

North Coast

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Move ins begin at Alder Creek Commons

WILL CHAPPELL
Citizen Editor

Following a \$2.5-million renovation, the former Nehalem Bay House assisted living facility has reopened as Alder Creek Commons, with 24 affordable apartments for residents 55 and over.

Daryn Murphy, the project's lead developer from North Development Group, recently gave the Headlight Herald a tour of the newly updated facility, which had welcomed one resident and received another dozen plus applications.

Alder Creek Commons is located on the west side of Nehalem, near Bayside Gardens, and was originally built in 1997 as a 34-room, assisted-living facility. It operated under that model until 2022, when economic pressures forced its closure and it fell into the ownership of CareOregon.

For several years, CareOregon officials searched for a partner to reopen the facility, but following three or four efforts that fell through, they reached out to Murphy, who has worked with the organization before, about renovating the facility.

Murphy, who had also led development at the nearby Bayside Commons apartment complex, agreed to become involved and secured a Local Innovation and Fast Track zero-interest loan from the state government for \$4.3 million and a grant from CareOregon for \$500,000.

Those funds allowed Murphy to purchase the building and begin renovations to convert the building from an assisted-care to independent-living facility. That entailed reducing the number of units from 34 to 24 to allow room for kitchenettes to be expanded into kitchens, as well as a complete upgrade to all interior and exterior finishes, including siding, roofing, flooring and wall painting.

With the renovation complete, the building now has six studio, 16 one-bedroom and two two-bedroom apartments, as well as a community room and communal laundry room. The apartments are open to those 55 years of age or older and earning less than 50% of the area's median income, and



Alder Creek Commons's renovation included new roofing and siding, as well as updated landscaping and the addition of parking spots.



The common room in the new building will be open for residents to have events and feature artwork from local artists.

See ALDER CREEK, Page A3

Merkley focuses on Trump in Tillamook town hall

WILL CHAPPELL
Citizen Editor

United States Senator Jeff Merkley largely focused on his resistance to the Trump administration's policies and actions at a town hall at Tillamook High School on January 17.

Merkley voiced strong opposition to the recent military operation removing Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro to the United States and discussed a list he recently compiled of ten strategies used in recent decades to undermine democracy as a basis to continue his fight to prevent Trump from doing the same in America.

"We know that we have to fiercely hold our elected leaders accountable, all of us, even me," Merkley said, "but maybe you're making me think about what else I can do, because when I go to town halls and people say, 'Jeff Merkley, you haven't done enough.' I'm thinking, what else can I do?"

At the town hall, Tillamook County Commissioner Paul Fournier introduced Merkley, who presented a flag flown over the United States Capitol to members of the Nehalem Bay Health District's board of directors in recognition of their recently completed pharmacy and clinic project.

Merkley then addressed the crowd, sounding the alarm about the dwindling Social Security Trust Fund, which is set to reach a zero balance within seven years, causing a cut of 25% to social security payments. Merkley said that he was using his role on the budget committee to agitate for a solution ahead of the problem becoming an emergency for millions of retirees.

"Why do we have to wait

See MERKLEY, Page A5

Port commissioners weigh Hangar B repair options

WILL CHAPPELL
Citizen Editor

At a special meeting on January 5, the Port of Tillamook Bay's board of commissioners discussed bids for repairs to a 200-foot hole in the roof of Hangar B caused by a December windstorm.

Commissioners unanimously passed a resolution affirming their desire to repair the structure, but with repairs for the recent damage estimated to cost in excess of \$2 million, numerous other structural concerns existing in the building and relatively small revenue generation, all agreed it would be challenging to do so.

The meeting began with Board Chair Jack Mulder addressing the large in-person and online audience, telling them off the bat that the port

does not have the money to repair the hangar, but introducing the resolution as an aspirational statement that was made with an understanding of that reality. Mulder continued that while it was the port's responsibility to maintain the building, the financial reality of the structure's complexity, age and relative lack of revenue generation potential made it difficult to achieve that task.

While repairing the roof is estimated to cost at least \$2.45 million, Mulder said that the port could spend that money only for the same damage to occur in another section of the roof during the next storm.

Mulder said that a comprehensive repair would cost ten times the amount for fixing the hole and noted that port commissioners had been trying to find a way to achieve those larger repairs since at least the 1980s, without success. Mulder said that the issue was that there were four or five different elements of the building, from the box beams

Trask River Apartments fire kills one

WILL CHAPPELL
Citizen Editor

A midday fire on Sunday, January 11, at Trask River Apartments on Fifth Street in Tillamook left one dead and twelve displaced after three apartments were completely consumed.

Firefighters from the Tillamook Fire District and Bay City Fire Department, as well as local law enforcement agencies, responded to the conflagration, the causes of which are still under investigation, according to Tillamook Fire District Operations Chief Alan Christensen.

Tillamook 911 received calls about the fire and a trapped individual just after noon on Sunday, and when fire crews arrived, they found multiple units on fire and heavy smoke engulfing the scene.

While officers from the Tillamook City Police and deputies from the Tillamook County Sheriff's Office evacuated residents from nearby apartments, crews battled the blaze, containing it within a few minutes of arrival and removed a victim from outside the apartment, who was taken by ambulance



The aftermath of the January 11 fire at Trask River Apartments in Tillamook.

See HANGAR B, Page A3

See FIRE, Page A3



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Fire merger moves toward ballot

WILL CHAPPELL
CITIZEN EDITOR

Tillamook County's board of commissioners held their first public hearing on a proposed combination of the Tillamook Fire District and Bay City Fire Department on January 14 and signaled their intention of approving the question for the ballot at a second meeting on February 11.

At the meeting, leaders from both agencies and members of the steering committee that has been leading the consolidation push and the public spoke in support of the proposal, saying that it was necessary to create a stable foundation for firefighting in the communities.

The proposed new district would be named the Tillamook Bay Fire and Rescue Rural Fire Protection District and encompass the area covered by both the district and department. If approved for the ballot, Tillamook voters would be asked in May to approve the dissolution of their current district, while voters in the entirety of the new proposed district will be asked to weigh in on its formation and a new tax rate, and select a board of five directors, all contingent on Tillamook voters' approval of the dissolution.

