

Voters approve two tax measures

Both rural fire district tax measures were approved during Tuesday's special election.

Those in the Warrenton Rural Fire Protection District (outside city limits) approved the five-year local option tax for general operations by a vote of 190 to 90, or a 68 percent approval rating.

Those in the Gearhart Rural Fire Protection District (outside city limits) approved a similar five year tax by a margin of 310 to 226, or 58 percent of the vote.

The Warrenton measure is

Transit agency adds new route on east side of Astoria

Sunset Empire Transportation District has expanded weekend bus service in Astoria.

The new service, Route 13, began Oct. 26. It serves the east side of Astoria and operates from 9:55 a.m. until 3:51 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays.

The new route connects with the Pacific Connector Bus at Astoria Transit Center.

The district is excited to add services that are a direct result of the state's new trans-

ported to raise \$56,000 per year for five years beginning with the 2021-22 fiscal year. It replaces a tax set to expire June 30, 2021. Warrenton's rural district contracts with the city for fire protection and emergency medical services.

The Gearhart measure is expected to raise \$135,800 during its first fiscal year, 2020-21. Gearhart's rural district contracts with the city of Gearhart.

The two measures were the only items on the Nov. 5 ballot in Clatsop County.

sit tax, Executive Director Jeff Hazen said.

House Bill 2017 was passed in 2017 and all employees in the state began paying 1 cent per dollar earned into the fund through payroll taxes beginning July 1, 2018.

There will be additional service expansion projects in the future, thanks to the tax, Hazen said.

Route 13 schedules will be posted in shelters and are available on the district's website.

Local sex offender dies in prison

A Warrenton man sentenced in January for child sexual abuse has died in prison.

Carl Axel Hagnas, 70, was found dead Oct. 31 at the Snake River Correctional Institution in Ontario.

The cause remains under investigation, Oregon State Police Capt. Timothy Fox said Wednesday. OSP investigates all in-custody deaths.

A local handyman, Hagnas had faced 13 counts



Hagnas

when he pleaded no contest in January to two counts of sex abuse and one count of sodomy.

He was serving a six-year sentence.

Hagnas was arrested in 2017 for crimes that occurred in the 1990s and in 2015 against girls younger

than 14.

He had previous convictions for sex abuse in 1986 and for manufacturing and delivering a controlled substance in 1991.

City's new library director considers 'things'

Warrenton Community Library has a new director.

Kelly Knudsen, a former high school English teacher, took over the role of library director Monday. The current director, Nettie-Lee Calog, officially retires today, Nov. 8.

Knudsen, 44, earned a master's degree in library and information science from the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. Her bachelor's degree is in En-

glish. She moved to Oregon three years ago and was school librarian at David Douglas High School in Portland.

"I've always wanted to work in a public library and I love the ocean," she said of her new job.

"I really enjoy that it's like a community hub. ... It's got a homey feeling; it feels welcoming."

She'd like to develop more



Knudsen

classes for older adults, such as technology skills, and may do a survey to learn what the community wants from its public library.

She also may take a cue from Hillsboro, which has a "library of things" that people can check out, such as musical instruments, tortilla makers, and cotton candy machines.

Controlled burns part of wildfire prevention plan

Cool, rainy weather across much of the state has allowed the first controlled burns to be lit in parts of Oregon. New rules governing smoke may allow more burns than in the past.

Increasing burning will improve forest health and help landowners reduce the public safety risk from the buildup of fuels in forests, Oregon Department of Forestry officials said.

Known as prescribed fires, the regulated burns are lit when weather conditions help minimize smoke getting into smoke-sensitive receptor areas and major wilderness areas, such as Crater Lake National Park.

A prescribed burn had been scheduled this week near Sunset Beach south of Warrenton, but was cancelled when weather conditions shifted.

Of the 2,964 units burned in 2018, only 18 – about half of 1 percent – resulted in smoke entering a sensitive area, according to ODF records.

Although forest landowners with permits may burn in certain areas, fire season still may be in effect where the public lives or camps, so check first before lighting backyard debris piles or mak-

ing a campfire.

"The prescribed burns the public may see in coming weeks are done only when weather conditions are favorable for burning," said Nick Yonker, smoke management program manager. "We look to burn on days where air movement will disperse the smoke so public health is protected."

New rules implemented earlier this year require burners to stay within federal air quality standards for particulate matter from smoke.

But a small amount of smoke entering a sensitive area no longer is classified as an intrusion.

"The old standard used to be zero visible smoke in an SSRA," Yonker said. "This made it difficult to burn brush near populated areas, the very places where burning built-up woody fuels would improve public safety the most."

Last year, controlled fires were set on 185,702 acres out of Oregon's more than 30 million forested acres.

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