

# Mobile clinic: 'It's just a huge relief for us'

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"We have new and emerging diseases, for as long as nature and humans have commingled," McClean said, "and so as Public Health continues to build stable infrastructure, we have this van."

The van arrives as coronavirus cases spike and the county begins dismantling its COVID-19 vaccination and drive-thru testing services at Camp Rilea Armed Forces Training Center in Warrenton.

The county had been giving weekly boosters at Camp Rilea. As that operation winds down, the vaccination supplies will be used to stock the van. Beginning on Friday, the county's drive-thru testing will take place at the household hazardous waste facility on Williamsport Road in Astoria.

At first, the department will use the van primarily to offer COVID-19 vaccinations and boosters. "That's kind of our priority right



Lydia Ely/The Astorian

Lucas Marshall, left, the environmental health manager for the county Public Health Department, shared COVID-19 statistics during a meeting on Tuesday.

now," McClean said.

In December, the county's overall COVID-19 vaccination rate reached 70% — among the highest in Oregon — but as of earlier

this month had yet to breach 75%.

Come fall, the mobile clinic may be used in schools' student immunizations efforts. "Our hope is, we will be able to offer other

## 'THIS IS QUITE HISTORIC FOR PUBLIC HEALTH IN CLATSOP COUNTY'

Margo Lalich | Clatsop County's interim public health director

vaccines with the van," McClean said.

As for workplaces, McClean imagined a scenario where a large employer — a mill or cannery, say — has an employee who tests positive for tuberculosis. To investigate how many others contracted the disease, the Public Health Department would normally send out a team and convert that employer's lunchroom or other workspace into a clinic. With the van, the county could bring its own.

Recently, a company contacted the Public Health Department to

vaccinate their employees against hepatitis B. The company was looking to schedule appointments for more than a dozen people at the county's clinic on Exchange Street in Astoria. Getting everyone vaccinated at the clinic could take about two days. "This time we can just take the van out there and probably be done within an hour or two," McClean said.

A mobile clinic has long been on the department's wish list, Margo Lalich, the county's interim public health director, said at a recent Board of Commissioners work session. Mobile clinics are used widely by public health departments, including in Tillamook County.

"This is quite historic for Public Health in Clatsop County, and I think it's just a huge relief for us," Lalich said. "And it will be, I think, a relief for the community once they get more familiar with seeing us out on the streets."

# Johnson creates stir by calling Portland the 'City of Roaches'

Comment featured in New York Times morning newsletter

By COURTNEY VAUGHN

Oregon Capital Bureau

Former state Sen. Betsy Johnson has a new moniker for the state's most populous city: "the City of Roaches."

The independent candidate for governor made the comment to a New York Times editor, referring to Portland's battle with homelessness and crime.

Her statements appeared in a Tuesday newsletter that explored Oregon's political landscape as a barometer of potential Democratic losses nationwide. The newsletter included an interview with Johnson.

"You can see the deterioration of the beautiful City of Roses, now the City of Roaches," Johnson was quoted as saying, riffing on Portland's moniker.

Johnson is one of many candidates who has zeroed

in on Portland as an example of failed policies or action.

"Betsy made a quip about the city of Portland which resonates with a lot of people," Jennifer Sitton, Johnson's communications director, told Pamplin Media Group. "What Betsy has been saying for months is that Oregon cannot succeed if Portland fails and, as detailed in the NYT piece, only 8% of residents think that Portland is on the right track."

In a campaign speech on her website, Johnson accuses Gov. Kate Brown, Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler and Johnson's Democratic opponent, former state House Speaker Tina Kotek, of bridging the urban-rural divide by unifying Oregonians in "mutual frustration with their leaders and their government."

"Right now, Portland is failing," Johnson said. "I don't think any problem demonstrates the need better to change Oregon's politics than the failure to solve homelessness on our

streets."

She stressed getting unhoused people into shelters utilizing police, addiction treatment services and mental health services. "Democrats are right that we need compassion, services and housing," Johnson said in a campaign video. "But Republicans are also right that we need more personal responsibility, accountability, and no more tent cities."

But critics say Johnson's latest remark about Portland was callous, equating unhoused people with vermin that need to be cleaned up, rather than humans in crisis.

"Unfortunately her comments are very reminiscent and in some cases identical to comments we've heard that dehumanize whole sets of people," Marisa Zapata, director of Portland State University's Homelessness Research and Action Collaborative. "It goes beyond an oversimplification, but it completely erases their humanity. It's deeply upsetting to have somebody using

that language to describe people who are living their lives the best they can. It's especially upsetting to have someone who's been in a position of leadership in our state talk about future constituents this way."

