 south of Seaside on Thursday. BELOW RIGHT: A person stands at the edge of a flooded U.S. Highway 101 south of Seaside.



Moratorium: ‘An unwillingness to discuss an issue’

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looking into in-depth to make sure the best interests of the community are being served.”

Commissioners said it is the City Council’s, not the Planning Commission’s, responsibility to take the lead in shaping the ordinance.

Commissioner Seth Morrissey, who is also a former

city councilor, said the decision to declare a moratorium should come from the council, not the commission.

“They’re more of the political body,” he said. “I feel that it would be more appropriate if they actually initiated this, if that’s what they want to do.” Commissioner Jon Wickersham said he sought “a little bit more information about

why we’re making a recommendation and maybe a little more structure around that recommendation.”

After the meeting, Kleczek said she was disappointed by the Planning Commission’s decision. “Not seconding a motion to me indicates an unwillingness to discuss an issue,” she said.

“I hope that the City

Council does move forward with a moratorium of some form. My motion was not detailed intentionally, so that the council would be the body to determine the form a moratorium would take, depending on the time frame and direction their action would take — study stand-alone or in conjunction with the comprehensive plan review.”

Business park: Property part of enterprise zone

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it for development,” Assistant County Manager Monica Steele said. “That is ultimately what’s going to be best for the taxing district.”

Columbia Memorial Hospital and Fort George Brewery own portions of the property on the south side of Ensign Lane.

The property is part of the Clatsop Enterprise Zone, which is administered by the county, Astoria, Warrenton and the Port of Astoria.

The enterprise zone offers companies tax breaks on new investments in return for improving property and creating new jobs that pay at least 150% of the average county wage.

Fort George Brewery, the first company to participate, was approved in 2020 for an estimated \$617,000 in tax relief over 15 years. The company promised to invest at least \$12.5 million in its development of the former



Lydia Ely/The Astorian

The North Coast Business Park property has been a challenge to develop.

Astoria Warehousing campus in Uniontown and create at least 35 jobs.

Buoy Beer and Pilot House Distilling’s parent company, River Bar-

rel Brewing Inc., joined in 2021, along with fishmeal company Scoular.

River Barrel promised to invest \$8 million in an expansion of its water-

front campus in Astoria, and Scoular planned to spend \$10 million on a new fishmeal plant near the Astoria Regional Airport in Warrenton.

Virus: Several new cases disclosed at county schools

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Statewide, the health authority reported a record 10,451 new virus cases on Friday.

“Once again, COVID-19 has regrouped and is on the march across Oregon,” Dr. Dean Sidelinger, the state health officer and state epidemiologist, said at a news briefing. “Today, the highly-contagious omicron variant is driving an alarming spike in COVID-19 infections, virus-related hospitalizations and test positivity. We have seen this across our recent days.”

“Today, OHA will report 10,451 new daily cases of COVID-19, a sobering reminder of the formidable challenge that lies ahead for all of us. This is not the way any of us wanted to begin the new year. We are all tired of taking steps to fight this virus. We’re anxious as we hear from more of our family and loved ones who are sick with, or were exposed to COVID-19. All the data is stark and discouraging.”

“We all have tools to help protect ourselves, loved ones and our neighbors — vaccinations and masks.”

Gov. Kate Brown announced she will deploy up to 500 Oregon National Guard personnel to support frontline health care workers at hospitals. An initial 125 National Guard personnel will provide logistical support, help with testing and other nonclinical services.

The National Guard had been deployed during the summer surge of virus cases linked to the delta variant.

“With more than 500 current hospitalizations and daily record-breaking numbers of COVID-19 cases, we are at another critical point in this pandemic — and the Oregon National Guard is stepping up again to assist,” the governor said in a statement.

With the new wave forecast to peak on Jan. 27 with 1,650 people in the hospital, the Oregon Health Authority issued a crisis care protocol to guide doctors on prioritizing possibly life-or-

death treatment.

Based on a model already used by Washington and other states, patients who would not survive if discharged have top priority. Patients already under care take precedence over newly arriving cases of the same level. If a choice needs to be made between two patients in identical medical situations, the choice will be made at random using a system on the health authority website.

“This is a very difficult topic to consider and work on,” said Dr. Dana Hargunani, the health authority’s chief medical officer.

The Jewell School District, meanwhile, sent all kindergarten-through-third grade students home this week due to coronavirus cases on Tuesday and Wednesday.

One student and two staff members tested positive, Jewell Superintendent Steve Phillips said, and due to contact tracing and erring on the side of safety, the school district made the decision to send all 32 of the K-3 students home.

“We are following safety protocols and doing our best to keep kids safe and in school,” Phillips said.

In a weekly outbreak report, the Oregon Health Authority disclosed seven new virus cases at schools in Clatsop County.

Three of the virus cases were from the Warrenton-Hammond School District. One was a staff member at Warrenton Grade School, while the other two were a student and staff member from Warrenton High School.

Two of the virus cases were students at Hilda Lahti Elementary in the Knappa School District.

The final two virus cases were students from the Seaside School District — one at Pacific Ridge Elementary and one at Seaside Middle School.

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