



Submitted photo

Gearhart firefighters joined the Clatsop County Task Force in fighting California wildfires.

Gearhart firefighters respond far and wide

By **EVE MARX**
For Seaside Signal

The Gearhart Volunteer Fire Department delivered its annual report to the City Council in January.

The report covers incident volume both within the city and the Gearhart Rural Fire Protection District, along with mutual aid responses to the fire departments of Seaside, Warrenton, Cannon Beach, Olney, Lewis and

Clark, Elsie Vinemaple.

The Gearhart Department also sent crew to distant fires, including the South Valley fire in Moro; the Memaloose #2 fire in Wasco County; the Stubblefield fire in Gilliam County; the Substation fire in The Dalles; and the Camp Fire Complex in Chico, California.

In 2018 there were 495 fire incidents in the City of Gearhart, a 48 percent increase in incident response volume in the last 10 years.

The department calculated 13,906 hours were spent in 2018 training personnel, including fire, medical and wildland personnel for incident response.

To compare 2018's 495 incidents, in 2017 there were 492 incidents; in 2015 there were 397; in 2012 there were 300; in 2008 there were 259.

According to the the department report, the most notable change for the department over the years has been mobilizations to fires far out-

side the city of Gearhart and the Gearhart Rural Fire Protection District.

Prior to 2017, mutual aid was more the norm, with personnel traveling no further than Astoria, Manzanita, and Hood River. Since 2017, teams have been mobilized to the Eagle Creek Fire in the Columbia River Gorge; The Chetco Bar Fire in Brookings; the LNU Complex Fire in Santa Rosa, California; and the Thomas Fire in Ventura County, California.



Tiffany Boothe/Seaside Aquarium

A longnose skate washed ashore in Seaside's Cove.

Longnose skate at the Cove

Seaside Signal

The Seaside Aquarium reported a large skate washed ashore at the Cove. "Upon closer examination we were able to determine that the four-foot skate was a female longnose skate," the aquarium's Tiffany Boothe said.

The skate had been very close to laying an egg casing — often referred to as a mermaid's purse — about 5 inches long and still in the process of developing.

Longnose skates can reach a maximum size of 4 1/2 feet and can live for more than 20 years. They are bottom feeders which have adapted a unique way of capturing prey by pouncing on top of their victims and pinning them to the ocean floor.

Other local finds include larger moon jellies littering the shore line, half of a small male California sea lion skull and a hatched-out egg casing from another type of much smaller skate, the black skate.

Unification, sewage drive annexation process

By **R.J. MARX**
Seaside Signal

City residents receive fire, police, water and sewage, among other services, while people under county jurisdiction are served by other entities.

The annexation could offer a chance for property owners along the Necanicum River to hook up to city sewer. Right now, many of those properties are on septic systems, with the potential for contamination should those systems fail, City Manager Mark Winstanley said.

Without annexation, development would be limited.

"The development of the property is going to be restricted by the fact that there's not sewer in that area," he said.

City councilors asked staff to address potential costs for property owners facing annexation.

It could be a trade-off, Winstanley said. Clatsop County residents served by Seaside Fire & Rescue, for example, now pay an assessment for fire services.

"If they come into the city, they'll still be covered by the same fire department, but the city taxes will pay for



City of Seaside

Homeowners within the annexation area have shared their thoughts on the process. Three public hearings will follow.

fire services at that point and they no longer will be in the rural fire district," he said.

Residents now under county jurisdiction would see an increase of about \$1.80 per thousand of their home's assessed value, Assistant City Manager Jon Rahl added.



Join the "Treasure the Beach" beach cleanup the first Saturday of every month.

Beach cleanups every first Saturday

Seaside Signal

Seaside Aquarium, City of Seaside, Seaside Downtown Development Association, Inn at Seashore, and Solve presents the 14th year of "Treasure the Beach" beach cleanup.

Organized cleanups will

take place, rain or shine, the first Saturday of every month from 9 to 11 a.m. A cleanup takes place Saturday, Feb. 2.

Sign in at the Seashore Inn on the Beach, 60 N. Prom, Seaside. Get your bag, and when done, drop it by trash receptacle along the Prom.

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