

## IN BRIEF

## County receives brownfield grant for sites in Astoria and Seaside

A \$500,000 grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will go toward cleaning up two potentially hazardous sites — one in Astoria, another in Seaside — that could be used for affordable housing.

In east Astoria is a 20-acre parcel, once the site of the Blue Ridge apartments, situated next to a former military facility. Various materials — such as tanks, munitions and contaminants like lead and asbestos — may have been left behind, Clatsop County said in a statement.

In north Seaside, near the old Seaside High School, a former gas station and car repair shop still has harmful substances on site such as fuel tanks kept underground, the county said.

The county and the cities, working with a consultant, identified the properties — which are privately owned — as needing to be cleaned up, Monica Steele, the assistant county manager, said.

In its application, the county identified mixed-use development, including workforce housing, as a goal.

The grant is part of the EPA's brownfield program that allows communities to rehabilitate once-developed properties that have fallen into disuse and may have turned toxic.

Of the program's \$254 million, Oregon communities will receive \$8.3 million, the federal agency said. — *The Astorian*

## Long Beach man sentenced to prison for child rape

LONG BEACH, Wash. — A Long Beach man stationed at U.S. Coast Guard Station Cape Disappointment has been sentenced to a minimum of 13 1/2 years in prison for raping a minor.

Jordan R. Wekenborg-Garcia, 32, pleaded guilty in February to three counts of first-degree rape of a child.

He was arrested in January at his residence on Ocean Beach Boulevard after a joint investigation by the Coast Guard and the Long Beach Police Department.

According to court records, at the time of his arrest, the victim was 11 years old, and the sexual activity reportedly went as far back as when she was 4.

Details of the crimes came to light after the victim told some friends at the Ocean Beach Elementary School about what Wekenborg-Garcia was doing to her. The information was then passed on to adults, and law enforcement was contacted. — *Chinook Observer*

## DEATHS

May 12, 2022

**BERGSTROM, Barbara**, 73, of Seaside, died in Seaside. Caldwell's Luce-Layton Mortuary of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

**GEORGESON, Gary Wesley**, 76, of Astoria, died in Astoria. Ocean View Funeral & Cremation Service of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

May 7, 2022

**GIBSON, Michelle Lynn**, 39, of Milwaukie, formerly of Birkenfeld, died in Milwaukie. Caldwell's Luce-Layton Mortuary of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

April 28, 2022

**RUST, Randy**, 64, of Astoria, died in Astoria. Hughes-Ransom Mortuary is in charge of the arrangements.

## ON THE RECORD

## Assault

**Amy Nacole Smalling**, 45, of Pocatello, Idaho, was indicted this week for second-degree assault, strangulation, menacing constituting domestic violence, a first-degree bias crime, fourth-degree assault and menacing. The crimes are alleged to have occurred in Clatsop County earlier this month.

## Unauthorized use of a vehicle

**Krystle Lee Florer**, 37, of Portland, was indicted this week for unauthorized use of a vehicle, fleeing or attempting to elude a police officer, two counts of first-degree theft, recklessly endangering another person and reckless driving. The crimes are alleged to have occurred in Clatsop County earlier this month.

## PUBLIC MEETINGS

## MONDAY

**Warrenton Marinas Advisory Committee**, 2 p.m., special meeting, City Hall, 225 S. Main Ave.

**Jewell School District Board**, 6 p.m., Jewell School Library, 83874 Oregon Highway 103.

**Youngs River Lewis and Clark Water District Board**, 6 p.m., 34583 U.S. Highway 101 Business.

**Astoria City Council**, 7 p.m., City Hall, 1095 Duane St.

## TUESDAY

**Port of Astoria Commission**, 4 p.m., 10 Pier 1, Suite 209.

**Seaside Planning Commission**, 6 p.m., work session, City Hall, 989 Broadway.

**Seaside School District Board**, 6 p.m., 2600 Spruce Drive, Suite 200, Secondary School Library.

**Shoreline Sanitary District Board**, 7 p.m., Hertig Station, 33496 W. Lake Road in Warrenton.

## the Astorian

Established July 1, 1873  
(USPS 035-000)

Published Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday by EO Media Group, 949 Exchange St., PO Box 210, Astoria, OR 97103 Telephone 503-325-3211, 800-781-3211 or Fax 503-325-6573. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Astorian, PO Box 210, Astoria, OR 97103-0210

DailyAstorian.com

MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MEMBER CERTIFIED AUDIT OF CIRCULATIONS, INC.

Circulation phone number:  
800-781-3214

Periodicals postage paid at ASTORIA, OR

ADVERTISING OWNERSHIP

All advertising copy and illustrations prepared by The Astorian become the property of The Astorian and may not be reproduced for any use without explicit prior approval.

COPYRIGHT ©

Entire contents © Copyright, 2022 by The Astorian.



Printed on recycled paper

Subscription rates  
Effective January 12, 2021

## MAIL

EZpay (per month).....\$10.75  
13 weeks in advance.....\$37.00  
26 weeks in advance.....\$71.00  
52 weeks in advance.....\$135.00

## DIGITAL

EZpay (per month).....\$8.25

## SPIRIT OF THE WATERS



Megan Mack

As part of a call to remove dams on the lower Snake River to protect salmon and orcas, Indigenous leaders are taking the Spirit of the Waters totem pole across the region. They made a stop on Monday at Clatsop Community College in Astoria.

