

# Police see rise in mental health calls

**SEEN FROM SEASIDE**  
R.J. MARX



It was timely coincidence that delivery of the annual report of the Seaside Police Department came the same night as a proclamation for National Police Memorial Week.

The proclamation honored the valor, service, and dedication of all police officer and publicly saluted the service of each of the city's officers.

Read by Mitch Brown, the department's communications manager, at Monday's City Council meeting, the proclamation invited citizens to reflect and remember Sgt. Jason Goodding, the Seaside officer who lost his life in 2016 in the line of duty.

COVID-19 changed daily operations for the Seaside Police Department in 2020, Police Chief Dave Ham said in presenting the 2019 and 2020 report. "The use of personal protective equipment, social distancing and restrictions in gathering has impacted the department as we learned to navigate the ever-changing guidelines and rules presented."

Throughout the pandemic, Seaside police have focused efforts toward education of the public rather than pursuing penalties for not wearing masks, socially distancing or gathering in large groups, Ham said.

Like other communities, Seaside had politically-themed demonstrations and a recognition of the use of police force after the death of George Floyd who was killed by Minneapolis police.

Rallies at City Hall and the Turnaround, Ham said, proved "stressful and tense short-lived politically themed protests." A positive result of these events was the update the department's use of force and First Amendment assembly policy.

The city saw a 3% rise in calls for service from 2019, but overall, the five-year change was a decline of 5% in calls. There were no homicides in either 2019 or 2020;



Communications manager Mitch Brown and Police Chief Dave Ham address the Seaside City Council last week.

the department reported six rapes in 2020 and four in 2019. Incidents of vandalism rose 42%, to 198; there were 309 larcenies in 2020, up 10% from the previous year.

Drug arrests declined 40%, largely a result of Measure 110, which decriminalized most possession charges, Ham said. "It's not a crime, straight up, anymore to possess. You can have under two grams of methamphetamine, cocaine. It's not even a misdemeanor crime anymore."

Of 352 arrests in 2020, 84 involved use of force, with a Taser used 16 times. Police pointed firearms 22 times, mostly for felony traffic stops.

As a result of the Statistical Transparency of Policing, or STOP program, all Oregon law enforcement agencies must collect data related to traffic and pedestrian stops. Of racial statistics compiled by Seaside police at traffic stops, about 82% of those stopped were white; 11% identified as His-

panic; Black, 2% and Asian 3%. Two-thirds of those stopped were male.

Police responded to 394 mental health calls in 2019 and 528 in 2020, a 25% jump.

Seaside police started monitoring calls for service involving homelessness in late April, Ham said. Over 252 days in 2021, the city had 183 homeless contacts and 44 aggressive homeless contacts.

"What it really boils down to is some dedicated funding that's going to pay for the services, the places for these people to go to get those services and get some housing," he said.

Seaside's dispatch includes seven telecommunicators and Brown, who also advises the North County dispatch on a part-time basis. Seaside dispatches for Seaside, Gearhart and Hamlet fire departments and Seaside, Gearhart and Cannon Beach police. The city received about 7,400 911 calls in 2020, a 6% increase from 2019.

Police responded to more than 32,000 none-emergency calls.

Cpl. Mike Baugher retired after 21 years. When Lt. Bruce Holt retired after 37 years with the department, Guy Knight was promoted to lieutenant.

Two patrol vacancies led to the hiring of Timothy "TJ" White and Jenson Segui. Seaside increased the detective unit to four, with Sgt. Josh Gregory, David Davidson, Cpl. William Barnes and Det. Cpl. Shauna Stelson. The department is beginning the search for a detective to replace newly promoted Sgt. Stelson, who was reassigned to patrol.

"The recent promotional processes have resulted in some staff achieving a higher rank within the department," Ham said. "But what these processes have also done is identify some of the up and coming future leaders that are already operating as a team within the department and community."

# Entering new worlds with the comfort of a book

**BETWEEN THE COVERS**  
ESTHER MOBERG



The Seaside Public Library and the North Coast Library Cooperative; a partnership between the Astoria Public Library, Seaside Public Library, and Warrenton Community Library, will be offering a summer full of fun activity packets and reading all summer long for children and teens. This summer the theme is "Reading Colors Your World," "Leer da Color a tu mundo." Reminding all of us that reading brings life and joy and worlds we can escape into from the comfort of a book.

Sign-up for summer reading starts on June 1, and on Saturday

June 12, we will have a special sign-up with distanced activities, free books and take-and-make packets available in the community room of the Seaside Public Library. Stop by to sign up and get a free book and kit.

Every time kids and teens turn in a completed reading form they get another free book and their name put into a county-wide drawing for grand prizes. Prizes include Lego sets with Lego book, baskets of books, and teen prizes will include a wireless Bluetooth speaker or a cash prize.

