

IN BRIEF

Warrenton Fire Department looking to add fire marshal

WARRENTON — The Warrenton Fire Department is pursuing several grants through the Federal Emergency Management Agency, one of which would allow the department to hire a fire marshal.

The marshal would handle safety and fire inspections, fire investigations and several forms of fire prevention, including work in community preparedness and education.

The other two grants seek to replace aging tools and a fire engine at the Hammond station. The City Commission voted unanimously on Tuesday night to authorize the fire department to apply for the three grants.

State reports new virus cases for county

The Oregon Health Authority reported six new coronavirus cases for Clatsop County on Wednesday and 27 new cases over the Presidents Day holiday weekend.

Since the pandemic began, the county had recorded 4,490 virus cases as of Wednesday.

Women seek better showers for surfers in Seaside

SEASIDE — Thirty years ago, when Seltzer Park was donated and developed, the surfing population at the Cove was only about 2% women. Today, that number is more than 30%, Lexie Hallahan, of Northwest Women's Surf Camps, said.

Hallahan is leading a campaign to bring shower equity to Seltzer Park, the area east of the Cove across Sunset Boulevard. While there's a shower immediately outside the men's room where the door is open, "You're literally looking right in at men in the urinals," she said.

Hallahan envisions a shower tower on the north side of the park in the open air, clearly visible from the street, with shower heads at both child and adult heights.

"It looks kind of like a cement round structure," she said. "It has the possibility to put up to six fixtures on it."

Trees cut down along the Astoria Riverwalk

Trees were discovered partially cut down along the Astoria Riverwalk near 20th and 21st streets and east beyond 39th Street last week.

The police have no information on possible suspects, Astoria Deputy Police Chief Eric Halverson said.

— *The Astorian*

Cathlamet throws a party to mark 115 years

CATHLAMET, Wash. — A proud community said "happy birthday" to itself by flying the flag.

And that flag is a new one, in the red and black colors of Wahkiakum High School featuring an eagle, which is apt, because Bald Eagle Days is the town's annual festival held in July.

Cathlamet celebrated its 115 years of existence as an incorporated town with cake and a party Friday. About 40 people attended.

The event was an opportunity for Mayor David Olson and first lady Dayle Olson to dress in period garb.

The adoption of the new flag with its distinctive design was among the last actions of the prior mayor, Dale Jacobson, in December. Students and others at Wahkiakum High School were among artists consulted when it was created.

— *Chinook Observer*

DEATH

Feb. 19, 2022

McKENZIE, Steven C., 72, of Seaside, died in Portland. Ocean View Funeral & Cremation Service of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

ON THE RECORD

Theft

• Marcus Lee Journot, 32, of Warrenton, was arrested on Saturday at Ocean Crest Chevrolet in Warrenton for three counts of unlawful entry into a motor vehicle and third-degree theft.

DUII

• Travis Stapley Elmer, 42, of Astoria, was arrested on Sunday at Duane and 10th streets in Astoria for driving

under the influence of intoxicants and reckless driving.

• James Christopher Bentley, 27, of Warrenton, was arrested on Sunday at the Premarq Center in Warrenton for DUII and reckless driving.

• Edward Keller, 56, of Astoria, was arrested on Friday on W. Marine Drive in Astoria for DUII and reckless driving.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

THURSDAY

Sunset Empire Transportation District Board, 9 a.m., (electronic meeting).

Clatsop County Recreational Lands Planning Advisory Committee, 1 p.m., (electronic meeting).

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END OF THE TRAIL



Lydia Ely/The Astorian

Trails in the dunes point toward a rainbow on the Long Beach Peninsula.

Pipeline expansion would increase flow of natural gas through the Northwest

By **BRADLEY W. PARKS**
Oregon Public Broadcasting

A Canadian company is proposing a project to increase the capacity of its pipeline transporting natural gas across the Northwest.

TC Energy wants to modify compressor stations along the Gas Transmission Northwest pipeline in Oregon, Washington state and Idaho to get about 150,000 dekatherms more gas flowing through the region per day — enough to meet the daily energy needs of close to half a million average American homes.

The company said in its application for approval from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission that the project is necessary to meet the needs of Northwest energy consumers, but opponents of the expansion say it ignores the larger trend toward renewable sources of power like wind, solar and hydro.

