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Woman killed in rollover crash Monday evening ... A10

# WHIDBEY NEWS-TIMES

SOUTH WHIDBEY RECORD

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## First vaccinations begin Thursday with island healthcare workers

By JESSIE STENSLAND  
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WhidbeyHealth expected to receive the COVID-19 vaccine Tuesday and to begin vaccinating frontline health care workers on Thursday, according to an update from the

hospital district.

The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine was approved by the FDA on Friday and by the Western States Scientific Safety Review Workgroup on Sunday. The first vaccines arrived in the state Monday.

WhidbeyHealth officials reported that the hospital is receiving the vaccine much earlier than initially expected.

The state expects to receive 62,500 doses of the vaccine this week.

SEE VACCINATIONS, A2

## Teachers voice concerns over plan to reopen schools

By EMILY GILBERT  
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Several Oak Harbor High School teachers criticized the school board during a regular board meeting Monday night for its decision last week to change the reopening plan in order to keep students inside school buildings.

Nonetheless, the Oak Harbor School Board approved a modified plan for the district's Pre-K through sixth-grade students, which features district-wide COVID-19 testing.

The three teachers who spoke during the public comment period criticized the board for last week's decision to change its reopening plan metrics so that students could continue to be in hybrid rotation in-person classes even as coronavirus cases increase in the community.

Under the hybrid rotation model, half of the students go to in-person classes for two days a week while the other half does distance learning from home. After a day of deep cleaning on Wednesday, the groups rotate learning environments.

The school district has had pre-K through sixth-grade students in hybrid rotation since Oct. 12.

Summer Leffler, a high school science teacher and mother of two elementary school students, said the school board members themselves were not qualified to decide how to reopen and were swayed by a group of community members asking for school doors to open. She advocated the district follow the original reopening metrics, which would have seen students go back to distance learning as local COVID-19 cases continue to climb.

"The five people in charge in making this decision include a pilot, a retired teacher, a librarian, a Realtor and an IT specialist. I think we can all agree that these are not the qualifications one

SEE REOPENING PLAN, A3



Photo by Emily Gilbert/Whidbey News-Times

The Whidbey Island Chicken meets a young fan, Aria Smith, and her dad, Josiah, on Saturday morning.

## Winging it

### Why did the chicken cross the road? To get you to crack a smile

By EMILY GILBERT  
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An interview with the Whidbey Island Chicken was full of a dozen poultry puns, after the initial clucking subsided.

The chicken man — or Chucky Chicken as he named himself — has captured the attention of joggers, drivers and most everyone else on North Whidbey. There is even a

Facebook group that has almost 400 members who share sightings of the big bird.

An intrepid reporter found that getting in touch with the mysterious poultry meant working through some back channels, for the chicken wants to keep up the mystery. Seth Moody, a member of the aforementioned Facebook group, said he cracked the chicken's identity after following him

around one day.

"I wouldn't say (we are) friends, but he is a friend if you know what I mean," said Moody.

He offered to put the *Whidbey News-Times* in contact with the enigmatic bird from Oak Harbor.

"Now I've become somewhat of a chicken-

SEE CHICKEN, A10

## Spa wins \$45K PSE makeover, spot on Evening Magazine

By JESSIE STENSLAND  
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A year in which small businesses have struggled to survive has come to a cheerful end for a well-known salon in Coupeville.

Aaron Wiley, the owner of Seaside Spa and Salon, won a Puget Sound Energy contest for

a small-business energy efficiency and cosmetic makeover worth \$45,000.

The energy company's media partner, KING-5 News, will be filming the progress of the work for an Evening Magazine episode that will air early in 2021, according to Leslie Meyers, outreach

supervisor for PSE.

Wiley said she never expected to win. She just happened to see an email about the contest late one night in October when she was having trouble sleeping and wrote an essay to enter.

"It was almost like a journal entry," she said. "I wrote about

all the wonderful things we've done at Seaside Spa and how I'm so proud of it."

Wiley wrote about how she opened the salon 14 years ago as an ambitious, young, single mother.

She noted that the business has been a "Green Circle Salon" for a year because her entire

staff strongly believes in sustainability. Under the program, 95 percent of the salon's waste is recycled, from hair to foils to plastics.

In addition, she wrote about how difficult this pandemic year has been and how her team

SEE \$45K MAKEOVER, A2



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