

VACATION RENTALS

Challenges emerge to ballot title

Language criticized by both sides

By ERICK BENGEL
The Astorian

Supporters and opponents of a prospective ballot measure that could decide the fate of vacation rentals in unincorporated Clatsop County are petitioning to get the ballot title changed.

In June, the county Board of Commissioners passed an ordinance that makes vacation rentals of 30 or fewer days an outright use in 16 unincorporated zones, both commercial and residential, in the development code. About 180 units are already licensed to operate in unincorporated areas. The county currently has a moratorium on new licenses.

A referendum to repeal the ordinance is underway, which could lead to the disappearance of more than 100 vacation rentals as licenses expire, according to the county.

It is the latest move in a contest over who gets to enjoy the Oregon Coast, and where, and how. Short-term rentals offer getaways to tourists, who put money into the local economy and lodging tax revenue in county coffers. But some residents worry that the growth of the tourism industry is eroding the quality of life in their neighborhoods and straining the coastal environment.

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Port ends tie to CREST

A tide gate project among the concerns

By ETHAN MYERS
The Astorian

The Port of Astoria Commission has opted to end membership with the Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce.

Commissioners made the decision at a meeting in July, questioning the task force's service to the agency and citing the importance of how the Port uses resources. The membership cost the Port \$2,000 a year.

The commission revisited the topic on Tuesday after Commissioner Frank Spence, who also serves as chairman of the task force's board, requested they remain a member at \$500 a year. But no other commissioner supported the move, and the vote failed 4 to 1.

The Port is a founding member of the task force, which was developed in 1974. The organization's council of governments includes representatives from Clatsop County and several North Coast cities, along with Wahkiakum County and Ilwaco in Washington state.

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Photos by Lydia Ely/The Astorian

Amy Baker, the executive director of Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare, spoke at the ribbon-cutting ceremony Thursday for a new pharmacy.

Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare debuts new pharmacy

An important step in the agency's evolution

By NICOLE BALES
The Astorian

A new pharmacy designed for Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare has opened at the agency's rapid access center in Astoria.

Representatives from the agency and Genoa Healthcare, which operates the pharmacy, held a ribbon-cutting ceremony Thursday afternoon to mark the grand opening on Bond Street.

Amy Baker, the executive director of Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare, Clatsop County's mental health and substance abuse treatment provider, said the agency pursued the partnership because they needed more assistance, down to making sure their medications were bubble packed correctly.

She said that while it may seem small, it is important that people get the right number of medications at the right time. She said that because the pharmacy is integrated with the other services Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare provides, it helps provide more curated care.

Baker shared an example of a woman who is partially deaf and blind and takes various medications for her



Mohamed Khalil, the pharmacy site manager for Genoa Healthcare, cuts the ribbon for a new pharmacy for Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare.

physical and mental health.

Baker said the woman used to have to walk to different pharmacies to get her prescriptions filled. When Genoa Healthcare opened, she said the pharmacist tracked down all of the woman's doctors and pharmacies and got everything transferred. She said the pharmacist drove the medications to the woman's home and arranged to have them mailed to her going forward.

Baker likened Genoa Healthcare to Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare.

"Genoa is not just a pharmacy," she said. "They're a pharmacy with a heart. And that's the thing about CBH that I love about CBH. I think some of the most important work that we do — that I'm so proud of our staff — is we see people. We see them as human beings."

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Amy Baker | executive director of Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare

Bonamici hosts field hearing on climate change

Testimony on fishing and conservation

By ABBEY McDONALD
The Astorian

Witnesses at a congressional field hearing in Astoria on Wednesday described the impacts of climate change on the ecosystems and industries of the Columbia River and Pacific Ocean and asked Congress to take action.

U.S. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici hosted the hearing



Abbey McDonald/The Astorian

Members of the House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis came to Astoria on Wednesday to hear from climate experts.

of the House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis at Clatsop Community College's Patriot Hall. The Oregon Democrat, who represents the North Coast, was joined by U.S. Rep. Kathy

Castor, a Florida Democrat who chairs the committee, and U.S. Rep. Earl L. "Buddy" Carter, a Georgia Republican.

They heard from people working in fishing, research

and conservation.

"For all that was taken or lost, especially for Native Americans, our relationship to the land and water remains. And so our natural resources are our cultural and community resources," said Aja DeCoteau, the executive director of the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission.

She said climate change especially impacts First Foods, which include water, salmon, game, roots and berries.

Forty-two percent of the Snake River spring and summer Chinook populations have reached

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Columbia Senior Dinners to end meal gatherings

Home delivery program to continue

By ABBEY McDONALD
The Astorian

Columbia Senior Dinners, which serves low-cost lunches to seniors, will close at the end of the month.

For nearly 50 years, the nonprofit has provided seniors with a space to socialize over a meal on weekdays. Since the coronavirus pandemic, the service has had difficulty maintaining revenue.

The final plate will be served on Aug. 31, but the home delivery program will continue through a partnership with Northwest Senior and Disability Services.

The program's in-person dining served nearly 6,000 meals at the Astoria Senior Center in 2019.

Many of their diners switched to home delivery during the pandemic, said Becky Johnson, the program's board director. She said they've gone from serving up to 25 diners a day to around five.

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