



R.J. Marx

Gary Turel, owner of Seaside Helicopters, stands with Tammi and Bruce Rath, owners of Captain Kid Amusement Park.

## Seaside Helicopters owner flies high to retirement

By R.J. MARX  
Seaside Signal

Gary Turel, owner and pilot for Seaside Helicopters, is Seaside's original Whirlybird.

He hosted the first in-person "Good Morning Seaside" since the coronavirus pandemic, with about 15 members of the Seaside Chamber of Commerce joining him near the tarmac.

A Tigard resident, Turel surprised them in announcing he will be retiring.

"There's a point in time with just like airline pilots, really other pilots, you should probably get out of the game before somebody

asks you to," he said. "And so that time for me will be the end of this year."

Turel learned to fly by getting a job at the Hillsboro Airport when he was 15, earning his pilot's license before his driver's license. He was in the Oregon Air National Guard for nine years. He and his family were in the income tax preparations business for many years and owned Columbia Turel Bookkeeping. Seaside Helicopters launched in 1990. Turel purchased the business in 2001.

"This is the 19th year that I've had a heliport here," Turel said. "And last year I shut down for 13

months during the COVID. I just felt that was the wise thing to do."

Liftoff resumed about a month ago and business has been sky-high since. "We found that demand is actually been so great that we're gonna have to curtail on occasion just a little bit of that," he said. "We're having record days in terms of what we did over the (Memorial Day) weekend."

Seaside Helicopters offers four basic flights, from a six-minute run over the coastline to a 18 to 20 minute flight for \$165.

Turel's Bell Jet Ranger helicopter can carry four passengers in addition to the pilot. Turel does most of

the flying, joined by Gearhart's Craig Looms — a retired Los Angeles Police Department pilot and U.S. Navy fighter pilot — and Dan Leary, a retired U.S. Coast Guard commander.

Bruce and Tammi Rath, owners of the neighboring Captain Kid Amusement Park, will take over the location, he said.

"The job that they've done with that fun park is incredible," Turel said.

He sees the Rathes as the perfect successors for the business.

"It's hard to find somebody that can buy a helicopter and buy a piece of

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## Homeless solutions prove elusive in Seaside

By R.J. MARX  
Seaside Signal

Sandy Palmer, who owns Five Star Henna in Seaside, described her experience with the homeless as "men under my windows, in my doorways, with grocery carts, smoking, eating, defecating, urinating on my door and doing anything and everything for someone else to come and pick up their garbage."

Unless homeless are compelled to move along, Palmer said, side streets in the city are going to look like Portland. "And people are going to be more leery about coming into our town for tourism," she said. "My solution would be to con-

stantly move them along."

Palmer's comments came last Thursday at the Seaside Civic and Convention Center during the third conversation in a series on homelessness. A remaining conversation takes place at the convention center at 6 p.m. on July 1. At a City Council goal-setting session in January, homelessness, addiction and mental health issues were listed among the city's top priorities. In the months since, the topic has intensified in urgency.

Homelessness "will never, ever go away completely," said City Councilor Tita Montero, an organizer of the forum. "But

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## Hotelier turns to building apartments

By R.J. MARX  
Seaside Signal

Masudur Khan owns five hotels in Seaside — and could build more. But the hotelier is turning his sights to developing two apartment complexes with more than 80 units aimed at stemming a lack of affordable housing.

"I'm excited for the projects," Khan said. "I could build a hotel, but I prefer to do the housing because that's most important for the city at this moment. At this moment, we have enough hotels."

Khan, who serves as chairman of the Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association, is considering using some of those apartments for his own employees, engineer Mark Mead said at last Tuesday

night's Planning Commission meeting.

"I do know that part of the units will be some of his employees, because he has 100-and-something employees between all the different hotels in Cannon Beach and Seaside area," Mead said.

On S. Holladay Drive, Khan plans to replace four old retail and storage buildings with a three-building, 28-unit complex. The site is located in the city's general commercial zone. It also contains parking and open space.

Building A will include a small, 875-square-foot office space to be used for management and maintenance of the project, along with a possible small office space to be rented out. The second and third floors will provide four

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## Gearhart expands, approves budget

By R.J. MARX  
Seaside Signal

Increased property values, a jump in building permits and transient room tax and inflow of federal dollars drove an expanding Gearhart budget.

The City Council approved the 2021-22 budget last Wednesday, showing \$2.57 million in general fund resources, up about 8% from last year's \$2 million budget. With additional

budget funds, appropriations total \$7.62 million. The permanent tax rate is \$1.005 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. The city will levy about \$608,000 in property taxes necessary to balance the budget.

The new budget details awards of revenue sharing funds to area nonprofits, awarding \$35,300 to 14 organizations. The organizations had sought a total of \$47,600.

Top awardees, which received grants of \$3,000,

included the Clatsop Community Regional Food Bank, Helping Hands, North Coast Food Web, The Harbor, Clatsop Economic Development Resources, South County Food Bank, Clatsop County Court Advocate Program and St. Vincent De Paul.

A 3.9% increase of city tax revenue is a result of new development in 2020 and 2021 and increased property values.

The city budgeted resources of \$230,000 from the American Rescue Plan

Act. The funds, likely distributed by the state, may be used for infrastructure, planning and emergency response. The water fund is budgeted to receive \$75,000, and the Gearhart Road District also expects about \$25,000 from the federal government's plan.

Building permits will account for \$250,000 revenue and the city anticipates transient room tax of \$380,000. The city has bud-

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## Game sparks real-world skills

By KATHERINE LACAZE  
For Seaside Signal

During the coronavirus pandemic, local educators searched for an activity that could take place remotely, keep students engaged, spark creativity and provide real-world problem-solving skills.

The fantasy role-playing game Dungeons & Dragons was the ideal solution.

"You have a chance to be creative," said Ann Branson, the assistant youth services and teen services librarian at the Seaside Public Library. "There's a lot of collaboration and teamwork. It teaches a lot

of really good skills for kids — and all of us, too," she said. "It's a fun escape that's still healthy and productive. It's a great way to make friends."

The imaginative game was created in the 1970s and has taken slightly different forms over the past 50 years. In general, it consists of an adventure or story that is narrated by the dungeon master. The other players are the adventurers who contribute to a structured yet fundamentally open-ended narrative with an overarching theme or goal.

One of the first steps is building a character. Participants can choose from being an elf, dwarf, human

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## Fourth of July parade is on in Gearhart

By R.J. MARX  
Seaside Signal

Save the date: the Gearhart Independence Day Parade is on for July Fourth at 11 a.m.

"We haven't posted anything but we hope to have the parade back," Mayor Paulina Cockrum said at last Wednesday's Gearhart City Council meeting.

The annual event, from Eighth Street and North Marion Avenue to the Gearhart Fire Department on Pacific Way, began as a kid's parade on Independence Day in 1980. It has

drawn a Mardi Gras-style group of Gearhart residents and visitors all celebrating American independence. It typically starts on North Marion and turns east on Pacific Way before ending at the fire hall.

The parade was canceled last year because of the state's prohibiting of large gatherings due to the coronavirus.

This year, the city advises to have small groups and practice social distancing, Cockrum said. "We hope everybody will be careful," Cockrum said. "It will be a good time for everybody to be out and enjoy our city."



Jeff TerHar

The bike patrol in Gearhart is decked out in red, white and blue at the 2019 Independence Day Parade.

