

# How a new home page reaches around the world

I joked at a recent Seaside Downtown Development Association breakfast meeting that I was starting to sound like a broken record with some of my reports. It's not that I've been repeating myself, rather that I've been sharing updates on the same topic. And that topic has been a very important one for the City of Seaside Visitors Bureau.

As I discussed in my December column, the Visitors Bureau is working through a complete rebranding of our communication materials (logos, print ads, web ads, business cards, etc.). Currently, our website has been the priority. In some ways it's become like moving into a new house. When you move into a new home, you are suddenly faced with empty rooms. Sometimes it's obvious where the furniture is going to be placed, while in some rooms it's not so clear. You might need to try the couch against the window before you realize it's better against that wall over there. A new home is also the opportunity for a fresh start.

In a lot of ways, the Visitors Bureau is going through some of those same options, only all of our furniture is brand new. Enter our new website. Earlier this week we unveiled this brand new information source (seasideOR.com) and touch point that reach-

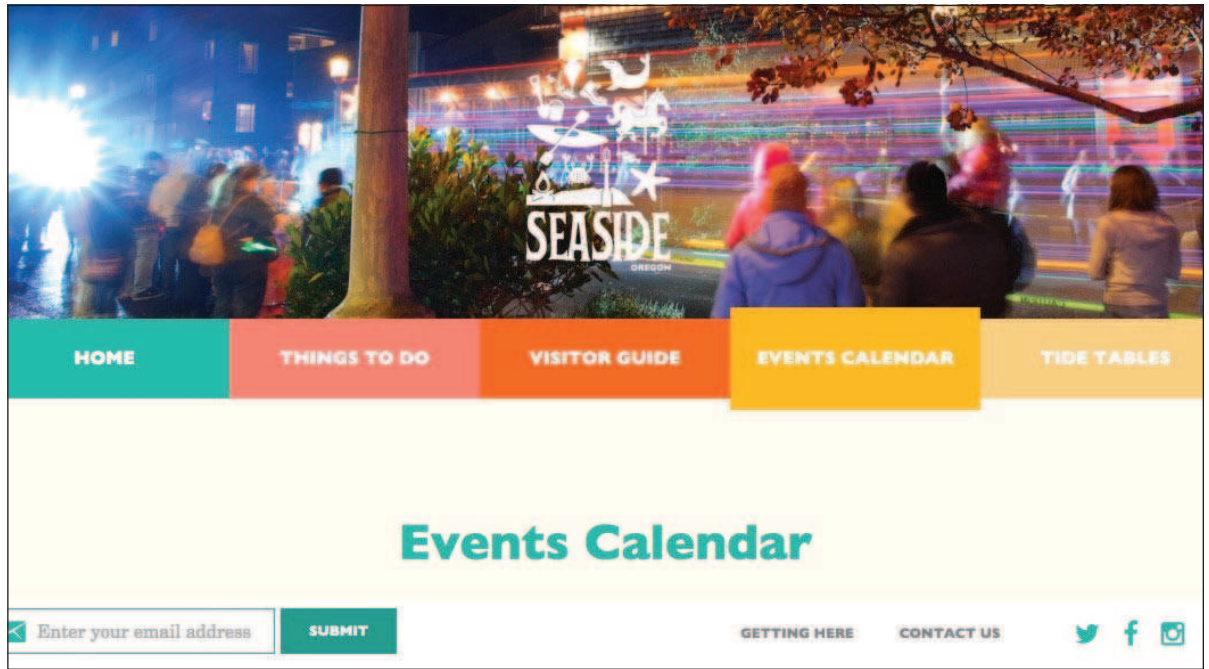
**SIDE RAIL**  
JOHN RAHL



es more people annually than any single advertisement or Seaside Visitor Guide does. For example, we print 100,000 copies of our Visitor Guide, but our website had 311,000 unique visitors in 2015. Our website is an extremely important asset.

