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FRIDAY,
JULY 31, 2020

The Chief

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\$1

VOL. 129, NO. 12

Sewage plant failure



The Beaver Boat Ramp at the Clatskanie River has been closed due to a city sewer plant incident.

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The Clatskanie Sewer Plant has experienced a failure of its clarifier seal, which is used to contain effluent during the treatment process.

As a result of the failure, E.coli levels have reached a higher than specified level for treated water being discharged into the Clatskanie River.

The City of Clatskanie, in cooperation with Columbia County, has closed the Beaver Boat ramp due to its proximity to the sewer plant. Signs have been posted downriver and upriver from the sewer plant warning of the hazard.

City of Clatskanie officials are recommending no swimming or water activities on the Clatskanie River near the plant.

City Manager Greg Hinkelmann said the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is aware of the situation and has been advising the city.

"We will let the public know when the E.coli levels have returned to normal once the repair to the plant has been completed," Hinkelmann said.

Parts have been ordered from an out of state company and Hinkelmann said work to repair the failed seal could be completed by next week.

Clatskanie Festival this weekend



The 2019 Clatskanie City Festival featured this cake walk.

Courtesy photo

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CHRISTINE MENGES
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The Clatskanie Festival is returning for its fifth year this year, with different guidelines in place this time around due to COVID-19 precautions. It will be held from Friday, July 31 to Sunday, Aug. 2 at Poysky's Park in Clatskanie, and as always, "Let the light shine" is the theme.

Festival organizer Lori Sherman talked to The Chief about the new restrictions that will be in place. Because Columbia County is in Phase 2 of reopening, gatherings at outdoor venues – including the events that will be held at the Clatskanie Festival – are restricted to up to 250 people.

"The only events we've kept are the ones where we can social distance," Sherman said.

That restriction will be enforced at all events at Poysky's Park. Sherman had originally planned to use both the park and an empty city lot behind FINS Custom Tackle and Café, but said she decided against it because enforcing social distancing was easier at the park.

One of the most popular events,

the lawnmower racing, will be held there on Sunday, Aug. 2 from 2 p.m. – 3 p.m.

"We have enough room to have people there," Sherman said.

Because it's a family event, families will be able to be placed together, Sherman said. For seats, Colvin's restaurant in Clatskanie and people in the community donated buckets, and people are also allowed to bring their own lawnchairs, according to Sherman.

There will be hay bails out as well, and hand sanitation stations will be available on site, Sherman said.

There is one event that will not be at Poysky's Park and that is another very popular one, according to Sherman – the evening light parade, which starts at 9 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 1, and will go down Nehalem Street. Each year, local organizations register and decorate their own floats with lights that glow in the dark. This year something unique will take place: the grand marshal will be approximately 30 different people, who are all essential workers, Sherman said.

According to Sherman, the essential workers come from all over and hold many different jobs, from grocery store staff to healthcare

workers. They will lead the parade on foot, in cars, and on floats, Sherman said.

Animals featured in the parade will be in their trailers throughout, so that they don't have to turn around and go back the same route when the parade is over, Sherman said.

The next day, from 12 p.m. – 3 p.m. on Sunday, Aug. 2, there will be live music, again with social distancing measures in place.

"We're going to have plenty of room for people to sit and listen to music," Sherman said. She also said she is thinking of having an open mic karaoke.

Other staple events will be taking place throughout the weekend, like the cake walk, the petting zoo, and an all-school class reunion, all with their own social distancing protocols in place. At the cake walk, the squares of carpet for participants to step on will be spaced six feet apart, and baked goods will come pre-packaged from Safeway and Stuffy's Restaurant in Longview, Washington, according to Sherman. The petting zoo will have each individual animal enclosed in a separate cage, with the children allowed to enter one

Rainier teen facing murder charges

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A Rainier juvenile is facing murder charges after he allegedly drove through a gathering at the Hunt Creek rock pit in Clatsop County, killing one person and injuring others.

On July 25, at approximately 4 a.m. Clatsop County deputies were called to the Hunt Creek rock pit, east of Nicolai Mountain off Highway 30, for a report of a hit and run.

Deputies investigating the incident learned that a large gathering had occurred at the rock pit and Kyle Snook, a juvenile male from Rainier, left the area after allegedly driving his vehicle through a crowd of people.

Three people in the crowd received serious injuries from being hit by the vehicle. Robert Betschart, of Rainier, died as a result of his injuries, according to the Clatsop County Sheriff's Office.

Snook was later arrested in Rainier.

The Clatsop County Major Crimes Team arrested Snook who is charged with murder in the second degree, manslaughter in the first degree, five counts of felony vehicular assault and driving under the influence of intoxicants. Snook is being held at the Cowlitz Detention Facility. Young offenders are sent to that facility because Clatsop County does not have a juvenile detention center.

Clatsop County District Attorney Ron Brown told The Chief he is asking that the case be moved to adult court.

Snook is scheduled to appear at a status hearing Aug. 5.

Brown said the investigation is expanding in an effort to reach any witnesses that might have been at the scene of the incident. Investigators are requesting anyone with information about the case to call Clatsop County Detective Justin Dersham, at 503-325-8635.

New school year challenges

MAX KIRKENDALL

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As COVID-19 case counts continue to rise throughout the State of Oregon, Governor Kate Brown has announced what metrics school districts must meet in order to reopen for in-person instruction during the 2020-21 school year.

During a press conference Tuesday afternoon, July 28, with Dr. Dean Sidelinger, state epidemiologist and state health officer, as well as Oregon Department of Education (ODE) Director Colt Gill, Brown addressed the need for in-person instruction this fall and said the State has been following guidance from the American Academy of Pediatrics, which states that 'only with low rates of disease and adequate safeguards in place should schools return to in-person instruction.'

"Good schools improve health and we need to be cautious so schools don't become places where the virus spreads," Brown said.

In June, the State started creating guidance for school districts in Oregon, giving them three options: all in-person instruction, all distance learning instruction, or a hybrid model, which is a mix of both in person on online instruction. Brown said planning for the next school year will still be a local decision for school districts.

