



When a tsunami hits, do you know where to go?



DANI PALMER/CANNON BEACH GAZETTE

Race the Wave participants began at NeCus' Park and ended at the Elk Creek Road emergency cache site in Cannon Beach. Wearing their city of Cannon Beach shirts, Daniel Willyard, with the Water Department, left, and City Manager Brant Kucera run along the beach, other runners not far behind them.

Race the Wave annual event tests tsunami preparedness

By Dani Palmer
Cannon Beach Gazette

If disaster strikes in Cannon Beach, residents are advised to run for the hills. They got some practice Sunday, Sept. 13, at the city's second annual Race the Wave, a 5K and 10K tsunami preparedness run and walk.

"It's a beautiful state we live in, but there's definitely a hazard level," Oregon Office of Emergency Management Director Andrew Phelps said.

In the event of a megathrust quake, scientists estimate Cannon Beach residents will have only about 15 minutes before a tsunami follows.

"Knowing the evacuation route is pretty much the simplest thing you can do to be prepared," Ali Ryan Hansen, earth science information officer for the Department of Geological and Mineral Industries, said. "You've gotta practice, gotta make that muscle memory."

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DANI PALMER/CANNON BEACH GAZETTE

Cannon Beach residents Julie Sackett, left, and Marlene Reynolds check out a city evacuation map during the Emergency Preparedness Fair following Race the Wave.

Teachers don't like Cannon Beach Academy plan

By Dani Palmer
Cannon Beach Gazette

Teachers with Seaside School District 10 took the opportunity to stand and speak against a proposed charter school in Cannon Beach during a public hearing on Tuesday, Sept. 15. In a reversal of the Aug. 18 hearing, the majority of those who testified, including parents, opposed the school.

"It isn't an 'us vs. them,'" parent Michelle Wunderlich said. "I'm not against the charter school. I'm just very much for a strong district for everyone."

She said the charter would take away financially from the district. "It's affecting the whole pie too much for such a small piece," Wunderlich added.

Chuck Albright, a third-grade teacher at Gearhart Elementary School, echoed Wunderlich's sentiments. He said all students need an "excellent education" and the wants of 75 students should not be placed ahead of the needs of 1,500.

He added that there'd be diminished quality in the district regardless of the teachers' skills.

Without incentives, Gearhart fourth-grade teacher Sena Bergquist said she doesn't see how Cannon Beach Academy would attract the same high caliber teachers. And with the loss

of up to 85 students, she's also concerned about how funding cuts would "negatively affect" the other schools.

Cannon Beach Academy Board of Directors President Ryan Hull said he sees a reduction in class sizes as a benefit for Seaside schools.

After the meeting he said the district would receive 20 percent of what the charter would get per student from the state if it sponsors the academy.

Seaside Union President John Meyer handed over a list of 11 points against the charter school signed by a dozen people, the majority of whom were district teachers. Meyer said he is not comfortable with the academy's curriculum and would only be OK with a school in Cannon Beach if it managed by the district.

A sense of belonging

Hull said Cannon Beach Academy wants to be a part of the district. If the school district supports the academy rather than the state, he added, there would be "set checks and balances." The academy would have to give annual reports and could be closed if it doesn't meet measurable goals.

"We're part of the district still," he said. "We're not an outside entity, but we are different."

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CANNABIS IN CANNON BEACH

Councilors seek to serve 'will of people'

By Dani Palmer
Cannon Beach Gazette

The Cannon Beach City Council laid it out to voters: write an ordinance regulating marijuana dispensaries or hold a vote in November 2016 giving voters the chance to opt out of sales.

During the Sept. 8 work session earlier this month, no decisions were made, but the council seemed to lean toward an ordinance by the end of the night.

"This is something the majority of our residents have voted for," Council President Melissa Cadwalader said. "I want to see us as a council try to do what we can to make the retail not necessarily easier, but something that fits our community."

Councilor Mike Benefield said a vote in 2016

would give residents "another chance to voice their opinion," but noted a ballot would take time and money.

Cannon Beach's business license ordinance currently requires businesses to abide by local, state and federal law, prohibiting marijuana dispensaries. Medical and recreational marijuana is now legal in Oregon, but still considered a controlled substance by the federal government.

By relying on the current ordinances alone, the city could be at risk of being sued, city attorney Tammy Herdener said.

Other municipalities have been sued over similar ordinances and while the cities have prevailed at a lower court level,

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Pollution readings concern watershed council

By Dani Palmer
Cannon Beach Gazette

With historically high bacteria readings, the Ecola Creek Watershed Council and Surfrider Foundation believe something may be wrong with Cannon Beach's wastewater infrastructure. The cause, however, is uncertain. Are high readings a result of failing systems, human activity, storms or something else?

Field coordinator for Surfrider's Blue Water Task Force Ryan Cruse appeared before the City Council Sept. 8. He and others asked the city to conduct a complete review to study potential flaws in sewage and wastewater systems.

The Surfrider Foundation has documented a history of sporadic high readings, mainly at Gower Street and Chisana Creek.

On Aug. 29, Surfrider measured 518 organisms per 100 milliliters in the ocean near Gower Street, well above the 158 organisms per 100 milliliters threshold considered safe under the Oregon Beach Monitoring Program, run through the Oregon Health Authority.

High measurements of E. coli in fresh water and enterococcus in marine water are indicators of the possible presence of fecal matter and a potential health hazard.

Watershed Council Chairman Mike Manzulli said the city's beaches have some of the highest pollution readings in Oregon.

In 2013, 12 percent of Cannon Beach's results exceeded the national Beach Action Value safety threshold, according to the Natural Resources Defense

Council. Sunset Bay State Park in Coos County was the worst, with 35 percent of its results exceeding the health threshold.

Manzulli noted two recurring themes: high readings at the Gower Street and Chisana Creek outfalls, and "city denial" of potential infrastructure problems. He said a Cannon Beach 2012 study suggested the need for infrastructure testing, but to his knowledge, the testing never happened. "The city does not know the source of all the contamination," he said, adding Cannon Beach needs to investigate further.

Public Works Director Dan Grassick countered that the city did take steps to find solutions for the high readings. No health issues were determined, he said.

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Hannah Moore with the Oregon Beach Monitoring Program tested ocean water near Gower Street in Cannon Beach.

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