

IN BRIEF

State reports 38th virus death for Clatsop County

The Oregon Health Authority reported a 38th coronavirus death for Clatsop County.

The health authority said a 57-year-old woman tested positive on July 30 and died of the virus on Aug. 7 at Columbia Memorial Hospital in Astoria.

Clatsop County said the woman was vaccinated against the virus and had underlying health conditions.

The health authority, meanwhile, reported 53 new virus cases for the county on Thursday and 37 new cases on Wednesday.

Since the pandemic began, the county had recorded 4,206 virus cases as of Thursday.

State adjusts virus case count in hospital, care home outbreaks

The Oregon Health Authority disclosed new coronavirus cases at Columbia Memorial Hospital in Astoria on Wednesday.

The new total at the hospital is 22, according to the health authority's weekly outbreak report. This number is up from the 18 cases mentioned in last week's report.

Nancee Long, the hospital's communications director, said the new total includes cases from the previous week.

"We continue to have COVID-positive employees," Long said. "There has not yet been a COVID exposure within the organization. They are all being exposed outside the organization and then calling in and saying, 'We're sick,' and staying home."

In addition, Suzanne Elise Assisted Living Community in Seaside was listed in the report as having an outbreak of 11 virus cases, up from 10 cases, dating to Jan. 11.

State discloses virus case at local school

The Oregon Health Authority has disclosed one new coronavirus case at a school in Clatsop County.

The case involved a student from Warrenton Grade School, according to the health authority's weekly outbreak report.

Gearhart puts firehouse bond on May ballot

GEARHART — The City Council voted Wednesday to put a \$14.5 million fire and police station bond measure on the ballot for the May 17 election.

The vote will come after a similar measure was postponed by a legal challenge last year. If approved by voters, the bond measure would finance a new firehouse on 2 acres off Highlands Lane along U.S. Highway 101.

— The Astorian

DEATHS

Feb. 3, 2022

BOLDT, Jo Anne, 85, of Seaside, died in Seaside. Caldwell's Luce-Layton Mortuary of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

KENT, Samuel, Eugene, 88, of Astoria, died in Warrenton. Caldwell's Luce-Layton Mortuary of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

ON THE RECORD

Encouraging child sexual abuse

• **Gabriel Burton Walker**, 34, of Seaside, was arrested on Wednesday for two counts of encouraging child sexual abuse in the first degree and two counts of online sexual corruption of a child in the second degree. The crimes are alleged to have occurred in June.

Assault

• **James Edward Hahn**, 45, of Warrenton, was arrested on Thursday

at Mill Pond Lane and 23rd Street in Astoria for assault in the fourth degree. The crime is alleged to have occurred on Marine Drive.

Theft

• **Eugene Burt Kornely**, 42, of Ocean Park, Washington, was indicted on Thursday for theft in the first degree, two counts of theft in the second degree and escape in the third degree. The crimes are alleged to have occurred in Clatsop County in January.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

SATURDAY

Warrenton City Commission, 9 a.m., goal setting meeting, City Hall, 225 S. Main Ave.

MONDAY

Astoria City Council, 6 p.m., City Hall, 1095 Duane St.
Jewell School District Board, 6 p.m., special session, 83874 Oregon Highway 103.

TUESDAY

Clatsop County Planning Commission, 10 a.m., (electronic meeting).
Cannon Beach City Council, 6 p.m., work session, (electronic meeting).
Lewis & Clark Fire Department Board, 6 p.m., main fire station, 34571 U.S. Highway 101 Business.
Clatsop Community College Board, 6:30 p.m., (electronic meeting).

the Astorian

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SUNSET STROLL

Lydia Ely/The Astorian

A man walks by the wreck of the Peter Iredale at sunset.



Oregon's land use rules bump up against crowded shorelines

By KRISTIAN FODEN-VENCIL
Oregon Public Broadcasting

Back in 2016, Michael Ellis, a former president of the Fred Meyer grocery chain, bought a lot in the Pine Beach development along Tillamook County's Rockaway Beach.

He built a house, but never really considered it oceanfront property. That's because a stretch of dunes lay between his home and the beach. The dunes were common ground, accessible to everyone.

