

County Sheriff Bergin says he will retire at year's end

By **NICOLE BALES**
The Astorian

Clatsop County Sheriff Tom Bergin plans to retire at the end of the year.

The sheriff, who was first elected in 2004, had announced last year that he would not seek another four-year term.

Bergin said he would ask the county Board of Commissioners to appoint Lt. Matt Phillips, the jail commander, as interim sheriff. The election for a new sheriff will be held in 2020.

"Well the time has come to provide the information as to my departure so the rumors and unknown can be resolved," Bergin, 61, wrote in an email to his staff on Monday afternoon. "I will be leaving at the end of December this year."

His decision came after a trying time of dealing with personal matters. Bergin was diagnosed with kidney cancer last year and said he became more reliant on his staff.

"It feels like I was living two lives, trying to take care of all my personal life

and take care all of this place and it's not fair to either side so it's kind of like, 'OK, it's time,'" he said in an interview.

The sheriff acknowledged he has received some criticism for his absences, but said he has always been involved.

"After going through cancer, double knee surgery, divorce and several other issues these last two years I know it has been hard on this office but I am proud how all of you have held this place together," Bergin said in his email to staff.

Bergin explained in the interview that he has "taken some extra time for myself because you come to the realization, it's like, there's more to life than being a cop. Even though I swore and raised my right hand to this job, but it's come to the point where it's time to move on and people can say what they want, that's OK."

Monica Steele, the interim county manager, said, "It's unfortunate that he won't be here to finish out his term and I have truly enjoyed working with him and I look forward to



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Sheriff Tom Bergin said he will retire at the end of the year.

working with whoever gets appointed."

Bergin became a sheriff's deputy in 1992 after about seven years at the Seaside Police Department. In 2004, he was elected sheriff and was reelected three times.

One of his biggest accomplishments was winning voter support to build a new county jail.

He was a leading voice for a \$20 million bond measure that passed last November to relocate the jail from Astoria to the former North Coast Youth Correctional

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Facility in Warrenton. Voters had rejected two previous bond measures for the jail.

"When I started here there was eight of us and the jail was small and tiny and we tried hard to get that new jail put in a couple of times and finally the third time the public saw the need, which is going to be very beneficial," Bergin said. "I'm really happy to see that for this community."

Bergin has also spent much of his career focused on drug enforcement. He ran the interagency narcotics team for several years and, while he was supervisor, the Western States Information Network awarded the narcotics team as team of the year in 2001.

Bergin will also be

remembered for his outspoken support for immigration enforcement, which has brought him praise, but also criticism.

"I was chosen to lead this agency by the people and luckily I've been elected four times to this office, and it's a responsibility that just consumes you, it absolutely consumes you," he said. "There's such a silent majority up here that is not happy with the current way our country is going and part of it is the issue on deportation. When people come here illegally, they need to abide by the laws and that is not coming here illegally, and so they need to follow the rules."

In 2014, he opposed a ballot measure that would have given driver's cards to

undocumented immigrants. Voters rejected the measure, but the Legislature this year passed a bill that would allow undocumented immigrants to obtain driver's licenses.

Last year, Bergin and 15 other sheriffs signed a letter in support of Measure 105, which would have repealed Oregon's sanctuary law. Voters, however, upheld the sanctuary law.

Last week, the sheriff said the county needed to support U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement after federal immigration agents detained a man at the courthouse.

"Everybody thinks I want to lock up all these Hispanics and throw everybody away and kick everybody out of the country — that's the furthest thing from the truth," Bergin said. "That's just ludicrous."

"And I think if you treat people with respect then you're going to get it back. I hope that is part of my success and part of my legacy. But it's just always being fair to everybody and treating everybody like you'd like to be treated."



Police Log

July 12

7:21 a.m., 900 block 14th Avenue: A disturbance is reported.

10:09 a.m., 800 block 13th Avenue: A missing person is reported.

2:08 p.m., Police headquarters: A person came in to register as a sex offender.

7:42 p.m., The Prom: Two women reported yelling at each other are separated. Disturbance was verbal in nature only.

July 13

10:21 a.m., 1000 block North Prom: An employee of a cleaning company finds and turns in to police a BB gun from a rental home.

5:08 p.m., 1000 block 12th Avenue: Suspicious circumstances are reported.

8:49 p.m., Lifeguard tower south of Ocean Shore: Fireworks are reported and confiscated.

10:50: Goodman Park: Subjects are warned of unlawful lodging.

