

# Gearhart sees late boost in vacation rental applications

## Clock runs out for short-term rental owners

By R.J. Marx  
Seaside Signal

The one-time chance for vacation rental permit applications ended Friday, Dec. 16, with an upsurge.

In early December, the city reported 43 applications, short of the city’s estimates. In two weeks that number has almost doubled.

“It’s a little bit of a moving target, but I think we’ll end up with about 84,” City Administrator Chad Sweet said Tuesday.

The city’s new ordinance regulating vacation rentals limited applications to homeowners who can prove they have rented out their homes by paying the lodging tax to



R.J. MARX/SEASIDE SIGNAL

**Gearhart City Administrator Chad Sweet reviews applications for short-term rental permits.**

the city prior to submitting the application.

Of the applications coming in, most if not all are “pretty thorough,” Sweet said.

“We had one inspection with a window that was too high so people couldn’t get out, that was easily corrected with a ladder system,” he said. “We’re asking for basic safety: egress windows, so people can escape from a bedroom; smoke detectors; tsunami information.”

## Appeals, initiative

While city officials consider the application period over, some property owners hope to repeal or alter the rules for short-term rentals.

Two state Land Use Board of Appeals cases are pending, and opponents of the new rules have indicated they will propose an initiative to change aspects of the ordinance.

With a new mayor, Matt Brown, property owner David Townsend said he and

others may seek to make the ordinance “more user-friendly.”

He said he is particularly concerned about occupancy limits and permit transfer restrictions. “The rules are a bit Draconian,” he said.

“Personally, I hope the City Council will take a hard look at the net effect of fewer rentals and its economic impact,” added property owner Jim Whittemore, one of those participating in the state board appeal.

Whittemore said compromise can be reached on occupancy limits, biannual septic inspections and permit transfer during a property sale.

“All we have to do is sit down and work out a reasonable and equitable solution,” Whittemore said. “Too much time, effort and money has been spent on a nonissue.”

## Review period

Sweet said the rules represent the recommendations of both the Planning Commission and the City Council over a multiyear review and public comment period.

Property owners may still rent their properties during the permit review.

“We need to get through this process,” Sweet said. “But as of the middle of June, everything will need to be complete and the permits will have to be perfected so we can hold people accountable who are renting without them.”

The city’s review process, conducted by Building Official Mark Brien, takes 30 days. Homeowners have six months to bring their properties up to code.

Applicants must pay a \$500 application fee, a \$125

dwelling inspection fee and a fee of \$50 if more than one inspection is necessary.

After a vacation rental dwelling is found to meet the city’s requirements, the city will issue a permit to be posted within 4 feet of the front entrance of the home.

Property owners who have not applied for a permit and continue to rent will be in violation of Gearhart’s zoning ordinance and subject to a \$500 fine for each day of offense.

If a Gearhart property owner came in today and tried to file a short-term rental permit application, would they be considered?

“No,” Sweet said. “Dec. 16 was a hard date. Future councils can make any decisions they want to make, but this is how this Planning Commission and City Council said they wanted to start.”

# Presentation highlights crucial role of salt

Salt from Page 1A

The expedition also included three dozen hand-selected noncommissioned officers and privates, and “yeah, they were worth their weight in salt,” Wilson said.

## Economic stimulus

One of President Thomas Jefferson’s purposes in commissioning the expedition was to establish trade with the Native Americans and partners to the east, particularly capitalizing on sea otters as a trade good. In order to be successful, Wilson pointed out, “they have to survive. They have to get here and get back.”

After crossing the Rocky Mountains, the expedition began running low on supplies, including food, trade goods and salt. By the time they were at the station camp at the mouth of the Columbia River, the situation was dire.

Unable to rely on trade with the Native Americans to get provisions, officers had to make an important decision.

According to the journal of Pvt. Joseph Whitehouse, the officers “had our whole party assemble in order to consult which place would be best for us to take up our win-



KATHERINE LACAZE/FOR SEASIDE SIGNAL

**Historian and National Park Service ranger Tom Wilson talks with attendees after his presentation on the critical role salt-making played in the Lewis and Clark Expedition.**

ter quarters.”

During the winter of December 1805, the expedition set up their winter camp at Fort Clatsop.

On Dec. 8, Clark set out to find a direct route to the ocean. On Dec. 28, Joseph Field, William Bratton and George Gibson followed, making their way to the coast near a Clatsop village about 15 miles south of Fort Clatsop, bearing five large kettles.

The salt-making began, as the explorers harvested about 3 quarts to a gallon per day and operated three kettles day and night. The operation continued through Feb. 21.

Gibson and Bratton, at least, were at the salt works the entire time.

In all, the Corps harvested about 28 gallons of salt.

They left for the return journey with approximately 20 gallons — enough for a large part of their return voyage. They knew once they reached the east side of the Rockies, they would have access to salt stashed there before, as well as plains of roaming buffalo.

