

CORONAVIRUS

Masks voluntary at local schools

State's indoor mask mandate has been lifted

By ETHAN MYERS
The Astorian

Students and staff at schools in Clatsop County will have the choice to wear masks to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus now that Oregon has lifted an indoor mask mandate.

The mandate expired in Oregon, Washington state and California at 11:59 p.m. on Friday as COVID-19 case counts and hospitalizations significantly declined.

Oregon also eased guidelines on contact tracing and quarantine after virus cases are detected, giving schools local control over virus protocols.

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College board fills vacancy

Williams replaces Teaford-Cantor

By ETHAN MYERS
The Astorian



Nicole Williams

Williams was sworn in at Tuesday night's board meeting to replace Anne Teaford-Cantor, who resigned from her Zone 2 position in Astoria in January.

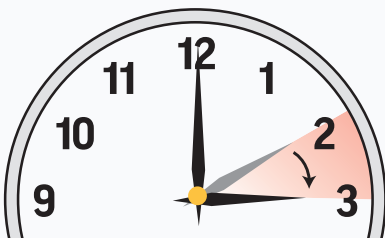
Williams will serve the remainder of Teaford-Cantor's term through 2023. She indicated she intends to run for election to the position when the term expires.

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Spring forward

AP

Daylight saving time starts Sunday at 2 a.m. local time. Set your clocks ahead one hour before bed Saturday.



Lydia Ely/The Astorian

A workforce housing project is planned for Heritage Square downtown.

Open houses to provide a more detailed look at workforce housing at Heritage Square

By NICOLE BALES
The Astorian

Astoria and Edlen & Co. will host two open houses this month to hear from the public on the proposed workforce housing project at Heritage Square.

The discussions at the Astoria Armory will be an opportunity for the Portland-based developer to collect feedback and finalize the basic outline before the City Council decides whether to take the next step in April.

"We're going to, hopefully, be looking for responses about the project, and tweaks or things that people think are important that perhaps we can incorporate or be responsive to," said Jill Sherman, who leads public-private partnerships at Edlen & Co.

At the Astoria Armory, stations will be set up covering different aspects of the project. Representatives from the developer and the other partners will be available to answer questions.

Sherman plans to share details on income eligibility, the mix of workforce units and the timeline moving forward.

Staff from Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare, Clatsop County's mental health and substance abuse treatment provider, will discuss the agency's role in the supportive housing units.

Stuart Emmons, the project's architect, will focus on the design. He will share the different floor plan possibilities the team has prepared and ideas for housing unit design.

Staff from Clatsop Community Action will provide information about housing programs and other social services in the community.

Staff from the Astoria Downtown Historic District Association will talk

OPEN HOUSES

The public is invited to open houses at the Astoria Armory to discuss development at Heritage Square.

- Monday, 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
- March 24, 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

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Jill Sherman | leads public-private partnerships at Edlen & Co.

about potential alternative locations for the Astoria Sunday Market, which uses the large parking lot on the eastern part of the block along 12th Street from May to October.

At each station, the public will be able to leave comments. All the feedback gathered at the open house will be made available on the city's website, where people can also submit comments.

Sherman said the plan is to share summaries of the feedback and the responses at each station at the second open house.

Amy Baker, the executive director of Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare, hopes the one-on-one conversations will help answer questions and dispel some misconceptions about the project.

Over the past several weeks, critics have testified before the City Council and used social media to rally against the project.

"It's really hard to have a productive conversation via social media," Baker said. "I want to have one-on-one conversations with people."

"We purposefully chose to do it this way so we could be as engaging as possible with community members and their concerns, questions and ideas."

Edlen & Co. will share a new concept that incorporates some of the feedback heard so far.

The new concept would place all the housing units into one building instead of two. The building would sit on the eastern portion of the block, and the smaller parking lot at 11th Street and Exchange would remain.

The change is intended to alleviate some of the concerns raised by the Astoria Senior Center and others about parking and a stand-alone building for Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare's clients.

Sherman called the change a "win-win," since it would also reduce the cost of the project.

The four-story building would include up to 105 housing units. Seventy-two of the units would serve

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Cannon Beach is working to make its infrastructure more resilient.

Lydia Ely/The Astorian

Cannon Beach works to ensure water after disasters

Loan from the state to help replace aging pipes

By NICOLE BALES
The Astorian

CANNON BEACH — With the help of a \$3.2 million low-interest loan from the state, the city will replace and upgrade aging water pipes.

The city's 50-year-old concrete and asbestos pipes that run from a spring to the treatment plant, and then into town, will be replaced with a flexible material designed to withstand a major earthquake.

The loan was awarded to the city

in late February by Business Oregon from the Safe Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund to improve resiliency after natural disasters. The loan is offered at a 1% interest rate and includes \$515,000 in principal forgiveness.

The plan to replace the aging water pipes is the second phase of the city's three-phase Backbone Resiliency Project, which also includes replacing one of the city's water tanks and installing seismic valves on all three.

Karen La Bonte, the city's public works director, said that by the time the project is complete in 2026, the city will be prepared to deliver water after an earthquake, possibly

even after a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake and tsunami.

"In a Cascadia, realistically, we're just going to be trying to get people out of here," La Bonte said. "And within the time of being able to get them out, you've got to have water. So whether it's a lower-level earthquake, or it's the big one, you still have to have drinking water until you can get everyone evacuated."

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