Tillamook County Administrative Analyst Isabel Gilda kicked off the public hearing with a staff report

about the proposed merger and the commissioners' role in it. Gilda explained that it was commissioners' responsibility to determine if the changes that would result from the proposed merger would benefit the area. Gilda said that the group supporting the request had submitted a study that showed staffing efficiencies, better training and long-term financial stability would be achieved by the merger.

Gilda also said that the new district was proposing a tax rate of \$1.49 per thousand dollars of assessed value and that employees and assets from both agencies would transfer to the new entity.

Tillamook Fire Chief Paul Edwards then delved deeper into the reasons the district needed the merger. Edwards, who has been involved with Tillamook Fire since 1982, explained that in those days, the City of Tillamook's fire department had been underfunded, while the Tillamook Rural Fire Protection District was somewhat better off.

In 1993, that led the agencies to seek voter approval for the merger of the two entities to form the Tillamook Fire District, which was given and a property tax rate of 69 cents per thousand dollars of assessed property value set. Edwards explained that, at the time, the rate supported seven

or eight full-time staff, the purchase and maintenance of necessary equipment, and the district's volunteer operations.

However, in the intervening years, the rate has remained steady as inflation has reduced the services the revenue it generates can support. "This has resulted in inadequate funding for fire services our residents demand and deserve," Edwards said. Currently, the district only has one full-time employee and has difficulty paying for ongoing maintenance of its equipment.

The good news, Edwards said, is that the district has been operating under an intergovernmental agreement with Bay City since 2024 and the partnership has been working seamlessly, giving him confidence in the proposed merger.

Bay City Fire Chief Alan Christensen then spoke briefly, recognizing the commitment and heroic efforts of the volunteer firefighters in each organization. Bay City City Manager David McCall then discussed the steering committee that has been leading work on the merger for the past five months and introduce Committee Cochair Mike Saindon.

Saindon echoed Edwards, saying that the current coordination between the two entities had shown the ef-

fectiveness of the approach of combining resources and said that it was important for the services to evolve as they responded increasingly to medical calls. Saindon said that the proposed merger would allow for increased staffing coverage and resilience, allowing the new entity to add capacity and provide a stable foundation to serve the area's needs moving forward.

Saindon stressed that the merger would not be a silver bullet solving all the issues instantly, but that it would provide a solid base for the new district to grow into the future and be handed off to the next generation.

Public comment then began, with Bay City Mayor Liane Welch leading off and sharing a statistic that since 2010, the calls for service to the city's fire department have increased from 115 to more than 300, with volunteers combining to work for more than 1,000 hours in response. Welch said that the current situation with only three full-time staff between the two entities was not tenable, especially during the busy summer months, and argued that approving the district would address long-term viability concerns.

Tillamook Fire District Board Member Tim Hamburger also spoke in favor of the proposal, saying that the district's sustainability has declined in recent years,

primarily due to financial concerns caused by the low tax rate. Hamburger said that at the same time, it was becoming more difficult to find volunteers, especially during daytime hours, and that more full-time staff was desperately needed. Hamburger concluded by saying that approval of the district would allow the new district to build reserve funds and said that the Tillamook Fire District could not realistically continue at its current tax rate.

Several Tillamook business owners, Jim Christensen of Valvoline Instant Oil Change, Don Burden of Burden's Muffler and Towing and Don Averill of Don G. Averill Recycling Inc., also spoke in support of the merger, saying that it was unrealistic to expect the Tillamook district to provide services with a funding level from the 1990s and that they were concerned about impacts on property insurance should the district not be better resourced.

Tillamook City Manager Sean Lewis then spoke, saying that while the city did not have a direct interest in the district, it was an important issue for residents and that he supported giving them the chance to vote.

A Bay City volunteer firefighter spoke in favor of the measure, saying that while the department currently receives strong support from

the city's council, amounting to around half of the city's general fund dollars annually, and has a voter-approved operating levy of \$1.80 per thousand dollars of assessed property value, either could change. He said that by forming the new district, funding for firefighting would be secured against potential changes in public or council sentiment.

Commissioners Mary Faith Bell and Paul Fournier then weighed in, with Commissioner Erin Skaar not in attendance.

Bell thanked everyone for attending and testifying and said that she was moved by the unanimity of comments in supporting the proposal and that it signaled to her that there was a clear benefit to the community from the merger. Bell said she was grateful for the hard work undertaken by the steering committee and that she hoped voters would approve the district.

Fournier echoed Bell's comments, noting that the merger matched a trend among other fire districts in the county and made sense.

Bell and Fournier voted to approve a preliminary order approving the formation of the district, setting the second public hearing on the matter for February 11, at which point the board will vote on its approval for inclusion on May's primary ballot.

TBCC bequeathed \$773,000

WILL CHAPPELL
CITIZEN EDITOR

Last year, the Tillamook Bay Community College Foundation received an unexpected donation of \$773,000 from the estate of Richard and Virginia White in to support students at the college.

The gift represented the largest in the foundation's

history and is expected to provide around \$30,000 annually to support scholarships at the college in honor of the Whites' passion for education.

Richard White was born in Tillamook on McCormick Loop Road and attended and graduated from South Prairie School when it still taught students from kindergarten to

12th grade. After a stint in the Navy, White returned to Tillamook and worked to save money for college, while also honing his craft as a cartoonist with some creations submitted to the Headlight Herald, before matriculating at Lewis & Clark College.

It was there that he met his wife, Virginia, with Donna Kaser, Richard's

sister and the trustee for the couple's estate, recalling that they were drawn together by their shared passion for art. "They met at Lewis & Clark," Kaser said, "they were both studying art and married before they graduated."

The couple's passion for art continued during their marriage, with Richard teaching Virginia to draw cartoon characters and the pair taking a cross-county trip to the 1964 World's Fair in New York from their home in San Diego, drawing along the way.

Education was another core value of the Whites, and though there was no community college in Tillamook during Richard's youth, he decided to support the institution with his portion of the estate.

