



INSIDE COAST WEEKEND  
**FIRE UP**  
Longtime pottery educator shapes peninsula residents into creatives

# CHINOOK OBSERVER

\$2.00 119th Year — No. 51 CHINOOKOBSERVER.COM Wednesday, November 24, 2021

## Japanese-style camping resort launching in 2023

Snow Peak USA will transform old RV park into a place to 'restore the human spirit'

Chinook Observer

SEAVIEW — An \$8 million investment in environmental restoration and landscape design will soon transform a decrepit RV park

into a state-of-the-art Japanese-inspired camping resort at 5411 Sandridge Road east of Seaview.

Snow Peak USA, the U.S. subsidiary of a company that Bloomberg calls "Japan's cult out-

door brand" ([tinyurl.com/SnowPeak-Bloomberg](https://tinyurl.com/SnowPeak-Bloomberg)) launched its first American facility with a groundbreaking ceremony Tuesday morning at the former Wildwood Campground & RV Park.

"Our U.S. headquarters is in Portland, and we wanted our first Campfield to be close to home," company

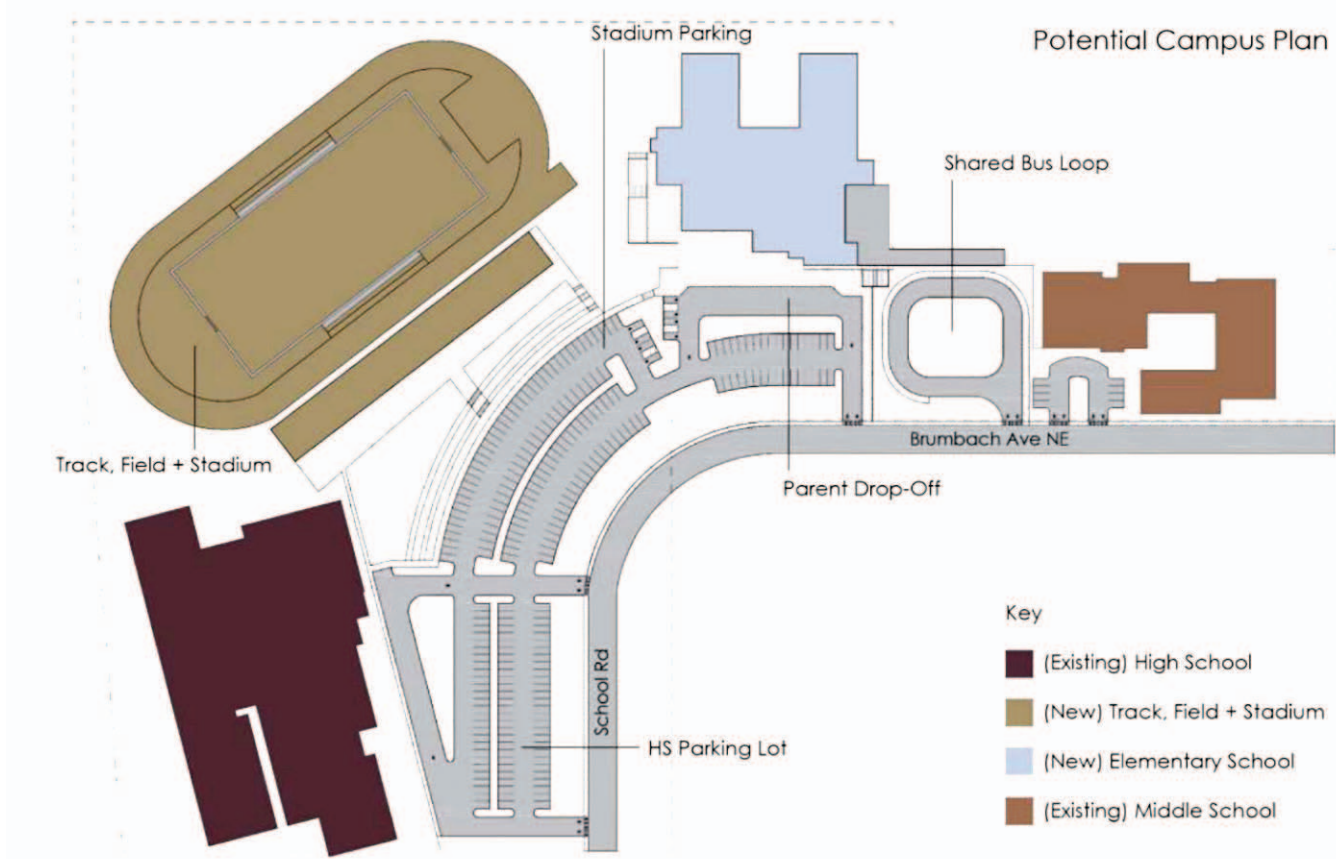
See Resort, Page A10



SNOW PEAK USA

The entrance of Snow Peak USA's Long Beach Campfield is shown in this architectural concept drawing. The \$10 million Sandridge Road facility is set to open for the 2023 camping season.

## School bond homework: Part 1



ERIC LANCAULT, ARCHITECT

Peninsula students would all attend classes at a unified campus in Ilwaco in a scenario under discussion by the Ocean Beach School Board and community members. Located on district-owned property, the campus would meet modern seismic and tsunami safety requirements.

## Wide-ranging talks look at menu of possible 2022 options

By BRANDON CLINE  
Chinook Observer

ILWACO — A diverse and expansive array of community stakeholders up and down the Long Beach Peninsula met inside the Ilwaco High School cafeteria for three hours last Wednesday night. The reason? To discuss the options and path ahead for a potential facilities bond vote as early as next spring.

The meeting was the latest development in a process that the Ocean Beach School District began this past spring to try and tackle how the district should address aging facilities and heightened concerns about two of its schools that are located in tsunami inundation zones. With the 20-year bond that voters passed in 2003 coming off the books soon, the district believes now could be the right time to move forward.

Along with OBSD administrative

