

Vaccine shipments headed to county

By **NICOLE BALES**
The Astorian

The first batch of a coronavirus vaccine is expected to arrive in Clatsop County next week.

Oregon has received shipments of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, which was approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Another vaccine made by Moderna Inc. is expected to be given approval and distributed next week.

“Today, I can tell you that help is here,” Gov. Kate Brown said in a statement.

The Oregon Health Authority has developed a plan for a phased distribution of the vaccines, giving first priority to those most at risk for the virus — front-line

health care workers and residents and staff at long-term care facilities.

The initial shipments will go directly to hospitals, for health care personnel, and to large pharmacies for distribution to long-term care facilities.

Columbia Memorial Hospital expects to receive 300 doses of the Moderna vaccine by Christmas. The Astoria hospital will administer the first shipment of vaccines to some health care staff, including those with the highest risk of exposure to the virus.

The hospital plans to reserve a portion for local emergency medical responders.

Another 300 doses are expected to be distributed to Columbia Memorial later to complete the required two-

dose vaccination protocol.

Providence expects to receive about 2,000 doses of the Pfizer vaccine for its Oregon facilities this week. Once the Moderna vaccine is approved, the hospital system expects to have enough supply to vaccinate its health care workers with the greatest need by the end of the year, a hospital spokesman said.

As supplies increase, other essential workers and people at higher risk for the virus, including people 65 or older, will be prioritized before vaccines become more widely available.

Patrick Allen, the director of the Oregon Health Authority, said vaccinations will likely not be available for most Oregonians until spring.

“The vaccine is the light at the end of the tunnel, but we

will be in this tunnel for several months,” Allen said in a statement. “We need to keep doing what we’ve been doing to help our friends, neighbors and ourselves stay safe.”

Columbia Memorial, Providence Seaside and public health officials have been meeting since early October to coordinate vaccine delivery and storage and plan for a community immunization program.

Chris Laman, the director of pharmacy and cancer center services at Columbia Memorial, said the hospitals and county will partner to hold mass vaccinations when the time comes.

“While we’ve got this vaccine that’s here, it’s not here for everybody yet,” Laman said. “And it’s going to be a few months, maybe many



Morry Gash/AP Photo

Oregon was slated to receive 35,100 doses this week.

months, before everybody in the community gets offered the vaccine.”

Laman said that in the meantime, it is important to continue wearing a mask and following other public health guidance. He also urged people to go to trusted sources for information to avoid misinformation about the vaccines and the virus.

New round of business grants available

By **EDWARD STRATTON**
The Astorian

Clatsop County businesses and nonprofits are in line for another \$942,000 worth of grants to help during the coronavirus pandemic.

Kevin Leahy, the director of Clatsop Economic Development Resources, recently told a meeting of downtown Astoria merchants that businesses should be looking forward to another round of business grants which opened last Thursday at clatsopcc.edu/cedr.

The county Board of Commissioners voted to direct another \$852,000 in state relief funds toward nonprofits and businesses impacted by the virus. Leahy said Astoria and the county have contributed another \$90,000 combined in unused virus relief funds.

The new round of relief grants comes with different requirements. Businesses and nonprofits must have been closed by government orders or prove they lost 25% of sales compared to

GEARHART DISTRIBUTIONS

Eight Gearhart businesses will receive a combined \$47,500 in relief funds from the federal CARES Act.

- Gearhart Indoor Dog Park**, \$5,000
- Melissa Archibald Cleaning Services**, \$5,000
- Santa Maria LLC (El Trio Loco)**, \$10,000
- Cleaning Witch LLC**, \$5,000
- Daniel Jesse Construction Inc.**, \$10,000
- Studio 620**, \$5,000
- Pacific Crest Cottage**, \$2,500
- The Trophy Case**, \$5,000

Total \$47,500

The money is part of funds delivered to the state by the federal government during the coronavirus pandemic. The \$2 trillion CARES Act, signed into law in late March, provides financial assistance to individuals, businesses, community organizations and state and local governments.

Funds for businesses are distributed through Clatsop Economic Development Resources. More than 210 businesses in Clatsop County have applied for relief through his group.

a prior year between March and November because of the virus.

Jessica Newhall, a local business adviser, said businesses most impacted by the state’s recent two-week freeze on seated dining, fitness centers, museums and indoor entertainment will be given priority.

“That would include

restaurants, gyms, those types of businesses,” Newhall said. “... Over the last several weeks, those are the businesses that we’ve been hearing from most aggressively. Although outside of that, restaurants tend to be anchor businesses in our community for retail, and so retailers and other busi-

nesses in core downtown areas are also seeing the ramifications, the impact of the two-week freeze.”

Before the freeze, fewer than 50 people per week on average in Clatsop County were filing new unemployment claims. But during the week ending Nov. 21, more than 150 new people applied for unemployment

benefits. In the next week, more than 260 people applied for support. More than 90% of new claims came from people working in lodging and food services.