"When [he] passed, the trust was split and his was always wanted for Tillamook Bay Community

VIEW

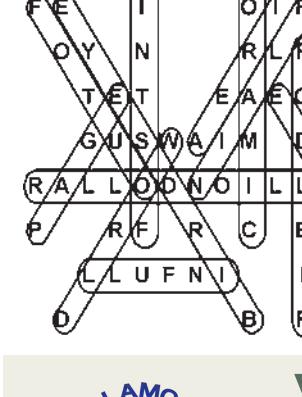


Photo courtesy TBCC Foundation

Richard and Virginia White.

Executive Director Britta Lawrence said that the gift could be used for credit or non-credit programs and that the board intended to use the money flexibly to maximize its impact.

"We are deeply grateful for the White family's belief in our mission," Lawrence said. "This incredible gift will open doors for generations of TBCC students."

Republican HQ vandalized

In the overnight hours of December 31, 2025, and January 1, 2026, a vandal splashed paint across the facade of the Tillamook County Republican Party at the corner of Second Street and Pacific Avenue in Downtown Tillamook.

Tillamook Police Chief Nick Troxel said that the department is investigating the incident and seeking public help in collecting evidence, including video. Troxel said that no suspect has been identified in the case.

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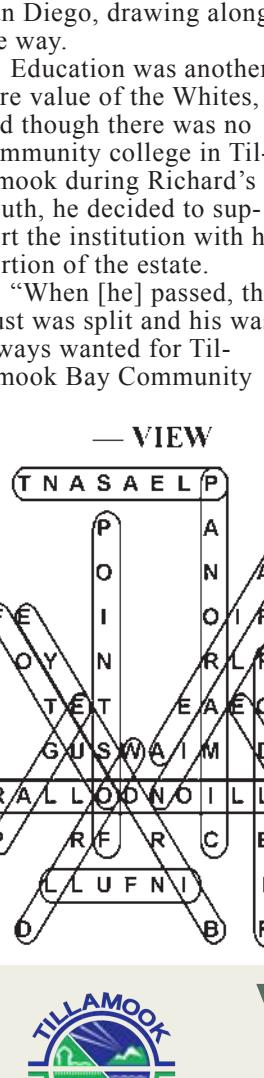
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2026 COMMUNITY SUPPORT GRANT PROGRAM

The 2026 Community Support Grant program is currently open and accepting applications until 5:30 p.m. on Monday, February 23, 2026. Local not-for-profit organizations with community projects that promote community livability and economic development are eligible to apply. Application forms, procedures, and additional information are available now at www.tpud.org/news-community-community-support-grants/.

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The aftermath of the January 11 fire at Trask River Apartments in Tillamook.

FIRE Trask River Apartments

From Page A1

to the hospital.

Despite the quick response, another victim was found deceased in the apartment where the fire is believed to have begun. The identity of the deceased has not been released.

In total, 22 firefighters responded to the scene, in addition to personnel from the Tillamook Ambulance,

Tillamook Police, Tillamook County Sheriff's Office, Tillamook Public Works and the Tillamook People's Utility District.

"This incident underscores the resilience of our emergency response network and demonstrates our commitment to the communities we serve," Christensen said. "The dedication and professionalism demonstrated by all responding agencies, both paid staff and volunteers, was instrumental. Our thoughts are with those impacted by this tragedy."

In addition to the three

units impacted by the fire, neighboring units suffered smoke, water and structural damage, forcing 12 residents from their homes. The American Red Cross is working with local organizations to provide temporary assistance to those displaced.

Tillamook Fire District personnel are now working with Oregon State Fire Marshal's Office on a cause and origin investigation into the blaze, and Christensen said further information would be released as it becomes available.

district residents of around 88 cents per thousand dollars of assessed property value annually.

Acknowledging that it would be difficult to gain voter support for such an increase, Baertlein put forward the possibility of working with the county to seek a countywide bond in the same amount, which he estimated would only require a tax increase of 11 cents per thousand dollars of assessed property value. Baertlein also suggested that the port could ask county commissioners to ask voters to increase the county's transient lodging tax rate by 5%, with revenue from the increase earmarked for hangar repairs.

Baertlein concluded by saying that if the board wished to pursue any of those ideas, it would be necessary to establish a political action committee to advocate for them, as commissioners are not permitted to do so under Oregon law.

Mulder then took a moment to acknowledge the hard work of the staff at the Tillamook Air Museum, which the port has operated since a previous concessionaire relocated to Madras in 2015. Mulder said that while he was personally saddened by the situation with the hangar, he was even sadder for Museum Director Rita Welch and Museum Curator Christian Gurling who had put so much of themselves into the museum, which is closed along with all operations in the hangar.

Port General Manager Michele Bradley added that the hangar's closure would also impact the employees of several other businesses that used space in the hangar and added that if the museum was forced to close, it could cost millions of dollars to return the planes from its collection.

Discussion then moved into more specific details of potential repairs, with a second proposal submitted since a first emergency meeting on December 22, at which commissioners

reviewed a proposal from Rick Lofton to remove damaged elements of the hangar with a budget of \$3.6 to \$4.5 million. The second proposal, from Gage Construction had an estimated cost of \$2.45 to \$2.65 million, including \$50,000 in donated labor.

Lofton said that leaving the roof as-is was not an option and commissioners agreed but said that they would need more time to review the proposals and decide on how to proceed. Commissioners then authorized Bradley to select from two bids to install emergency fencing around the structure's perimeter.

Commissioner Matt Mumford said that after reviewing the port's finances, he felt they could afford to borrow up to \$1 million for repairs but no more. Mumford wondered if it might make sense for the port to borrow money to secure the roof safely to buy time to work on financing for a long-term solution with the county.

Lofton said that while pieces of debris hanging from the building could be secured to the roof for \$300,000 to \$400,000, avoiding the expense of building scaffolding to access the damaged area more directly, he did not favor that approach as the hole left the rest of the building open to further damage.