Erin Saylor, a staff attorney with the environmen-

tal group Columbia Riverkeeper, said the region is moving away from its reliance on natural gas extracted using hydraulic fracturing or fracking.

"These pipeline projects typically have a projected lifespan of 30 years or more," Saylor said, "meaning that this project will lock our region into continued reliance on fracked gas whether we like it or not."

Natural gas has made up a much larger portion of Oregon's electricity mix in recent years as the state phases out coal. Natural gas powered about a quarter of Oregon's electricity use in 2019, compared to just 12% in 2012.

When burnt for energy, natural gas generates fewer greenhouse gas emissions than coal, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, which is part of the reason its appeal has grown. However, methane leaks associated with the production, transport and storage of natural gas can quickly erase those ben-

efits. Methane is itself an extremely potent greenhouse gas.

Oregon and Washington state have each recently passed legislation to drastically decrease greenhouse gas emissions from electricity providers. Power suppliers in Oregon have until 2040 to zero out their emissions, while Washington utilities have until 2045 to become carbon free.

"We're expecting demand for gas to drop significantly," Saylor said, "which means there isn't going to be a need for all of this gas that they're planning to push into our region."

TC Energy has not responded to calls and emails requesting comment.

The company is seeking approval from FERC to upgrade compressor stations in Sherman County; across the Columbia River in Walla Walla County, Washington; and farther north in Kootenai County, Idaho.

In its application, TC Energy says the project

will provide gas to meet "increased market demand driven by residential, commercial and industrial customers in the Pacific Northwest." TC Energy is the parent company of Gas Transmission Northwest LLC, or GTN, which owns the pipeline of the same name.

"The benefits of GTN's proposed project far outweigh its potential adverse impacts," the application said.

TC Energy has urged FERC to approve the project by Oct. 14.

The agency must determine whether the pipeline expansion is in the public interest in order to approve the project. This week, FERC updated the policies guiding those decisions on natural gas projects.

The changes allow the agency to more thoroughly consider a project's contributions to climate change as well as its potential impact on landowners and environmental justice.

Committee: 'We didn't have the option of waiting'

Continued from Page A1

plan happened to fall before the county's short-term rental discussion ended.

"If we were going to say anything on what our recommendations were, we needed to get them into the report," Dice said. "We didn't have the option of waiting."

A county staff memo also pointed to "bias displayed in the narrative."

For example, a section that seeks to resurrect a quasi-judicial Arch Cape design review committee that the county Board of Commissioners dissolved in 2017 notes that the vote was taken "over strong support from the community for continuing" the committee.

This design panel evolved out of the last Southwest Coastal advisory committee that worked on the previous comprehensive plan, and took a heavy hand in the area's land use. The new proposal recommends something similar with the current advisory committee:

"It is the desire of the current CAC that this committee be made a standing committee to represent the region in land use planning and other development matters, and to facilitate the flow of information between community members and county government," the plan reads.

Dice said the board's desire in bringing back the design review committee was



Lydia Ely/The Astorian

The Arch Cape area has sought more local control over land use decisions.

to adhere to the first of the state's 19 planning goals: citizen involvement.

"We felt really strongly that, to adhere to goal one, it was really essential to have a better mechanism for local involvement, such as the design review board," Dice said.

County staff told the Southwest Coastal committee that some of the recommendations may not be legal.

"They had told us it would go through a legal review in any event," Dice said. "So we figured we'd make our recommendations and let it go

through the legal review."

'It's ignored'

At a Board of Commissioners work session earlier this month, the board unanimously disapproved of the document.

County Commissioner Lianne Thompson, whose district encompasses Southwest Coastal, asked, "How much more public money — taxpayer dollars — and volunteer time and staff time and commissioner time do we expend for a group that doesn't want to play by the rules?"

A land use attorney will review the community plans.

Dice said committee members were "surprised and disappointed" by the board's reaction. He said the plan they submitted was not intended as a statement.

"We only had one thing in mind, and that was to make sure that our recommendations ... reflected the current state of affairs in the community — and a number of things clearly have changed in our area over the last 40 years — and to indicate what the people are very interested in," he said.

A Planning Commission review of the Southwest Coastal plan has not been scheduled. The Board of Commissioners is looking to adopt the updated comprehensive plan this summer.

County Commissioner Courtney Bangs said the Southwest Coastal plan highlights a reason for last year's pause.

"Even when staff is giving guidance, and it's giving valuable guidance, it's ignored," Bangs said.

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