The new round of grants comes as most federal assistance has expired and Congress has stalled in negotiations for a new relief package. The Paycheck Protection Program, offered to companies to keep employees on payroll and off of unemployment, expired in August. Some companies are still using federal Economic Injury Disaster Loans as reserves, Newhall said.

“Business Oregon and the state of Oregon have gotten some funding into the small business community, as well as some of the local agencies,” she said.

“And that’s helped, but it will be helpful to have Congress pass an additional stimulus package aimed at small business support.”

Newhall said another challenge is programs like Pandemic Unemployment Assistance, which is set to expire by the end of the year. More than 9 million Americans received continuing support from the program as of mid-October, according to federal data.

“That will create a gap in funding for those businesses that are still unable to operate,” Newhall said. “If you look at event venues, or people in the catering industry, they have no ability to pivot their business. Those are the businesses that are really facing significant challenges moving into this next phase.”



A tufted puffin nests on Haystack Rock.

Haystack Rock Awareness Program

Tufted puffins will not be listed as threatened

By **KATIE FRANKOWICZ**
The Astorian

The tufted puffin, an iconic seabird that can often be spotted at Haystack Rock in Cannon Beach during nesting season, will not be listed under the federal Endangered Species Act despite local efforts.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced earlier this month that the puffin does not warrant listing as threatened or endangered. A recent estimate of the species across a range that extends from California to British Columbia — and includes Alaska, as well as Japan and Russia — found that the majority of the known population appears to be trending up or staying stable.

Haystack Rock Awareness Program

The federal agency believes the birds are under-

going a range contraction, specifically at the southern end of their range, where researchers and other observers have seen a decline.

The species continues to be widely distributed across the northern part of its range and maintains a high overall abundance, according to the agency. A recent estimate places the total population of tufted puffins at approximately 3 million birds.

“The tufted puffin is an essential member of the coastal and marine ecosystems in which it resides,” Stewart Cogswell, the supervisor of the Fish and Wildlife Service’s Anchorage Fish and Wildlife Conservation Center Office, said in a statement.

“Although the species does not warrant listing under the Endangered Species Act, we will continue to work with others to monitor and conserve this iconic sea-

bird throughout its range.”

On the North Coast, the tufted puffin is instantly recognizable, a sort of mascot for Cannon Beach along with Haystack Rock. Residents celebrate the return of the puffins to the rock each year.

Friends of Haystack Rock has helped fund research on tufted puffins along the northwest coast through a variety of campaigns. Recently, the group purchased and donated transmitters to be attached to birds at Washington state colonies.

Three Arch Rocks National Wildlife Refuge in Tillamook County is the largest known puffin colony along the Oregon Coast with 220 tufted puffins counted on the islands in 2019.

Still, North Coast residents worry about a possible decline of puffin numbers locally. Between 100 to 130 birds have returned to

Haystack Rock each year for the past 10 years, but a population estimate in the 1980s put more than 600 birds on the rock — a number that may have been exaggerated, federal biologists now say.

The birds can be difficult to study. Their colonies are located on islands or mainland cliff faces. They burrow into the rock and cannot be easily counted from a distance. They are prone to abandon their nests if they feel unsafe.

Until Further Notice

Drive-up and ATM Banking only at your local Branch

Please call your Branch to make an appointment for Loans and Safe Deposit Box access.

Bank of the Pacific

BankofthePacific.com

DINING on the NORTH COAST

Great Restaurants in:
GEARHART • SEASIDE CANNON BEACH

WANT TO KNOW WHERE THE LOCALS GO?

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Dinner
- Junior Menu
- Lighter appetite menu

RILEY'S RESTAURANT & LOUNGE

BEST BREAKFAST IN TOWN!

Fish 'n Chips • Burgers • Seafood & Steak
Friday & Saturday - Prime Rib
Lounge Open Daily 9-Midnight
All Oregon Lottery products available

1104 S Holladay • 503-738-9701 • Open Daily at 8am

Excellence in family dining found from a family that has been serving the North Coast for the past 52 years

PIG 'N PANCAKE

Great Breakfast, but that's not all... Great lunch and dinner menu, too! Great pasta, steaks & seafood! Homemade Clam Chowder, Salads!

Seaside • 323 Broadway • 738-7234 (Open 7 Days)
Cannon Beach • 223 S. Hemlock 436-2851 (7am-3pm Daily)
Astoria • 146 W. Bond • 325-3144

CHOCOLATE CAFE

Cannon Beach Chocolate Cafe

Bring this ad in for 10% off your purchase! Stocking Stuffers and Gifts for Everyone!

232 N. Spruce • Cannon Beach, Oregon
Open 10 am-5 pm Daily! • 503.436.4331

Call Sarah Silver
503.325.3211
ext 1222

YOUR RESTAURANT AD HERE.

Find Your Next Regular Customers!