This year we are also offering museum connection kits from the Museum of Natural and Cultural History University of Oregon. Different themes each month include "Oregon's Dino Story," "Power of Plants" and "Oregon's Amazing Animals." We will also offer a variety of art and craft

take-and-make activity kits.

Our storytime will continue every Thursday at 10:30 a.m. through ZOOM, Teen Tuesdays at 2:30 p.m. and our Thursday Teen Book Club at 2:30 p.m.

Did you know children and teens who participate in public library summer reading programs score higher in reading and math when they return to school? A new study found significant differences between students who read for pleasure outside of class and those who primarily read books to satisfy school assignments. Not only was there a powerful link between reading for fun and stronger language skills, but students who disliked reading frequently attributed their negative outlook to experiences they had in classrooms. Summer reading is the perfect time to take reading for fun as seriously as we take academic read-



**The Seaside Library offers museum connection kits from the Museum of Natural and Cultural History University of Oregon, including "Oregon's Dino Story," "Power of Plants" and "Oregon's Amazing Animals."**

ing during school.

Library cards are free for all children in Clatsop County, thanks to the Libraries Reading Outreach program in Clatsop County

and the generous support of individuals and The Francine Reinhold and Val Winstanley Libraries ROCC Endowment fund, Clatsop County, and United Way. If your child does not have a library card, bring them to the closest public library to where you live to sign up for free.

Don't forget, your library card works in all three public libraries in Clatsop County. You can check out books in person with your library card or place holds and have them delivered to the library of your choice. The North Coast Library Cooperative continues to seek ways to better serve our library users. We offer a shared card and a shared library catalog. Only library of things items including guitars, waffle makers, telescopes, and other large or fragile items, must be picked up and returned at the library they belong to.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Time to put focus on housing

To the business owners of the northern Oregon coast:

I am curious as to why all businesses have not used their economic and political power in this county (in all coastal counties, honestly) to create housing for employees?

Everywhere there are help wanted signs. Everywhere there are stories about how impossible it is to find and keep employees.

This problem is not new. It is, however, now, worse than ever.

Collectively the businesses on the coast are responsible for the economic prosperity or failure of their communities. Why haven't these businesses used that collective power to incorporate affordable housing and sustainable living options for employees they need for their businesses to thrive and succeed?

I honestly want to know. I reside in Seaside. I would

like to see the businesses here thrive and succeed. My household supports local businesses.

We also mourn the businesses we used to support that no longer exist.

As we look toward the end of the pandemic and the return of tourists visiting, businesses are facing a bleak reality with few people to sustain them, when there is no way to live here, work here, and have a life here.

**Christina Buck**  
Seaside

### Provide world access to vaccines

The COVID-19 outbreak in India is a humanitarian crisis with global implications. It's also a powerful reminder that we won't end this pandemic anywhere unless we end it everywhere.

The world is facing a vaccine access crisis. While wealthy countries continue ramping up vaccinations, only 0.4% of COVID-19 vaccines globally have been administered to peo-

ple in low-income countries. The US alone has secured well over 550 million excess COVID-19 vaccine doses.

We are in a race against time. These vaccines are desperately needed around the world and will save lives and stem further mutations that could result in a resurgence of the virus in the US and around the world.

Gov. Kate Brown, U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley and U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden should call on the Biden adminis-

tration to do more to share America's vaccine stockpile equitably with countries in need.

Regardless of whether you live in Seaside or Soweto in South Africa we're all in this fight together. Sharing excess vaccines isn't just the humane thing to do, it's the smart thing to do to reduce the spread of variants, reopen our global economy, and help to end this pandemic faster, everywhere.

**Elizabeth Dix**  
Beaverton

## PUBLIC MEETINGS

Contact local agencies for latest meeting information and attendance guidelines.

**MONDAY, MAY 24**

Seaside City Council, 7 p.m., cityofseaside.us.

Seaside Planning Commission, 6 p.m., 989 Broadway St.

**TUESDAY, MAY 25**

Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District, regular meeting, sunsetempire.com.

Seaside Airport Advisory Committee, 6 p.m., 989 Broadway St.

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 2**

Gearhart City Council, 6 p.m., work session, cityofgearhart.com.

**MONDAY, JUNE 8**

Seaside City Council, 7 p.m., cityofseaside.us.

**MONDAY, JUNE 14**

Seaside City Council, 7 p.m., cityofseaside.us.

cityofseaside.us.

**TUESDAY, JUNE 15**

Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District Board of Directors, 5:15 p.m., 1225 Avenue A.

Seaside School District, 6 p.m., www.seaside.k12.or.us/meetings.

Gearhart Small Business Committee, 6 p.m., cityofgearhart.com.



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