The metrics

However, the state has created new requirements/metrics that will help schools make decisions based on health data, Brown said. These metrics were detailed

by Dr. Sidelinger.

"Parents and guardians need to have confidence that they will not have to risk their children's health for the sake of their learning, or the learning for the sake of their health by sending kids back to school," Sidelinger noted. "There's no simple statewide answer for Oregon. We need to get our students back to class, but how we do it depends on a number of important factors."

The State has considered several factors when coming up with their metrics. Factors include: Prevalence of the virus in the particular community, availability of testing, capacity of their local health care system and readiness of local public health to contain outbreaks that may occur.

The first metrics include the level of disease the State would prefer to see in a concentrated area in order for schools to reopen safely. Ideally at the state level they will look to be at or below five percent of positive tests over seven consecutive days for three weeks.

At the county level, schools can open for in person instruction if cases drop below 10 per 100,000 people in the population in the proceeding seven days for three weeks. Additionally, positive tests must be at or below five percent during that time.

Sidelinger listed several exceptions to this metric. First included in-person education for students kindergarten through third grade.

"Studies show that our younger students, particularly those in kindergarten through third grade and kids under 10 years old, have lower rates of illness and transmission than older children and



Clatskanie Elementary School is set to reopen this fall under state guidelines ensuring the health and safety of students, teachers and staff.

adults," Brown said. "Providing nurturing and in-person relationships and learning to our youngest children is absolutely critical to developing the reading and language skills and social development necessary for their long term success."

The second exception is for remote and rural districts with under 100 students, which will be permitted to offer on site instruction. These communities often lack online capabilities for distance learning and are in smaller cohorts, according to Sidelinger.

The third exception is for students with disabilities or specific education needs, who will be permitted for on-site education.

Sidelinger said the exceptions may be utilized only if the virus is not actively circulating in the community, meaning the rate in the specific county is less than 30 cases per 100,000 people in a week for three consecutive

weeks and the test positivity is at or below five percent for three weeks.

The second metrics were created in case case counts continue to increase. If cases are at 20 per 100,000 people or higher or the positivity rate exceeds 7.5 percent, schools will begin planning to potentially move to distance learning.

Case counts

If case counts reach 30 per 100,000 people or higher and the positivity rate exceeds 10 percent, schools should move to distance learning, according to Sidelinger.

Currently, the state of Oregon is at 50 cases per 100,000 people and the test positivity is approaching five percent. Meaning case rates are higher than they should be to reopen schools, said Sidelinger.

In May, the Oregon case rate dropped to 1 case per 100,000 people, which gives

Sidelinger optimism that the state can get back to that transmission rate.

"We all have a role to play," Sidelinger said. "Gather in small groups, keep your distance and cover your face. We're seeing some glimmers of hope as Oregonians follow these guidelines... The total number of cases began to decrease in the past week, hospitalizations are leveling off and our test positivity is declining."

Brown said the state will continue to take a 'cautious and careful' approach to protect public health when reopening in-person instruction in schools. She also stated equity continues to be at the forefront of their decision making, saying that many students have struggled to receive high level education since schools originally closed.

"I am absolutely unwilling to lose an entire school year for kids," Brown said. "A year that could be foundational to the life-long opportunities for thousands of Oregon students. I will push... and I will demand nothing but excellence from our districts and educators. But it is also incumbent on all of us to take every measure to slow the disease so that we can get our kids get back into school as soon as possible."

Distance Learning funds

With that in mind, Brown said she has decided to dip into the Emergency Education Relief Fund by releasing \$28 million for public schools to use for distance learning. The funding will be used to provide mobile hotspots for students, com-

puters, online curriculum and teacher training.

ODE Director Colt Gill also addressed the potential of online/distance learning for the fall year but made a point in saying that distance learning in the fall will be different than it looked in spring, as many school districts rushed into a new curriculum model.

"This fall's comprehensive distance learning guidance has rigorous requirements for teacher training, family engagement, a common platform for students in each school, daily engagement between educators and students, social, emotional and mental health supports, access to quality grade level curriculum and assessment of student progress through Oregon's academic content standards," Gill said.

Gill said they are also addressing inequities for some students in rural communities by creating requirements for access to technology, school meals and help for students with specific learning needs. The State funding will address the needs directly.

With a plan for distance learning in place, Gill said the main goal is still to return to in-person instruction.

"We all, as Oregonians, have a part to play in that," Gill said. "Opening school to in-person instruction is not a one way journey. If cases increase in local communities, schools will need to move back to comprehensive distance learning to further mitigate spread in that community."

Follow daily developments here online and in-depth reports in the Friday print editions of The Chief.

Billions in federal pandemic relief pending

CHRISTINE MENGES

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Courtesy photo
Sen. Jeff Merkley responds to an audience member's question at the online Columbia County town hall held Wednesday morning, July 29.

Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-Oregon) said the U.S. Senate is working on multiple priorities, from the fourth coronavirus emergency relief bill to police brutality to extending unemployment benefits, all topics Merkley discussed with Columbia County residents during an electronic town hall.

Merkley held the meeting from his Washington, D.C. office Wednesday morning, July 29.

COVID-19 relief

Regarding the coronavirus emergency relief bill, Merkley said there are two versions, one that the House of Representatives passed two months ago, which the U.S. Senate has not yet acted on, and one that the senate majority released yesterday, which Merkley said was done without bi-partisan negotiation and which looks very different from the one proposed by the House.

According to Merkley, the Senate Bill allocates \$3 billion towards helping citizens with their rent or mortgage in order to avoid eviction, while the House Bill allocates \$175 billion. The House Bill supports programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), while the Senate Bill does not, Merkley said, adding that the Senate Bill also does not support education.

"What I'm portraying here is a vast different," Merkley said. "We've got a lot of work to do. We're hoping to have a bill through Senate by the end of next

week but it will require intense negotiations. These are really exceptional, challenging times."

Fed troops in Portland

Merkley also addressed paramilitary tactics being carried out against protesters in Portland and said the troops, who are almost always unidentified, another unlawful tactic, according to Merkley, were to be removed by Thursday, July 30.

