

## Schools work on making more kids successful

By CINDY YINGST  
The Columbia Press

A huge chunk of state money could be a game-changer for local students who come to school with distinct disadvantages.

The Warrenton-Hammond School District expects about \$860,000 more for the 2020-21 school year, thanks to the Student Success Act, which was approved by state lawmakers in the 2019 legislative session.

The corporate activity tax, which the state's largest businesses begin paying this year, will fund the program, funneling \$1 billion a year into school coffers statewide.

"In some ways, it is perceived as absolutely game-changing," Superintendent Tom Rogozinski said. "It allows us to do some good work if – IF – it is sustained. That's the X factor. We are guardedly optimistic. We are appreciative of the funding ... but we won't know until it runs through a few years here and passes the reality test."

So, while students are off campus, school administrators and others have remained busy working on student investment account plans. The school board approved the plan earlier this month.

The COVID-19 outbreak has left much up in the air and the district also must figure out a way to ensure seniors can graduate and other students can be promoted to the next grade level.

See 'Success' on Page 4

## Trailblazing:

## Warrenton gives tourists 24 hours to leave; other cities follow suit

By CINDY YINGST  
The Columbia Press

Warrenton was the first city on the coast to issue an edict to tourists: Get out of town or face arrest.

Saturday's unanimous vote by city commissioners was followed within hours or days by nearly every other coastal community in Oregon and Washington.

Warrenton city commissioners took the stance after thousands of people from elsewhere arrived in town for spring break. Many flocked to beaches and state parks, often disregarding calls to adhere to social distancing measures.

Soon, Oregon closed down its state parks, too. Initially, Gov. Kate Brown had issued the closure effective the evening of April 4, the end of spring break.

But she and other elected

representatives received thousands of pleas from coastal residents, demanding action immediately.

Mayor Henry Balensifer called Saturday's emergency meeting in which the commission first issued a state of emergency because of the COVID-19 outbreak and then ordering the closure within 24 hours of all campgrounds, hotels, and other lodging facilities in hopes of stopping the virus' spread, which could overtax the local rural health-care system.

"This is a serious event and it's also a major event," Balensifer said. "Our top priority is doing what we need to do for the best interest of our citizens."

Word spread quickly.

Since the vote, Balensifer has been interviewed by many news organizations.

See 'Orders' on Page 5



Staying 6 feet apart and with Pam Ackley checking in by phone, commissioners Tom Dyer, Rick Newton, Henry Balensifer and Mark Baldwin prepare to vote on the emergency resolution Saturday evening. (Cindy Yingst)

**Below:** The parking lot at Stub Stewart State Park near Vernonia was on overflow Saturday as were all coastal parks. (Courtesy Oregon State Parks)



## City Commission plans to finish what it's started

The Columbia Press

The city has vowed to finish what it started.

On Tuesday evening, city commissioners approved a list of goals for fiscal year 2020-21 and No. 1 on the list is "Finish city priorities/initiatives that have been started."

City commissioners Rick Newton and Pam Ackley attended the meeting by phone while Mayor Henry Balensifer and commissioners Tom Dyer and Mark Baldwin kept a required 6-foot social distance. The City Commission meeting was broadcast live

on Facebook for the first time and members of the public wishing to comment on the goals and other agenda items were given an opportunity by phoning in.

"These may end up being flexed a bit," Balensifer said. "We don't know where the light is at the end of this tunnel, but I believe we ought to have a plan before us."

The three other goals are:

- Identify and accelerate Urban Renewal Agency projects.

- Identify areas of the city that lack infrastructure, and align develop-

ment requirements and, potentially, Capital Improvement Plan investments to address them.

- Improve existing services. This could include reviewing organizational memberships to justify why the city should or shouldn't continue paying dues, and looking at revenue opportunities.

Priorities the city wants to finish are spelled out more fully in the goals list. It includes:

Recommendations made by two committees – downtown/thorough-

See 'Goals' on Page 2