When the rebranding was taking shape last fall, we put into motion the plans to start anew with our website. We did a request for proposals and decided for the direction we were heading that a small digital agency, WELD, would be the best fit for us. So now what? Using a newer philosophy for building websites, we based everything around the principals of growth-driven design. There are great articles on this process, but I'll try and make it simple. Rather than building this big elaborate website at the onset, you shorten up your time to launch the website. You do not build everything all at once but build enough for launch that your site accomplishes key priorities.

To do this, we analyzed the traffic to our current website over the past 12-24 months. What we



The "Events Calendar" of the new Seaside website.

learned was that 80% of our visitors focused most of their time on about 15-20 percent of our content. This critical content would become the basis of our launch site. If you visit our site today, you'll see there are just five categories: our home page, things to do, an event calendar, tide tables and our visitor guide. That's it. It's thoughtfully put together with the things that visitors have told us with their clicks that they want

more than anything else.

Don't worry, the website is still a work in progress. This is just phase one. Phase two will include incorporating all of our business listings, historical information, and a blog. Generally speaking, we move into a house and want that bed, couch, microwave and maybe a TV in place. Next comes all the other stuff. It's the same for the website. We'll now begin the decorating process and like al-

ways, I'll keep you posted on the progress.

*Have a thought or a question about tourism in Seaside, or maybe an idea for a future column? Drop me an email at [jrahl@cityofseaside.us](mailto:jrahl@cityofseaside.us). Jon Rahl is the director of tourism for the Seaside Visitors Bureau and assistant general manager of the Seaside Civic & Convention Center.*

## New sales rep was inspired by a mentor

**Stewart is longtime Seaside resident**

By R.J. Marx  
Seaside Signal



Brandy Stewart

Brandy Stewart likes her new commute — about two minutes from her home in Seaside. But don't expect Stewart to remain stuck at her desk. The new South County sales rep for the Signal plans to make her rounds in getting to know the community better.

Stewart moved with her family to Clatsop County from Utah when she was 12. The 20-year Seaside resident graduated from Astoria High School and took her first job as a receptionist at Seaside Providence Hospital.

"I was there for 11 years," Stewart said, working in the hospital's admissions department, as an emergency room technician and physician's assistant.

Stewart later worked part-time as a bookkeeper before applying for a part-time job in the Signal's South County office in January 2009.

"The first person I met was Wendy Richardson," Stewart said, referring to her predecessor, who died in December. "We hit it off just like that."

In May 2009 Stewart was transferred to the Daily Astorian office, where she worked in the accounting department before becoming a sales representative in 2010. "I worked with all the auto dealers in the area, as well as in Longview, Washington," Stewart said.

"I managed the Warrenton sales area, and bits and pieces of Astoria."

Among her achievements is "Everything Auto," a sales guide going into its third year.

Stewart said she's worked on "all aspects" of ad projects. "I integrated the tax pages, the Cinco de Mayo pages — but I've been a key player in everything we do."

Stewart went under "Wendy Richardson's wing," and learned to develop a "more business and professional side."

"I was shy," Stewart said. "The biggest thing I learned from Wendy is when you conduct business it's all about cultivating relationships and caring about the outcome."

Stewart's son, Derek, 13, starts high school in the fall.

Her husband of 13 years, Brian, 41, works for Reed and Hertig Packing Co.

Stewart said her goal as South County Sales Representative is to "get integrated with the Seaside community and become a valuable resource for the area's businesses and their marketing needs."

## New branch of Seaside's STUFF focuses on used clothes and more

By Katherine Lacaze  
Seaside Signal

The owners of Seaside's STUFF have expanded their presence in town by opening a second store with a similar theme, called Seaside's Clothes & STUFF.

The store, located on South Roosevelt Drive, opened in September 2015. The stores are owned by Valerie Watson and her son, Tim Meyer.

Watson's brother, Daniel Osborn, runs Seaside's STUFF; Watson manages the new store; and Meyer is the buyer, who goes to storage auctions, estate sales and other venues throughout the state, stocking a warehouse with items. He does "all the wheeling and dealing," said Watson. She grew up Clatskanie and moved back to the area more than four years ago.

Seaside's STUFF opened in 2014. The store did well, but soon grew a little short of space. The owners were "donating so many clothes to Goodwill," Watson said, because they did not have room to display them all. Without

space to expand Seaside's STUFF in its current building, the family decided to open a new location to fit in the used-clothing niche, Watson said.