Merkley released a statement following Governor Kate Brown's announcement that federal forces from the Department of Homeland Security would be withdrawing from their occupation of downtown Portland.

"This announcement is an important step in ending the deployment of Trump's secret police on the streets of America," he said. "These forces—with no agency or unique identification—have attacked peaceful protesters night after night and swept a number into unmarked vans. These militia-style attacks on free speech and the right to assemble have no place in our democratic republic and must end. Trump's strategy to shift attention away from Black Lives Matter and the reform of systemic racism must not succeed."

Tear gas, pepper spray, flash bang grenades, and rubber bullets aimed at close range to the heads of individuals have all been tactics the troops have used against peaceful protesters, Merkley said.

"You don't shoot people with impact munitions, rubber bullets, you don't aim at their heads," Merkley said.

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Audience engagement

Several residents from Columbia County asked questions about unemployment benefits, rental relief, police brutality, and COVID-19 precautions.

Merkley responded to one resident's question regarding unemployment benefits saying that the Senate is trying to extend unemployment insurance support at \$600 a week, which is now set to expire on July 31, and is trying to keep the moratorium on evictions in place.

The unemployment insurance extension bill would allow for an additional 13 weeks of federally funded unemployment benefits for individuals who have exhausted their 26 weeks of state unemployment benefits, according to an information page on Merkley's website.

"Next week we'll know if we're good on that or not," Merkley said.

Diane Benson, a homecare worker who lives in Clatskanie, asked about the federal government's role in curtailing the spread of COVID-19 in congregate settings such as prisons. Benson said one of her patients has a son who was her primary caregiver but is now incarcerated.

"Her son is one of many others that qualify under new ruling of release of inmates who are not violent," Benson told Merkley. "What is going on in that area as far as reduction of transmission of virus in prisons?"

Benson asked if her patient's son would qualify to be released.

"The conversation on who's released isn't a federal conversation," Merkley responded. "I don't have much to share on how that is going or how they've revised standards to reduce contagion."

One resident from Scappoose, who said she had not yet received unemployment benefits, asked about what she could do to receive them.

Merkley said that in his office, representatives can call the state unemployment office

and say they have a constituent who has not yet received their unemployment benefits, and sometimes the constituent will receive their benefits right away.

Merkley noted he has heard firsthand accounts of individuals receiving unemployment benefits after months without them and the relief they feel after being able to catch up on all expenses. Merkley said extending unemployment benefits is one of the major priorities he has been working on with the state.

"I certainly hope we can extend the \$600," Merkley said.

To close out the Town Hall, Merkley shared his thoughts on the state of democracy in the United States.

"How do we make our republic function as government by and for the people? It has become profoundly different. Passing a bill on good housing policy now takes a supermajority. [We've got] lots of work to do to put our nation back on track," Merkley said.

Merkley's July 29 town hall was his 36th of the year.

The following is additional details requested by The Chief concerning legislation discussed at the Columbia County town hall.

GOP BILL Renter assistance

- \$3.3 billion total
- \$2.2 billion in Section 8 vouchers

• \$1 billion to public housing authorities in a vague, unclear channel

HOUSE BILL Renter assistance

- \$75 billion for homeowners' assistance
- \$100 billion for a rental assistance fund to capture folks that are outside of typical support systems
- Additional funding in CDBG and ESG grants.

The Credit Report and Eviction Defense in Turbulent (CREDIT) Emergencies Act of 2020 would prevent or erase unpaid rent, property evictions, or unpaid judgments that occur during the coronavirus pandemic from negatively impacting Americans' credit scores.

The Emergency Water and Energy is a Human Right Act would protect Americans' access to electricity, running water, and other critical utilities during the crisis by barring any utilities that receive federal support in the next round of relief funding from shutting off power or water to consumers.

Additionally, the bill would require providers to reconnect households that have been disconnected during the pandemic and allocate \$1.5 billion in grants to assist low-income households paying a high proportion of household income for drinking water and wastewater service. Preventing Authoritarian Policing Tactics on America's Streets Act would block the Trump administration from deploying federal forces as a shadowy paramilitary against Americans:

- Require individual and agency identification on uniforms of officers and prevent unmarked vehicles from being used in arrests.

• Limit federal agents' crowd control activities to federal property and its immediate vicinity, unless their presence is specifically requested by both the mayor and governor.

- Require disclosure on an agency website within 24 hours of deployments specifying the number of personnel and purposes of deployment.

• Make arrests in violation of these rules unlawful.

For more information, contact Sen. Merkley's office by calling 503-326-3386, or visit <https://www.merkley.senate.gov/connect/office-locations>

Clatskanie Swimming Pool

(503) 728-2757 clatskaniepool@cni.net

August 3rd through 7th

Morning

- 6:00 - 7:00 AM: Deep End (6) & Shallow End (4) Water Exercise
- 7:15 - 8:15 AM: Deep End (6) & Shallow End (4) Water Exercise
- 8:30 - 9:00 AM: Levels 4 through 6
- 9:15 - 9:45 AM: Levels 1 through 6
- 10:00 - 10:30 AM: Levels 1 through 6
- 10:45-11:15 AM: Tots through level 4

Afternoon/Evening

- 3:30 - 4:00 PM: Tots through level 4
- 4:15 - 4:45 PM: Levels 1 through 6
- 5:00 - 5:30 PM: Levels 1 through 6
- 5:45-6:15 PM: Family Lesson
- 6:30-7:00 PM: Family Lesson

Prices

Water Exercise:
Daily Fee: \$3.00, Weekly: \$10.00

Family Lessons*:
2 children: \$35.00

Each additional child is \$5.00

Lessons*: \$20.00 per child

*A family member is required to be in the pool with each child for Levels Tots through 2.

Things to remember:

- Register only by phone or email
- Enter through lobby only

• 1 person (family) in lobby at any time

• Lockers are not in use

• Take a cleansing shower

• Take your belongings on pool deck

• After program, exit through side gate, no showers.

