

IN BRIEF

Steadfast departs on patrol after virus delay

The U.S. Coast Guard cutter Steadfast, which homeports in Astoria, is underway again after a recent COVID-19 outbreak among the crew delayed the cutter's patrol.

The unit departed after infected crew members spent time quarantining in Astoria.

"Keeping the cutter in homeport a few extra days allowed the crew to quickly contain and minimize transmission, enabling them to return to full service Friday and continue on with their mission as planned," Lt. Cmdr. Scott Carr, a Coast Guard public affairs officer, said in an email.

Columbia River commerce halts for annual maintenance

Commerce moving along the Columbia River will stop for up to five weeks starting in February as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers works on annual maintenance and repairs.

The closure will start Feb. 13 and end on March 19.

The period of closure was extended three extra weeks this year in order to repair the downstream miter gate at The Dalles. Technicians found damage at The Dallas navigation lock during last year's closure, forcing an emergency extended outage.

Engineers will also perform maintenance on the navigation locks at the Bonneville and John Day dams during the closure.

Seaside cemetery plots see purchase price hike

SEASIDE — Even with a \$250 price hike, the city's Evergreen Cemetery remains a bargain, Public Works Director Dale McDowell told the City Council last week.

Councilors approved the hike from \$500 to \$750 per plot. Nearby cemeteries average almost \$1,750 per plot, while the state average exceeds \$4,000.

"That is a real bargain at that price," Mayor Jay Barber said.

The cemetery is overseen by the city's Public Works Department. The earliest marked grave was placed in 1909.

The city obtained the property in 1981. The cemetery has two sections across 21 acres with a population of 1,331.

— The Astorian



Reflection

Trees are reflected in a puddle along the Astoria Riverwalk on Friday.

Lydia Ely/The Astorian

DEATHS

Jan. 16, 2022

MARTIN, Michael A., 76, of Seaside, died in Seaside. Ocean View Funeral & Cremation Service of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

Jan. 15, 2022

QUADE, Rosalyn M., 85, of Astoria, died in Seaside. Ocean View Funeral & Cremation Service of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

View Funeral & Cremation Service of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

Jan. 14, 2022

DeWAIDE, Michael George, 78, of Astoria, died in Astoria. Ocean View Funeral & Cremation Service of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

ON THE RECORD

Burglary

• Damien James Arrin Ruiz, 26, of Seaside, was indicted last week for burglary in the second degree, criminal mischief in the first degree, two counts of theft in the first degree, theft in the second degree and two counts of theft in the third degree. The crimes are alleged to have occurred in November.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

TUESDAY

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

Warrenton City Commission and Planning Commission, 5:30 p.m., joint meeting, City Hall, 225 S. Main Ave.

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

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

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

Shoreline Sanitary District Board, 7 p.m., Hertig Station, 33496 West Lake Lane, Warrenton.

WEDNESDAY

Clatsop County Board of Commissioners and Planning Commission, 10 a.m., joint meeting, (electronic meeting).

Astoria City Council, 1 p.m., work session, City Hall, 1095 Duane St.

Seaside Tree Board, 4 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

Cannon Beach City Council, 5:30 p.m., special meeting, (electronic meeting).

Knappa School District Board, 6:30 p.m., Knappa High School Library, 41535 Old U.S. Highway 30.

Astoria School District Board, 7 p.m., (electronic meeting).

THURSDAY

Seaside Transportation Advisory Commission, 6 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

the Astorian

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Advisory: No injuries or damage reported

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during that time is that the earthquake warning center in Alaska is analyzing buoy and other data to anticipate whether a tsunami is expected."

More often than not, the advisory is canceled within two to four hours of being issued, Brown said.

But with confirmation from the warning system at 5:20 a.m., Oregon, along with Hawaii, California, Washington state and Alaska, asked that people move out of the water, off the beach and away from harbors.

In hours to come, local, county and state resources were involved in the response.

"For my part, we began early with the public messaging on our department Facebook page to make sure everyone was getting the same message," Brown said.

Both Cannon Beach and Seaside activated emergency operations centers and state, city and county agencies coordinated beach closures from the Seaside operations center, Brown said.

Seaside

Seaside Public Works Director Dale McDowell said he received an initial call from Seaside dispatch at 6:29 a.m.

"When the call was completed, I telephoned our wastewater foreman, water foreman and street department," McDowell said. "The calls were completed by 6:36 a.m."

McDowell telephoned employees that the coastline might be impacted by high water and asked them to reach out to their surfer friends to let them know, as a good-sized group meets at the Cove every morning.

Seaside police first sent notice of a tsunami advisory in effect for Seaside beach at 7:39 a.m., with public safety monitoring the event.

Mayor Jay Barber said he was notified by the city manager shortly after 8 a.m.

The emergency management team was already assembled, including all of

the emergency management agencies in the county.

