

## IN BRIEF

## Astoria to get federal money to prevent landslides

Astoria will receive \$676,875 in federal aid to help prevent landslides.

The amount for a predisaster landslide storm drainage project is part of \$10.7 million — built into a federal omnibus spending package — for 10 projects in Northwest Oregon.

U.S. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici, an Oregon Democrat, submitted a proposal to fund the project, along with other requests to fund communities in her district.

## Warrenton to receive funding for waterline project

WARRENTON — The city expects to receive \$1 million in federal money for a waterline project in Hammond.

The project is a part of the city's capital improvement program.

U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley and U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden — Oregon Democrats — announced the distribution of funding to many cities, programs and organizations across the state, citing an effort to support rural communities, protect public lands and build environmental resiliency.

The money comes from an omnibus spending package approved by Congress that would fund the government through September.

## Coast Guard cutter Steadfast back from patrol off California

The U.S. Coast Guard cutter Steadfast returned to Astoria this month after 48 days of patrolling the California coast, including near the Mexico border.

The work involved searches and rescues, intercepting migrants and drugs and protecting the marine environment, the Coast Guard said.

The Steadfast crew helped intercept boats that agencies suspected were trying to bring migrants to the U.S. illegally, the agency said.

The crew also took part in a search operation involving multiple assets and boarded 23 U.S. vessels, the agency said.

— *The Astorian*

## DEATHS

## March 10, 2022

ARIENT, Joseph Eulin Albert, 46, of Longview, Washington, died in Seaside. Caldwell's Luce-Layton Mortuary of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

## March 9, 2022

Cryderman, Richard Ray, 83, of Warrenton, died in Warrenton. Caldwell's Luce-Layton Mortuary of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

## MEMORIAL

## Saturday, March 19

TAYLOR, Mary Kay — Celebration of life at 3 p.m., Hughes-Ransom Mortuary, 220 N. Holladay Drive in Seaside.

## ON THE RECORD

## Identity theft

• Robert Bruce Brown III, 46, of Astoria, was arraigned on Friday for identity theft, second-degree theft and two counts of fraudulent use of a credit card. The crimes are alleged to have occurred in January 2020.

## Theft

• Jason Brian Pace, 38, of Warrenton, was arrested on Sunday at

Walmart in Warrenton for second-degree theft and first-degree criminal trespass.

## DUI

• Brandon J. Mathews, 30, of Longview, Washington, was arrested on March 8 at Main Avenue and Second Street for driving under the influence of intoxicants and reckless driving. He was involved in a two-vehicle crash.

## PUBLIC MEETINGS

## TUESDAY

**Port of Astoria Commission**, 4 p.m., (electronic meeting)  
**Seaside School District Board**, 6 p.m., 2600 Spruce Drive, Suite 200, Secondary School Library.

## WEDNESDAY

**Clatsop County Board of Commissioners**, 10 a.m., work session, (electronic meeting).  
**Port of Astoria Finance Committee**, noon, 10 Pier 1, Suite 209.  
**Astoria City Council**, 1 p.m., work session, City Hall, 1095 Duane St.

**Seaside Tourism Advisory Committee**, 3 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

**Seaside Tree Board**, 4 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

## THURSDAY

**Seaside Transportation Advisory Commission**, 6 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

## the Astorian

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## PINBALL WIZARD



Lydia Ely/The Astorian

Jeff Lee was the champion of the inaugural Salty Mermaid Cup pinball tournament over the weekend at Merry Time Bar and Grill in Astoria.

## Washington Legislature passes \$17 billion transportation plan

By DON JENKINS  
*Capital Press*

OLYMPIA, Wash. — Washington's Legislature has passed a \$17 billion transportation funding bill supported by fee increases and cap and trade, climate legislation expected to push up fuel prices while netting the state billions of dollars.

The 16-year Move Ahead Washington package advocates requiring new passenger cars and light-duty pickups be electric by 2030 and raids an account that makes low-interest loans to local governments for public works projects.

The state House passed the plan on a 54-44 vote Thursday afternoon, and the Senate followed a few hours later, approving the plan by a 29-20 vote on the final day of the 2022 legislative session. Both chambers also passed a spending plan to go with the revenue plan.

At a post-adjournment press conference, Gov. Jay Inslee called Move Ahead Washington "the cleanest, greenest transportation package in the history of Washington."

