

County reaches vaccine milestone against virus

Over 70% vaccinated

By **ERICK BENDEL** and **GARY WARNER**
The Astorian and Oregon Capital Bureau

Seventy percent of Clatsop County residents are vaccinated against the coronavirus, a goal the county has sought to reach since vaccines became widely available to the public earlier this year.

The county reported last Friday that 27,615 people had been vaccinated. The county's vaccination rate is among the highest in Oregon.

"I think it is a testament to the collaboration of all the health care resources in the county," Mark Kujala,

the chairman of the county Board of Commissioners, said in a text message. "It showcases good communications and local media efforts to inform residents of vaccination clinics and why it is important to get vaccinated."

"I'm very proud of this county and hopeful that the momentum continues through the booster dose phase."

The pace of vaccinations peaked during the spring and slowed over the summer and fall. In late June, for example, the vaccination rate was 54%. By late September, it was 63%.

The county initially set the goal in the hopes of reaching herd immunity against COVID-19. But public health leaders have

cautioned for the past several months that it is unclear whether the 70% target will be effective as variants such as delta and omicron emerge.

In a weekly vaccine task force update, the county also reported last Friday that 80% of residents 18 and older are at least partially vaccinated.

"We would just urge other folks who are, maybe have been, on the sidelines thinking it over to ask more questions and, hopefully, get vaccinated themselves," Tom Bennett, a county spokesman, said.

The vaccine task force is planning more booster clinics that offer the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines. So far, more than 9,000 residents have received booster doses, the county reported.

While the county marked the vaccination milestone, state leaders warned of a new wave of virus cases driven by the omicron variant.

"We're in a race against the clock," Gov. Kate Brown said during an afternoon press call last Friday.

The new infections come as Oregon is slowly recovering from the delta surge that began last July and peaked in early September.

A forecast released by Oregon Health & Science University said the new variant will push out the dominant delta variant by the last week of December.

Peter Graven, the lead author of the OHSU forecast, said omicron doubles at twice the rate of the delta variant, doubling the num-

ber of infections every two days.

"We have about two to three weeks before we'll see omicron accelerate and become the dominant strain," Graven said. "We expect that cases will ramp up quickly."

The OHSU report said early studies in Europe show vaccines and earlier exposure to the virus are not as effective against omicron as earlier variations of COVID-19.

The Pfizer and Moderna two-shot vaccination loses about 50% of its protective power with omicron. The third booster shot of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine, now authorized for anyone over age 16, offers significant additional protection.

The booster is especially

needed for those most vulnerable to severe illness, including immunocompromised residents or older adults living in congregant settings.

"I'm calling on 1 million Oregonians to step up and get a booster shot," Brown said.

The Oregon Health Authority's weekly report on virus cases last week found that unvaccinated people accounted for just under 70% of new infections. Vaccinated people accounted for just over 30%.

The biggest difference is in severity of illness. Only 4.4% of all vaccine breakthrough cases have required hospitalization, and 1.3% have died. The average age of vaccinated people who died was 81.

OBITUARIES

George Mark Johannessen

Lacey, Washington
1929 — 2021

George Mark Johannessen passed away on Dec. 6, 2021, while receiving hospice care at the Lacey Memory Care facility in Lacey, Washington.

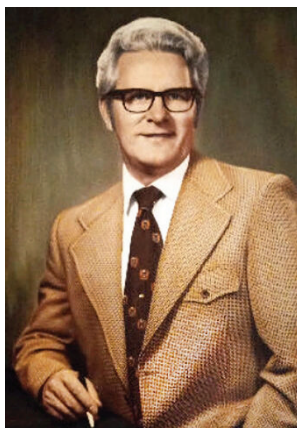
Mark was born in Klo, Norway, in 1929. He was the oldest child of seven born to Trygve and Haldis Johannessen.

Mark immigrated to the U.S. in 1948. In New Jersey, he studied American history and English. Mark liked to travel, and headed west to California, where he became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1950.

In California, Mark met Elizabeth "Betty" Kostiv, who became his devoted wife of 67 years. Together they sponsored and helped his parents and siblings emigrate from Norway to the U.S. Mark and Betty had two children, Keith and Kim. They raised their children in Anaheim, California.

In California, Mark began his career in law enforcement with the Covina Police Department. He advanced his career by joining the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. Mark was promoted, and became a lieutenant investigator with the L.A. County District Attorney's Office.