All this is very new for us. Please be patient and don't hesitate to ask questions about our new protocols.

Please note that the weekly/daily schedule is subject to change at any time.

Registration for the above programs begins Monday, July 20th

Call or email to register for your program!

State issues seed warning

STAFF REPORT
chiefnews@countrymedia.net

The Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) is aware that people across the country, including Oregon, are receiving unsolicited packages of seeds from China in recent days.

Often the package is labeled as jewelry and the recipients say they did not order jewelry or seeds.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is warning Americans not to plant the unsolicited package of seeds. ODA is working closely with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and the Department of Homeland Security's Customs and Border Protection on this issue. The

goal is to collect the seeds and test them to determine if they are a concern to agriculture or the environment.

Anyone who receives an unsolicited package of seeds from China should immediately contact their state department of agriculture or the APHIS state plant health director and follow these steps:

- Save the seeds and the package they came in, including the mailing label.
- Do not open the seed packets.
- Do not plant any of the seeds.
- If the packets are already opened, place all materials (seeds and packaging) into a zip lock bag and seal it.
- If the seeds have been planted, leave the seeds/plants in the ground until

you receive further instruction from your state department of agriculture or APHIS.

If you have received a package of seeds that you did not order, please include the packaging that includes the return address and send the shipment to:

Oregon Department of Agriculture Plant Protection and Conservation 635 Capitol Street NE, Suite 100, Salem, Oregon 97301

If you have already opened the seed package, please place the entire package in a plastic bag and seal it and then send it to ODA. Do not plant any of the seeds. If you already planted the seeds, please contact Dr. Helmuth Rogg, ODA Plant Programs Director at 503-986-4662 or hrogg@oda.state.or.us.



Photo courtesy of the Oregon Department of Forestry and fire districts in Columbia County are urging caution as extreme heat and dry conditions heighten the wildfire danger.

Wildfire danger increasing

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Continued extreme heat and dry conditions are causing the wildfire danger to rise in Columbia County and other areas across the state.

All Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) districts in western Oregon have raised their fire danger level to high (yellow) except for the coastal counties of Clatsop, Coos, Curry and Tillamook, which remain at moderate fire danger.

Counties experiencing high fire danger in western Oregon include Benton, Clackamas, Columbia, Jackson, Josephine, Lane, Lincoln, Linn, Marion, Multnomah, Polk, Washington and Yamhill.

"Fighting fires in hot and dry conditions is extremely taxing on those who are trained to protect our lands

from fire," ODF's Western Lane District unit forester Chet Behling said. "We are asking that our public remain mindful of this as they conduct activities throughout the coming days."

The Chief reported earlier this year that the National Interagency Fire Center's (NIFC) National Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook report outlined continued drought concerns in much of Oregon.

The NIFC long range outlook forecasts warmer and drier than average conditions for Oregon and Washington through July.

"This would tend toward worsening the situation in the dead fuels where moisture levels are already low," the Outlook states. "Wildfire potential will rise above average in late June and July if the forecast for unusually warm and dry weather per-

sists through spring and early summer."

Clatskanie and Rainier fire officials said most of the wildfires they respond to during the summer are human caused. A lit cigarette tossed onto dry grass, an illegal burn and agricultural accidents can lead to significant wildfires. Under Oregon law, those found responsible for illegal fires can be held responsible for the suppression costs of the wildfires.

Various potential fire-starting activities are more closely restricted during periods of declared high fire danger, according to the ODF.

Specific restrictions may vary, so check with your local ODF district office or the online state map at <https://gisapps.odf.oregon.gov/firerestrictions/PFR.html>.

You can also check there for changes to fire danger levels.

State agencies issue waterway warning



Courtesy photo

The Oregon Marine Board urges waterway users to be aware that rivers fed by snow melt run cold even on hot days. And swift currents hidden beneath the surface can catch swimmers off guard.



Jeremy C. Ruark / The Chief

The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department advises that the Pacific Ocean is a powerful force. Even the strongest swimmers can be vulnerable to rip currents — fast-moving channels that flow out to sea.

to protect public health, and recommends visitors bring — and wear — their own jackets," Massey said. "Accidents happen quickly, and there isn't time to put on a jacket in the middle of an emergency."

For information on proper fit and caring for your life jacket, visit oregon.gov/osmb/boater-info/Pages/Life-Jackets.

Be Safe Exploring the Beach

The Pacific Ocean is a powerful force, and all visitors should know how to stay safe and teach children the same. Even the strongest swimmers can be vulnerable to rip currents — fast-moving channels that flow out to sea. Choppy dark water and floating debris serve as warnings of rip currents.

"If you get caught in a rip current, don't panic," OPRD safety program coordinator Robert Smith said. "Swim parallel to the beach until you are out of the rip, then swim back to the beach."

Smith said climbing or hiking along beachside cliffs can be extremely dangerous. Cliff edges may look stable, but many can crumble easily with the slightest weight.

"Taking one step closer to the edge may be all that is needed to crumble a bluff,"

Smith said. "Please stay on trails, respect signs and stay behind fences."

Find more beach safety tips at stateparks.oregon.gov.

Water Recreation and COVID-19

OPRD and OSMB officials said it is important to follow these safety tips every summer, and especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, when first responders are stretched thin and worry about exposure to the virus.

When selecting a spot to splash, visitors should choose one close to home and be ready to turn back if the parking lot is full. Visitors should bring everything they need to avoid making unnecessary stops.

Additionally, visitors are asked to wear face covers in tight outdoor spaces such as trailheads, docks and boat ramps.

"Help us keep parks and beaches open by following these precautions and ensuring these areas are safer for everyone," OPRD spokeswoman Jo Niehaus said.

For additional safe recreation tips during the pandemic, visit OPRD's COVID-19 Day-use Guide. Recreational boating information is at oregon.gov/osmb/info/Pages/COVID-19.

Safety Tips for Rivers and Lakes

Be aware that rivers fed by snowmelt run cold even on hot days. And swift currents hidden beneath the surface can catch swimmers off guard, according to OSMB spokeswoman Ashley Massey.

