

## IN BRIEF

## Astoria to repair failed storm drain

The Astoria City Council on Monday approved a \$162,650 emergency contract with Big River Construction to replace a failed storm drain in Evergreen Field next to Astoria Middle School.

A 21-inch corrugated metal pipe beneath the field failed, causing stormwater to back up and an embankment to fail.

Temporary repairs were made, but about 200 feet of the pipe needs to be replaced immediately.

## Wyden to host virtual town hall for county residents

U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden will host a virtual town hall for Clatsop County residents on Tuesday.

The event, scheduled for 4 p.m., will be hosted by People's Town Hall and can be watched live on Facebook.

The Oregon Democrat has pledged to hold town halls in all of the state's 36 counties each year.

Registration for the town hall can be found at [peopletownhall.org](http://peopletownhall.org). Those interested in submitting a live video question must register by Sunday.

## KMUN station manager to step down

After nearly five years at the helm, Graham Nystrom is stepping down as station manager for KMUN.

Susan Peterson, the development director for KMUN, will take his place.

Nystrom, a musician and live sound and recording engineer, previously worked as technical director for Live Wire Radio and Oregon Public Broadcasting.

Under his leadership, KMUN regained significant financial and operational stability. Nystrom also planned and helped fundraise for major technical improvements.

The work came at a cost, though. Nystrom said he has increasingly felt the toll of job-related stress and wants to step back.

"I came into the position planning on giving it five years," he said. "I'm at four and half now and I've accomplished the bulk of my goals — and then some."

— *The Astorian*

## DEATH

April 2, 2022

JASPER, Ronald Leslie, 88, of Astoria, died in Astoria. Caldwell's Luce-Layton Mortuary of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

## BIRTH

March 2, 2022

NELSON, Brooklyn and DAVIS, Conner, of Warrenton, a girl, Harley Rae Nelson-Davis, born at Columbia Memorial Hospital in Astoria.

## ON THE RECORD

## Assault

Alexander Todd Fenton, 31, of Warrenton, was arrested on Monday at N.W. Cedar Court in Warrenton for fourth-degree assault, felony domestic violence and strangulation.

## Strangulation

Michael James Smith, 37, of Seaside, was indicted last week for strangulation, fourth-degree assault, menacing constituting domestic violence and harassment. The crimes are alleged to have occurred in March.

## Criminal mischief

James Edward Hahn, 45, of Astoria, was arrested on Sunday on Exchange Street for second-degree criminal mischief and resisting arrest.

Dallin Martel Chevalier, 30, of Astoria, was arrested on March 31 on S.E. Discovery Lane in Warrenton for first-degree criminal mischief, second-degree disorderly conduct and unlawful entry into a motor vehicle. The incident took place at Taco Bell, where Chevalier allegedly caused more than \$1,000 worth of damage to a truck.

## Unauthorized use of a vehicle

Russell Dean Brooks, 36, of Astoria, was indicted on March 31 for unauthorized use of a vehicle, two counts of attempted unauthorized use of a vehicle, three counts of unlawful entry into a motor vehicle, two counts of second-degree criminal mischief, second-degree theft, third-degree theft and third-degree escape. The crimes are alleged to have occurred earlier in March.

## DUII

Marcelino Hernandez-Ramirez, 34, of Taft, California, was arrested on Saturday on E. Harbor Drive in Warrenton for driving under the influence of intoxicants, driving without privileges or in violation of license restrictions, driving uninsured and having an open container.

Timothy Luke Perkins, 37, of Longview, Washington, was arrested on Saturday on U.S. Highway 101 near Gearhart for DUII and reckless driving. Perkins was involved in a single-vehicle crash.

## PUBLIC MEETINGS

THURSDAY

Seaside Parks Advisory Committee, 6 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

## the Astorian

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## POPPING BY

Lydia Ely/The Astorian

A sea lion surfaced next to Pier 39 in Astoria.

## Nike co-founder Knight invests more in Johnson's campaign for governor

By DIRK VANDERHART

Oregon Public Broadcasting

Nike co-founder Phil Knight is once again picking favorites in Oregon politics, this time in the highly competitive 2022 race for governor, and putting up major money to back up his choice.

On Friday, records show Knight contributed \$750,000 to the campaign of former Democratic state Sen. Betsy Johnson, who has left the party to run as an unaffiliated candidate. Combined with a previous \$250,000 donation, Knight has now given \$1 million to Johnson's attempt to become the first governor not associated with a political party in nearly a century.