**Memorializing the salt-making**

Wilson concluded his presentation by discussing

how they know for certain The Salt Works site, now run by the National Park Service, is the correct location. The answer is Tsin-is-tum, also known by her English name Jennie Michel, a member of the Clatsop tribe. Although she was born about 1818, her mother witnessed the expedition’s salt-making endeavors and showed her the site.

In the early 1900s, the Oregon Historical Society traveled to find where the original salt works was located. They relied on the information from Michel.

The Cartwright family gave the land to the society, which started the process of maintaining the site, including the original rock structure. In the 1950s, the Lions Club, wanting to maintain the site, did more work, installing the monument and a salt cairn replica.

Wilson said he likes to think “the rocks you see there now are the original charred rocks of the expedition,” but there is no evidence to confirm that.

The National Park Service took over in 1979 and continues to strategize how to best portray and interpret the site.

# Tillamook gathering draws SHS alumna

Gathering from Page 1A

have an idea for an activity or field trip can submit an application requesting funds to cover costs. The committee determines which applications get funded.

In the past, proceeds from the gathering have been spent to fund an arts day at the high school; help send the choir to perform in Los Angeles; bring in professional musicians to perform in various classes; send members of the yearbook staff to a photography workshop; and provide a field trip to an animations studio for members of the robotics program.

Soul singer and songwriter Kelsey Mousley, who graduated from Seaside High School about 12 years ago, will perform with her Portland-based band, Kelsey Mousley and The Next Right Thing. The event will include a silent auction for artwork donated by local artists, as well as light fare provided by The Stand.

Mark Mizell, an English teacher at the high school for more than 30 years, came up with the idea for the Tillamook Head Gathering a few years ago, and it took shape and became a reality with the help of Wunderlich; Karen Emmerling, owner of Beach Books; and Mizell’s daughter, Lindsey.

Each committee member has found their involvement with the project rewarding, particularly because of how they value the arts and stress the importance of giving students access to them during school.

“It certainly broadens them as people to recognize there is more than just the basics of life, that creativity is such an important part of humanity, and of course, I think the world



SUBMITTED PHOTO

**Seaside High School alumna Kelsey Mousley, a professional singer and songwriter.**

opens if you read,” Emmerling said. “We want kids to realize the world is a bigger place than Seaside, Oregon, and that they can see themselves with a future that may be outside of here.”

Added Mizell, “It makes their worlds bigger. It gives kids kind of a spiritual nourishment, I guess you might say.”

When he started teaching, the school had a field trip fund to cover costs for activities, but that’s changed.

“In general, the arts have been hit kind of hard; not just here, but elsewhere, too,” Mizell said.

A different event each year

Currently, the Tillamook Head Gathering is an individual event that is operated through the Seaside School District. The committee hopes to convert the event into an official and separate nonprofit organization at some point, though, Mizell said.

Each year, the gathering assumes a slightly different atmosphere depending on the featured acts. During the first year, authors Peter Lindsey and Karl Marlantes focused on the literary arts and spoke about their published works. Last year, “Frogtown,” a nationally-touring live action



COURTESY OF KELSEY MOUSLEY FACEBOOK PAGE

**Kelsey Mousley and The Next Right Thing, who produce soul-infused R&B and rock music, will be performing at the Tillamook Head Gathering.**

musical, was the featured act, with a strong appeal to families. This year’s event, featuring a showcase by Mousley, also will have a unique flavor that appeals to a different audience, the organizers suspect.

The fact that each year is different in terms of its performers and audience “has been really nice, because it’s expanded the people who know about it,” Emmerling said. “We’re not talking to the same people each year.”

One common theme so far, however, is the inclusion of a performer or speaker who graduated from Seaside High School. Finding alumni who have advanced to find professional success in various art forms but are willing to return to participate in the Tillamook Head Gathering hasn’t been difficult.

“When you have a connection to here and find out kids aren’t getting the same things we got when we were younger, I think the consensus is people want to come back and be a part of it and help, so the kids that are here now aren’t miss-

ing out on the things we got,” Wunderlich said.

Another tradition that’s started is for a senior to participate in the event for their Pacific Project. The responsibility of the student so far has been to coordinate the silent auction. This year, senior Will Garvin is filling the role, which includes work before, during and after the event, from asking local artists for donations, setting up bid cards, collecting money and distributing the right pieces to auction winners.

“It’s nice to have a kid’s perspective in the planning of things,” Wunderlich said, adding they hope to continue the tradition

At this year’s event, a few students will share first-hand how they have benefited from the donations in the past to give attendees a clear idea how the money is being spent.

Tickets for the Tillamook Head Gathering are \$10 in advance, available for purchase at Seaside Coffee House, Beach Books or the Seaside High School business office, or \$15 at the door.

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