

Edmonds Beacon

YOUR HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER

728 3rd St., Ste. D Mukilteo, WA 98275

Volume XXXVI

Number 32

July 8, 2021



JULY 4: THE BEST EVER

Boom city: Explosion shakes Edmonds

No one hurt: 'It sounded like a bomb'

BY BRIAN SOERTEL
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Joe Pipinich lives on Sixth Avenue North, just two houses from the site of a violent explosion at about Tuesday on Sixth Avenue North that shattered windows, shook houses, and could be heard from the Edmonds fishing pier through downtown and to those leisurely playing petanque at Civic Field,

"I was doing a home improvement project in my backyard, and my dog was there," Pipinich said. "He had just gotten over the fireworks on July 4. It sounded like a bomb."

Edmonds Police Sgt. Josh McClure traced the 11:25 a.m. explosion to a U-Haul van in the parking lot of the Edmonds Center for the Arts. There were propane tanks in the truck, but McClure said police and the fire marshal have not determined that the tanks were the cause, and are investigating, as is the federal Bureau of Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives.

"The explosion was caused by a likely combination of leaking propane in an enclosed space, and warm temperatures and an undetermined ignition source," McClure said.

The explosion set off a fire that was quickly extinguished by firefighters from South County Fire. The explosion blew out the van's roof and side panels.

see **EXPLOSION** page 16 ▶

Government services resume in-person, signaling a return to a kind of normalcy

BY NATALIE KAHN
BEACON REPORTER

Access to the in-person customer service desk at the Edmonds Parks and Recreation Department probably isn't the most exciting thing returning to the lives of Edmonds residents this month.

But with the recent removal of almost all COVID-related restrictions in Washington state on June 30 and reopening plans being released by Edmonds and Snohomish County, this month will see the return of many important facilities and services that have been unavailable or only available online.

In Edmonds, City buildings and services will be resuming in-person access following the statewide reopening. The city is aiming for government buildings, including City Hall and the Edmonds Municipal Court, to be open for public access by July 12. In keeping with state regulations, buildings will be returning to standard capacities and masks will not be required for vaccinated

see **NORMALCY** page 14 ▶



Edmonds July 4th attendees celebrate as Little Leaguers pass by on Fifth Avenue South.

Beacon photos by Brian Soergel

Chamber scores with largest parade and biggest fireworks show

BY BRIAN SOERTEL
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The top awards for An Edmonds Kind of 4th entries went to familiar groups – North Sound Church and the Edmonds Floretum Garden Club – but the most unique may have come from folks from two neighborhoods: Bell Street and Spruce Street.

This could be the beginning of a trend. How about Shell Park Neighbors? Second Avenue North Neighbors? Pine Street Neighbors?

News stations debuted, too. KING 5/KOMO 6 had an entry, with anchors Kaila Lafferty and Jake Whittenberg leading the pack. Could KOMO make an appearance in 2022? KIRO?

"The day before, KIRO was out doing a thing on the fireworks," said Edmonds Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Greg Urban. "I mentioned it to them at the beginning and (the reporter) said, 'What? Why didn't we put one in the parade?' It was



Michael Reagan

kind of funny."

It was Urban and the Chamber that pulled off the festivities – which included the morning Beat Brackett 5K and the evening fireworks – after announcing June 1 the parade could be canceled due to a lack of groups signed up. He said he needed at least 40 groups by June 21.

The community – and communities beyond Edmonds – responded, as Urban encouraged 2021 high school grads, religious groups, nonprofits, sports teams (even Little Leagues), neighborhood groups, and all types of businesses to register.

The result: Even if there are a number of newbie entries next year, it'll be hard to top this year's parade, buoyed by enthusiastic and happy, majority-maskless crowds lining downtown Edmonds streets, eager to celebrate after the pandemic wiped out last year's parade.

Urban was able to organize the parade in four weeks, instead of the typical 16, despite being short one staff member.

