

# Ballot measure marked by vigorous campaigning

Ballots from Page 1A

Another challenge for the city was the absence of an ordinance requiring inspections or spelling out occupancy limits for vacation rentals.

An acute countywide housing shortage also drove the conversation.

Increased online rental activity and reports of loud parties, overcrowding and blocked roadways drew greater calls for action.

By 2015, an increase in online bookings led to more than a doubling of bookings in Gearhart, through companies like Vacasa, HomeAway and Airbnb. Complaints that out-of-town management was unable to promptly reply to public safety concerns led to an increased call for regulation, particularly a provision requiring 24-hour owner contact information.

After a series of hearings, including standing-room-only public workshops in the Gearhart Fire Hall, the Planning Commission crafted rules in May 2016 detailing occupancy limits, parking rules and property management contact information.

According to rules, rental properties must maintain a “residential appearance,” and provide weekly garbage service. Homes are required to conduct fire and safety inspections, and post a tsunami evacuation map in the dwelling.

The proposed regulation capped registration to existing short-term rental properties and established a \$600 permit fee.

Provisions included permit transfer only by inheritance, not sale. Applicants had to show proof of having paid the lodging tax in 2016.

In early September 2016, after what City Planner Carole Connell said were “30 meetings and eight draft reports,” the City Council passed Ordinance 901 unanimously without discussion.

Property owners who met the conditions faced a Dec. 16 permit application deadline.

As of Oct. 1, 81 vacation rental dwelling permits have been issued, 57 of which are complete and processed, six pending parking plans, 15 working on upgrades after inspection and three awaiting initial inspection, according to the city administrator.

## QUESTION

**SHALL GEARHART'S VACATION RENTAL DWELLINGS ORDINANCE BE REPEALED AND REPLACED?**

## SUMMARY

### IF APPROVED, THE ORDINANCE WOULD:

- Require \$600 annual permit fees dedicated to police and fire departments;
- Permit transfers to new dwelling unit owners;
- Change maximum occupancy from two persons over 2 years old per bedroom to two persons over 12 years old per bedroom, plus three additional people over 12 per dwelling unit, no limit on children under 12;
- Repeal ordinances imposing special regulations on vacation rental dwellings related to off street parking, residential appearance, garbage service, septic sewer capacity inspections and cesspool prohibitions.
- Require compliance with Gearhart city

- ordinances that apply generally to all residential dwelling units;
- Eliminate requirement that a 24-hour representative be able to physically respond to the site within 30 minutes;
- Allow safety inspections to be conducted by any licensed home inspector;
- Make dwelling unit owners responsible for self-reporting inspection issues, and provide a six month cure period, for any deficiencies;
- Remove current limitation on the number of vacation rentals;
- Require public vote for amendment of the vacation rental ordinance or any subsequent ordinance relating to vacation rentals.

## Appeals, petition

After the new regulations were adopted, two separate groups sought to overturn the rules in the state's Land Use Board of Appeals.

They said they were not against some aspects of the rules, but opposed what they said were plans to eliminate short-term rentals altogether.

They cited inconsistencies in

how the city defined “residential character,” among other issues.

Before a decision was rendered, property owners David Townsend, Joy Sigler, Brian Sigler and Sarah Nebeker in March filed a challenge seeking a ballot initiative that would repeal and replace the ordinance. Nebeker serves on the Clatsop County Board of Commissioners.

Their proposed 15-point or-

dinance sought to “assure that the interests of vacation homeowners and permanent residents remain in a sustainable balance that is good for the community, that every property owner's rights are fairly protected and that no property owner is economically harmed by excessive rules and regulations.”

A city summary of the ballot initiative was changed as a result of a decision issued

by Circuit Court Judge Dawn McIntosh in May.

Their ballot petition received more than 200 signatures, bringing the matter to voters.

On May 30, the Land Use Board of Appeals upheld provisions of the ordinance.

Vigorous campaigning, including lawn signs, newspaper and radio debates and door-to-door outreach, have marked the election so far.

# Food bank scheduled to reopen Nov. 7

Food Bank from Page 1A

Gooch said the closure provides an opportunity to focus on “future sustainability.”

The food bank, located at 2041 N. Roosevelt Drive, is a private nonprofit serving the hungry in Seaside. It survives on contributions from individuals, organizations, foundations, businesses and cities.

Board member Alan Evans said the food bank will work to guarantee no break in services. There will be changes to some management and volunteers, as well as paperwork and internal policies.

“We have realized that the need for our services becomes more important daily as more people find themselves in need,” Evans said. “With that increase in need becomes a bigger responsibility for us to be sustainable. We realize that stronger policies are needed to be enforced to our management, volunteers and the foundation of our services to our partnering agencies and the people we serve.”

Board members said any delivery changes would be for the purpose of better service.

Regional food banks will supplement private food donations, Evans said. Food donations will be accepted during the restructuring.

