

# Enrollment increases in Seaside, Warrenton pace county growth

By EDWARD STRATTON  
The Daily Astorian

School enrollment in Clatsop County has grown nearly twice as fast as the state over the past five years, driven mainly by increases in Warrenton and Seaside, while Astoria slowly shrinks.

Enrollment, reported at 5,226 students in the fall, has increased by 5 percent over the past five years. The state has expanded from 567,100 students five years ago to 581,700 this fall, a 2.6 percent growth rate.

After surpassing 1,900 students for the first time since 2013, Astoria shrank by nearly 2 percent to 1,881 students this fall. The school district's enrollment has fallen nearly 3 percent since its last high point of 1,937 in 2010.

Craig Hoppes, the school superintendent in Astoria, sees the lack of housing and living-wage jobs as some of the biggest factors in enrollment, along with yearly influx and departure of Coast Guard families.

"I can tell you from a staff standpoint, based on now versus how it was 15 years ago, we have more staff that live outside Astoria than in Astoria," he said.

The school district's 10-year projections call for fairly steady enrollment, Hoppes said, although educators are seeing a sustained



Edward Stratton/The Daily Astorian

**Enrollment growth in Clatsop County has been nearly twice as fast as the state, driven by increases in Warrenton and Seaside.**

increase in at-risk students based on the number of free and reduced-price lunches.

"I would assume that it's the nature of the type of jobs that are available right now," he said of the growth in lower-paying service sector positions. "I don't think Walmart's paying \$35 an hour."

Warrenton was at 1,041 students this fall, up slightly from the previous year. The school district has grown by more than 22 percent since 2011, when it reported 849 students after several years of shrinking enrollment. Enrollment has stayed above

1,000 since 2015, but has plateaued. The district estimates enrollment will eventually peak at 1,159 students in the 2024-25 school year.

Close on the heels of Warrenton has been Seaside. At 1,650 students this fall, Seaside has grown by 4 percent from last year, nearly 7.8 percent over the past five years and more than 12 percent since 2011.

Knappa reported 499 students this fall, almost unchanged from five years ago. Jewell School, a small, rural, K-12 campus that averages around 150 students, reported 155 students.

## Vacancy on school board

Seaside Signal

The Seaside School Board seeks candidates for a vacancy left by the resignation of Steve Phillips. Phillips vacates Zone 5, Position 1, which is one of two Seaside positions.

School board candidates must be registered voters who have lived within the district for at least one year. They may not be employees of the school district.

Community members wishing to be considered should submit a letter of interest to the Seaside School District office at 1801 South Franklin Street, Seaside, OR 97138. Applications are due by noon Feb. 15. Phillips' replacement will serve out his term through June 30, and would have to run for election this May to continue serving.

For more information, call 503-738-5591.

Growth in student enrollment has slowed down statewide. After growing by more than 2.2 percent between 2012 and 2015, enrollment has grown by less than 1 percent over the past three years.

## Phillips: Board president steps down in aftermath of settlement

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two positions representing Cannon Beach, stepped down in January.

The district will appoint replacements for both positions, Roley said. The seats will then be up for election in May, along with that of vice-chairman Truax, who conducted Thursday's meeting.

The district also approved a time frame to look for an assistant superintendent. Candidates will be selected by board members for interviews next week. The position is anticipated to succeed as superintendent after Roley's retirement.

An offer of employment for the selected assistant superintendent candidate is expected on March 8.

## Treatment center: Opioid recovery clinic heading to Seaside

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The Columbia Pacific Coordinated Care Organization, which oversees the Oregon Health Plan in Clatsop, Columbia and Tillamook counties, has sought a local methadone treatment option because of the high cost of paying for people to get help in the Portland metro area.

Andy Mendenhall, the chief medical officer at Central City Concern, which works on homelessness, poverty and addiction issues in Portland, said there is a lack of treatment in rural areas. Hospitalizations associated with opioid abuse in the three counties are well above the statewide average.

"Part of the opportunity presented by the CODA continuum here in the Seaside community is to provide a hub for patients to receive treatment," he said.

"I see an opportunity to close the treatment gap, and allow people to get treatment locally, and that's good for those individuals, their families and the community."

When the prospect for a methadone clinic on the North Coast surfaced last summer, city leaders in Astoria and Warrenton recognized the need but were cool to the idea of a

location in their cities.

The new clinic in Seaside does not need approval from the City Council, Mayor Jay Barber said.

City Councilor Dana Phillips said she is "proud of CODA" and the work they do. The provider has 40 years of experience in treating opioid abuse.

But some in the city are concerned the clinic might be unwelcome and add to public safety needs.

Brian Owen, the executive director of the Seaside Chamber of Commerce, said he anticipated "a lot of questions and misstatements and information that is not read completely through" from people in the community.

Fire Chief Joey Daniels asked if the clinic will lead to an increase in call loads. "We're already limited in capabilities with our resource and any call is a taxing call already," he said.

