

IN BRIEF

State reports 50 new virus cases for county

The Oregon Health Authority reported 50 new coronavirus cases for Clatsop County on Friday.

Since the pandemic began, the county had reported 3,989 virus cases and 37 deaths as of Friday.

— *The Astorian*

Oregon hospitals near breaking point during COVID surge

Health officials say Oregon hospitals are near their COVID-19 breaking point as the state is expected to reach peak hospitalizations in coming weeks.

Fueled by the highly contagious omicron variant, hospitalizations could soon surpass the pandemic high, officials said Friday.

“(The pandemic) is not behind us yet,” said Dr. Dean Sidelinger, state health officer and epidemiologist.

— *Associated Press*

Oregon wine leads US in growing direct-to-consumer sales

PORTLAND — Bolstered by high demand and rising prices, Oregon’s wine industry led the U.S. in accelerating its rate of growth for direct-to-consumer sales in 2021, according to an analysis of shipment data from more than 1,300 wineries nationwide.

The annual report, issued by Sovos ShipCompliant and Wines Vines Analytics, shows Oregon wineries shipped 560,702 cases of wine valued at \$285.5 million.

That represents an increase of 12.9% in volume and 18.7% in sales value over 2020, outperforming all other wine regions across the country.

Pinot noir dominated the share of Oregon direct-to-consumer sales, accounting for more than half of the state’s wine shipments and two-thirds of the total sales value.

— *Capital Press*

DEATHS

Jan. 30, 2022

GROTHE, Alvin J., 96, of Astoria, died in Astoria. Ocean View Funeral & Cremation Service of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

MEMORIALS

Wednesday, Feb. 2

GRABER, Billie — Graveside service at 10 a.m. at Willamette National Cemetery, 1800 S.E. Mount Scott Blvd. in Portland. Graber, 76, of Seaside, died Sunday, Jan. 16, 2022, in Seaside.

A celebration of life will be held July 9 for friends and family in Seaside.

Saturday, Feb. 5

HAUKE, Michael Holden — Graveside service at 11 a.m., Ocean View Cemetery, 575 S.W. 18th St. in Warrenton.

ON THE RECORD

Strangulation

• Andy Bierlee Loke, 47, of Seaside was indicted last week for strangulation, assault in the fourth degree constituting domestic violence and attempted assault in the fourth degree constituting domestic violence. The crimes are alleged to have occurred in January.

Weapons charges

• Ricky Lee Guzman, 60, of Madras, was arraigned last week on charges of fleeing or attempting to elude a police officer, driv-

ing under the influence of intoxicants, reckless driving, two counts of unlawful possession of a firearm and two counts of carrying a concealed weapon. The crimes are alleged to have occurred in Clatsop County in September.

Theft

• Michael John Lyly, 36, of Hillsboro, was arraigned last week on charges of theft in the second degree. The crime was alleged to have occurred in Clatsop County in July.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

TUESDAY

Seaside Community Center Commission, 10 a.m., Bob Chisholm Community Center, 1225 Avenue A.
Port of Astoria Commission, 4 p.m., (electronic meeting).
Clatsop Care Health District Board, 5 p.m., (electronic meeting).
Astoria Library Board, 5:30 p.m., Flag Room, 450 10th St. (and via Zoom).
Clatsop County Fair Board, 5:30 p.m., 92937 Walluski Loop, Astoria.
Cannon Beach City Council, 6 p.m., (electronic meeting).
Seaside Planning Commission, 6 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

WEDNESDAY

Clatsop County Board of Commissioners, 10 a.m., work session, (electronic meeting).

Gearhart City Council, 7 p.m., (electronic meeting).

THURSDAY

Astoria Design Review Commission, 5:30 p.m., City Hall, 1095 Duane St.

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

the Astorian

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People, reflected in a puddle, walk back to their cars after sunset at Fort Stevens State Park.

Lydia Ely/The Astorian

Chamber recognizes business and community leaders

Annual event celebrates the best of local outreach

By ABBEY McDONALD
The Astorian

On Saturday night, business leaders flocked to the Clatsop County Fairgrounds, some opting for waist-length crab bibs over semiformal attire.

The 149th annual meeting and banquet for the Astoria-Warrenton Area Chamber of Commerce recognized the community service work of businesses and individuals this past year.