"It was determined from the information coming in from the reporting agencies that Seaside was likely to see about a 3-foot wave at about 8:55 a.m.," Barber said. "I agreed that, with that information, it would be best not to sound the tsunami warning sirens, rather to warn residents to get off the beach and as a precaution, close Sunset Boulevard in the Cove. Fire (personnel) and law enforcement actually went on to the beach to inform people to leave the beach. People were mostly very cooperative."

It was hard to distinguish a potential tsunami of small size from a typical surge of a sneaker wave, Seaside City Councilor Tom Horning, a geologist, said.

"I stationed myself at the south tip of Gearhart above the mouth of the Necanicum River," Horning said.

Two minutes of surge, followed by four minutes of ebb, were typical from 8:30 to 9 a.m.

"At 9:01 a.m., a surge of 10 minutes followed by a two-minute ebb followed by another surge of six minutes took place," Horning said. "Later surges were from three to five minutes with five minutes of ebb until around 9:40 a.m, when we left. Possibly the 9:01 a.m. surge could have been a sneaker wave with some tsunami momentum. One part tsunami, 10 parts sneaker wave."

High tide was around 8 feet at 10:30 a.m., and from the old high school parking lot, it looked like it should have under normal conditions.

"The tsunami, if it arrived, was swamped by sneaker waves, and the sneaker waves were insignificant," Horning said.

At 11:45 a.m., the Seaside emergency operations center stood down.

The tsunami advisory was canceled around 5 p.m. There were no injuries or damage reported.

"The event provided an excellent rehearsal in preparation for the potential of a

much more serious event," Barber said.

Gearhart

Gearhart Fire Chief Josh Como said he was notified of the advisory by both Seaside's fire chief and the dispatch center.

The Gearhart Fire Department responded to the emergency operations center at Seaside dispatch. "At our station, our firefighters set up local emergency operations to organize and deploy resources throughout our city and fire district, focusing on low-lying areas that would have the best chances for impact from surges of water," he said.

Como called on-duty Officer Josh Lair, Lt. James Hutchinson and City Administrator Chad Sweet. After the necessary personnel had been notified, Como contacted Mayor Paulina Cockrum so she could communicate with the Gearhart Community Emergency Response Team.

The Clatsop County Sheriff's Office blocked the Sunset and Del Ray beach accesses.

Police Chief Jeff Bowman monitored the 10th Street access, Como said, and helped Gearhart fire personnel patrol the beach and low-lying areas.

"From what I saw, the waves did not breach the first base of the dune line," Como said. "The waves did push up similar to a sneaker wave on a high tide. I was not made aware of any damage to our community."

Cockrum said she stayed at the overlook near the Little Beach parking lot and took pictures of waves, three of which she said were abnormal.

"One of the unusual things I noticed was a large amount of trees that came out of the base of Neacoxie Creek and were starting to float into the estuary," Cockrum said.

Como said he was proud of the response from all of the agencies involved. "All parties acted together to protect our citizens and visitors from harm," he said.

Cannon Beach

Cannon Beach received an advisory just after 6:20 a.m. via Seaside dispatch. City Manager Bruce St. Denis and department heads were notified, including police, fire and public works.

"We organized at City Hall, opened up the emergency operation center and had a quick briefing and started to deploy resources," Rick Hudson, the city's emergency manager, said.

Responders patrolled all of the beach accesses, posted warning signs and had a continuous patrol presence, Hudson said.

Wave heights were highest close to 9 a.m., Hudson said. "We did not measure the waves, but they represented close to a low king tide level. The tidal flow from this tsunami was not far enough out of the king/high tide level to cause any new damage to the city."

The city's emergency sirens were put to the test and led to an apology late Saturday from the Cannon Beach Rural Fire Protection District.

"There were a few challenges with the system since it has not been used as a city-wide PA system in over 10 years," Hudson said.

The siren system inadvertently activated an automatic alarm while Hudson and his crew were trying to use the public address system to give an audio address, Cannon Beach City Councilor Nancy McCarthy said.

"It wasn't the COWS (Community Warning System) message, it was an alarm that, frankly, I hadn't heard before," she said. "The last time, someone delivered a message asking people to stay away from the beach until noon. But the public did respond to the alarm."

According to a statement from the fire district, the emergency operations center as a group decided to use the siren system as a loudspeaker to help clear people from the beaches.

"During that attempt to use the loudspeaker function, the sirens were set off. This was not the intention, and unfortunately created confusion," the fire district stated.

"Cannon Beach fire district would like to apologize for this, and everyone know that we are looking into why this happened."

"There has been a discussion lately with the city of Cannon Beach, regarding upgrading the siren technology and changing who manages the sirens, as they are currently managed by Cannon Beach fire district," they wrote. "This event further stresses the need for upgrades to the system."

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