

IN BRIEF

Astoria City Council approves employment agreement with Benoit

The City Council approved an employment agreement Friday to appoint Paul Benoit, a former city manager, as Astoria's interim city manager.

City Manager Brett Estes, who replaced Benoit in 2014, announced earlier this month that he would step down on July 4 after accepting a job with the state.

Benoit is expected to start before Estes' last day. The City Council also discussed the recruitment process for a new city manager, and is expected to select an executive recruiter in the coming weeks.

Warrenton man dies in crash in Tillamook County

A Warrenton man died in a crash on Tuesday morning while riding a motorcycle on Miami Foley Road in Tillamook County.

Adam Taylor, 26, was headed south on a black Honda 500 at about 11 a.m. and veered into the north-bound lane and struck an oncoming Ford truck near the intersection of New Miami River Road, police said.

Emergency responders closed Miami Foley Road for hours, police said.

Body of former Cornelius mayor identified

The human remains found in a car submerged in the Willamette River on May 13 have been identified as those of Ralph Brown, the former Cornelius mayor with ties to Astoria.

His vehicle, a 2014 dark blue Nissan Sentra, was found 40 feet underwater near a Newberg boat ramp, according to the Washington County Sheriff's Office.

Brown, 77, disappeared on May 16, 2021.

Fishery managers add more fishing days on the river

Fishery managers have adopted an additional 11 days of recreational Columbia River spring Chinook fishing downstream of Bonneville Dam.

The additional days are from May 24 to June 3.

The decision follows an updated forecast of 19,000 additional upriver-origin adult spring Chinook, bringing the total projected return to 180,000.

The open area below Bonneville Dam includes the Tongue Point/ Rocky Point line upstream to Beacon Rock, plus bank angling only from Beacon Rock to Bonneville Dam.

— The Astorian

DEATHS

May 17, 2022

CANESSA, Leland Robert, 82, of Seaside, died in Seaside. Caldwell's Luce-Layton Mortuary of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

LEISEY, Marlin, 80, of Seaside, died in Seaside. Hughes-Ransom Mortuary is in charge of the arrangements.

May 16, 2022

HENSLEY, Colleen, 94, of Vancouver, Washington, formerly of Astoria, died in Vancouver. Caldwell's Luce-Layton Mortuary of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

arrangements.

May 15, 2022

PEDERSEN, John A., 82, of Astoria, died in Seattle. Caldwell's Luce-Layton Mortuary of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

May 14, 2022

MacARTHUR, James C., 63, of Astoria, died in Astoria. Caldwell's Luce-Layton Mortuary of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

WOLDEN, Frank L., 87, of Seaside, died in Seaside. Caldwell's Luce-Layton Mortuary of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

MEMORIALS

Friday, May 27

JOHNSON, Elmer Leroy — Memorial at 10:30 a.m., Hughes-Ransom Mortuary, 576 12th St., with a brunch to follow at noon in the basement at Clatsop Post 12 American Legion, 1132

Exchange St. Private interment is at 2:30 p.m. at Knappa Prairie Cemetery.

Saturday, June 4

BERRY, Diane A. — Celebration of life at 1 p.m., Warrenton Community Center, 170 S.W. Third St. in Warrenton.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

MONDAY

Seaside City Council, 7 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

TUESDAY

Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District Board, 5:15 p.m., 1225 Avenue A, Seaside.

Astoria Planning Commission, 5:30 p.m., City Hall, 1095 Duane St.

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

Warrenton City Commission, 6 p.m., City Hall, 225 S. Main Ave.

County, city leaders discuss housing at work session

First joint meeting since before pandemic

By NICOLE BALES and ERICK BENGEL
The Astorian

Clatsop County and city leaders met Wednesday to discuss affordable and workforce housing, micro housing and services for the homeless.

The joint work session at the Clatsop County Fairgrounds was the first time the governing boards gathered together since before the coronavirus pandemic. The boards agreed to schedule quarterly regional housing meetings to continue the discussion.

"I want to point out, while the county is made up of distinct cities, unincorporated communities, rural areas, employment opportunities and housing needs do not stop at these jurisdictional boundaries," said Jeff Adams, Cannon Beach's community development director, who proposed the quarterly meetings.

"Our workforce, our lives, are regional. They've been regional for as long as we know, but more so now," he continued. "So we've got to use our regional collaboration to build that capacity for the future."

regional organization that can take this project on and move it forward," Adams said.

He said he reached out to the Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce, an organization specializing in environmental planning and habitat restoration for fish and wildlife.

CLATSOP COMMUNITY ACTION ESTIMATES MICRO SHELTERS COULD COST BETWEEN \$12,000 AND \$15,000 A UNIT. THE NONPROFIT SAID IT WOULD MANAGE THE VILLAGES AND SECURE FUNDING IF JURISDICTIONS CAN PROVIDE THE LAND.

Adams noted that little action has been taken since Clatsop County's 2019 housing study, which also called for a regional approach.

"If we're going to move this forward as a group, we've got to find that

Adams said the organization could take the lead, noting that housing authorities typically fill that role.

Susan Prettyman, the social services program manager at Clatsop Community Action, also presented to the group.

Prettyman said the nonprofit's long-term goal is to see micro shelter villages in Astoria, Warrenton and Seaside. These units would serve as transitional housing for people having trouble securing permanent homes.

Ideally, Clatsop Community Action would hire full-time on-site managers, Prettyman said. Social services providers could work with people where they live, offering mental health care, domestic violence counseling and other support.