July 14

1:55 a.m., Avenue N and Beach

Drive: Police respond to a report of a disturbance which turned out to be verbal in nature only.

2:11 a.m., Broadway and North Downing: Police respond to a report of a disturbance.

2:49 a.m., West Harrison and Ocean Shore: Police assist Cannon Beach police with a disturbance.

6:35 p.m., 700 block Wahanna: Caller reports an intoxicated man approaching his vehicle after leaving the hospital. Police contact subject who has a female driver assisting him.

9:21 p.m., 2400 block Highway 101: A deceased person is reported.

8:26 p.m., 1200 block Pacific: Police assist Cannon Beach police.

July 15

12:17 p.m., Forest Court: A missing person is reported.

July 16

1:43 a.m., 1700 block South Roosevelt: Telephone harassment is reported.

10:25 a.m., Ninth Avenue and Queen: A person is arrested on a warrant.

5:44 p.m., Convention Center: A missing person is reported.

July 17

2:58 p.m., 2100 block South Franklin: Neighbor reports

neighboring home is "unlivable" and wants the person living in it to leave. Police check with the city building and planning department and the building has not been condemned. Reporting party is advised.

July 18

6:04 a.m., Convention Center parking lot: Caller reports a boat tied to a handicapped sign. Owner of the boat is contacted and advised to move their boat.

Fire Log

July 12

11:08 p.m., 3300 block Bearman Creek: Emergency medical response.

July 13

7:08 a.m., Beach and Avenue U: Grass brush fire.

2:23 p.m., Avenue K and the Prom: Wildland grass fire call.

6:07 p.m., 10th and Ocean Shore: Water rescue.

July 14

9:56 p.m., 400 block Second Avenue: Public assistance is rendered.

3:41 p.m., 1500 block Spruce Drive: Fire investigation.

July 15

11:03 a.m., 2400 block High-

way 101: Emergency medical response.

11:20 a.m., 2600 block Highway 101: Emergency medical response.

8:00 p.m., 1800 block Beach Drive: Emergency medical response.

8:25 p.m., Jct. 26 and Highway 101: Emergency medical response.

July 16

10:33 p.m., Avenue A: Emergency medical response.

July 17

12:50 a.m., 1100 block Avenue B: Emergency medical response.

2:40 a.m., Avenue A: Emergency medical response.

7:31 a.m., 8400 block Nordmark Lane: Fire investigation.

July 18

8:30 p.m., 2100 block Lewis and Clark: Emergency medical response. Medix on scene.

Oregon State Police Report

Gearhart man involved in crash

On July 16 at 2:07 p.m., Oregon State Police responded to a report of a crash on Highway 26 near milepost 31 when a 43-year-old man from Gearhart driving a 1987 Toyota van traveling eastbound drifted off the highway shoulder, striking an embankment. Police say the van traveled down the embankment, coming to rest between some trees. The driver received minor injuries and was transported to Oregon Health & Science University. North


Plains troopers assisted at the scene. The van was towed away by Classic Towing. The driver of the vehicle was not issued a citation.

Seaside man involved in head-on collision


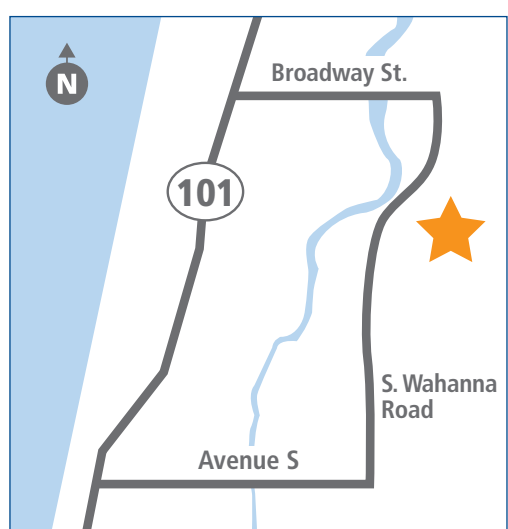
On July 16 at 10:23 p.m., a 49-year-old man from Seaside traveling eastbound on Highway 26 near milepost 9 lost control of his vehicle after his rear axle came loose from the vehicle causing him to enter the westbound lane to strike another vehicle head on. A second vehicle then left the roadway to the westbound shoulder while the first came to a stop in the eastbound lane, where it obstructed traffic. Both drivers were uninjured and North Coast Towing removed both vehicles from the scene. The driver of the first vehicle was issued a citation/warning.

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