Finally, Dallas Adams, a member of the Friends of Tillamook Air Museum addressed the board, detailing his proposal to create what he called a tiger team to address the issue. Adams explained that he envisioned a group of local experts who would work to evaluate the potential solutions for the problem and that he hoped local businesses would allow their employees to use work time to participate.

Commissioners gave Adams their blessing to pursue the idea and agreed to further discuss the situation at their regular monthly board meeting on January 21.

Manzanita council updated on slide

WILL CHAPPELL
Citizen Editor

Manzanita City Manager Leila Aman updated the city's council at their January 7 meeting about a slide near the city's public works yard that triggered an emergency declaration in mid-December.

Aman said that the slide had been caused by unstable topsoil and that repairs were ongoing and encouraged the council to extend the state of emergency by a month to allow an assessment of the completed work, which they did.

The situation at the city-owned property across Oak Street from the public works yard caught the attention of the city's Public Works Director Rick Rempfer on December 16, when he noticed that sustained rains had created the potential

for a landslide. Rempfer called Aman as well as the city's emergency manager, Manzanita Police Sergeant Mike Sims, and the city's engineer and went through a preliminary investigation of the site with them on the phone, as a geotechnical expert made their way to the city.

Sims also reached out to the Emergency Volunteer Corps of Nehalem Bay, with 12 volunteers arriving promptly to help secure the situation by placing sandbags over an impacted area.

A geotechnical engineer made an initial visit on December 17, and returned on the December 18 for a full investigation, before placing monitoring points around the property on December 22. Those sensors revealed that the slide was being caused by unsettled soil sitting

near the surface, while the underlying soil remained stable, leading the engineer to recommend removing the unsettled material and taking steps to stabilize the underlying soil, such as planting grass.

Aman said that the city was following that recommendation and contractors had begun removing material on January 5. Aman said that further monitoring of the sensors at the site had not shown further movement and that she was confident in the geotechnical report's findings.

Aman asked that the council extend the state of emergency, which they initially declared on December 16, until their February council meeting, which will make it simpler for Aman to hire contractors should assessments after the current work is done reveal the need for more.

ALDER CREEK Commons

From Page A1

rents will be \$731 for the studios, \$783 for the one-bedroom apartments and \$940 for the two-bedroom apartments.

Each bedroom features an accessible shower and full kitchen, and residents will have access to a storage locker in the building. Murphy said that an internal courtyard in the building could also be used for a communal garden once drier weather arrives, if residents desire.

Murphy said Cascade Management is managing the property and that most prospective clients were probably in contact with somebody at CareOregon or another social



The kitchen in one of the one-bedroom apartments at Alder Creek Commons

services organization that could help them navigate the application process, but that if they weren't, they should reach out to the property manager.

As of mid-January, one person had moved into the building and Murphy said that around 15 more applications had been received.

HANGAR B Repairs

From Page A1

on the concrete columns holding the doors on the building's ends to the doors themselves and numerous elements of the roof, that needed work, and that each project would cost \$10-15 million, which was not economically viable.

Mulder also addressed \$44 million in funding the port received from the Federal Emergency Management Agency in 2010, after a 2007 storm knocked out the port's rail line to Banks. Mulder explained that those funds had not been invested in rebuilding the railroad or repairing the hangar, but instead in building new warehouses, upgrading the port's water system, upgrading the airport's fixed-base operator facilities and supporting the Southern Flow Corridor Project north of the city of Tillamook to reduce flooding. Mulder defended those expenditures as financially sound and discussed several grants, including one for \$75,000 for a truss support study in 2022 from the county, that the port has pursued and won in support of hangar repairs.

Port Commissioner Bill Baertlein then chimed in, saying that the port was not going to find a guardian angel to solve the issue, noting that grant funding was constricted at both the state and federal level. Baertlein said that it was therefore incumbent on the port to try to find a way to use taxes to support the project and floated several ideas for how to do so.

The most straightforward would be asking residents in the port's taxing district, which stretches from Idaville to Pleasant Valley and from Netarts to the Washington County line, to support a bond to pay for the repairs. Baertlein said that his back-of-envelope math suggested that a \$20 million bond would require a tax increase for

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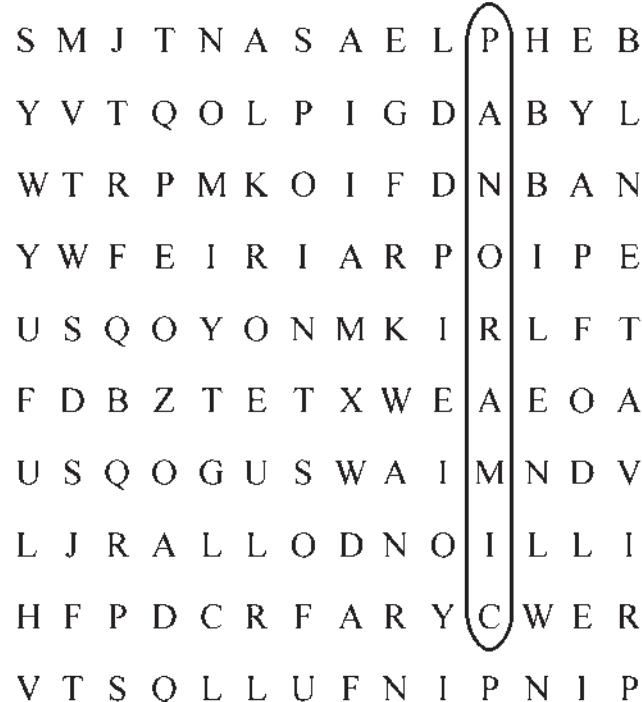
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Aerial In plain Page Private
Bird's eye Million dollar Panoramic Side
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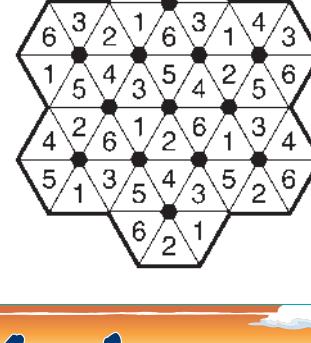
CryptoQuip

answer

At first I didn't audibly
laugh at that funny
guy's one-liner, but then
I had a ha-ha moment.

