



Anacortes sports are back

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FAREWELL SUMMER



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Above: A lineup of local musicians performed all day Saturday, Sept. 4, at Seafarers' Memorial Park for the first AMP Fest off Guemes Island. Money was raised for a new all-ages music venue.

Left: Logan Tomasko and Sue Gilbert shot hoops together at Storvik Park on Friday, Sept. 3. Gilbert is excited to go on drives to see the changing colors of the leaves. "I love fall," she said.

Below: Jaqlin Deakin has been running a lemonade and treat stand on 22nd Street this summer, shown here on Friday, Sept. 3. "I love how people are very nice and stop by for me," she said.

Bottom: A group of people sailed their remote-controlled boats at Seafarers' Memorial Park on Saturday, Sept. 4.



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New school year brings new leaders

BY BRIANA ALZOLA
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Students are back in Anacortes School District schools today, and among those finding their way around new schools are new principals at Anacortes and Cap Sante high schools.

The new leadership comes at the same time that students are back at school full-time and all together for the first time since early March 2020. They were separated into smaller groups last year for added safety.

Daniel Williams, taking over as principal at Anacortes High School, said his main focus this year is learning how to best serve all students academically. That means accelerated learners, those who are struggling and all the students in the middle.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been hard on a lot of students as



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Daniel Williams is the new principal at Anacortes High School.

they learned virtually or visited schools just a couple days a week. Some students didn't retain as

much as normal, he said. Now is the

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Impact felt as COVID spreads

By Skagit Publishing staff

COVID-19 cases continued to climb as August gave way to September, which is raising safety concerns and affecting event plans.

This year's Bier on the Pier event has been canceled this year, the Anacortes Chamber of Commerce announced late Friday. The cancellation of the early October event was due to concerns over rises in COVID-19 cases and deaths in the community and the cancellation by several breweries citing staffing shortages.

"The safety concerns and possibility of having an event not as advertised would have been unfair to attendees, volunteers, and vendors,"

spokesperson Bridget Fry said in a news release.

The annual event, which takes place on the first weekend of October and features live music, food and over 40 breweries and cideries, was also canceled last year.

Skagit County Public Health reported 394 new cases of COVID-19 for the seven-day period running Aug. 29 through Sept. 4.

There were 16 new hospitalizations and no deaths during that period.

It marked the fourth consecutive seven-day, Sunday-through-Saturday period with 300 or more new cases, and the highest number over that

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Low jobless rate may not reflect reality

BY RICHARD WALKER
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The local jobless rate is currently low, but it doesn't truly reflect pandemic economic recovery, according to information from a local economy expert who expects changes as schools reopen and unemployment benefits expire.

July numbers showed just 5% of the workforce in Skagit County was officially out of work, down from 5.5% the previous month and 12.5% in July 2020. Several local businesses continue to lack workers, and "Now Hiring" signs can be seen across the county.

That relatively low jobless rate, however, doesn't include many of the workers who left the labor force during the pandemic, according to Anneliese Vance-Sherman, regional labor economist with the state Employment Security Department.

There were 76,230 people in the labor force in Skagit County in 2019, according to an economic profile produced by the Western Washington University Center for Economic and Business Research. The resident labor force was estimated at 63,240 in July, Vance-Sherman reported — a difference of 13,000 people.

The unemployment

rate may rise again as people return to the labor force now that their children are returning to school and federal programs that expanded and extended unemployment benefits expired.

People returning to work could strain child care services in the area, which had waiting lists before the pandemic. Anacortes Chamber of Commerce CEO Jessica Stickles said Aug. 12 that one of her staff members placed her baby on a waiting list before the child was born.

The labor market could also be tested.

"Retail, restaurants and hotels statewide lost about 40% of all their jobs in the space of a month," Vance-Sherman said. "It was an extremely swift downward turn — and an extremely harsh one. Now, they're digging out of an extremely deep hole in trying to bring workers back."

"I think we are going to see a lot of people coming back into the labor force. As we're seeing a lot of jobs advertised, is it going to be a high enough level to accommodate people coming back in a couple

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