The new store features mainly clothes and other personal accessories, such as handbags, belts, scarves, jewelry and shoes. Brands include some that are upscale, like Gucci, Coach, GUESS and Michael Kors — nice products "at reasonable prices," Watson said.

Tops run about \$5, purses are \$5, used belts are \$2 and there is a \$1 rack. People who bring in items can trade them for store credit.

Watson said they try to bring in new products every week, since several of their patrons return often to check for new deliveries. If an item doesn't sell after a few weeks, Meyer will return it to the warehouse, sell it on the Internet or donate it. With all the leftover items they still generate, Watson said she would like to see someone set up a community clothing bank, where those in need could get the clothes for free.



Valerie Watson

Both stores have Facebook pages that are updated with new products as they

arrive. To contact Seaside's Clothes & STUFF, call 971-704-4163.

## Join the 'Better Breather's Club' at Providence Seaside

Providence Seaside Hospital, in conjunction with the American Lung Association, is offering a monthly Better Breathers Club to senior members of the community who have difficulty breathing. Attendees will meet in the education center of the hospital from 1:30 to 3 p.m. There is no charge

to attend, but registration is encouraged.

These sessions will provide an opportunity to learn ways to cope with COPD, asthma, pulmonary fibrosis and other respiratory issues while getting the support of others who share the same struggles.

The Better Breathers

Club's monthly meetings will feature educational presentations on a variety of relevant topics including breathing techniques, exercise, medications, home healthcare, lung transplants, pollution, smoking and more. Caregivers are also welcome to attend all meetings.

Monthly meetings for 2016 will be held Feb. 11, March 10, April 14, May 12, June 9, July 14, Aug. 11, Sept. 8, Oct. 13, Nov. 10 and Dec. 8.

To register for one or more sessions, call 800-562-8964. Providence Seaside Hospital is located at 725 S. Wahanna Road.

### School changes

There are some things I would change about Broadway Middle School in Seaside. I would allow students to use their cell phones in class, and a longer passing period time between classes, and have longer lunches.

First, I think students should be allowed to use their cell phones in class. If students need help spelling a word they don't know, they will be able to use their cell phones. Also if students needed the definition of a word, a cell phone would be good. Another thing is if students need to research information, the students can use their cell phones.

Second, I think students should have a longer passing period time between classes, because if some students can't open their lockers, they won't be late if they had more time. Also, if students need to go to the

bathroom they won't be late to their class. Another thing is if students drop their stuff, and pick up their papers and spirals, they won't be late to their class.

Finally, I think school lunches should be longer. Students who are in last in line don't have much to eat. Also, if you're last in line you don't get what you want to eat. Another thing is to have a longer recess. It should be like an hour.

As you see, I would make some changes to the school. I would allow students to use their cell phones in class, have a longer passing period time, and have a longer lunch time.

**Ezequiel Lopez-Mota Seaside**

### Time to raise minimum wage

My family and I have lived in Seaside for five years. I have watched our communi-

ty grow and change, and I've also watched it fall behind.

My husband is 63 years old, yet has struggled to find work that will pay him a decent wage, even though he had a long career as a manager. He now makes just \$12 an hour as a maintenance man, and I am on disability, so our small family struggles. And, we aren't alone.

There are people in our community who work full time, but can't afford to pay their rent on time. There are

parents who skip a meal or two so that their kids don't go hungry. There are people who don't get essential medical care because they can't afford it.

Out here in the "seasonal communities" that rely on tourism, it's not just worrying about how much you'll get paid, but whether there will be a job for you year-round. Almost everyone I know has two jobs, just to make ends meet.

Yes, Seaside isn't Portland. But, it's not as simple

as that. Because our community relies so heavily on the service industry and retail jobs, many people — like my husband — are forced to take jobs well below their experience or skill level. If they were paid better, even just a few

dollars more an hour, they would be able to feel the dignity of providing for their family after a hard day's work.

It's far past time to raise the minimum wage.

**Dawn Greenfield Seaside**

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