Snowflakes

solution



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Sheriff raises alert about scammers

WILL CHAPPELL
CITIZEN EDITOR

In recent months, the Tillamook sheriff's office has received a slew of reports from citizens about scam calls from individuals purporting to be with the office and demanding money to pay for traffic tickets or other fines.

Tillamook County Sheriff Josh Brown said that, fortunately, he does not believe anybody has fallen victim to the crimes, but that he wanted to alert the public to the trend and take the chance to remind everyone to be on the lookout for scam calls.

"The biggest thing I want to get across is, if it seems suspicious or if they are being pushy, it is almost 100% going to be a scam," Brown said, "and the thing of it is, even if it's not a scam, the urgency's just not going to be there."

Brown reached out to the Headlight Herald after numerous citizens contacted the office in recent months letting them know that somebody calling from a phone number with a local area code had given the name of a specific deputy and tried to convince them that they owed money to the sheriff's office. Brown stressed that the sheriff's office does not take part in collecting fees and fines, a duty of the circuit court, and that none of his deputies would ever call asking for money.

"Sheriff's office will never call and say, 'hey, you've got to do this and

pay the ticket.' We don't accept money for tickets," Brown said. "Our deputies certainly will not call directly and if they do, it'll be for different reasons, it won't be to collect money."

With a plethora of scam varieties out there, Brown said that he also wanted to take the time to caution residents to be skeptical of any strange calls, and that even if residents weren't sure if a scam was being attempted, to assume it was if something felt off. "If you're wondering, is this legitimate, I've never heard of it before so it must be, that right there is your own alert that something is wrong, something's off," Brown said.

If somebody finds themselves in conversation with a potential scammer, Brown said to be on the lookout for pushiness and not to be afraid or embarrassed to hang up the phone and reach out to a friend or family member for help. "Find a way to set your pride or embarrassment aside, there's no embarrassment to it, and hang up the phone, don't answer the text, don't respond to the email, ask for help, ask your kids, ask an expert," Brown said.

Brown also suggested hanging up and searching for a legitimate number for the organization or company that is supposedly calling you and reaching out directly to them.

Unfortunately, if somebody is scammed, the sheriff's office's options to respond are limited,

Brown explained, saying that the small agency did not have the digital forensics tools to investigate cybercrimes. "We don't have the technology to track down the phone numbers and the spoofing, anything like that, we don't have a computer crimes division, we don't have the funding, we don't have the staffing, we don't do the technology" Brown said. "It's not that we don't want to take action against a lot of these, we simply do not have the capability to track it down."

However, if somebody does fall victim to a scammer, Brown said that they should still call his office to file a report so that deputies could pass the information along to other agencies as necessary and identify trends, allowing them to warn the public. Brown also encouraged any victims to contact their bank's fraud department to attempt to recover lost funds and noted that he had been receiving a lot of calls recently from scammers impersonating tax professionals.

At the end of the day, Brown said that with limited options to track the criminals behind the calls down and bring them to justice, he was prioritizing raising awareness of the issue in the community to try to combat the issue on the front end.

"It'll continue forever," Brown said, "but the more awareness that can be brought, the more tools available, hopefully the less people get taken in."

TFCC Executive Director retires

WILL CHAPPELL
CITIZEN EDITOR

After more than two decades with the agency, Tillamook Family Counseling Center Executive Director Frank Hanna-Williams retired at the end of 2025.

Hanna-Williams said that he was proud of work to expand Tillamook Family Counseling Center's (TFCC) peer support and intellectual and developmental disabilities programs, and of strong relationships forged with community partners, especially in law enforcement.

"You want to be able to work with people who are at the other agencies in the community to make things go as smoothly as possible," Hanna-Williams said, "and if there's one thing that I've noticed over time, it's that while there can be some challenges, I see our relationship with law enforcement as having improved tremendously and we have some key law enforcement partners in the community."

Hanna-Williams arrived in Tillamook in October 2000, after having spent most of his life in the Cleveland area, where he was born and raised. After attending college in Wisconsin, Hanna-Williams returned to Cleveland to earn a master's degree before working in a series of jobs with behavioral health agencies around the greater Cleveland area.

A conference earlier in the year in Portland had put Oregon on Hanna-Williams's map, and with his son completing school, Hanna-Williams and his wife decided to move and applied for jobs across the country. "My son was finishing culinary school and so we thought, well, maybe this will be a time to rethink what it would be like to live and work in a new place," Hanna-Williams said.



Frank Hanna-Williams

"And so, there were a few openings that came up and I applied for a few of them, and this one, I came and was fascinated by the area and I like a challenge."

In his tenure with TFCC, Hanna-Williams said that his proudest accomplishments have been expanding the services being offered to the community.

When Hanna-Williams arrived, TFCC had recently begun its peer-support program, where people with lived experience with behavioral health challenges or substance use disorder help guide new clients through treatment, and in the years since it has become one of TFCC's most important programs.

"There are some people that one of the reasons that they are getting connected with services here is because they've been able to have that communication with a peer and that peer may be there to go alongside that person while they're getting the help and support that they need," Hanna-Williams said.

Another area of expansion has been in TFCC's intellectual and developmental disabilities program, which tripled in the number of employees under Hanna-Williams. Hanna-Williams said that he was proud of the good work being done by the program team and that

he thought the increase in people seeking the services was due to providers being able to better assess their needs. The program's growth included moving into a newly renovated building adjacent to TFCC's headquarters on Main Avenue in Tillamook last year.

Under Hanna-Williams, TFCC also moved into housing to help meet clients' needs as the area's supply of rentals became constrained over the past decade. Using funds from Senate Bill 1530, TFCC has purchased two houses in recent years that now operate as recovery homes, one in partnership with Iron Tribe Network and the other under an Oxford house model. In 2024, TFCC also purchased and renovated the Kilchis House near the fairgrounds into Turnstone Commons, a 30-unit apartment complex with affordable rents and space set aside for those with mental health diagnoses.

All in all, Hanna-Williams said that the changes added up to an agency with more opportunities to meet patients where they were in the community, with services available at a satellite clinic in Rockaway Beach in addition to the other growth.

