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Incumbent county commissioners to run for reelection

Kujala, Thompson, Wev announce plans

By ERICK BENGEL
The Astorian

Three Clatsop County commissioners whose terms expire after this year say they intend to run for reelection in May.

Commissioner Mark Kujala and Commissioner Pamela Wev have filed their candidate forms. Commissioner Lianne Thompson said she plans to file hers later this month.

Kujala, who serves as the chairman of the Board of Commissioners, was elected in 2018 to represent District 1, which encompasses Warrenton, Hammond and a southwest swath of Astoria. He is the director of the Columbia Memorial Hospital Foundation.

Thompson, the board's longest-serving member, was elected in 2014 to represent District 5,

which covers South County, including Cannon Beach, Arch Cape, Hamlet, Elsie, Jewell and a section of Seaside.

Wev, a land use planner and economic development consultant, was elected in 2018 to represent District 3, which covers central Astoria and Miles Crossing, Jeffers Garden, Fort Clatsop, Lewis and Clark, Olney, Youngs River, Green Mountain and parts of Walluski.

Kujala said he chose to run again because he feels the commission has unfinished business that he would like to see through to completion.

Two high-profile projects underway in Warrenton are the North Coast Business Park, a proposed industrial development near U.S. Highway 101, and the new Clatsop County Jail, scheduled for completion in the second half of 2022.

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Lydia Ely/The Astorian

Police and social services agencies are working to improve crisis response calls linked to homelessness and mental health and substance abuse challenges.

Several options emerge to handle crisis response calls

Triaging, co-response and exclusion zones under discussion

By NICOLE BALES and ERICK BENGEL
The Astorian

Astoria police and social services agencies are working together on several options to improve emergency response to people in crisis.

The new outreach would build on a network of services and could provide a stronger safety net for people experiencing homelessness, mental illness and drug and alcohol abuse.

Emergency calls and complaints linked to homelessness and other public behavior have become increasingly taxing on law enforcement, health care

providers and social services agencies.

Often, police respond to recurring calls involving the same people in crisis. "How do we try to focus on certain individuals that clearly need some more immediate assistance?" Astoria Police Chief Geoff Spalding said.

Triaging

The Astoria Police Department and other agencies have discussed triaging the people they see most often to try to determine what services can best help.

The goal would be to reduce the number of calls these people are generating and lessen the strain on social services.

"We kind of do a lot of this informally anyway," Spalding said.

Astoria police meet regularly with Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare, Columbia Memorial Hospital and law enforcement partners to discuss people who have appeared on their respective radars.

The new initiative is still in the brainstorming stage.

"This is going to be a difficult task, as many of the individuals that we're dealing with have already been through different services, and many of them don't want the services," Spalding said.

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Geoff Spalding | Astoria police chief



The all-terrain vehicles could be useful in dunes.

Warrenton and Cannon Beach fire districts get emergency help

Vehicles could help in flooding or fires

By ETHAN MYERS
The Astorian

The state has awarded six fire departments across Oregon with new high-axle, all-terrain vehi-

cles. Clatsop County received two of them.

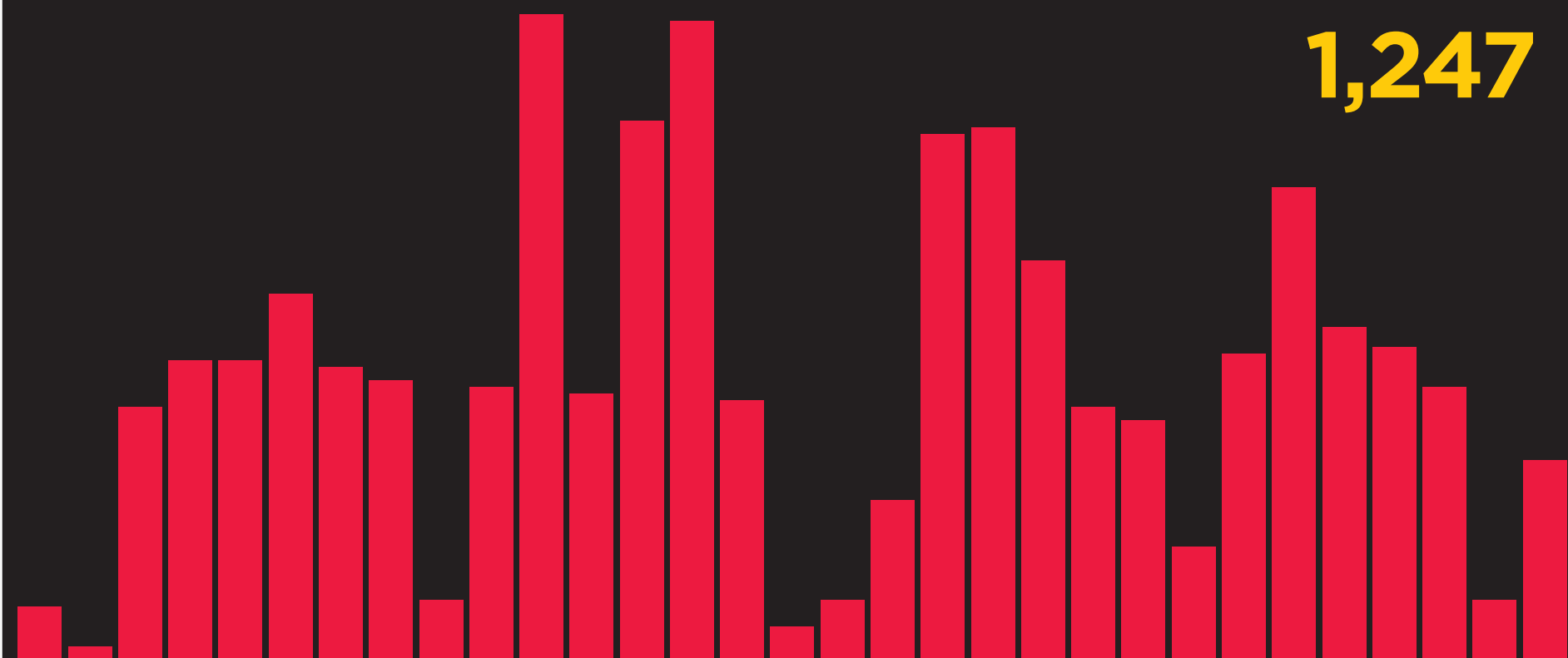
The Warrenton Fire Department and the Cannon Beach Rural Fire Protection District acquired the rigs in January through grants from the state's Office of Emergency Management.

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A Coronavirus Snapshot

Clatsop County recorded 1,247 COVID-19 cases in January, the highest monthly total since the pandemic began. The new virus cases were driven by the omicron variant.

NUMBER OF CASES



JANUARY 2022

SOURCE: Oregon Health Authority

