



## URGENT CARE FIRST + THEN SPECIALTIES TO FOLLOW +

By R.J. MARX  
Seaside Signal

**C**MH Urgent Care in Seaside will debut after a nearly one-year construction process with a mid-February opening.

Columbia Memorial Hospital began looking for space in Seaside more than three years ago, when Don Larson, Seaside's mayor at the time, asked CEO Erik Thorsen what would it take to get hospital services in the South County.

With an emphasis on original art, decor, an emphasis on quality food, a spiritual component and alternative therapies, "You're going to think, 'Wow, this feels different from other facilities I've been in,'" Thorsen said at a walk-through of the facility with members of the Seaside Chamber of Commerce.

The clinic, in the Outlet Mall in the 12,000-square-foot site of the former Dress Barn, will offer urgent care, primary, specialty care, hospice, labs and a pharmacy with home delivery.

The new CMH clinic will follow the model of the hospital's Warrenton clinic, offering primary care, urgent care, X-ray and labs.

CMH Medical Group Director of Operations Jeanette Schacher pointed to the county's need. CMH's urgent care facilities in Warrenton saw about 15,000 patients this year, she told members of the Seaside Chamber of Commerce on a tour of the new facility, and emergency care had about 14,000 visitors.

Providence Seaside Hospital has seen another 11,000 emergency patients this year, Thorsen added.

When the clinic is filled and fully staffed, it will provide 25 to 35 new jobs, he said. CMH overall will have between 750 and 775 employees, the second largest employer in Clatsop County.

Primary care is scheduled to arrive in March, with one physician and one nurse practitioner. Other services anticipated include OB/GYN, maternity care, three days a week, pre-op and surgery.



R.J. Marx  
**Jeanette Schacher and CEO Erik Thorsen at the site of the new Columbia Memorial Hospital Urgent Care center in Seaside. At right, Kendra Frazier of the Seaside Chamber of Commerce.**

A podiatrist, the first in the South County, starts March 9. Patients at CMH in Astoria who are receiving surgery there can get pre-op services in Seaside.

CEO Thorsen said the facility embraces the Planetree model, which "puts our patients at the center of everything."

The facility offers a "pod" design, with a pod for urgent care, primary care, specialty care and OB/GYN. Each pod has a room for minor procedures.

"We've moved away from a model where physicians have their own office," Thorsen said. "We believe team care is best. We partner up the physician right next to their medical assistants, so they share a workspace together."

Transition of the space from retail to a medical facility cost about \$3.5 million in improvements with equipment

and upgrades.

According to CMH property manager Randy Stemper, the biggest challenges converting the mechanical, electrical and plumbing. "We had to take out most of the floor, to put all new plumbing in," Stemper said. "We had to redo the main line out of the building. It's all brand new heating and air-conditioning fully controlled for our space, as well as the electrical."

A generator allows the facility to operate during an outage. In addition to that we brought our own generator in so we're fully functional in a power outage.

Video capabilities in the conference room will allow providers to "beam in and out."

"They can stay here and still participate in meetings in Astoria," Thorsen said.

## Gearhart housing study offers road map to city's future growth

Ongoing demand, tight supply to keep prices escalating

By R.J. MARX  
Seaside Signal

Brendan Buckley of Johnson Economics took Gearhart City Council and Planning Commission officials through the numbers in a Dec. 10 work session at City Hall.

With Angelo Planning Group, Buckley co-authored the countywide housing study to assess housing inventory, needs, available residential land, identify issues and gaps between availability of what has been built and what might be built and recommendations on what research found.

Gearhart was the smallest of the communities studied — Astoria, Warrenton, Cannon Beach, Seaside and unincorporated Clatsop County are the others — and the last to receive a public review in the Clatsop County 2019 Housing Summary Report.

Among findings, at 1,483 in 2018, Gearhart's population has grown more than 50% since the year 2000.

Gearhart ranks near the state average in households with children, at 30%; in Clatsop County, ranking only behind Warrenton, at 38%.

Gearhart's population above age 65, at 21%, is over the average in the county.

The housing stock is "overwhelming single-family attached homes," Buckley said, with an average of 2.3 people per household.

More than 60% of Gearhart properties are used as second homes.

Permanent residents are more likely to be owner households rather than rental households, a "stark distinction between other parts of the county," Buckley said.

In Gearhart, 95% of residents work outside of Gearhart, with a small percentage living and working in Gearhart.

The median Gearhart home sales price, last tracked in 2018, was more than \$402,000 and trailed only Cannon Beach in terms of the cost of home sale price.

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## In Gearhart, school sale, firehouse bond will set the stage for 2020

Elk move over, pickleball is new Gearhart visitor draw

Seaside Signal

Wait until next year.

That's what Gearhart officials decided when it comes to the new firehouse.

As the Aug. 17 deadline to place a bond measure passed, the timeline for a vote on a new firehouse location and building plan got bumped till next year. "We still have a lot of work to do," Mayor Matt Brown said at the time.

But if the date is unclear, officials continue to pursue negotiations to acquire a property at 1376 North Marion, considered the best location to prepare for an "L-1" or large tsunami, which encompasses 95% of the possible flood scenarios.

Since the early 2000s Gearhart firefighters have asked the city to replace the current



R.J. Marx  
**Pickleball advocate Wally Hamer, right, on the court in Gearhart.**

structure, a building constructed in 1958 considered unsafe in the event of an earthquake or tsunami. A 2006 bond measure for a new

**Herman Biederbeck, wildlife biologist with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, fixes an ear tag onto an elk that has been fitted with a GPS collar to track its movements around Lewis and Clark National Historical Park near Warrenton.**

Lewis and Clark National Historical Park



public safety building failed at the polls.

In 2018, after considering nine locations, the fire station committee recommended three concepts and locations to the public to help guide the decision-making process.

Negotiations with the property owners and with the Pacific Palisades Homeowners Association, which owns an easement necessary for access, continued throughout the fall.

### Firefighters grant

Firefighters did get a win with a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The grant will bring more than \$145,000 for operations and safety.

An additional grant for wildland firefighting was also received by the fire department, with \$8,000 from the Oregon Department of Forestry to be used for radios and turnout gear.

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## New aerial fire truck 'exceeds expectations'

City pays off \$1.2 million investment

By R.J. MARX  
Seaside Signal

The fire truck is here — and according to Deputy Chief Gordon Houston, a Seaside volunteer who is a professional firefighter in Portland, this is top-of-the-line apparatus.

Even Portland doesn't have a vehicle that can match the features of Seaside's tractor-drawn aerial quint #3148, manufactured by Rosenbauer and delivered to Seaside in early December.

"It's really a step up for the safety of the community," Mayor Jay Barber said at the Dec. 23 City Council meeting. "If you're up on the WorldMark, you've got to feel better at night, sleeping on that top floor."



The Rosenbauer 100-foot ladder truck.

