



Jessica Smith is led into the Clatsop County Courthouse for a hearing in January.

County mental health to evaluate Smith

By Kyle Spurr
EO Media Group

A local mental health provider is getting the first opportunity to determine if Clatsop County has the expertise available to evaluate the mental state of accused murderer Jessica Smith.

Smith, 42, is the mother charged with drugging and drowning her toddler and attempting to kill her teenager in a Cannon Beach resort in July 2014.

Her defense lawyers claim Smith suffers from a mental disease and is unable to aid and assist in her own defense. They asked the court for a competency examination of Smith and then a determination of her fitness to proceed.

Clatsop County Circuit Court Judge Cindee Matyas ordered Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare, the county's mental health provider, to consult

with Smith in late January to determine whether services and supervision are available in the community to safely restore Smith's fitness to proceed.

Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare must provide a written report to the court with its determination. An official with the mental health provider could not be reached for comment Wednesday.

The court order stems from a state law that gives criminal defendants the opportunity to be evaluated locally by a community mental health program before a decision is made on sending them to the Oregon State Hospital.

The defense and prosecution each submitted four recommendations for other mental health experts to examine Smith. A status hearing to address the results of Smith's evaluation — whether from a local, private or state expert — is set for late March.

Hope fades in search for missing man

Resources 'exhausted,' Police Chief says

By Lyra Fontaine
Cannon Beach Gazette

After five days of a search that brought in crews throughout the state, responders announced they will curtail major search efforts in Cannon Beach for Raymond Hickman. The 87-year-old Haystack Heights man was reported missing Saturday morning, Jan. 30.

"As the fourth day ends, we've exhausted all different outlets that we could go to and that we could access, as well as just exhausted our resources," Chief Jason Schermerhorn said at the Tuesday, Feb. 2, Cannon Beach City Council meeting.

Throughout the week, rescue teams from Clatsop County, Washington County, Tillamook County, Multnomah County, Clackamas County and Mountain Wave Search and Rescue scoured the coastline, highways and trails.

About 75 people helped with the search, using four-wheel drive vehicles, horses, and a drone from a Hamlet resident that flew over areas they couldn't access and took photos that were extensively reviewed, Schermerhorn said.

The search teams responded to tips from people who had seen Hickman recently.

"It's just really unfortunate because it's so heavily forested and green, which we love down here," Schermerhorn said. "But it's hard to find different areas where he could have slid off the track or path."

Described as 5-feet-9-inches tall, bald, blue eyes and wearing glasses, family members said the 87-year-old

Hickman may have memory issues.

Schermerhorn said he met with the Hickman family before making a decision.

"They understand the possibilities of what could have happened, but the difficult part is that they want some sort of closure," Schermerhorn said. "The family was very thankful for the responses they got. They never expected it to turn into something like this."

"I'd like to comment on the alert system and the number of calls I got both on my cell and my landline," City Councilor Melissa Cadwallader said. "It's reassuring to know how much that's working."

"It's a great warning system," Schermerhorn said. "We are very thankful for the search and rescue. It was an amazing collaboration working with the Coast Guard and the Fire Department."

The Coast Guard flew over the Cannon Beach area looking to detect heat on Saturday and Sunday. They flew two miles in each direction and were unable to find anything. The first night, they finished early due to weather.

The fire station and the family are "overloaded" with food donations, Schermerhorn said.

"Cannon Beach is a great community," he added. "I have found time and time again that people step up and help out during these tough times for families."

The Police Department will continue to search as they patrol, Schermerhorn said, and encourage people to contact them if they have any information.

"It's been great, the community support and neighbors and friends who have come to help," Schermerhorn said.

"I'd like to comment on the alert system and the number of calls I got both on my cell and my landline,"



Raymond Hickman

It is difficult to search for a person in a large, heavily forested area, he added. "I'd like to comment on the alert system and the number of calls I got both on my cell and my landline," Melissa Cadwallader said. "It's reassuring to know how much that's working."

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Rescue teams received food donations from citizens and local restaurants including Morris's Fireside, Pizzeria Hut in Seaside, Subway in Seaside, Mo's Cannon Beach Restaurant, Cannon Beach Hardware, Tom's Fish and Chips and Cannon Beach Pig 'N Pancake, among others.

Anyone with information about the missing man should contact Clatsop County Search and Rescue at 503-440-2650 or Cannon Beach Police at 503-436-2811.

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