"When I first came here, all the services were in this building, and right now, we've gone way beyond that," Hanna-Williams said. "We have a staff of master's level counselors, we have psychiatric services and now we include an amount of telehealth that puts us in a position to serve more people."

Hanna-Williams said that in retirement he plans to begin substitute teaching at one of the county's school districts and to travel to see family across the country, as well as sites across Oregon he has not yet visited, with Crater Lake at the top of the list.

MERKLEY Town Hall

From Page A1

until the last second when there's a crisis and it's harder to fix it," Merkley asked rhetorically. "Let's actually do something before we reach kind of a cliff and show that we can actually govern in this United States of America."

Constituents then began asking question of Merkley, with most focused on disagreements with the administration.

In response to a question about the release of the Epstein files, as required by a December 2025 bill, Merkley said that he would do what he could to make court orders compelling the Justice Department to follow the law stick.

On the subject of Venezuela, Merkley took the president to task for taking the action not in support of democracy, but to secure control of the country's oil reserves. Merkley said the move represented a return to a longtime U.S. foreign policy of supporting dictators as long as they allowed American companies access to their resources, engendering anti-American sentiment around the world.

"It's undermining our reputation for promoting

democracy," Merkley said. "Our damage to the alliances is hurting us in terms of not just intangibles like respect but tangible stuff like people being willing to work with us on trade agreements and we're not having any principles that help us go forward in an orderly world and prosper, so I think it's a massive mistake."

Asked about damage to Hangar B at the Port of Tillamook Bay, Merkley said that completing a study of repairs needed to fix the structure should be the priority and mentioned Federal Emergency Management Agency money as a potential funding source.

When asked about how the Democratic Party could appeal to voters on the core issues Merkley has identified as key to American families, healthcare, housing, jobs and education, Merkley said that he didn't like to make his town halls partisan but instead to focus on his positions. On that front, Merkley called attention to the fact that President Donald Trump in recent weeks has adopted two of his ideas for increasing affordability, prescription drug control prices and barring hedge funds from owning single-family homes, citing it as evidence that he was still in touch with issues that resonated on both sides of the aisle.



U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley addresses constituents at a town hall at Tillamook High School on January 17.

More generally, Merkley said that his view of the current system was that the wealthy had too much influence through dark money donations and were able to induce legislators to craft new laws that made them wealthier, a dynamic that needed to be reversed. "If we want to make this country work better, it can't be a families-lose-billionaires-win version of the world," Merkley said. "It has to be families thrive; billion-

aires pay their fair share."

Responding to a question about how concerned citizens could take action to protect democracy, Merkley pointed to a pamphlet that his staff had handed out to town hall attendees titled "Ring the Alarm Bells: The Ten Rules of Trump's Authoritarian Playbook." Merkley said that he had researched democracies from around the world that had failed in recent decades, saying that

armed coups had receded from prominence, replaced by a slow drift to authoritarianism and that he had studied the commonalities from those situations to compile the list.

The list includes items like pack the government with loyalists, disregard due process, silence free speech and steal congress' power of the purse, and culminated with rigging the next election, which Merkley accused Trump of working to do.

"The president's rigging the next election," Merkley said. "He's doing this national voter database so it can be purged before the next election, you'll show up and you won't be able to vote."

Merkley praised the Oregon Secretary of State and Attorney General for fighting to protect the state's ability to conduct vote-by-mail elections. Merkley said that everyone deserved the option to vote by mail and that "saving our election system has got to be a top priority when we have a congress that is under different leadership."

Finally, in response to a question from a college student about affordability of classes, Merkley said that he believed the United States had the financial resources to make college debt free for all students and that he would continue to advocate for that policy.

"If other developed nations can afford to do that, we can afford to do that," Merkley said. "We can't afford to do it if we're spending on wars like Afghanistan and Iraq, we can't afford to do it if we're doing tax bills that give \$30 billion to the richest Americans, we can't afford to do it if we're spending \$40 billion to help out some right-wing ruler in Argentina. We've got to focus on the fundamentals so we can deliver for the next generation."

FENCEPOST

ROCKAWAY BEACH
SCOTT FISHER
sfisher71@yahoo.com

As of the January city council meeting on January 14, 2026, The Rockaway Beach Artisan Farmers Market is currently without a venue.

The issue was discussed at the December 2025 city council workshop, when applications for the wayside had been filed ahead of the 2026 season. Longtime events such as the Kite Festival (in its 50th year for 2026) and Arts & Crafts Festival were approved, as was the relatively

new NCAM Music Festival.

But objections arose to the proposed Thursday Market, primarily for closing of the Wayside from 9 a.m. through 8 p.m. on market days.

Introduced in May 2023, the market ran on Thursdays, from its May 16 opening through Labor Day in September.

It returned in 2024 with a similar schedule. In 2025, the hours were changed as a result of visitor feedback. From my May 6, 2025, Fencepost:

"Visitors in previous years asked for more time after the market ended [...] Of particular interest was having enough time for visitors to have dinner after shopping.

"This year [2025], the Thursday Market hours are 2 p.m.-6 p.m., which gives vendors the chance to pack up earlier and guests another hour to grab a bite down-

town."

Objections to the 2026 Thursday Market application came down to questions of the best use of the Wayside during summer.

"It's 14 weeks of our peak tourist season," commented City Councilor Kiley Konruff. This concern was echoed by Mayor Charles McNeilly:

"Rockaway Beach is experiencing a surge in businesses in our downtown core. But we have not had an increase in parking to support this growth. Simply put, Rockaway Beach does not have enough parking." He cited some of the consequences of this as affecting safety, congestion, and lost revenue for businesses.

At issue appears to be the loss of the 17 parking spaces in the Wayside.

The proposed location for the Market is the Anchor

Street parking lot, with space for 43 vehicles. It has hosted the annual Trunk or Treat activity, last held at the Wayside in 2023 before moving to Anchor Street in 2024.

But Anchor Street has a number of challenges for the Thursday Market. Chief among these is little to no visibility from highway 101, lacking the historic red California sign to draw the eye.