"If you get caught in the current, know how to float with your feet pointing downstream and have your life jacket straps secured to the jacket so they don't get tangled in any underwater snags," Massey said.

Visitors heading out to a lake or river that typically has a life jacket loaner station will need to bring their own. OSMB and OPRD closed all loaner stations for 2020 due to sanitation concerns related to COVID-19.

The Marine Board supports closing the stations



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•VIEWPOINTS•

Reopening schools challenge

BRAD WITT
Chief Guest Column

Oregon Governor Kate Brown held a news conference this week to layout a framework for reopening schools this fall. She warned that this coming school year will be unlike any other school year on record.

Oregon school districts have been working on plans for the 2020-21 school year using the Oregon Department of Education's (ODE) Ready Schools, Safe Learners guidance. The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) has been working with ODE and the Early Learning division to develop science-based COVID-19 criteria for school district officials to use while making operating decisions for the fall.

What the metrics mean

Under the metrics described for school in-person learning, each county must have 10 or fewer cases per 100,000 residents over seven days, with the countywide and state test positivity rate at 5 percent or less over the span of the week. Currently, Oregon does not meet that standard. In the past week, case rates across the state were about 50 per 100,000, with the positivity rate approaching 5 percent.

Fall focus

Given the current spread of COVID-19 in both rural and urban communities this summer, most Oregon students will need to begin the school year by focusing on distance learning or will have a hybrid model combining online learning and in-person classroom instruction part of the week. Districts have been developing plans to provide high quality education to all students, including those who were disproportionately impacted by the move to distance learning last spring. Schools are beginning

to announce their plans for this fall, and very few are planning to have students physically attend class full-time. In fact, Portland Public Schools has already said it will have online classes only until at least November 5. Other large districts, including Beaverton, Tigard-Tualatin and North Clackamas are also planning for distance learning.

Education is critically important, and the goal of these guidelines is to keep Oregonians safe, and to minimize the spread of the disease. The total amount of confirmed and presumptive cases in Oregon since the start of the pandemic has surpassed 17,400. At least 303 people have died.

The new metrics for school reopening came as OHA reported a record number of 14 deaths in a single day. Studies have shown that children ages 10-19 do spread the virus, however transmission by children younger than age 10 is rare. Metrics for Kindergarten through grade 3 classrooms will be looser, but in-person instruction can only begin if there are fewer than 30 cases per 100,000 and if COVID-19 is not actively spreading in the school. The positivity rate must remain at 5 percent or less. If cases surge, schools that have reopened will have to transition to distance learning.

Classroom face masks

When schools do reopen, students, teachers and school staff will be required to wear face masks. The ODE is allocating \$5 million for face mask distribution to school districts to meet this mandate. Districts offering in-person instruction will need to create plans that include training for staff and community notification if they need to switch back to distance learning due to increasing COVID-19 infection rates.

For many students, fami-

lies and communities, high school sports play an important role in personal growth, team building and civic pride, and I'm looking forward to the days when we can once again enjoy the camaraderie of rousing competitions.

However, Governor Brown says this coming sports year is also going to look different. There will be opportunities for non-contact, limited competitions, but we don't have all the details yet. The state is currently working on those guidelines which will be released soon.

Lawmakers will be returning to Salem in the next few weeks, after the Governor calls a Special Session to deal with the budget shortfall brought on by the pandemic-related economic shut down. We will consider reductions in agency budgets, cuts in programs and activities, and tapping reserves to rebalance the budget. As always, I'll keep the needs of HD 31 as my top priority as we work to make the budgetary adjustments. For that reason, I'm asking people to weigh in on the issues, and let me know your thoughts and concerns.

Capital Building closed

As is the case with many public spaces, the Oregon Capitol Building remains closed to the public, but my office staff and I monitor our email and phone daily, and we are working to assist constituents. If you need help, have an issue or concern please feel free to contact my office.

Please take care of yourself and each other. Be Safe.

Rep. Brad Witt serves House District 31. He may be reached at:

- Email: Rep.BradWitt@oregonlegislature.gov
- Telephone: 503-986-1431 • Capitol Building: 900 Court St NE, H-382, Salem, OR, 97301

- Website: <http://www.oregonlegislature.gov/witt>



Weekly Online Poll / Last Week's Results

Do you agree that schools should not open until the pandemic cases slow significantly?

Yes No

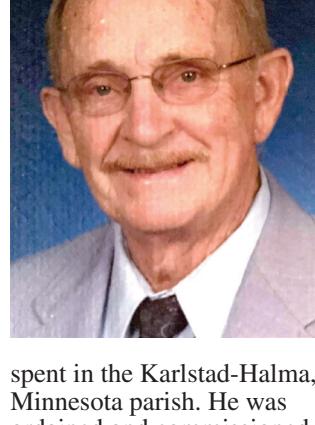
Because of the sharp increase in pandemic cases, should Governor Brown shut down the state again?

36% Yes 64% No

Vote online at thechiefnews.com

•OBITUARIES•

Glenn Clayton Hetland April 12, 1930 ~ July 23, 2020



Glenn Clayton Hetland, 90, of Clatskanie, Oregon passed away peacefully, on July 23, 2020, after a brief hospitalization stay following a fall in his home. Glenn was born April 12, 1930 in Cooperstown, North Dakota and grew up on his family's farm.

After graduating from Cooperstown High School, Glenn attended Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota, majoring in biology. He went on to teach science and music at high schools in Eagle Bend and Herman, Minnesota. Around that time, Glenn married his high school sweetheart Jane Ann Burk. They started a family and followed the Lord's calling by attending Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota. His internship was

spent in the Karlstad-Halma, Minnesota parish. He was ordained and commissioned as a missionary to Brazil in 1961. He served congregations in Parana, Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina.

Upon returning to the

United States in 1970, Glenn

served three congregations

in and around Beltrami, Minnesota for five years. Glenn then accepted a call in Van Nuys, California, where he served until 1995. His semi-retirement included a series of interim positions in California and Arizona. Glenn and Janeil then retired for good in Clatskanie, Oregon. It the last of many moves and one which Glenn often described as guided by God's hand.

