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Lydia Ely/The Astorian
Potholes can be found along Exchange Street in Astoria.

On the North Coast, potholes can be more than bumps in the road

Weather, materials, funding and staff challenges can prolong repairs

By **ETHAN MYERS**
The Astorian

Potholes can be a source of irritation for drivers on the North Coast as they swerve to avoid jarring bumps and potential damage to their vehicles.

For local agencies, filling potholes can also be a struggle.

“Pavement management in gen-

eral on the North Coast I think is challenging for a number of reasons, and this includes potholes,” Nathan Crater, the engineer for Astoria, said.

Crater, who assists with permitting, capital improvement projects and infrastructure management, passes along complaints of potholes to the Public Works Department.

The process for getting a pothole filled varies based on a number of fac-

tors, including shape, size and severity, as well as the road it’s on. A pothole on a street with a high volume of traffic — like near Columbia Memorial Hospital — usually takes priority.

Often the most important piece affecting the time frame in patching is weather — an endless challenge on the North Coast.

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Coast Guard invests in child care

A \$20 million boost for child development center

By **ERICK BENGEL**
The Astorian

Astoria is one of the U.S. Coast Guard locations that will receive a slice of \$120 million in federal infrastructure money for child care.

The Coast Guard’s new child development center — a \$20 million investment — is still in the planning stages. But the center will likely free up child care slots on the North Coast, where families often struggle to find options. Since 2017, Clatsop County has lost over half of its licensed child care capacity — more than 1,000 slots.

“If the Coast Guard families don’t have child care through the Coast Guard, then you’re coming to places like this, and then that’s fewer spaces for other community members,” U.S. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici, an Oregon Democrat, said during a visit Thursday to Sprouts Learning Center in Astoria.

In July, Bumble Art Studio, an Astoria preschool provider, will take over Sprouts Learning Center operations from the city, which was set to close Sprouts at the end of June because of staffing and financial limitations.

“We know child care is one of those few big-ticket items that are big considerations for any potential employees,” Mayor Bruce Jones said. It is a refrain city leaders consistently hear from Columbia Memorial Hospital, the Astoria School District and other employers.

“When they’re bringing in prospective new employees, they’re looking at housing and they’re looking at child care,” he said. “And in the current housing environment, where housing is so expensive, child care can be a tipping point.”

Jones, a former commander of Coast Guard Sector Columbia River, said he

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A local legend in Brazilian jiu-jitsu

Kyllo has earned a black belt

By **R.J. MARX**
The Astorian

SEASIDE — “A local legend.” That is how Zach Adamson of Adamson Bros. Jiu Jitsu describes Michelle Kyllo.

After a decade of dedication, Kyllo became the first woman on the Oregon Coast to earn her black belt in Brazilian jiu-jitsu.

“Michelle is an inspiration to many women here locally and throughout the Pacific Northwest and this is something our community can be proud of,” Zach Adamson said.

Kyllo attended local schools from elementary to high school, graduating in 2009.

“I have always kind of been a little — I don’t want to say tomboy — but when I was in elementary school, primary school, I was always trying to wrestle, scrap with people,” she said. “We’d go to the beach, and I’m like, ‘Let’s play sumo.’ I’ve always been, I wouldn’t say aggressive, but I always liked to mix it up a little bit.”

Her mom always wanted her to be a ballerina. “She put me in dance classes, and I was terrible. I hated it,” she said. “And so when I was 12, I eventually mustered up the courage to say, ‘I don’t want to do this, I want to fight. I want to do martial arts.’”



Michelle Kyllo stands atop the podium after a recent competition.

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She started at a studio in Warrenton with taekwon do kickboxing, her introduction to the martial arts.

“I loved it,” she said. “I never really considered myself very

athletic. When I did softball I mostly picked daisies in the outfield. I swam for the fun of it. Any other sport did not appeal to me. And I wasn’t good at them. Why would you do something you’re not good at? We’d go to competitions and I would just whoop on everyone. Once I got started with martial arts, I was like, ‘Oh, my God! I’m good at this!’”

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Brewery jobs expected to grow

Study projects increase to 700 by 2024

By **NICOLE BALES**
The Astorian

Jobs at breweries, distilleries and cideries in Clatsop County are expected to rebound from the coronavirus pandemic and grow from about 520 to more than 700 by 2024.

An economic impact study prepared by the Columbia Pacific Economic Development District in May illustrates the fermentation sector’s dramatic growth over the past two decades.

The study was initiated, in part, in response to steps Astoria has taken to offset the impact the sector’s industrial waste has had on the city’s wastewater treatment facility. It was funded by Business Oregon, Clatsop County and Clatsop Economic Development Resources.

Ayreann Colombo, the executive director of ColPac, acknowledged to the City Council in May that the nonprofit does not have expertise in waste-

water systems, but used the study to demonstrate the outsized economic contributions of the fermentation sector.

Lydia Ivanovic, the programs analyst for ColPac, said breweries on the North Coast have formed “a strong economic cluster.”

“They’ve achieved this through significant job creation, entrepreneurialism, innovation and visitor spending,” Ivanovic said.

She said Fort George Brewery and Buoy Beer Co. — the two largest breweries in Clatsop County — act as anchor businesses and incubators for others entering the market.

Since the business model for breweries includes production, wholesale, distribution and retail, Ivanovic said the sector is considered inherently resilient because there are multiple avenues of operation.

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