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New pretrial release policy takes effect

Moves away from bail schedule

By ERICK BENDEL
The Astorian

A new Oregon law directs courts to take a more consistent approach when deciding which offenders should stay in jail before trial.

The law, which went into effect on Friday, replaces the state's bail schedule with pretrial release criteria tied to the seriousness of the charges and an offender's criminal history.

The goal is to have a standardized pretrial release program throughout the state and to move away from a system where an offender's release depends on how much money they have available, according to Julie Vredevelde, the trial court administrator at Clatsop County Circuit Court.

The changes were approved by the state Legislature and signed into law by Gov. Kate Brown last year. Oregon Supreme Court Chief Justice Martha Walters issued guidelines in June to help courts comply with the law.

Under these guidelines, offenders are sorted into one of three categories based on the nature of the charges and potential risk factors. Judge Dawn McIntosh, the presiding judge of the Clatsop County Circuit Court, signed an order establishing these categories for her judicial district.

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Contest emerges for mayor of Warrenton

Balensifer will face Newton

By ETHAN MYERS
The Astorian

WARRENTON — Mayor Henry Balensifer will face a challenge from City Commissioner Rick Newton in the November election.

Balensifer, a sales and marketing manager at JBT AeroTech, was first elected to the City Commission in 2012 and appointed mayor in 2017 to finish Mark Kujala's term. He won a four-year term as mayor the following year.

Newton, a former NAPA Auto Parts store owner, was elected to the City Commission in 2014. He will give up a chance at a third four-year term to campaign for mayor.

Balensifer noted the challenges the city has faced throughout the coronavirus pandemic and said his decision to run for reelection came down to support from the community and the desire to complete unfinished projects. He pointed to the progress of the Urban Renewal Agency and making development easier without sacrificing livability.

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County raises health and safety concerns about hotel pools

Several lodging facilities had more than one closure

By ABBEY McDONALD
The Astorian

When entering a hotel pool area, getting hit with an eye-watering chlorine smell is a sign that something may be off about the water. It's an issue common in Clatsop County.

As of mid-June, over half of the county's pool and spa inspections this year led to a closure after failing to meet state requirements for health and safety.

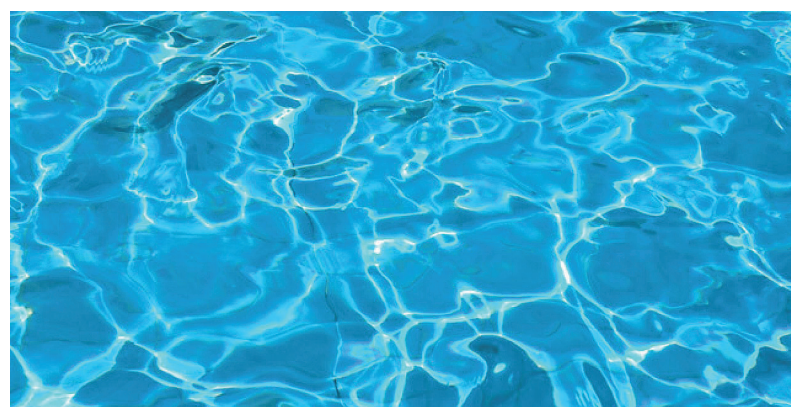
Water quality issues were the

most common reason, according to Meredith Reiley, an environmental health specialist with the county's food, pool and lodging program.

During an inspection, the county checks for water balance, which includes pH balance and chlorine or bromine levels. They also check that the equipment is functional and ensure the facility is frequently testing the water.

Without proper maintenance, unbalanced pools can cause eye and skin irritation and grow harmful bacteria.

"Our goal is more education than regulation, so we do give them the opportunity to correct the violations. Especially now, since we're coming out of the pandemic



Associated Press

As of mid-June, over half of the county's pool and spa inspections this year led to a closure after failing to meet state requirements for health and safety.

and the pools are opening up again, we have been working a lot more with the operators than we may in, quote, 'normal times,'" Reiley said.

When the water quality falls out of the acceptable range, the inspector will ask the operator to close the pool. It typically takes a few days to correct the water balance

and reopen.

"Sometimes it's a matter of an hour or so because the combined chlorine was a little high, but there had just been a whole volleyball team in the pool," she said. "They can usually fix that pretty quickly."

In some cases, however, businesses have had pools and spas closed repeatedly.

"This is an ongoing trend and too often we are dealing with repeat offenders. We closed the pool of one lodging business five out of the six times it was inspected during a two-month period earlier this year," Reiley said in a statement released by the county.

That business was the Red Lion Inn & Suites in Seaside, according to inspection reports obtained by

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'Transformative' donations



Lydia Ely/The Astorian

Welding helmets sit at work stations at the college.

Large donations enhance vocational education programs at college

By ETHAN MYERS
The Astorian

Courtesy of a former instructor and a museum that closed its doors, two large donations gifted to the welding and automotive programs at Clatsop Community College have boosted the courses and expanded scholarship opportunities for students.

In 2020, the World of Speed Museum, a motor sports attraction in Wilsonville, closed during the corona-

virus pandemic. The museum's assets were distributed to other museums and schools in the region, including over \$430,000 to the Clatsop Community College Foundation.

"It was transformative for the program and the students," Angee Hunt, the director of the foundation, said.

The foundation, formed in the 1960s, seeks to raise money for scholarships and help meet the needs of students.

Hunt sat down with the college, community stakeholders and the local

automotive industry to determine the best way to distribute the money.

In addition to new supplies and a full set of tools for each student to take into their automotive career, the money will fund six full scholarships each year.

Since the donation, the automotive program's enrollment has more than doubled in size. The funds were first put to use this past school year.

"A huge part of that is the World

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Lydia Ely/The Astorian

Cars used for instruction are housed at the college.