Mark became the chief of police of Astoria in 1967, and served until 1972. From 1972 through 1976, he was the chief of police of Springfield, Oregon. The hallmark of his career was his service to the community, ethics and



George Johannessen

professionalism. Mark was a member of the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

Mark was successful in real estate as an agent and broker, as well as a developer in building and remodeling homes and apartments in Grays Harbor County, Washington. Mark and Betty retired to Mason County, Washington.

Mark was a devoted husband and father. He relished taking his family on trips and cruises. Mark loved sailing, camping, fishing and to travel. He frequently traveled to Norway and Costa Rica. Mark was an avid reader. He loved his wife, his family, and was proud to be of service to his community.

Mark is survived by his wife, Betty, and their two children, Keith and Kim. Dad will be missed, and was dearly loved by his family. "Vi elsker deg, Far" in Norwegian means, "We love you, Dad."

Elk attacks reported in Cannon Beach

CANNON BEACH — Elk have attacked dogs in two separate incidents this month.

The first, which took place in a city park in late afternoon, resulted in slight injuries to the dog, possibly an injured paw, Police Chief Jason Schermerhorn said.

In the second, an elk attacked a woman and her dog in the north end of Les Shirley Park at night.

The woman, a part-time resident, refused medical treatment, but Schermerhorn said he learned the dog's injuries were more extensive than in the first incident.

The chief said that elk reports usually involve crashes on the highway. He spoke with Sgt. Joe Warwick, of the Oregon State Police's fish and wildlife division.

"(Warwick) said that every time that he's heard of a so-called elk attack, it's involving a dog," Schermerhorn said, "and it's

because the elk see them as wolves and they're just protecting themselves and their herd."

Cyclist killed after hit by motorist on U.S. Highway 101

A bicyclist was struck and killed on U.S. Highway 101 south of Seaside on Saturday.

Oregon State Police troopers and emergency personnel responded to the report of a bicyclist hit by a

vehicle on the highway near milepost 25 shortly after 6 p.m.

A Seaside man was traveling northbound in a gray Nissan Frontier when he failed to drive within his lane and struck a bicyclist, Zane Belshe, 59, of Seaside, who was riding on the northbound shoulder.

Belshe sustained fatal injuries and was pronounced dead at the scene.

Holmes remained at the scene, police said, and the Nissan Frontier was towed.

The investigation is ongoing.

NEWS NOTES

PUBLIC SAFETY LOG



- Dec. 10**
- 10:58 p.m.**, Bend: A possible puppy scam originating from Seaside was reported.
- Dec. 11**
- 1:05 p.m.**, 200 block 13th Avenue: Suspicious circumstances are reported.
- 3:02 p.m.**, Wahanna: An unaccompanied dog is reported wandering at large.
- 5:54 p.m.**, 500 block S. Lincoln: A disturbance is reported. On arrival, police speak to all parties and options are given.
- 11:20 p.m.**, 300 block Broadway: An assault is reported. The parties are separated and a case taken.
- 11:43 p.m.**, 2100 block Lewis and Clark Road: Following a reported disturbance, one person is arrested on a warrant and transported to the Clatsop jail.
- Dec. 12**
- 8:43 p.m.**, 400 block S. Prom: Hotel employee requests help with a guest who has been causing a problem all day.
- Dec. 13**
- 6:48 a.m.**, Community Center: Caller reports transient sleeping in the doorway of the center. The person is advised to keep moving.
- 9:04 a.m.**, 1100 block Broadway: Subject reported yelling at elderly patrons of the pool is advised he is trespassing.
- 10:36 a.m.**, 1200 block Avenue

- F:** Caller reports roommate kicked her door in. She said the person doesn't live there but police say they live in the same house.
- 10:42 a.m.**, Beach: A female transient living in the dunes is reported yelling and screaming. She is advised to clean up the area and move on.
- 9:55 p.m.**, 1100 block Broadway: A man is reported screaming in the area.
- Dec. 14**
- 8:42 a.m.**, Beach: Tents reported.
- 11:32 a.m.**, 300 block Hillside Loop: Goats are reported at large; police learn the goats are on loan to clear vegetation and they escaped; their owner is contacted and the goats are rounded up.
- 9:29 p.m.**, 11th and Necanicum: Harassment is reported.
- 10:51 p.m.**, 400 block Third Avenue: Caller requests help with her intoxicated husband.
- Dec. 15**
- 9:00 a.m.**, End of the World: A transient camp is located.
- 9:30 a.m.**, N. Franklin and 19th: A case is taken for unlawful lodging.
- 9:44 a.m.**, End of the World: Caller reports a disturbance in the area; Police say they find nothing amiss.
- 10:17 a.m.**, 10th and Necanicum: Caller requests assistance with a harassing neighbor.
- 3:59 p.m.**, Avenue N and Ocean Shore: Caller reports an injured seal. The Aquarium is advised.

