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## Warming center opening in doubt

Shelter was slated to open on Saturday

By R.J. MARX  
Seaside Signal

The future of a warming center in Seaside is in question after Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District board members asked to table the proposal for now.

"This just came in our radar last week," board member Celeste Bodner said. "There's a whole coalition of people working on homeless issues for decades. We should be playing a support role, not a main role. I think it's mission creep and has the potential of alienating folks."

The warming center had been prepared to open on Saturday in the Sunset Recreation Center, formerly Broadway Middle School, which the park district purchased in January.

Bodner said businesspeople in Seaside had the

impression "this was a bait and switch. If this is the first thing with 30 days of closing on the building and this is the first thing, I think we have some communication to do."

Questions of staffing, hours, insurance, supplies, litter and pets were among concerns raised at the board meeting on Tuesday night.

"Those are the questions we need answers to before we can say, 'Yes, we can go forward with this plan,'" Katharine Parker, the board president, said. "I understand the need, particularly this week as the temperatures are going to plummet. I just don't know if we can get through this in three days."

Modeled after the Astoria Warming Center, the warming center was planned as a partnership between Clatsop County Community Action, Seaside, Helping Hands and the park district, which would have provided two classrooms for overnight shelter in inclement weather

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Steve Urman at work on the Ridge Path.

R.J. Marx

## DUNCAN'S CROSSING FINDS NO BRIDGE TOO FAR

By R.J. MARX  
Seaside Signal

When he ran for Gearhart City Council in 2014, City Councilor John Duncan listed as one of his top goals to complete and extend the portion of the Ridge Path from Eighth Street to Gearhart Loop Road.

Duncan and his volunteer army marched through mud, brambles and elk droppings with loppers and saws. He worked so long and with such pride that other volunteers pled fatigue to convince him it was time to quit for the day. He was out working on the path two days before his death in September 2015.

Duncan's widow, Sandy, sought to remember her husband in a way that would have been meaningful to him. With her cooperation, Gearhart established a fund for "Duncan's Crossing," a project designed to bridge

wetlands and connect the path to Gearhart Loop Road.

"John saw the completion of the Ridge Path between Ninth and 10th streets and then north from 10th Street along the Neacoxie to Gearhart Lane as an opportunity to do a couple of things at once," volunteer Bob Widdop said. "As an engineer it was a chance to use his skills for a public good and to organize the public to participate in a hands-on project that gave a significant sense of accomplishment to all involved."

The former Native American trail runs between privately owned residential properties within the blocks between Cottage Avenue and Neacoxie Creek, extending from F Street on the south to 10th Street on the north. The first 11 blocks were established

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John Duncan, who died in 2015, had a vision for the Ridge Path.

## Gearhart fire chief plans to retire

By R.J. MARX  
Seaside Signal

Gearhart Fire Chief Bill Eddy will be stepping down from his role.

Eddy has served as chief since 2000 and has been with the fire department since 1981. No firm retirement date has been set.

City Administrator Chad Sweet announced Eddy's retirement at a City Council meeting last week.

"I'm getting a little bit up there in age," Eddy, who turns 67 in April, said. "It's probably time to let somebody else take it to the next level."

The Eddy family arrived in Gearhart in the 1960s when Eddy's father, William Lloyd Eddy, was named Gearhart police chief. The younger Eddy worked as a beverage account manager before joining the fire department, serving under chiefs Bruce Maltman,

Randy Curs, Preston Devereaux and Jim Pesonen before being named chief.

"Back then, it was a lot different than it is today," Eddy said. "As long as you were a warm body, they took you. We didn't even run a hundred calls a year back then. I don't even want to guess what the numbers were. Somebody pretty much sponsored you or brought you in. They said, 'Here's your gear, here's the truck and here's how you use it.'"

During his years as chief, he faced several challenges, including the 2007 storm. He responded to an air crash in Gearhart in August 2008 that killed five family members and participated in countless beach rescues, fireworks and mutual aid calls throughout Clatsop County and beyond.

He traveled with crews to wildfires in Oregon three

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## Marion Blake, 'a force of nature,' dies at 102

By R.J. MARX  
Seaside Signal

Marion Blake, one of Seaside's oldest residents, died Saturday at 102 peacefully at home.

"A force of nature," is how her daughter, Mary Blake, described her. "As she was getting older around her century mark, she was constantly asked, 'To what do you attribute your longevity?' Good genes, red wine, dark chocolate, being with the one you love, great friends, play and have fun!"

Marion was born April 29,



Mary Blake

Marion Blake at home in 2018.

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## Valentine's Day pairs kids, senior citizens

By KATHERINE LACAZE  
For Seaside Signal

Valentine's Day this year will be a little more special for residents of Avamere at Seaside and local students, thanks to a partnership between the senior care community and Pacific Ridge Elementary School.

"I get very excited about the connection between the children and the adults," said Erin Zellmer, who started as Avamere's life enrichment director five months ago.

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A secondgrader shares a Valentine's Day wish.



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