The checks, coming seven months before Johnson would actually stand for election, signal that Knight is once again hoping to play a strong role in helping his chosen candidate reach Oregon voters. That's particularly a necessity for Johnson, who won't be able to appeal to voters purely based on the political party next to her name.

While Knight has given to plenty of candidates and causes in Oregon over the years, his financial support has typically been far lower than what he's offered Johnson.

In 2010, Knight favored former Portland Trail Blazer Chris Dudley, a Republican, who lost the gubernatorial race by a razor-thin margin to Democrat John Kitzhaber. Knight gave Dudley \$400,000 in that contest and, four years later, backed Kitzhaber's reelection bid with a check for \$250,000.

Knight dialed his political giving way up in 2018, when he contributed \$2.5 million to the campaign of then-Re-



John Gress

Nike co-founder Phil Knight has donated \$1 million to Oregon gubernatorial candidate Betsy Johnson.

## NIKE CO-FOUNDER PHIL KNIGHT'S CONTRIBUTIONS AMOUNT TO 17% OF HER TOTAL RAISED SO FAR.

publican state Rep. Knute Buehler, who was challenging Gov. Kate Brown. The heavy donations spurred accusations that Knight was attempting to buy a Republican the governor's mansion, but were not ultimately enough to help Buehler beat the vulnerable Brown. Knight's donations comprised 13% of Buehler's fundraising in the race.

"It's not surprising that (Knight) would connect with Knute," Dudley told Oregon Public Broadcasting in 2018. "Similar to myself, Knute is moderate, and he lines up with where Phil is on a lot of stuff: He's pro-choice, he's pro-free trade, he's pro-business, he's in favor of pension

reform to fix the funding of schools."

In Johnson, Knight may have found a candidate with politics that are similar to Buehler's. Both are pro-choice politicians, but also say they represent a commitment to strict fiscal discipline and a chance to snatch the state back from the control of progressive Democrats.

Knight could not immediately be reached for comment. In a statement Monday, Johnson touted Knight's support.

"Without the money and machinery from the two-party system, I need all the help I can get to rescue Oregon," the statement said.

"Phil Knight deeply loves Oregon and is willing to put his money where his heart is like so many others helping our campaign. I am proud to have him in my corner."

Since she's running as an unaffiliated candidate, Johnson does not need to seek a major party nomination in the May primary. Instead, she's taking a less common route to the November ballot: working to collect roughly 23,750 valid signatures from Oregon voters, an amount equal to 1% of the statewide vote in the 2020 general election.

That will require major money, which Johnson has. So far, the former senator has raised far more than any other gubernatorial candidate. As of Monday, she'd reported having more than \$5.1 million on hand.

Knight's contributions amount to 17% of her total raised so far.

## State expands eligibility for unemployment benefits

By KATE DAVIDSON  
Oregon Public Broadcasting

People who have received unemployment benefits in Oregon are probably familiar with the triple A's — a bedrock of the benefits system. Job seekers must attest they are able, available and actively seeking work to get unemployment on a week-to-week basis.

The Oregon Employment Department temporarily relaxed those rules when the coronavirus pandemic forced mass layoffs.

Now the agency says it has learned a lesson from the pandemic. It recently updated its avail-

ability requirements so that more people can get unemployment.

"The world of work has changed," said Lindsay Leahy, director of the unemployment insurance division. "The child care crisis definitely put an exclamation point on it."

To get benefits under the old rule, a job seeker would have to be available to work any schedule, on any days, that an employer in their field would normally require. In other words, they had to be completely available.

The amended rule lets the agency consider barriers such as lack of transportation, lack of child care or

other caregiving responsibilities before denying benefits to someone with more limited availability.

For example, say a parent looking for a manufacturing job can't work during the day because their kid's child care provider closed.

"You don't have child care for day shift," Leahy posited. "Are you available for swing shift and graveyard? Yes?"

Under the revised rule, as long as a worker is available 40 hours per week during times when an employer in their area would typically offer work, they may now be eligible for benefits. A person doesn't need to be available around the clock.

The same could be true for job seekers caring for an elderly parent or attending classes during certain hours. Or for people whose availability depends on public transportation.

About 19,000 people are currently receiving unemployment benefits in Oregon.

Leahy said the agency doesn't know how many more people will be eligible for benefits because of the rule change. She said some employers raised concerns their tax liabilities could rise if more claimants were paid benefits from the state's unemployment insurance trust fund.

Any impact should be softened, however, by legislation Oregon lawmakers passed last summer cutting employer taxes by roughly \$2.4 billion through 2029.

Leahy said the Employment Department would evaluate the rule change after a year, to see how often it gets used and measure its effect on the unemployment trust fund. She said additional changes could be made in the future.

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