Board members will also take the time during the closure to clean, organize and deal with inventory.

## ‘Totally devastated’

The South County Food Bank was launched with donations from a Seaside grocery in 1981 and incorporated as a nonprofit in 1986. It is associated with Clatsop Community Action and an affiliate of the Oregon Food Bank Network. It was housed in a loca-



COLIN MURPHEY/EO MEDIA GROUP

The South County Food Bank is closed until Nov. 7

tion in a building provided by the Moose Club for 28 years, until the Moose Club disbanded in 2013.

Gann, who is unsalaried, took over as the food pantry's managing director in 2013, replacing Norm McLaren.

From 390 to 470 families use the food bank each month.

Gann said changes in the board, including departures of key members, changed its composition. “It's all a big clique of friends now,” she said.

Gann, who said she'd worked 70 to 80 hours a week at the food bank, clashed over a request by board members to provide personal information on food bank patrons.

The board cut Christmas and Thanksgiving dinner boxes because of the belief that patrons were “double-dipping and getting stuff everywhere,” Gann said.

“We've got a room in the back of my office of Christ-



COLIN MURPHEY/EO MEDIA GROUP

South Clatsop County Food Bank Regional Manager Karla Gann at the food bank in August.

mas presents for kids people already sent in, and they're going to get rid of it all,” she said.

An aisle offering patrons free shoes, clothing, blankets and cookware was also an issue. “They're getting rid of all that stuff,” she said.

## ‘Rotting in the fridges’

Of the 240 people to lose service at the food bank this

month, about 100 who need to walk for their food “are going to suffer” because they can't get to food banks in Gearhart or Cannon Beach, Gann said.

“Food is rotting in the fridges because they did this,” she said.

Regular donation pickups from North Coast Family Fellowship in Seaside — yielding 1,000 pounds of food a month — will be interrupted, she said.

Gann does not expect most of the 60 volunteers to return after the food bank's reopening, she said.

“My people are up in arms and 90 percent of my volunteers are not coming back,” she said. “I'm totally devastated. This is the busiest time of the month and there will be a week-and-a-half people will go hungry. I am so sorry for these people. I am so upset.”

The food bank is scheduled to reopen Nov. 7.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Gearhart Fire after a shift in California.

# Gearhart and Seaside firefighters return from Santa Rosa

Fire from Page 1A

Crews cleared brush fires and put out hot spots in an effort to contain blazes driven by the wind, reaching speeds of 60 mph at times.

“Until the wind dies down you are just trying to keep it at bay, or to redirect it so it does not take out more,” Daniels said. “They just had an awful wind.”

## Turning the tide

It wasn't until rain fell overnight, Thursday into Friday, that crews could begin cleaning up the last hot spots.

“They were glad to see it,” Daniels said. “And boy, they got some rain.”

With help from precipitation, Oregon firefighters demobilized and returned after 11 days in California.

Eddy and Daniels returned Saturday.

As of Tuesday, the Tubbs fire in and around Santa Rosa was 94 percent contained, Cal Fire reported, but not before growing to more than 36,000 acres.

The fire killed 22 people, destroyed 7,000 homes and buildings and damaged another 500. Five percent of homes were destroyed and damage reached more than \$1 billion in Santa Rosa alone.

This summer, California sent resources to Oregon to fight blazes in the Chetco Bar Fire in Brookings and the Eagle Creek Fire in the Columbia Gorge. They joined teams from as far away as Victoria, a state in Australia.

“Everybody helps support everybody else,” Eddy said.

“Firefighters are firefighters,” Daniels added. “We all do the same job.”

# Rotary gala fundraiser is the ‘bee’s knees’

## The Roaring 20s this year's theme

By R.J. Marx  
Seaside Signal

Flappers, gangsters and their molls came to Seaside's convention center Saturday night to celebrate the Rotary Club of Seaside's annual fundraiser dinner and auction, the Roaring 20s Gala.

The special appeal raised \$12,450 for holiday programs including Shop with a Cop, Rotary President Raven Brown said, with about 280 people in attendance. Final tallies will be available next week.

Guests wore period costumes and bid on auction items in a night geared to local charities, including the Shop With a Cop program. This year, the program expands to 20 students and the law enforcement partners will include Clatsop Coun-

ty Sheriff's Office deputies and an Oregon State Police officer who serves the local area, in addition to officers from the local police departments.

Funds raised also support community projects including the Rotary Youth Exchange, academic scholarships and the Christmas Wishing Tree program.

Internationally, Rotary Foundation supports clean water throughout the world and eradication of polio.

The gala, Seaside Rotary's main fundraising event, is put on each fall featuring a different theme. This year's event committee was chaired by Rotary members Al Peinhardt and Greg Sawyer.

Additional gala funds will

go toward creating a new scholarship to help a local student acquire vocational training or attend trade school. Rotary gifts about \$20,000 in scholarships to Seaside High School graduates pursuing education.

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