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\$1.50



Bob and Cindy Magie restored the historic property off Exchange Street.

## Housing project gets boost

State approves money to expand Owens-Adair

By NICOLE BALES  
*The Astorian*

The Northwest Oregon Housing Authority was awarded key state funding for a project that will double the size of the Owens-Adair, an affordable housing complex for seniors and people with disabilities near downtown.

The state's Housing Stability Council on Friday approved \$1.9 million in low-income housing tax credits for the housing authority, advancing the project forward. The housing authority provides critical housing assistance to low-income residents in Clatsop, Columbia and Tillamook counties.

The new four-story, 50-unit apartment project called the Owens-Adair Annex will mirror the building on 15th

and Exchange streets. The \$22.6 million annex is expected to serve low-income seniors and people with disabilities earning 30% to 50% of the area median income.

Elissa Gertler, the executive director of the housing authority, said she is grateful the project was selected in the competitive funding process. She is appreciative of the state's understanding of the significant need for supportive housing in Clatsop County.

"We are excited to work with the community and with our development partners to bring 50 units of much-needed, deeply affordable housing for seniors to downtown Astoria, as recommended in the city's comprehensive plan," Gertler said in an email.

"NOHA is also very excited about our partnerships that will help us build and manage the Owens

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## At a historic property downtown, a tug of war over vacation rentals

A couple wants the city to recognize the conversion from long-term housing

By NICOLE BALES  
and ALEXIS WEISEND  
*The Astorian*

**W**hen Bob and Cindy Magie purchased a historic property near downtown in 2015 from the Lower Columbia Preservation Society, their goal was to restore and rent out the buildings.

Using 20 years of retirement savings as the down payment, the couple said they brought the two cottages and fourplex on Exchange Street, known as the Gilbaugh Apartments, back from the edge of falling apart.

Over time, the long-term housing transitioned into vacation rentals.

Earlier this year, after seeing a listing online, the city sent the Magies a letter notifying them that using the apartments for vacation rentals was in violation of the city's homestay lodging ordinance. The city ordered the couple to stop.

But the situation remains unclear.

The Magies maintain that the vacation rentals are legal and that the city has been inconsistent in communication. The city is still looking at the facts to determine whether the business is operating legally, but is also

concerned about the loss of residential housing units.

Having purchased the property with the intent of converting all the units into vacation rentals and already investing a significant amount of money into the restoration, the Magies are frustrated.

"This is not fair and feels like theft," the couple said in an email.

### 'Fairly complicated'

Astoria adopted a homestay lodging ordinance in 2018 that does not allow rooms to be rented as vacation rentals unless the owner lives on the property and obtains a license. The ordinance grew out of concerns about illegal short-term rentals and the market forces putting the city at risk of losing more of its limited housing stock to tourism.

Although the Magies property is in a commercial zone that allows hotels, the ordinance prevents structures occupied as residential housing after January 2019 from being used for vacation rentals. Structures that were originally constructed as residential housing also cannot be used for vacation rentals.

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## Disrespect helped drive resignations during pandemic

Survey examined worker perspectives

By ANNA DEL SAVIO  
*Oregon Capital Bureau*



More than a quarter of Oregonians have quit a job in the past two years, a new survey from the Oregon Values and Beliefs Center found.

Among Oregonians who quit their jobs, the most common reason why was that they felt disrespected at work.

Some Oregonians said the pandemic pushed issues with their employers — or with work — under a spotlight.

Shannon Richardson quit her job with the state after 11 years and moved to the nonprofit sector.

"It was like this period of upheaval was also a little bit of a reckoning,"

Richardson said. "I think we're all a little bit afraid to disrupt our daily lives, and then suddenly, our lives are disrupted for us and we see the possibility in that."

Richardson lives in Linn County with her partner and two children.

When the pandemic hit, Richardson felt her workplace didn't adequately respond to the need for increased flexibility, which "disproportionately impacted working parents and particularly working mothers."

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## 'I'm always a fan of the extra weird'

Commercial fisherman one of the 'bubble guys'

By ALEXIS WEISEND  
*The Astorian*

**O**n overcast days when the weather is just right, people walking downtown may come across gigantic bubbles dancing in the wind.

If they follow the trail of iridescent shapes back to the source, they'll likely find Gavin Lampert in a wacky costume letting a breeze catch onto the solution from his homemade wand.



Lampert is known around Astoria as one of the "bubble guys" because he likes to go out with his friend and "rip a few bubs" in his free time.

"It just brought me a lot of joy," he said. "I was having fun and then I started realizing how many other people it brought joy to."

He's been blowing bubbles since the beginning of the year. Astoria is an ideal place for his craft with its cloud coverage and frequent light breezes. If it's too hot or windy, the bubbles will burst.

The people are also more responsive to his bubble-blowing than people in other cities, Lampert said.

Despite only moving to Astoria this year, he said he's met a tremendous amount of people through a shared love of bubbles.

"I feel like it just cuts down on that social anxiety," he said. "It's like a way for somebody to walk up and start a conversation, you know. And so I feel like that helps a lot."

Lampert has bubbles down to a science. His homemade solution he calls "bubble sauce" is specifically formulated to create giant bubbles.

"It is a secret recipe," he said. "I can tell you the main ingredient is dish soap."

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Gavin Lampert blowing bubbles downtown.