Citizen commentary at the January 14 City Council meeting was decidedly in favor of continuing the market in its location at the Wayside.

First to present was Chris Williams, representing the Rockaway Renaissance Artists, a group established by the late Cindy Kay Gregory.

"We are beholden to the Thursday Market," Williams began, which provides the ability for a number of Rockaway artists to supple-

ment their income.

"My first concerns were for myself. But then I heard from folks that brought up some really good issues."

Williams mentioned "many barriers to having a market on Anchor Street. One is absence of wifi," which vendors use for payment systems. Others included the relative lack of electricity and water. At the core, though, Williams concluded, "The Wayside is the heart of Rockaway Beach and people who drive by stop for events."

City council discussion focused on the duration of closure for the Wayside. Councilor Pat Ryan noted his concern with the application calling for Wayside closure all day from 9 a.m.-8 p.m.

He added that it would be "difficult to tie that up for the full day when there are other options."

Councilor Mary McGinnis noted that in the past, the market "doesn't start till 2:30 but they're requesting to block it off from 9 a.m."

McGinnis went on to note that Rockaway Beach has "the 4th most tourists on the North Coast."

She concluded with a possible course of action for proponents of the Thursday Market: "I would like to see the chamber come back with an amended application that more accurately reflects what's possible at the Wayside. I invite the chamber to come back."

"I think we can come out of this with a big win for everybody."

If you have ideas or wish to express an opinion on the issue, write to Rockaway Beach City Council, P.O. Box 5, Rockaway Beach, OR 97136.

Pirates fall to Braves

WILL CHAPPELL
CITIZEN EDITOR

Neah-Kah-Nie High School's boys' basketball team lost a close home game to the league rival Banks Braves on January 16, coming up just short 53-48.

The Pirates struggled with Banks's defensive pressure all night long and could not find a way to build or sustain a lead. Clayton Dante led the Pirates with 11 points on the night, while reserve Marcus Johnson chipped in ten.

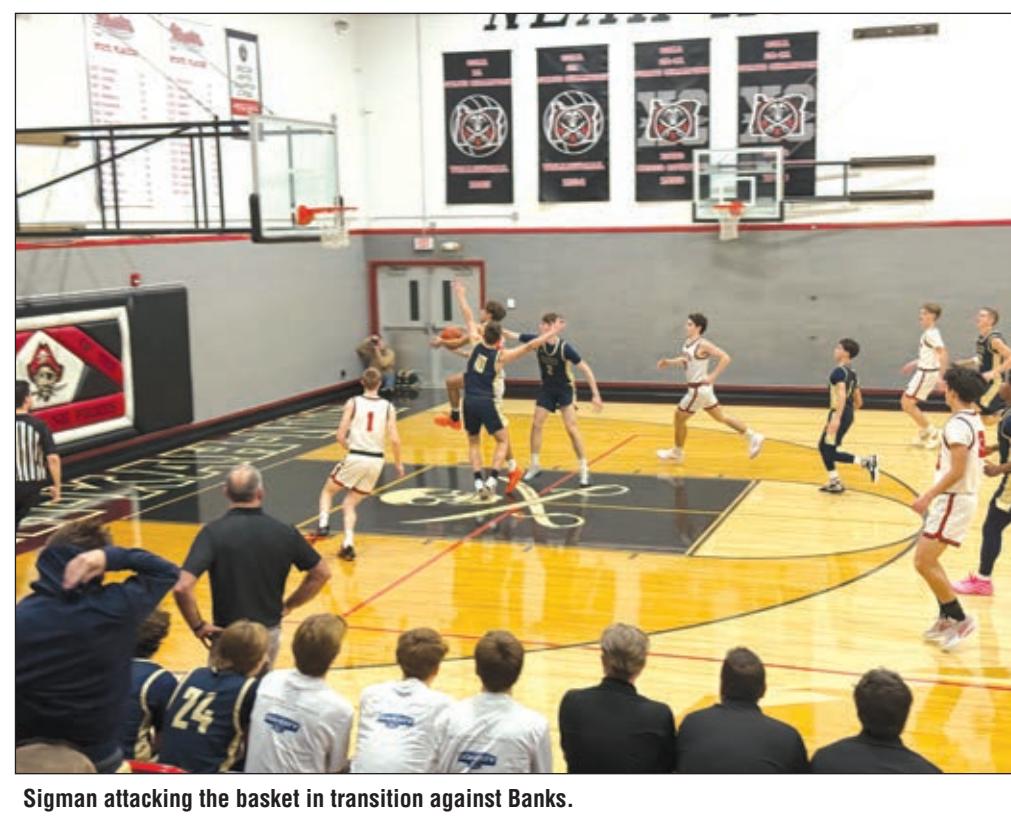
Early in the game both teams were playing strong defense and three minutes in the only basket had come from Dylan Sigman on a transition layup off a steal. Banks evened the game on a driving lay in a little less than a minute later and took the lead on a three following a Dante floater in the lane with two and a half left in the quarter.

A Johnson layup returned the lead to the Pirates shortly later and after a Brave layup off a

steal, Douma tied the game with a free throw before the Banks bench drew a technical allowing Dante to give the Pirates an 8-7 lead from the line. Banks responded with another layup and Johnson answered with one of his own before two late Braves free throws put them ahead 11-10 after one.

Neah-Kah-Nie's offense went dormant as the second began, as the team struggled to take care of the ball, allowing Banks to extend their lead to eight before Dante ended the run with a contested midrange jumper. The Brave run continued as time wound down in the half, as the defensive pressure continued to flummox the Pirates, and the lead was 23-14 with two minutes to go. Lewis knocked home a three with one and a half left and the teams traded baskets before two Sigman free throws cut the lead to 25-21 at the half.

A 7-3 Pirate run drew the game level on a Lewis three two and a half minutes into the second, and Johnson converted on a



Sigman attacking the basket in transition against Banks.

second chance opportunity near the basket on the next possession to give Neah-Kah-Nie the 30-28 lead. Both teams went cold from the field as the quarter wore on, as the Pirates again struggled with turn-

overs, allowing the Braves to tie the game with around four to go. The teams stayed close for the rest of the quarter, with Dante scoring four for the Pirates, and Banks took a 36-34 advantage to the fourth.