He loved golf, his family and friends, and bringing the good news of God's love to people around the world.

Glenn is survived by his wife Janeil; children, LaNita (Javier), Craig (Olga), Martin (Jennifer) and Steve (Barbara); and grandchildren, Emily and Elise Ajun, Charlie, Jason, Lauren, Evan, Grace and Quinn Hetland.

Thomas L. Berg Sept. 16, 1942 ~ March 12, 2020

Thomas L. Berg passed away on March 12, 2020 at the age of 77 in St. Helens, Oregon. Please join Tom's children for a celebration of his life from 1 p.m. – 3 p.m. on Sat., August 8, 2020 at Tom's home, 830 West Street, St. Helens, Oregon.

•VOICES OF THE COMMUNITY•

Timber Unity Support

After four months of lock down and watching way too much bad news on TV, I took a road trip through the State and spent the night in Klamath Falls.

I was very surprised to see how many Timber Unity signs there are and how vast

our farming and timber lands are across our State. Obviously, I was aware of Timber Unity as I live in Columbia County, which is almost all covered in timber.

When I got back I looked up Timber Unity and realized they support farmers, and working families as well as the timber industry. During these uncertain times ahead of us, I felt that supporting Timber Unity is

the right thing to do for me in lieu of only supporting local endeavors. This helps all Oregon working families, farmers and timber, State-wide.

I would like to ask you to check out their Facebook page and see if supporting them is right for you also.

Thank you very much,

Jeff Kemp
Warren

The Chief (USPS 116-360) is published weekly by Country Media, Inc.
1805 Columbia Blvd,
St. Helens, OR 97051

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Write to Us

We want to hear from you and encourage you to write letters to the editor. Because of space limitations, shorter letters have a better chance of being printed. We may edit your letter for style, grammar and clarity, although we do as little editing as possible. If you don't want your letter printed under those conditions, just let us know. Thank-you letters are limited to a general thanks and summary of an issue or action. We reserve the right to exclude lists of people, organizations and businesses. Letters received after noon on Friday may not be in time for the following Wednesday's paper. To verify authenticity, all letters must be signed and include your address and daytime phone number. We won't print your street address or phone number (just your city of residence). Submissions may be emailed to chiefnews@countrymedia.net, sent via mail, or dropped off at the office.

Send Letters To:

The Chief Attn: News Editor
PO Box 1153, St. Helens, OR 97051
Email Letters To: chiefnews@countrymedia.net

Letters Policy

The Chief welcomes letters of 250 words or fewer. Letters are subject to editing for length, clarity or grammar. They should be concise, to the point and original. Letters dealing with disputes or containing criticism of private individuals or businesses will not be published. All letters must be signed (unless emailed) and include the author's full name, address and daytime telephone number (for verification purposes only). Letters will be published at the editor's discretion. Letters also may be published on our website.

Obituaries

Obituaries received after noon on Wednesday may not be in time for that Friday's paper. Obituaries may be emailed to chiefnews@countrymedia.net, sent via mail, or dropped off at the office. We also accept obituaries written by funeral homes. Include the address and daytime phone number of the person who submitted the obituary, so we can verify information as necessary.

Guest Commentary

We welcome all variety of community viewpoints in the newspaper. These longer, guest opinions might be columns written by newsmakers, public officials or organization representatives. Or you might just have interesting thoughts to share and a penchant for writing. If you'd like to submit a guest column for publication, contact us at (503) 397-0116 or chiefnews@countrymedia.net.

All columns are subject to editing for style, grammar and clarity. However, views expressed in guest columns are independent and do not represent those of The Chief, its staff or Country Media, Inc.

Editorial Policy

Opinions expressed on this page are independent of The Chief views and are solely those of the writers expressing them.

Marketplace

It's easy to place a classified ad in The Chief. Just call 503.397.0116

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OREGON DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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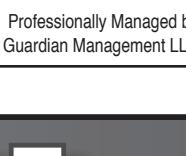
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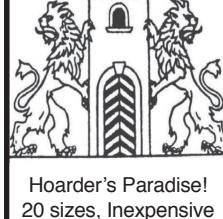
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Public Notices

PROTECTING YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW

CC20-1283

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE STATE OF OREGON FOR THE COUNTY OF COLUMBIA

No. 20CV02279
SUMMONS Constance D. Budge, Plaintiff, v. Jackie L. Gump, Trustee, or his successor(s) in trust, under the Evelyn B. Boursaw Revocable Living Trust dated August 8, 2012, an individual, Defendants. To: Jackie L. Gump, 28997 Hirtzel Rd., Rainier, OR, 97048. You are hereby required to appear and defend the complaint filed against you in the above

entitled action within thirty (30) days from the date of service of this summons upon you and in case of your failure to do so, for want thereof, plaintiff(s) will apply to the court for relief demanded in the complaint. NOTICE TO THE DEFENDANT: READ THIS CAREFULLY! You must "appear" in this case or the other side will win automatically. To "appear" you must file with the

court a legal paper called a "motion" or "answer." The "motion" or "answer" must be given to the court clerk or administrator within 30 days along with the required filing fee. It must be in proper form and have proof of service on the plaintiff's attorney or, if the plaintiff does not have an attorney, proof of service upon the plaintiff. If you have any questions, you should see an attorney immediately. If

you need help in finding an attorney, you may contact the Oregon State Bar's Lawyer Referral Service online at www.oregonstatebar.org or by calling (503) 684-3763 (in the Portland metropolitan area) or toll-free elsewhere in Oregon at 9800) 452-7636. STATE OF OREGON: County of Columbia, Steven D. Petersen, OSB# 73235, PO Box 459, 612 West B Street, Rainier, OR 97048. 503-556-4120.

ordinance clarifying business license fees; discussion about the Columbia County Harm Reduction Program; discussion on Non-Profit Building Owners Base-rate suspension; discussion on the resumption of Utility Account Shut Offs and Late Fees. An updated agenda will be available at City Hall by July 31st, 2020.

