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COVID rules change Saturday at schools, jobs

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New protocols for dealing with COVID begin in local school districts, businesses, and other indoor places throughout the state after today.

Last week, the Oregon Health Authority and the Oregon Department of Education announced that mandatory masking will be lifted at the end of day March 11. Requirements for schools to contact trace and quarantine close contacts of positive cases also comes to an end.

Warrenton-Hammond School District polled employees and parents on Feb. 28, asking them whether they preferred to continue with a mask mandate or to make masks optional. More than 79 percent of parents and 67 percent of staff preferred to make masks optional, according to the district.

“As such, starting Monday, March 14, it will be optional for students, staff, volunteers, and visitors to wear masks in district schools and offices and on district school buses. Contact

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Redefining the district of Hammond

BY CINDY YINGST

The Columbia Press



Left: The large sign that will stand at the entrance to downtown Hammond.

Below: The grassy strip that separates Pacific Drive from Sixth Street and defines the downtown area, looking east from Lake Drive.

Cindy Yingst
The Columbia Press



Hammond is a distinct place with a history worth preserving, most would agree.

Others, particularly those who live there, would like the city of Warrenton to do more to help it prosper.

“I love Hammond. It’s just a very small, quaint town,” said Cheryl Hitchman, who was Hammond’s final mayor before the

small city dissolved and became a part of Warrenton in 1991. “When I was mayor was when it was probably the craziest time because of the merge and they were also looking at putting in a resort (at the marina) and nobody wanted that.”

Hammond was incorporated as New Astoria in 1899 and, in 1915, residents voted to change the name to Hammond to align with the name of its railroad station and post office. Andrew Hammond was a Montana businessman who platted the town and expanded the railroad from Portland to the area in 1898.

But 85 years later, it became clear that the small town could no longer support itself.

“The merge was a good thing for Hammond. We couldn’t afford the billings anymore,” Hitchman said. “The biggest concern at the merge was that Hammond would lose its identity and Warrenton promised to take

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