

Cleanup: One man's cleanup crusade wins community support

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savers — can you leave the dumpster?" I filled every bag I could, picked up every needle I could."

Anderson's posts were showing results. When he mentioned on social media he could use hot coffee and more garbage bags, "right away somebody showed up with coffee," he said. "Then somebody showed up with more coffee and garbage bags. That day I put about 12 or 13 bags into the dumpster."

For the next week, Anderson continued working along the river, despite high winds and drenching storms.

"Any time I've planned on the weather it hasn't helped," he said.

Whether driven by the social media attention, police intervention or Anderson's determined cleanup efforts, those living in the encampments along the river retreated.

Now Anderson has his eye on cleaning up Mill Ponds, which he said is "a total disaster," with layers of debris, stolen items, bicycle parts, recyclables and biohazard waste strewn all around the park.

His timing is good: the



R.J. Marx
Jesse Anderson shows some of the hazardous debris, including needles, he has encountered during riverbank cleanups.



Jesse Anderson
Volunteers plan a cleanup at the Mill Ponds on Saturday.



Jesse Anderson
Cleanup complete at the Necanicum River boat launch after work by Jesse Anderson, the Department of Public Works and volunteers.

26.5-acre park is the focus of the city's Parks Advisory Committee plans for more accessible trails, public art and historical interpretive signage. The park is the anchor of the Necanicum Estuary History Park, which goes from the Mill Pond to Neawanna Point at the north end of Seaside.

Meanwhile, his Facebook posts gained traction and won attention throughout the county including the Facebook group, Rolling Fortress, described as "a community of individuals who pride themselves in building awesome

all-in-one contained campers and caring for our environment." The group's Brady Chandler will co-host Saturday's event, Anderson said.

Volunteers are invited to park at Ruby's overflow lot at 9 a.m. Seaside Public Works will supply two dumpsters, boxes of rubber gloves, large plastic bags and Sharps containers for needles, McDowell said.

Providence Seaside Hospital, Columbia Memorial Hospital and Bayshore Animal Hospital are all providing Sharps containers, Anderson said. Motel 6 announced

special overnight rates to volunteers.

The event is not for children. Volunteers should bring gloves to handle potentially hazardous material.

"Keeping people aware," Anderson said. "That is my goal. I want the community to use Mill Ponds. I want the community to use the boat launch."

He said he hopes for a turnout of "100 people plus" on Saturday.

"I can move 12 yards of garbage in a day by myself. But I don't think I can take the whole city by myself."

Annexation: Ordinance moves to final reading

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Residents now under county jurisdiction would see an increase of about \$1.80 per thousand of their home's assessed value.

Police service for non-emergencies would shift from the county sheriff's office to the Seaside Police Department.

The annexation brings

attention to a trailer park ordinance last updated in the 1960s.

"That ordinance hasn't been really been looked and reviewed since 1968," Cupples said. "I thought it was probably best to create a small exemption from that."

Trucke's counsel Christian Zupancic added additional text, which was incorporated into the draft ordinance.

Trucke's, at 1921 South Roosevelt Drive, offers 15 sites, with water, electricity and bathrooms. The RV park offers access for large and small RVs and motorhomes.

With unanimous approval for a first and second reading of the exemption, as well as a unanimous vote for the ordinance, both will go before the council at their next

meeting, Monday, Feb. 10.

"I want to give kudos to city staff," City Councilor Seth Morrisey said after the vote. "With annexation, we had no intention to put Trucke's out of business. I appreciate you guys jumping on this, so they can continue to operate."

Mayor Jay Barber added, "They're an important part of our community."

Dance: Cutting a rug at the Mother Son Dance

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Dance started several years ago, and Whisenhunt said she was hoping they would add a similar opportunity for sons to have a unique night-out with their parents and guardians. She was "excited" when the recreation district added the Mother Son Dance last year. She and her 9-year-old son JD dressed up and went out to dinner beforehand, making it "definitely a special occasion," Whisenhunt said.

"It's also a great way to see him with some of his friends," she added.

Sheryl Paul, who attended with her 7-year-old, Kayden Dederstedt, said her favorite part of the event was simple: "Just spending time with him." Although they're used to dancing around the house, she said, the atmosphere at the dance made their experience all the more memorable.

Taira Harper said her two elementary-aged sons, Mason and Ronan, needed no convincing to attend the dance with her.



Katherine Lacaze
LEFT Mothers and sons from across Clatsop County attended the Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District's second annual Mother Son Dance on Jan. 31.
ABOVE Sheryl Paul and Kayden Dederstedt, 7, show off their moves on the dance floor during the Mother Son Dance at the Seaside Civic and Convention Center.

"They insisted," she said. "This was them, not me."

Throughout the evening, the dance floor pulsed with activity. The young dancers and their parents flossed, dabbed, slid, jumped, headbanged, and played air guitars. Group numbers, like "Y.M.C.A.," "Gangnam Style," and the "Chicken

Dance," had nearly everyone on their feet and joining in the movements. For certain retro numbers, like the "Cha Cha Slide," the disk jockey encouraged the children to look to their moms for a demonstration of the dance moves.

When they weren't out dancing, attendees also

enjoyed fruit punch and cookies, along with capturing special moments at photo booths sponsored by The Cats Meow and Seaside Inverted Experience. Other sponsors for the dance included Bruce's Candy Kitchen, North Coast Records, Safeway, and TLC Fibre Federal Credit Union.

Grad rates: Focus on graduation, attendance pays off

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rate was 95.6%.

"That's significant growth in that amount of time," Roberts said.

While there are numerous external factors influencing graduation rates that the district can't control, Roberts said they're working to control the factors they can.

For example, one of the main areas students were falling behind in their freshman year was math. In the past, all students were placed in Algebra 1 and if they failed, they would have to repeat it until they passed.

"That's not a model that worked," Roberts said. "The data doesn't support that every student should be in Algebra 1."

Incoming students now take a placement test to determine if they should be in a lower-level math class to

build a foundation that will support their subsequent success in Algebra 1 and more challenging math courses. Since this change, Roberts said, "We have seen an improvement in passing rates in math for freshmen."

With funding from Measure 98, the school will be adding a graduation support specialist to mentor and counsel students, along with collecting important data to help the school continue trending in a positive direction.

Rigorous standards

The district also has identified high attendance rates as a performance indicator of its second strategic plan goal, which is that all students K-12 will develop the social and emotional skills to be positive community members.

In this area, the district

also is using a more rigorous standard than the state, according to Seaside High School Vice Principal Jason Boyd. Students are expected to miss no more than 95% of school days — or one day per month — as opposed to 90%, regardless if they are excused or not.

Tracking attendance rates from the start of school to the Friday before Martin Luther King Jr. Day in January, the district has generally seen year-over-year improvements. The districtwide attendance rate for this period was 91.6% in 2017-18, 92.16% in 2018-19, and 93.48% in 2019-20. All four schools in the district, except The Heights Elementary School, have improved marginally over the three years. Attendance at The Heights for that time period was 90.46% in 2017-18, 93.3% in 2018-19, and 88.02% in 2019-20.

A central challenge is changing the culture around school attendance and emphasizing the significance of missing out on learning and engaging information, Boyd said. The district has sent home letter to parents for students below the 90% attendance rate. At the high school, the attendance secretary calls parents or guardians if a student is absent.

The district also has implemented the "Every Day Matters" campaign and asked businesses and individuals to put up signs with positive messages, such as "You Matter" and "Don't Give Up."

The program aims to identify and remove barriers hindering attendance, whether they are tangible, emotional, or mental.

"We're trying to get to 95%, so we've got some work to do," Boyd said.

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