- 4:31 p.m.**, 900 block Fourth Avenue: A person is arrested on a warrant.
 - Dec. 16**
 - 2:13 p.m.**, 800 block Avenue N: Theft is reported and a case is taken.
 - 7:07 p.m.**, 1600 block N. Roosevelt: A person is arrested on a warrant.
 - 9:03 p.m.**, 1100 block Avenue S: Caller requests welfare check on someone who is not responding to phone or texts. Police checking report the person is deceased.
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- Dec. 10**
 - 7:06 a.m.**, 2500 block S. Roosevelt: Fire alarm.
 - 10:19 p.m.**, 300 block S. Roosevelt: EMS call.
 - Dec. 12**
 - 10:19 a.m.**, 2200 block S. Downing: Chimney fire.
 - Dec. 13**
 - 2:12 p.m.**, Mill Ponds: Fire investigation.
 - 8:04 p.m.**, 1100 block S. Holladay: EMS call.
 - Dec. 14**
 - 5:29 p.m.**, 600 block S. Edgewood: EMS call.
 - 11:13 p.m.**, 1700 block Twelfth Avenue: EMS call.
 - Dec. 16**
 - 8:32 a.m.**, 2100 block Sunset Beach Lane: EMS call.



- 5:32 p.m.**, 1900 Spruce Drive: EMS call.
- ### Two-car crash
- A 53-year-old Gearhart man was involved in a two-car collision Dec. 9 at 6:56 p.m. on U.S. Highway 101 near Doryman Lane. Police say a white Honda Civic was traveling north on U.S. Highway 101 near milepost 16 when the driver saw a black Buick Regal turning left onto the highway from a private driveway. The driver of the Regal said he noticed the Civic had only one headlight and tried to speed up but was struck on the left rear panel of their vehicle. The force of the crash pushed the Civic across the highway into the southbound lane. The 17-year-old driver was transported to Seaside Providence Hospital for treatment. The Gearhart man was issued a citation.
- ### Car on fire
- A car caught on fire Dec. 10 at 3:16 p.m. on U.S. Highway 26 at milepost 12, eastbound. The driver of a Kia four-door sedan said they were near milepost 12 when they saw the engine smoking. They pulled over to the shoulder and the car caught fire. Hamlet firefighters, a county deputy and ODOT were on scene. The cause of the fire could not be determined and the driver and their passenger were given a courtesy ride by a trooper to Hillsboro. The Kia was towed.

DEATH NOTICE

Lorna M. Brandt

Lorna M. Brandt, 67, of Gearhart, died on December 19, 2021 in Gearhart. Ocean View Funeral & Cremation Service of Astoria.

OBITUARY POLICY

The Seaside Signal publishes paid obituaries. The obituary can include a small photo and, for veterans, a flag symbol at no charge. The deadline for all obituaries is 9 a.m. the business day prior.

FIND YOUR CAREER AT CMH
columbiamemorial.org/apply

SCAN ME TO APPLY

IMMEDIATE OPENINGS

CMH is hiring for a variety of positions with advancement opportunities, sign-on bonuses and excellent benefits, including up to 28 days PTO and 70% off hospital services.

Give the gift of hope this holiday season!

A Court Appointed Special Advocate is a community volunteer who advocates for a child who has been abused or neglected. CASA volunteers work hard to ensure that children in foster care in Clatsop County will have a safe and nurturing permanent home as soon as possible.

This year, 40 CASA volunteers donated 4,000+ hours serving 115 children in Clatsop County.

Please consider Clatsop CASA Program in your giving this season and help us strengthen our mission into 2022!

Checks can be mailed to: PO Box 514, Astoria, OR 97103 or give to CASA's Holiday Campaign at: www.clatsopcasa.org

Make a life-changing impact.

CHANGE A CHILD'S STORY.