"It was all trees, some spruce trees, some shore pines. It was like you're in a mountain cabin, versus a beach cabin," Ellis said. "But you still had the ability to walk down a little pathway and go down to the beach."

Over the last few years, however, the ocean has eroded just about all that common ground. So Ellis and his neighbors banded together to find a way to protect their properties.

Their options included trucking in more sand, planting more trees or moving their homes upward or inland. But none of those seemed as viable as using riprap — piles of boulders that break up wave energy and prevent erosion.

"If we do nothing, the oceanfront homes would be gone," Ellis said. "And then the next set of homes behind those would be the next to go."

This fall, Tillamook County commissioners allowed 10 homeowners in the Pine Beach development to use riprap. Over the last few months, each has spent \$100,000 or more to build a barrier. It's one long pile of rocks, each the size of about a third of a car, buried deep in their backyards and topped with sand and vegetation.

Without this reinforcement, Ellis said, the Pacific Ocean would destroy his house and much of the neighborhood — leaving behind a mess of ruined homes.

To county commissioners who approved the plan, these erosion prevention efforts sound logical. But there's a problem: Oregon land-use rules largely ban shoreline armoring, under what's known as Goal 18. The policy, adopted back in 1977, banned the use of riprap to protect new development, unless the site qualified for an exception.

State regulators back then



Kristian Foden-Vencil/Oregon Public Broadcasting

Many homes along the Oregon Coast are threatened by ocean erosion. Goal 18 bans shoreline armoring such as riprap unless the home was developed before 1977.

hoped Goal 18 would keep the Oregon Coast from coming to resemble California's coastline, where in certain spots you can find mile after mile of riprapped beaches.

"People were starting to build out on the beach and there was a feeling that that wasn't something that they wanted," said Meg Reed, a coastal specialist with the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development.

Natural friction

At the time Goal 18 was adopted, scientists were also realizing that riprap changes the wave action on a beach, scouring away sand and potentially leaving no beach for the public to enjoy.

So there's a natural friction between the hundreds of thousands of Oregonians who live on the coast and want their properties protected from the ocean, and environmentalists and visitors, who vacation here and want to protect the beautiful vistas.

These kinds of neighborhood spats go on all the time, and all over Oregon and Washington state, whether they're about new fences or parking rights or riprap. What makes this disagreement so important is that, after decades of largely sticking to Goal 18 riprap rules, Tillamook County has decided to toss them out, said Phillip Johnson, executive director of the Oregon Shores Conservation Coalition.

"It's not new that we're getting more and more attempts to riprap the shoreline due to increased erosion," he said. "But this is like an order of magnitude more, where they're just trying to suspend Goal 18. And

mook County approved the Pine Beach development in the 1990s, independent surveyors said the ocean had been adding sand to the beach for 70 years. They also said the area was relatively safe from the threat of erosion.

"These (homeowners) did everything right. This is not a situation where you have people who are tempting fate," Kellington said.

But now, that common ground of trees and sand dunes has been washed away.

The Pine Beach development is also located between two jetties, about 5 miles apart, built 70 years ago, and Kellington said those have contributed to the erosion.

"The natural processes were forever and irrevocably altered by these two man-made jetty systems that exist nowhere else in the entire state of Oregon," she said.

Environmentalists disagree with Kellington's suggestion that the jetties had a major impact on erosion. And they worry about the precedent Tillamook County is setting by allowing riprap here.

To secure the exception to Goal 18, Kellington had to convince commissioners that the situation was unique and exceptional, so it doesn't create a precedent. Kellington expects LUBA to side with homeowners. She thinks 90% of owners in the area between the jetties are entitled to riprap and it's just a matter of time before this segment of the coast can be riprapped without Goal 18 exceptions.

Back at the beach, the effect of Goal 18 is clearly visible. The Shorewood RV Resort was developed before 1977, so it's protected on three sides by riprap. As the beach has eroded, the RV resort now juts out onto the beach. The public can't walk past the site at high tide.

It's a vivid illustration of how, over time, a mixture of erosion and land use rules are reshaping of Oregon's coastline.

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