CC20-1284

CITY OF CLATSCHANIE CLATSCHANIE CITY COUNCIL MEETING NOTICE

The Clatskanie City Council will meet on Wednesday, August 5th, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, 75 South Nehalem St. (Clatskanie Cultural Center, 2nd floor). Agenda items include, but are not limited to: approval of the minutes of the July 1st, 2020 regular meeting; second reading of an

The Public Notice deadline is Wednesdays by noon.

Late submissions are not guaranteed to make it into the paper.

Community Justice Department future

CHRISTINE MENGES
chronicle2@countrymedia.net

Discussions have begun on whether or not to merge the Columbia County Community Justice Department with the Columbia County Sheriff's Office (CCSO).

The justice department is currently its own entity and overseen by the Columbia County Board of Commissioners.

The merger was triggered by the retirement this month of Janet Evans, the justice department's director. Columbia County Sheriff Brian Pixley has submitted a proposal to the Columbia County Board of Commissioners to combine the Community Justice Department with the CCSO.

The Community Justice Department was created in 2012 after the dissolution of the community corrections department. The Community Justice Department has two divisions – an adult and a juvenile department. The department is responsible for reducing criminal contact, according to its website.

"Our department partners

with community groups and human services agencies, and provides a continuum of supervision, incarceration and programming to manage offender behavior," an online information page about the program states.

The same information page states the work is done through partnering with the Oregon Department of Corrections, the Oregon Youth Authority and local criminal justice agencies. The adult division supervises criminal offenders sentenced to probation by the court or parole by a correctional facility. The juvenile division fulfills a similar role for those under age 18.

Benefits

Pixley and Evans were present at a county commission meeting earlier this month to discuss the pros and cons of the potential merge.

The benefits would be

shared resources between the programs, including training,

according to Pixley, who said the CCSO, which provides

some training each year to

the probation staff, would

be able to provide the staff

with additional training every year.

Better infrastructure, which Evans said allows for communicating with individuals higher up the ladder, was something that Evans noted as an additional benefit that she said has been made apparent to her as an executive director.

"One of the biggest challenges in this role has been that lack of support in some ways," Evans said. "When you're dealing with elected officials and they're not an elected official, and then you're dealing with unions and you're getting hit at all angles, sometimes it's really challenging if you don't have the necessary infrastructure to go up a ladder."

Pixley said one potential disadvantage of the combining of the departments would be the loss of the current Community Justice Department's autonomy. Probation officers would report directly to Pixley under the new system, and Pixley admitted to not having a lot of knowledge about probation.

"My issue is lack of expertise," Pixley said. "It's a big learning curve, but I have

been in touch with a couple of the sheriffs from around the state that have experience in this, including a county who actually has adult and juvenile under their umbrella. So I have people that I can lean on."

Controversy

The potential merger hit a nerve with some county residents, who voiced their concerns during the county board of commissioners public comment time during the meeting.

"I personally find that (the merger) to be pretty problematic and concerning," Warren resident Sabbath Mikelson said. "Sheriff's departments and rehabilitative departments are separate. Rehabilitative programs require stuff that's not policing."

"This is not something we should be doing right now," Scappoose resident Carroll Sweet said. "I'm not putting this in terms of criticizing the sheriff. It doesn't make sense, logically. We have had a lot of good presentations from Community Justice. It's an interesting and very worthwhile program, and I

think it should stand on its own, with the Board of Commissioners in charge, not the sheriff."

The comments and discussion concerning the proposed county merger come during a time where many citizens across the nation are raising a rallying cry to defund the police – reallocate funding away from police departments and into local government agencies—as a means to curb police brutality. The Community Justice Department is one such local government department exemplified by those who support defunding police.

Next Steps

The commissioners did not immediately embrace Pixley's merger proposal.

Commissioner Margaret Magruder said she wanted to hear judges' thoughts and other counties' success or failure who have done similar programs before making a decision. Both Evans and Pixley recommended doing a trial run of the program, which they both suggested should be longer than one year.

"Whether it's two or three or four years, one year is definitely too short for a trial to judge success," Evans said.

Commissioner Henry Heimuller said he wanted to see a more official proposal before making a decision.

"What I've seen come before us is not what I call a proposal," Heimuller said. "What you presented today, I think is an opinion piece that puts a few things on paper."

Heimuller agreed with Magruder, saying he wanted to see data on successes and failures of similar programs in other counties and recidivism rates based on if the program remains on its own or goes back to the state.

"I don't care what the number is," he said, "whether it's a year or two years, three to five years. I don't care what the trial period is. At the end of that trial period, I want my colleagues and I to be able to say, this is working and here's why. And that's all I need to make an informed decision."

Follow this developing story at thechiefnews.com and in the Friday print editions of The Chief.

Coast Guard's critical role in maritime traffic



Map courtesy of the Coast Guard Sector Columbia River, which contains areas from the Pacific Ocean to Idaho.

CHRISTINE MENGES
chronicle2@countrymedia.net

The Columbia River flows right alongside St. Helens and other Columbia County cities and is home to not only a thriving ecosystem, but also a vibrant transportation industry – an industry that can greatly impact the surrounding area when something goes wrong.

That's where The Maritime Transportation System Plan and the Maritime Transportation System Recovery Unit come in. The two agencies are spearheaded by the United States Coast Guard (USCG) Sector Columbia River. The Astoria-based sector is charged with devising plans to combat anything, from terrorist attacks to oil spills, that might impact traffic on the Columbia River.

The sector comprises an area of responsibility covering 465 miles of the Columbia-Willamette-Snake River System, extending from the Pacific Ocean to Northern Idaho, according to USCG Sector Columbia River Deputy Commander Gretchen Bailey, who said the same river system is home to a \$20 billion transportation system, 50,000 cruise ship passengers, 1,500 foreign vessels and many maritime transportation safety facilities.

Bailey outlined the plan during an editorial meeting July 14, to define the Coast Guard's role in the regional Maritime Transportation System Plan and Maritime Transportation System Recovery Unit as it applies to the states of Oregon, Washington and Idaho.