Several Edmonds businesses threw mone-

see **EDMONDS FOURTH** page 7 ▶

Garden party blooms in Edmonds next weekend

Featured home: 'California meets English cottage garden with Pacific Northwest aesthetics'

BY BRIAN SOERTEL
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Beacon photo by Brian Soergel

Alicia Rivera's garden has plenty of personal touches.

After three years of renovating a drab 1959 house in Esperance into a spacious, modern home with a garden of delight and wonder, Alicia Rivera wasn't necessarily thinking about the 25th anniversary of the Edmonds in Bloom Garden Tour.

But neighbors, who pass Rivera's 88th Avenue West home in Esperance on a regular basis, urged her to submit an application.

"We were all just amazed by her creativity," said tour chair Jeanne Thorsen. "This is what we all need, especially this year. People are so enthusiastic about getting out and seeing gardens."

The tour, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Sunday, July 18, is back after the pandemic canceled last year's event.

Rivera designed and planted the backyard garden herself, turning a patchy yard of overgrown shrubs and weeds into an inviting oasis, complete with a new deck and a smart, utilitarian she-shed that

see **EDMONDS IN BLOOM** page 6 ▶

► from **EXPLOSION** page 1

No injuries were reported, but several windows in the nearby Crosswaters apartments were blown out by the explosion, as was the back window of a car in the Crosswaters parking lot. In addition, the force of the blast jammed some residents' doors, McClure said.

McClure added that the driver of the U-Haul, who was being interviewed by police, had parked in the ECA parking lot after he'd missed the Edmonds-Kingston ferry. The van was filled with personal belongings.

The explosion was also felt at the nearby police station, also on Sixth. "It shook my office," McClure said. "We heard it, we could see that there was smoke, and a bunch of us just ran down here."

"Patrol was on an unrelated stolen vehicle stop, so most of the first responders were the fire department and office staff for the PD."

Blanche Toro, a 15-year Crosswater resident, said she looked out her first-floor window before the blast and saw the U-Haul. She thought it might be a new person moving in, as there was a vacancy.

"I turned my back, and 'boom,'" she said. "My grandson was fishing on the dock, and



An explosion in Edmonds left scattered debris in the parking lot of an apartment building.

he heard it. And felt it. There were some young women in the Arts Center parking lot, and they were stunned, just standing there. They could have gotten blown up."

Ed Caspers, who lives at Third Avenue North and Caspers Street, heard the explosion, too.

"It felt and sounded like a truck hit my house," he said. "I went outside to investigate, and saw a large cloud of black smoke in the direction of the Civic Center."

To see a contributed video, go youtu.be/Su1R_WlqVpA.



The explosion blew out the rear window of this Mazda at the Crosswater apartments.



Photo courtesy of Tara Ashton

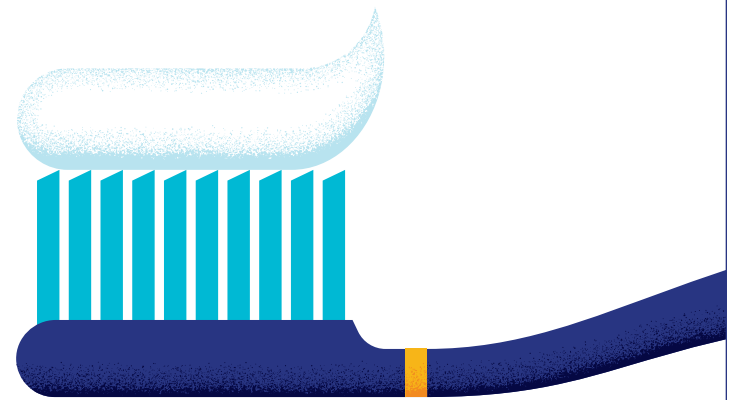
Tara Ashton captured this image, taken from a video, of the smoke from the U-Haul explosion.



Photo courtesy of Edmonds PD


The U-Haul explosion blew out the vehicle's roof and side panels.


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