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A lifeguard uses a scope to keep watch over swimmers in Cannon Beach.

Photos by Lydia Ely/The Astorian

In Cannon Beach, city partners with fire district to add lifeguards

Authorities work to close gaps

By NICOLE BALES
The Astorian

CANNON BEACH — After noticing more water rescues before and after the typical lifeguard season, the city and the Cannon Beach Rural Fire Protection District have partnered to provide additional coverage.

City lifeguards have typically started in mid-June and supervise the beach through Labor Day weekend.

Police Chief Jason Schermerhorn said the city usually has about 10 lifeguards each year, but most are teachers or students, who are forced to start later in the season. They also have to return to school toward the end of summer, creating another gap.

An intergovernmental agreement approved by the City Council in May allows fire district staff and volunteers to bookend the typical lifeguard season. It also allows the fire district's five lifeguards to fill shifts during the summer when needed.

Schermerhorn said there are usually two to four lifeguards on the beach seven days a week. Fire district personnel will be reimbursed an hourly rate for lifeguard services by the city.

"It's really just a win-win because water rescue ultimately falls under the fire department, so it's something that is good to include them on," he said. "I think we'll continue to build the team and work together, making it stronger, because it's not as easy to get any employees anymore."

Fire Chief Marc Reckmann said that after continuing to see emergencies in the water earlier in the season

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A lifeguard uses binoculars to keep watch over the shore.

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Jason Schermerhorn | Cannon Beach police chief

Housing authority improves rating

Agency had been flagged as 'troubled'

By NICOLE BALES
The Astorian

The Northwest Oregon Housing Authority has moved from "troubled" to a "standard performer" after working with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development on a corrective action plan since 2020.

The federal agency flagged the housing authority, which helps low-income people in Clatsop, Columbia and Tillamook counties, as "troubled" in January 2020 following an audit of the housing choice voucher program. The program, which is the housing authority's primary housing assistance, helps low-income families find rental housing.

The housing authority had received a score of 7 out of 100 in 2020 following an audit and on-site review. Housing authorities are deemed "troubled" if

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MORE INSIDE

Elevator at apartment complex for seniors still out • A6

Neighbor's quick action saves house

A frantic knocking during fire

By ALEXIS WEISEND
The Astorian

Richard Boman had settled down for a peaceful night of watching TV by the fireside in late June when he heard frantic knocking on his door in Uniontown.

On his doorstep was his neighbor, Richard Bates, who owns the Hume Avenue house from the 1986 movie "Short Circuit." He told Boman to evacuate. The roof was on fire.

Bates and his nephew, Xavier Womelsdors, leapt to action as Boman called 911. Equipped with fire extinguishers and fire training from his time in the U.S. Navy, Bates worked to tame the flames.

Fifteen minutes later, the fire was out. "He really saved my life, I think," Boman said, "And the house is still here because of him."

Bates and Womelsdors were pressure-washing Bates' deck when they noticed blacker-than-usual smoke pipping out of their neighbor's chimney. The fire had grown too hot and spread to the roof.

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Crime drama fan found second career with police

Peden managed administrative services

By ERICK BENGEL
The Astorian

Terri Peden, the administrative services manager at the Astoria Police Department, recently retired after more than 23 years.

Soon after joining the department in January 1999, she began to



wonder if she would stick around. Within weeks of her arrival, the department's computer system crashed, wiping out all digital case records.

"We had nothing," she remembered. "You couldn't call us up and ask us about anybody ... It was like we'd just started working."

Then, shortly before Valentine's

Day, a 7-year-old girl went missing. Her 16-year-old neighbor had kidnapped, sexually abused and strangled her and hid her body in his basement. Without records to review, police had trouble helping the FBI and local crime team.

Amid the homicide investigation, the department was training on a new phone system.

All of this with Y2K — the millennium bug — looming.

"I'd go home at night and I'd tell my husband, 'I don't know if I really made the right decision here. This is crazy. If this is the way it's

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Terri Peden worked at the Astoria Police Department for more than two decades.



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