Seaside Police Lt. Bruce Holt called CODA's plan "intriguing," but sought more information on how law enforcement would work with the clinic "to get help for people we come across."

Hartnett said emergency calls from the clinic would be more than offset by fewer drug overdoses and other drug-related emergencies.

## Dance: Seaside families put on their dancing shoes

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The event, held Feb. 9 at the Seaside Civic and Convention Center, continues to grow in popularity. The reason for that was summed up concisely by young participants as they identified their favorite part of the dance: getting to spend time with their dads.

The organizers do not enforce that the attendees only be father-daughter duos or trios, though, and open the event to grandfathers, step-dads, uncles, and other important adult figures with whom the girls share a meaningful relationship.

"It's just a really special evening of bonding," recreation program manager Grace Lee said, adding, "The main focus is to make the girls feel special."

The success in accomplishing that goal was evident as the young participants twirled, leapt, and glided across the dance floor, laughing and talking with their guardians and friends as DJ Bruce Smith presented an eclectic array of pop music, oldies, and Disney songs. The event, sponsored by TLC Federal Credit Union and Lum's Auto Center, also featured face-painting, drawings with prizes, a photo booth, dessert, and a candy buffet provided by Bruce's Candy Kitchen.



Katherine Lacaze/For Seaside Signal

**Dale Malvaney and his 10-year-old daughter Lily were frequently on the dance floor during the Daddy Daughter Dance held Feb. 9 at the Seaside Civic and Convention Center.**

Although the Daddy Daughter Dance is a highly anticipated event for many families in the community, others were only introduced to it this year.

Robert Spurgeon, whose family has been in the area about three years, said he was not aware of the event until his daughters, 9-year-old Lilyan and 7-year-old Isabella, received notices at school that they brought

home — along with excitement.

"They've talked about it every second since they got the flyer," he said.

### A new addition

During the evening, a group of father-daughter duos danced a routine they had learned earlier that day at a special dance class put on for members of Encore Dance Studio. Instructors

from the studio also attended the inaugural Mother Son Dance, held Feb. 8, to teach a few dance moves.

Because of the popularity of the Daddy Daughter Dance, many community members requested the recreation district add a parallel event for moms and their sons.

"We've been talking to different moms in the community and it seemed they were excited about the idea," Lee said. "We decided to go ahead with it and try it out."

As a pilot program, the event received a positive response, reportedly drawing a packed house every bit as energetic as the crowd that attended the Daddy Daughter Dance. Both events were formatted similarly, incorporating not only dancing and refreshments but also other activities to keep attendees busy, including an airplane-making contest, a scavenger hunt, and dance contests.

The organizers' intention, Lee said, is to make the events not only fun and exciting, but also an avenue for parents and other guardians to focus on and nurture their relationships with their children.

"You can see at the dance the energy and if the kids are interested," she said. "If the kids are having fun, as (adults) are having fun, as well."

## Newcomers: Club celebrates its first year

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Newcomers club in January 2017. The club, which six months ago changed its name to North Coast Newcomers and Social Club is celebrating its one year anniversary.

"We had 15 people at our first meeting here at Sweet Shop," Ludy said. "We now have 85 members. Not everybody is a newcomer."

Some members have lived in the area for some time, but for one reason or another weren't making new friends or strong connections. "Our club is unique; we don't have regular meetings. There are no dues. There's no politics. We just have fun."

The fun so far has been wine tastings, painting

classes, garden events, walking. There is a Facebook page (search for North Coast Newcomers and Social Club) where members post things they are going to or want to do, including movie outings, conversations and coffee, bicycle rides, and checking out new restaurants. Last spring, Ludy hosted at her home a very successful pot-luck Italian dinner night she called "Mangia," which drew a substantial Italian food loving crowd.

Kathy Zimmerman moved to Gearhart in November 2017.

"I'd been coming to the coast for years as a visitor," she said. "I met Ellie on the beach with her dog and then we met for coffee at Sweet Shop." Zimmerman attended

the club's first meeting and has been an active member from day one.

Members, Ludy said, tend to be age 55 and up. So far the club has attracted mostly females, but it's never been Ludy's intention it be a women's club.

"One of the goals for 2019 moving forward is to make the club more inclusive to families and partners," she said.

Members come from as far away as Hillsboro although the majority reside from Astoria to Manzanita. There's always room for new members.

"Our goal is to make the experience of being in the club richer," Ludy said. "More food related events, more outdoor activities,

more walking, more hiking."

Traci Williams, Sweet Shop's owner, is a member of the club. Sweet Shop, in fact, has become an informal hub.

"Traci's always been a supportive member," Ludy said. "Her living room style lounge area in the shop is a natural meeting point."

After being a newcomer club member for a year, Zimmerman said she feels she's found a nurturing community.

"We've bonded," Zimmerman said. "The people who are active members are actually here for each other."

"I feel I have a richness now," Ludy said. "I feel like the area is not just a place I live, but a place I call home, a place where I belong."

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