Bailey explained the purpose of the Coast Guard's focus on the river was to keep track of traffic flowing up and down the Columbia River.

In addition to the traffic, the river system is also the top gateway for American wheat and barley exports, as well as corn, bulk minerals, timber and paper products.

Bailey said, adding that the Columbia River is one of the few port systems in the United States to export more than it imports.

"A major disruption to the Maritime Transportation System would be felt around the world," Bailey said.

The USCG's recovery plan is designed to prevent such disruption.

"The Maritime Transportation System Recovery Plan prevents, responds and recovers from any natural or manmade event that causes disruptions on the Maritime Transportation System on any of those systems: the Columbia-Willamette-Snake River, coastal Oregon, coastal Washington, and other navigable waterways," Bailey said.

A large part of the plan involves holding drills each year according to different scenarios in order to develop a coordinated response for different incidents, Bailey said.

The scenarios are contained in a three-part system made public in the presentation and outlined by USCG Port Security Specialist Jim Merten.

"This recovery plan that we've done is really the first time the Coast Guard has pulled this plan out of the classified level and put it open share department at the local level, at the state level," Merten said.

The first part is Infrastructure Impact, the second is Constrained Operational Capacity and the third is Constrained by Response Operations.

The first involves a natural disaster like an earthquake or flood, or an infrastructure casualty to bridges or roads.

An event like this "requires repair, alternative strategies and vessel traffic control actions by the Captain of the Port prior to resumption of MTS operations," the presentation states.

The second part, Constrained Operational Capacity, is an event without

infrastructure damage that still interrupts cargo or vessel movement, according to Merten.

"Examples are weather events, labor shortage-disruption event, security or casualty causing enhanced cargo movement in other non-impacted ports within the region," Merten said.

The third event, Constrained by Response Operations, includes oil discharge/hazardous substance release, mass rescue operations, or a marine casualty that may or may not involve infrastructure damage, according to Merten, who said in each of the scenarios, the response to it depends on a number of factors and involves the partnerships the USCG has formed with stakeholders.

"We identify and prioritize our goals and find the methods to aid in their recovery," Merten said.

One such scenario Merten used as an example in the Maritime System Transit Recovery Plan was at the Bonneville Lock on the Columbia River that was forced to close for 21 days this past September following the discovery of a leak.

That scenario impacted vessels up and down river, according to Merten. In order to resolve the build-up in traffic, Merten said the USCG Columbia River Sector worked with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and industry partners in order to create a vessel queue, a prioritized order in which vessels would pass through the lock once it was opened. Vessels were prioritized by commodity, Merten said.

"In the Coast Guard, we call these things 'choke points,'" Merten said. "The entire river is a choke point; if something happens in one place, it can back up the whole system."

Read more about the Coast Guard's Columbia River Sector in a special online Salute to the Coast Guard at thechiefnews.com.

Checks in the mail

STAFF REPORT
chiefnews@countrymedia.net

Over the next few weeks, more than 1 million Oregonians who used a debit card to buy gas at Oregon ARCO and am/pm gas stations between January 1, 2011, and August 30, 2013, will receive a check in the mail for \$94.42.

The nonprofit organization Oregon Consumer Justice (OCJ), in partnership with Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum of the Oregon Department of Justice (ODOJ), wants the public to know that the checks are not a scam; they are a settlement from a class action lawsuit against BP.

According to OCJ, 27 percent of the checks from the first round of settlement checks distributed last year were not cashed before their expiration and the organization wants to ensure that doesn't occur this time around. To assure recipients that the settlement checks are valid, they have launched a public awareness campaign and website: www.ThisCheckIsReal.org and in Spanish at www.EsteChequeEsReal.org.

"We always encourage Or-

egonians to be on the look out for scams and to know the signs that something could be a scam," Oregon Attorney General Rosenblum said. "But, in this case, the checks are real, and we want Oregonians to know they are safe to cash this check at the bank. If you used a debit card at an Oregon ARCO and am/pm gas station during this time period, you qualify for this class action settlement. This is your money, and we hope that all Oregonians will help us spread the word."

The mass mailing of settlement checks is the result of a class action lawsuit known as Scharfstein v. BP West Coast Products LLC. The suit was brought against ARCO's owner BP West Coast Products, on behalf of people who used a debit card to buy gas at Oregon ARCO and am/pm gas stations between January 1, 2011, and August 30, 2013. In 2014, the jury and the court concluded that class members in this case were unfairly and illegally charged a \$0.35 debit card fee in violation of Oregon regulations and the Oregon Unfair Trade Practices Act.

The jury verdict resulted in an award of damages of \$409 million.

Henry Kantor, OCJ board chair, said, "Oregon Consumer Justice was launched as a result of this case to advance consumer rights in Oregon through advocacy, research, education and engagement. We felt it is important that Oregonians who have been impacted as a result of this case know that they have a check coming to them, understand that it is their money to keep and also have access to cashing the check even if they don't have a bank account. Especially in this time of community need, \$94.42 can go a long way."

Settlement recipients in the Portland area without a bank account can still get their money, thanks to Beneficial State Bank. A list of their locations can be found at ThisCheckIsReal.org and EsteChequeEsReal.org. Individuals will need to present the check and a valid government-issued photo ID card, and the name on the check must match the ID. Face masks will be required at all participating bank locations.

For more information, visit ThisCheckIsReal.org, EsteChequeEsReal.org and debitcardclassaction.com.

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— frequenting restaurants near your

home is the perfect way to enjoy a variety of delightful culinary experiences. Your local restaurateurs are always happy to serve up diverse dishes that are sure to delight your taste buds. What's more, you'll always get a warm welcome and the most attentive service.

It's never too late to step outside your comfort zone and try something new. So, if you've been meaning to try the pub a couple of blocks away or that pizza place your coworkers keep raving about, now's as good a time as ever. Who knows — maybe you'll even become a regular.

What are you waiting for? It's time to treat yourself to the best cuisine your region has to offer. Reserve a table at a local restaurant for an evening of friendly faces and fantastic tastes. Bon appétit!



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