Senate Transportation Committee Chairman Marko Liias, D-Everett, said the spending plan prioritizes climate change and equity and that the revenue plan won't raise taxes on working families.

The package will not hike the gas tax, but depends on higher fees to raise \$2.6 billion over 16 years.

A vehicle license plate will cost \$50 instead of \$10. Replacing a plate will cost \$30 instead of \$10. Fees



In Washington state, the Legislature has adjourned a 60-day session.

will be higher for motorcycle licenses and an enhanced driver's license. The aviation fuel tax will increase to 18 cents from 11 cents a gallon.

House and Senate Republicans opposed the plan. Sen. Curtis King, R-Yakima, said the higher fees will punish drivers.

"Working families own cars, at least they do on my side of the state. That's how they get to work," he said.

Democrats scrapped plans to tax fuel refined in Washington and shipped to Oregon, Idaho and Alaska. The tax would have raised gas prices by 6 cents a gallon in those states.

Abandoning the export tax left a hole in the plan. Democrats filled it by taking \$1.7 billion over 16 years from an account that makes low-interest loans for roads; bridges; solid waste facilities; and sewer, water and stormwater systems.

The money comes from

taxes on public utilities, solid waste and real estate sales. Small cities, counties and special-purpose districts are especially reliant on the loans, Public Works Board Chairwoman Kathryn Gardlow said.

"For them to go to the bond market is a big deal," she said. "We're an easy place to access money for these small projects. For the smallest jurisdictions, it's definitely a needed source of funding."

The board loaned \$123 million for projects last summer after receiving applications totaling \$255 million. Gardlow said the board must review its current loan commitments before knowing whether it can make loans this summer.

"This is something the Legislature can do," she said. "It's disappointing. We'll work with it."

Move Ahead Washington's largest source of money

will be cap-and-trade legislation passed in 2021. Manufacturers, including oil refineries, will bid for the right to emit greenhouse gases. Move Ahead Washington depends on getting \$5.4 billion from the auctions.

"That is nothing but a very complicated gas tax," said Sen. John Braun, R-Centralia.

Other pillars of the revenue plan include \$3.65 billion in federal funds and \$2 billion from the general fund.

The revenue will fund public transit, ferries, culvert removal, highway projects and electric vehicles. Liias called the spending plan monumental and transformational.

A state council will write a plan for making all new cars and pickups sold and registered in Washington electric by 2030.

"That's a little heavy-handed, if you ask me," King said.

## Lawsuit claims hospital shared confidential information

By ERICK BENGEL  
*The Astorian*

A former patient at Columbia Memorial Hospital is suing for alleged negligence and breach of confidence.

Lauren Born had a medical procedure done at the hospital in August.

In a complaint filed earlier this month in Circuit Court, Born alleges that the hospital shared confidential information, including an account of her behavior at the hospital, to Born's employer without her permission.

Her employer told

Born her behavior "misrepresented the company" and fired her, according to the complaint.

Born alleges the hospital's disclosure violated the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, which is intended to protect medical privacy.

She is seeking \$140,310 covering economic and noneconomic damages.

Samuel Stanke, Born's Milwaukie-based attorney, could not be reached for comment.

A spokeswoman for Columbia Memorial Hospital declined to comment.

## More trees cut along the Astoria Riverwalk

By ERICK BENGEL  
*The Astorian*

More trees have been found illegally cut along the Astoria Riverwalk, but no suspects have been identified.

At the north end of the Alderbrook Lagoon, a small alder was "barber chaired," which happens when a cut tree splits vertically and falls over but is still attached on one side.

Near the Mill Pond neighborhood, a group of larger alders were also discovered with deep gashes in them.

"Those were either cut all the way through, or cut to a

point of being so damaged that we had to remove them," Jonah Dart-McLean, the director of the Astoria Parks and Recreation Department, said.

Last month, a few alders and a hemlock beyond 39th Street, as well as cottonwoods near the Columbia River Maritime Museum, were discovered cut.

Dart-McLean said the parks department is "trying to do our best to address those issues as they come up."

Astoria Police Chief Geoff Spalding said, "I don't know anyone that has an idea who's doing this and why."

Dart-McLean suspects the trees are being cut by the same person.

"It seems like it'd be unlikely that there would be multiple people out there using a motorized saw," he said.

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