Zapata noted that the term "cockroaches" has been used historically to demonize marginalized groups in society.

The city of Portland, along with economic and tourism groups, has been actively involved in campaigns to bring shoppers and tourists back to downtown and help businesses crippled by the pandemic and repeated vandalism.

They say Johnson's comments aren't helping.

"It's easy to articulate the challenges Portland is facing," Wheeler said. "We need a governor who will partner with us to help find solutions and fight for Portland — not disparage and write us off."

The Oregon Capital Bureau is a collaboration between EO Media Group and Pamplin Media Group.

# Code changes: Parking concerns echoed

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and high-density residential areas instead of conditional. Duplexes will be allowed everywhere single-family homes are allowed.

Cottage clusters, which usually have shared open space, would be permitted outright in residential and commercial zones.

Parking for homes would be calculated by the number of bedrooms, which would reduce parking requirements, but not significantly.

Other changes include removing the permit requirement for accessory dwelling units, reducing lot sizes and removing lot coverage requirements to make

adding accessory dwelling units more feasible. To prevent larger than typical homes from being built as a result of removing lot coverage requirements, a maximum lot size was added to the draft. Setbacks would guide the buildable land.

Planning commissioners were supportive of prohibiting homestay lodging in low-density residential areas and making it conditional in medium residential areas instead of permitted outright. Currently, homeowners in those areas can apply for licenses to rent bedrooms in their homes to tourists.

In commercial zones along the Columbia River

and Port of Astoria, hotels would be allowed under conditional use instead of permitted outright. The change would allow the public to have the opportunity to weigh in prior to a building permit being issued.

Commissioner Cindy Price said she was happy to see the restrictions on homestay lodging. She expressed concerns about narrow streets that already lack parking.

Commissioner Sean Fitzpatrick echoed the importance of parking.

"As a housing provider, I have noticed there are diverging trends," Fitzpatrick said. "Twenty years ago, my tenants averaged a

car and we had a few tenants that didn't have a car. Today, I have a large number of tenants that don't have a car and a large number of tenants that have multiple cars. So the need for ... off-street assigned parking is important."

Commissioner Brookley Henri said she felt torn on the issue of parking, but leaned toward the recommendation of reducing the requirement. Henri, who works for a civil engineering firm and landscape architect, noted that there is a belief that single-use vehicles will decline or get smaller.

"Although I realize that parking is important, I wish it wasn't," she said.

# Bears: Have also damaged young timber stands

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cans and wandered into people's backyards and on porches, was viewed as a human safety risk and euthanized, Michelle Dennehy, a communications coordinator at the Department of Fish and Wildlife, said.

Jason Badger, wildlife biologist at the department's Gold Beach office, has recorded 56 complaints so far this year.

The South Coast, Badger said, has had two livestock depredations this year. In one incident, a bear killed sheep. In another case, a bear destroyed a chicken coop and killed chickens.

Paul Atwood, wildlife

biologist for the department's Tillamook office, said the North Coast Wildlife District has logged 12 complaints so far this year, all related to garbage or public safety.

"We haven't had any livestock depredations reported so far this year, but we have talked to a number of folks concerned about chicken coops when they hear there's a bear in the area," he said.

Jason Kirchner, the department's mid-coast district wildlife biologist in Newport, said his office has received 27 complaints so far this year, 15 of those in June. He said bears have broken into about five chicken coops in his district.

"This year, it seems like

chicken coops are a hot commodity, so they're breaking into chicken coops, killing chickens and a couple ducks," he said.

Love, in Charleston, estimated Coos County is seeing bears cause problems in four to six different residential areas each week.

State biologists say bears have also damaged young timber stands.

According to the U.S. Forest Service, bears use their claws to strip bark from a tree, then feed on the sapwood, the newly formed outer wood, by scraping it from the heartwood, the older central wood, with their teeth.

In the Pacific Northwest, the Forest Service reports that

bears frequently peel the bark from Douglas firs, primarily immature smooth-barked trees ages 15 to 30. A single bear can strip as many as 70 trees per day.

Love said it's not completely clear why bears strip trees, but the activity appears to be "pretty prevalent this year," so it may be tied to hunger.

Although bear activity is high right now, state biologists say they are optimistic that when wild huckleberry and blackberry crops ripen in the coming weeks, it will draw bears inland and away from communities.

Ethan Myers of The Astorian contributed to this report.

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