

**Business and
development tidbits**
MIDDLE SCHOOL

Furniture will be ordered for Warrenton's new middle school in less than 45 days. Construction is *that* far along.

Project Manager Scott Rose reported during Wednesday night's school board meeting that all steel construction is complete, the second-floor slab has been poured, they've begun roofing work and 25 percent of the exterior wall framing is complete. Drywall installation should be complete by Feb. 1.

The school is "still on target" for completion by late July with the site ready for students in the fall.

NEW GEARHART TRAIL

The Ridge Path is under construction in Gearhart. It's a new trail being built by volunteers and paid for by donations.

The path begins on the right side of City Hall, 698 Pacific Way, and passes through several neighborhoods. Walkers will find Sitka spruce, western hemlock, salal, shore pine, and pink honeysuckle. A loop back to City Hall passes along the golf course and the Necanicum Estuary.



City of Gearhart

Volunteers work on the Ridge Path.

Clatsop sees its fourth death from coronavirus

The Columbia Press

Clatsop County had its fourth COVID-related death this week and also returns to the state's "extreme risk" category on Friday, Jan. 15.

The county's fourth death was an 85-year-old Clatsop County man first diagnosed Dec. 3. He died Dec. 31 at Legacy Meridian Park Medical Center in Tualatin.

The county's redesignation as "extreme" means additional restrictions on businesses and social events. The county had been downgraded from "extreme risk" to "high risk" on Jan. 1, but increased cases during the two-week period meant a return to the more restrictive class.

Restrictions again have been placed on bars, restaurants, gyms, theaters, conference centers, and nursing homes.

The declaration by Gov. Kate Brown is based on the county's case count per 100,000 people. There were 103 cases from Dec. 27 to Jan. 9, putting the county's "metrics" above 200 cases per 100,000 population.

While in the extreme risk category, restaurants and bars are allowed no indoor dining or drinking, although outdoor dining is allowed. All indoor recreation and entertainment establishments are closed. No indoor visitation is allowed at long-term care facilities.

There had been 35 cases recorded in Clatsop County during the previous seven days that ended Wednesday.

Since the first case in March, the county has had 660 people contract the virus. Eleven people have been hospitalized. The rest have recovered or are recovering.

Statewide, there have been 129,109 cases and 1,708 deaths attributed to coronavirus.

PANDEMIC FRAUD

Two Oregon men face federal charges after they alleged-



Heather Bashor/Oregon Military Dept.

Oregon National Guard Spc. Toby SeWell vaccinates a Salem resident at the Oregon State Fairgrounds on Wednesday.

ly converted small business COVID-19 relief funds into their personal use.

Andrew Aaron Lloyd, 50, of Lebanon and Russell A. Schort, 38, of Myrtle Creek were charged by the U.S. Attorney's Office on Jan. 7 with wire fraud, bank fraud and money laundering.

They're accused of filing false applications to receive \$2.2 million in Paycheck Protection Program funds and Economic Injury Disaster Loans using three separate bogus businesses.

The loan application packages included some of the same information across the different business entities, including physical locations and the names of several dozen employees.

After receiving the funds, Lloyd transferred at least \$1.8 million to a personal online brokerage account and purchased various securities. In the months that followed, the investments increased to \$10 million. Anyone with information about attempted fraud in-

volving COVID-19 should report it to the Department of Justice hotline at 866-720-5721.

VACCINES FOR VETS

Veterans age 75 and older should soon receive a phone call from Veterans Administration staff to schedule COVID-19 vaccinations.

Currently, operators and staff will not be able to schedule veterans who call in for a vaccination, so be sure to take phone calls coming from the VA.

The VA encourages people to check for vaccine information online at portland.va.gov or by calling a recorded information line at 503-220-3434.

FITNESS CENTER FINED

Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Administration has fined a Salem fitness center \$126,749 for willfully continuing to expose employees to coronavirus disease despite a public health order to limit capacity.

The fine was the result of

an inspection launched in response to multiple complaints against Capitol Racquet Sports on Commercial Street.

It is the largest penalty issued to an employer by Oregon OSHA for a violation related to COVID-19. The division cited the violation as "willful" and, at the discretion of the administrator, imposed the maximum penalty allowed.

SEND IN THE GUARD

The Oregon National Guard is helping distribute vaccinations to residents.

On Jan. 12, 40 medical personnel who are guard members were activated by the governor to assist the state in distributing vaccines at the Oregon State Fairgrounds in Salem.

The state had vaccinated 120,000 people as of Wednesday.

Help from the National Guard was initiated through a plan developed by Salem Health Hospitals and Clinics.

Use of the State Fairgrounds as an alternative hospital location was established at the beginning of the coronavirus outbreak.

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