Clatsop Community Action estimates micro shelters could cost between \$12,000 and \$15,000 a unit. The nonprofit said it would manage the villages and secure funding if jurisdictions can provide the land.

In April, the county put up 15 surplus properties for child care, low-income housing and social services.

By the May 13 deadline, the county had received proposals from Clatsop Community Action, Clatsop Care Health District and Seaside.

Oregon private forestland deal wins acclaim, but doubts remain

Brown signs bills in Portland ceremony

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

PORTLAND — Regulations that reduce Oregon's harvestable timber acreage by roughly 10% aren't a development that would normally be embraced by timber industry representatives.

Yet new rules that increase no-logging buffers around streams and impose other restrictions were celebrated Wednesday by executives of forest product companies alongside Gov. Kate Brown and environmental advocates at an event in Portland.

The signing ceremony memorialized the Private Forest Accord, a compromise deal over forestry regulations struck by timber and environmental representatives. The agreement was enshrined in legislation passed earlier this year and signed by Brown.

"You all set aside your differences to do what is best for everyone," the governor said. "Both sides recognized the old way of doing things wasn't working."

Any decrease in the state's log supply is a hard pill for lumber and plywood manufacturers to swallow, but the segment of the industry that supports Senate Bill 1501 believes it's a calculated risk: The new restrictions are meant to forestall ballot initiatives or other unpredictable disruptions to logging rules.

"There are no certainties in life, but we have a negotiated agreement that's supported by all sides," said Eric Geyer, the strategic business development director for Roseburg Forest Products. "I'm confident we will have regulatory certainty for the elements that were negotiated."

This regulatory certainty is generally cited as a key benefit to foresters, loggers, landowners and manufacturers, but detractors in the timber industry view the term as unrealistically optimistic.

Critics say the regulations don't actually prevent environmental advocates from filing lawsuits or seeking ballot initiatives, either immediately or years from now.

"One must suspend disbelief that the greens will not sue in the future. History says otherwise," said Rob Freres, the president of



Gov. Kate Brown spoke at a signing ceremony in Portland on Wednesday for bills that impose new regulations on private forestland.

Freres Lumber. "Surrogates and newly formed organizations will be used to circumvent the agreement."

Meanwhile, the timber investment management organizations and real estate investment trusts that agreed to the restrictions will eventually divest their Oregon forestlands, "avoiding the harm they have caused," he said.

The larger buffer zones around waterways, which depend on stream type, are a major component of the deal and have come under fire for rendering valuable standing timber on private land effectively worthless.

upland, lowland and riparian areas, according to detractors.

Supporters of the deal in the timber industry say it ensures future regulations under the state's Forest Practices Act will be guided by an "adaptive management process" that relies on research rather than political maneuvering.

"Any changes to the Forest Practices Act will be based on sound science," said Chris Edwards, the executive director of the Oregon Forest & Industries Council, a timber group. "The science will lead us to agreements."

'BY SEEING EACH OTHER AS PEOPLE AND SHARING OUR VIEWS WITH INTEGRITY, WE CAN ACHIEVE THE HALLOWED MIDDLE GROUND.'

Ken Nygren | president of the Oregon Small Woodlands Association

Aside from no-harvest buffers expanding, the legislation imposes restrictions on beaver trapping, road building and steep slope logging.

Industry estimates peg the statewide impact as a 10% cut in harvestable timber acreage, which will roughly correlate with a decrease in lumber and plywood production and the mill closures or curtailments that entails, critics say.

The effect will be particularly burdensome for landowners with many streams on their properties, including small woodland owners who don't own vast acreages spread out over

Environmental groups that signed onto the deal say their public show of support will deflate any future efforts to change the law through ballot initiatives, given the broad-based consensus behind the new rules.

"It becomes harder for someone to mount external efforts at the ballot to do something different," said Sean Stevens, the executive director of Oregon Wild. "There will be a little bit of stasis that comes from this."

If the federal government approves the deal's regulations under a habitat conservation plan for threatened and endan-

gered aquatic species, it would protect against lawsuits alleging landowners unlawfully harmed them and their habitat.

"That gives them a shield from liability," said Ralph Bloemers, co-founder of the Crag Law Center.

Even so, the habitat conservation plan must first be approved by federal authorities through a public process, and its protections don't extend to terrestrial species such as the spotted owl. The plan also doesn't apply to liability under the Clean Water Act.

Though a representative of the Oregon Small Woodlands Association helped craft the deal, critics have accused the agreement's signatories of deliberating behind closed doors without input from the public.

Small woodland owners won't be held to the same standards under the legislation as industrial forest owners, but the regulations will still be more stringent than they are now. The state's Board of Forestry must implement the new rules before December.

Under companion legislation, Senate Bill 1502, small woodland owners with fewer than 5,000 acres who abide by the stricter industrial standards can obtain tax credits to compensate for the loss in revenue.

Small woodland owners are more likely to live in the wildland-urban interface and thus the significant reduction in their property's timber value will create pressure to convert these forests to residential or other uses, according to detractors.

For the Oregon Small Woodlands Association, it's gratifying that the unique circumstances of small woodland owners were recognized in the accord and they were given special consideration in the regulatory and tax provisions, said Ken Nygren, the group's president.

By engaging in negotiations, representatives of the timber and environmental communities learned their goals were not mutually exclusive, he said. They all share the aim of keeping Oregon's forested landscape healthy.

"By seeing each other as people and sharing our views with integrity, we can achieve the hallowed middle ground," Nygren said.

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