David Reid, the chamber’s executive director, wearing a royal-blue railroad conductors’ uniform to follow the event’s theme of “back on track,” said he was excited to be back in person after holding the event virtually last year because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The event had a lower capacity of 130 people, spaced out among a greater number of tables.

All went quiet for the main event, which were awards for outstanding community service.

First up was the Board President’s Award, selected by 2021 president Lois Perdue, and awarded to Bridge-water Bistro for their help with the Great Columbia Crossing and communication throughout the pandemic.

Next was the Ambassador’s Choice Award, which went to Hampton Lumber for its infrastructure projects, forest management and employment in the area.

Lindsay Davis, Hampton’s outreach specialist and stewardship coordinator, said the award was a surprise and an honor.

“We are so grateful to have had such an impact on the community, because it’s had such an impact on us,” she said.

The Richard Ford Distinguished Service Award went to Brenda and Norm Hoxsey, of Spruce Up Warrenton, which cleaned up over



Photos by Abbey McDonald/The Astorian

Kevin Leahy was recognized with the George Award for his work in the community.



Chamber award winners pose for a group photo. From left, Chris Laman, Lindsay Davis, Kevin Leahy, Janet Bowler, Judi Lampi, Norm Hoxsey and Brenda Hoxsey.

70 properties last year. The pair also worked to revitalize downtown Warrenton and clean up local trails and parks.

“While Spruce Up Warrenton is full of active persons, many deserving credit, these two were directly responsible for the formation and continual expansion of work by Spruce Up Warrenton and the outsized impact of their work over the past few years makes them the obvious choice for this most prestigious of awards,” Warrenton Mayor Henry Balensifer said.

Astoria Mayor Bruce Jones presented the first of two George Awards for community service, selected by both the city and the chamber.

Judi Lampi and Janet Bowler received an award for their near six-year effort to build the Astoria Nordic Heritage Park. They received a standing ovation, and

Bowler called it a “shocking surprise.”

“We’re proud to be a part of our community,” said Lampi, who added that their work would not have been possible without the 866 people who donated over \$1.5 million toward the project.

Former state Sen. Betsy Johnson, who is making an independent bid for governor, presented the final George Award to someone she said she consulted with repeatedly in her work, and that she considers a personal friend.

Kevin Leahy, the director of the Small Business Development Center and Clatsop Economic Development Resources, had a bounce in his step as he approached the stage to another standing ovation.

“Growing up in this community, and looking at the names of who have won before, it’s just an honor,” said Leahy, who called his

work in community development his dream job.

He said the award was especially meaningful to him coming from Johnson, and in front of a room full of friends and colleagues.

The final award of the night, the Applause Award, went to Chris Laman, the director of pharmacy and cancer center services at Columbia Memorial Hospital.

“His organizational skills, his knowledge of complex medical challenges, his calm leadership, and just his unflappable charm turned little old Clatsop County’s vaccine rollout into a model for our entire state,” Johnson said.

Afterward, Laman praised the work of over 300 volunteers that put the county in the upper rungs of state vaccination rates.

“Without the whole community coming together, we wouldn’t have been able to do what we did,” he said.

Nonprofit: Center relies on lower-paid, part-time labor

Continued from Page A1

even with the assistance the city was willing to provide on rent, was just too much for a new nonprofit to expect to overcome in the near term,” Citovic said in a text message. “And this was confirmed by our contacts in the philanthropy world, especially given that

there is not a family income or need-based element for admissions.”

Citovic said the nonprofit estimates the child care program would need an additional \$300,000 to \$400,000 per year.

She said while the group is stepping back for now, “we are waiting in the wings to help in any way we can

as the future of Sprouts becomes clearer.”

Jonah Dart-McLean, Astoria’s parks director, said the city plans to discuss how to move forward with the City Council during a work session later this month.

“(We) just need to get more discussion with council on where their priorities are and how we can best offer the existing services we have in place with the resources we have,” he said.

The day care, run by the Astoria Parks and Recreation Department at the

Astoria Recreation Center, has become increasingly taxing on department staff.

The center relies heavily on lower-paid, part-time labor, which has been especially challenging to hire and retain during the coronavirus pandemic.

After opening nearly a decade ago because of the need for child care in the community, the day care still serves as a vital resource in the county. Child care options on the North Coast remain scarce, and the center is one of the few of its size that provides care for infants.

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