Banks extended the lead to six with four unanswered before Dante scored a contested layup. The Braves responded with a layup of their own and Douma scored a three on the next Pirate posse-

sion to cut the lead back to 42-39 with six minutes remaining.

Banks stretched the lead to nine with three and a half to go, as the Pirates were again cold from the field, drawing a Neah-Kah-Nie timeout. The Pirates struggled continued after the break, with the Braves pushing the lead to 11 before a Douma three ended the run. Kason Fletcher scored on a drive on the next possession and Douma knocked home a contested floater from the foul line to cut the lead to 51-46 entering the final minute.

A Sigman steal and breakaway dunk trimmed the lead to three with 30 seconds left but two Brave free throws pushed it back to five and Neah-Kah-Nie failed to score again, falling 53-48.

Neah-Kah-Nie went to 8-6 on the season and 1-2 in Coastal Range League play with the loss, after a 77-30 win earlier in the week at Riverdale. The Pirates return to action with games this Wednesday at Warrenton and on Friday versus Rainier.

Lady Pirates lose to Banks

WILL CHAPPELL
CITIZEN EDITOR

In a tough outing, the Neah-Kah-Nie High School girls' basketball team dropped a league game 37-21 at home against the Banks Braves on January 15.

The Pirates never found an offensive rhythm on the night, struggling with the Braves' defensive pressure throughout, and after holding an early lead, watched the visiting team pull away for the win.

The teams traded threes in the early minutes of the game but were otherwise cold from the field and remained knotted at three with four to go in the quarter. Neah-Kah-Nie struggled with Banks's defensive pressure and turned the ball over repeatedly, but the Braves failed to capitalize and a Lucy Smith free throw with two and a half put the

Pirates ahead and a Ruby Martine basket with a little over minute left stretched the lead to 6-3 after one.

A Bianca Smith three a bit over a minute into the quarter stretched the Pirate lead to six but the Braves responded with two midrange jumpers to cut it back to two and tied it up on a layup off a steal as Neah-Kah-Nie continued to struggle with Banks's defensive pressure. After several scoreless minutes another Banks midrange jumper returned the lead to the Pirates and after a Banks layup, Marilyn Dante cut the lead to 13-11 at the half with a layup.

Neah-Kah-Nie remained in an offensive funk as the second half got underway, though Banks fared little better and led 17-13 with four minutes to go in the quarter. Banks scored six straight in the next minute to push the lead to double dig-

its and with just four points between the teams in the rest of the quarter, the Pirates headed into the fourth trailing 26-14.

In the fourth, Neah-Kah-Nie's offensive travails continued, with the squad scoreless through four minutes, allowing the Banks lead to grow to 35-14. A Bianca Smith putback with just over two left ended the drought for the Pirates but the Braves held on for the 37-21 win.

Bianca Smith led the Pirates in scoring with eight points in the game as the squad snapped a five-game winning streak with the loss and moved to 9-5 on the season and 2-1 in league play following a 39-32 win at Riverdale earlier in the week. Neah-Kah-Nie is scheduled to return to action Wednesday at Warrenton before a Friday home matchup against Rainier.

Banks extended the lead to six with four unanswered before Dante scored a contested layup. The Braves responded with a layup of their own and Douma scored a three on the next Pirate posse-



Acacia Christensen goes up for a basket in the paint.

Pirate wrestlers turn in strong performances

BY MIKE WEBER
For the Citizen

The Neah-Kah-Nie High Pirates boys and girls wrestling teams competed in two OSAA Class 3A meets last week and they had several athletes turn in standout performances.

The 10-member boys' squad was highlighted by a third-place finish for senior Nathaniel Timnes (1-0) who took first place in the 165-pound division in a Class 3A/2A Special District 1 dual meet Jan. 12 at Vernonia High School.

The Pirates, guided by fifth-year head Coach Alejandro Quintana and assistant coach Krista Bozely, also had a solid overall finish by other wrestlers, who helped their team win two-out-of-three dual events at Vernonia.

"Everything is going pretty well, and Nathaniel had a good performance at Vernonia," said Quintana.

On January 10, the Pirates boys squad competed at the eight-team Bob Bishop Classic at Wilamina High School and had an impressive overall

performance by taking third place in team scoring. Timnes took third place in his weight class. Freshman Ivan Cazarez took sixth place in the 132-pound division and junior Nathan Vance (285 lbs.) also notched a sixth-place finish.

"We did okay at Wilamina and it was a tough tournament, so it was good to get third place," said Quintana. "It's getting down to crunch time now, so we're just looking forward to getting a couple of kids to qualify for the

state tournament. Nathaniel is having a good season and we're hoping that he'll qualify for state. Senior Alex Lessor (157 lbs.) has been doing well despite the fact that he's dealing with an injury, but I think he'll have a good chance to qualify for state as well."

The Pirates boys' squad will compete in the SD1 District Tournament February 14 at Yamhill-Carlton High School and the top four finishers qualify for the OnPoint Community Credit Union Wrestling State Championships

Tournament Feb. 26-28 at Veterans Memorial Coliseum in Portland.

"On our girls' team, senior Sara Vega (113 lbs.) and junior Trinity Schenck-Williams (126 lbs.) are first-year wrestlers who have been doing pretty good, but they won't be able to qualify for state," said Quintana. "There's a lot of tough girls in the Class 4A/3A/2A/1A level and Sara and Trinity are still pretty new in the sport since they've only been wrestling for one season."

Schenck-Williams had a solid performance while winning one out-of-three matches in a tournament Jan 14 at Riverside High School.

The Pirate boys and girls will compete in their next meet January 24 in a three-way dual meet with Banks and Yamhill-Carlton at Yamhill-Carlton High School.

The Pirates girls' team will compete in the Class 4A/3A/2A/1A Special District 1 tournament February 20-21, and the top four finishers qualify for the state meet February 26-28.

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