## Environmental group, Weyerhaeuser settle over river pollution claims

## Problems for river at Longview mill

By TROY BRYNELSON  
*Oregon Public Broadcasting*

Less than two months after it sued over alleged river pollution in Cowlitz County, a group of environmental activists inked a settlement with one of the world's largest timber firms.

Columbia Riverkeeper and Weyerhaeuser will settle on a deal to end the lawsuit in exchange for upgrades at a mill in Longview, Washington, that is at the heart of the activists' concerns.

Columbia Riverkeeper first sued the Seattle-based timber giant in March, alleging its Longview mill has been discharging harmful levels of runoff into the Columbia River. The group alleged the discharges hurt oxygen levels for fish and can spur the growth of harmful bacteria.

In a proposed settlement signed this month, Weyerhaeuser agreed to reroute a stormwater pipe, aerate a pond, install new monitoring devices and filters and change on-site procedures to "more actively manage wood and bark debris."

The proposal also calls for Weyerhaeuser to be fined up to \$5,000 for every instance of future pollution between 2023 and 2025. The com-



Elaine Thompson/AP Photo

Timber processing facilities, including Weyerhaeuser's, line the banks of the Columbia River near the Port of Longview.

pany will also give \$600,000 to the Portland nonprofit Seeding Justice. Court filings show the nonprofit plans to put the money into grants for river restoration.

"Weyerhaeuser is a huge company, and to see an agreement of this magnitude with this type of penalty really shows that no corporation has the right to flout the law and pollute this river," said Simone Anter, a staff attorney with Columbia Riverkeeper.

The settlement is contingent on approval from the U.S. Department of Justice. It must then be signed by a federal judge.

Weyerhaeuser representatives did not respond to requests for comment. In

the proposal, the company denies any wrongdoing. The settlement calls on Columbia Riverkeeper to drop related, future claims.

The Longview mill has been hit multiple times with allegations of pollution in recent years.

In 2020, the mill and its immediate neighbors — North Pacific Paper Corp. and Nippon Dynawave — all landed in hot water with the Washington Department of Ecology over dozens of reported instances of pollution between September 2019 and April 2020.

The trio of companies comprises a 700-acre industrial complex, once owned entirely by Weyerhaeuser until it parceled off

its pulp, thermo-mechanical and de-ink mills in 2016. The companies still share infrastructure.

In February, the state also fined the mill \$40,000 for failing "42 times to meet pollution limits" between October 2020 and last November.

Two days later, the regulators also fined the North Pacific Paper Corp. \$68,000 for 71 documented cases of pollution.

Anter has said Columbia Riverkeeper has "kept its eyes" on the complex for years. Anter said the organization's focus on them predated her own tenure there.

"We've been monitoring the stormwater samples there and trying to understand what's going on," she said.

## Dispute: 'I do not want to close a business that employs 17 people without giving them a chance to comply'

Continued from Page A1

who could operate in a home occupation. The development code allows up to five employees; Velazquez-Silva employs 17. But, Sisson said, the county has interpreted the code to mean that no more than five employees may be on the grounds at a given time, regardless of how many are actually on the payroll.

The development code also does not allow a home occupation to use more than two vehicles in its operations. Neighbors have documented more than that number on the property.

One neighbor, Dale Barrett, told the board he doubted that a permit would bring Velazquez-Silva into compliance.

"I personally don't believe he will be able to follow the guidelines of the

staff's recommendations for conditions of approval," Barrett said. "He can't control other people coming onto the property, or necessarily his employees."

Greg Hathaway, the couple's Portland-based attorney, said Velazquez-Silva understands he could lose his business if he doesn't follow the rules.

"There needs to be a balance between the Velazquezes wanting to preserve their business — which is obviously very, very important to them — but on the other hand, there's a need to make sure that the neighbors are being protected, as well," Hathaway said.

Commissioner Lianne Thompson, Commissioner Pamela Wev and Commissioner Courtney Bangs voted to overturn the Planning Commission's denial.

"I do not want to close a business that employs 17 people without giving them a chance to comply," Bangs said.

Thompson said Velazquez-Silva is entitled to operate the business if he does so legally. "Inquiring minds wonder what happened with his initial application, but we can't revisit that — it's fruitless," she said.

Commissioner Mark Kujala, the board's chair-

man, wanted to send the decision back to the Planning Commission for further discussion. Commissioner John Toyooka was absent.

The applicants own a commercially zoned property in Gearhart. "If they have an alternative property that could be used for commercial activity, I would like that to be explored more and not have that creep into a neighborhood if at all possible," Kujala said.

## Please ADOPT A PET!



**SPARKY,**  
5 year old Lab/Shepherd Blend

Smart, happy, children friendly from trail to town and all around, a fabulous family dog.

See more on  
Petfinder.com

CLATSOP COUNTY ANIMAL SHELTER • 861-PETS  
1315 SE 19th St. • Warrenton | Tues-Sat 12-4pm  
www.dogsncats.org



THIS SPACE SPONSORED BY BAY BREEZE BOARDING



## WANTED

Alder and Maple Saw Logs & Standing Timber

Northwest Hardwoods • Longview, WA

Contact: John Anderson • 360-269-2500