staff and school board members, the meeting was attended by members of the Facilities Advisory Committee. The committee was formed by OBSD earlier this year with the purpose of forming a group that represents the various pockets of the peninsula community and who can provide feedback and ask questions throughout the planning process and, ultimately, make a recommendation to the school board on the best path forward for the district's facilities.

### Diverse stakeholders

The committee, OBSD Superintendent Amy Huntley said, spans a number of spectrums: politically, geographically, community involvement and their connection to the school district, to name a few. Some members have no direct connection to OBSD at the moment, Huntley said, while others have children enrolled in the district.

"The goal of the committee is to look

at our facilities, their strengths and their weaknesses, and really help us prioritize what our plan should be, facilities-wise, moving forward," Huntley told the *Observer*. "We want the committee to talk to people, we want them communicating with the public ... They aren't the decision makers — the whole community decides things — but the representative group helps us narrow [the concepts] down."

Among many others, those in attendance at Wednesday's meeting included: David Glasson, Long Beach City Administrator; Claire Bruncke, executive director of the Dylan Jude Harrell Kids & Community Center; Lisa Kaino, natural resources specialist at the Washington State DNR; Madeline Matson, executive director of the Columbia-Pacific Heritage Museum; Matt Lessnau, Ilwaco City Councilor;

See School bond, Page A10

### CORONAVIRUS

## Boosters OK'd for all adults

Youth clinics available

By BRANDON CLINE  
Chinook Observer

PACIFIC COUNTY — Thousands of Pacific County residents became eligible for additional protection against covid-19 over the weekend, as federal, regional and state health regulators signed off on the expansion of booster shots for all people 18 and older.

All U.S. adults who received either of the three covid-19 vaccine types available in the country are newly eligible for booster shots. For people who are at least six months removed from receiving their second dose of Pfizer's or Moderna's vaccine, adults 50 and over should receive a booster dose and those 18-49 may receive a booster dose. All adults, regardless of age, should receive a booster dose if they received Johnson & Johnson's single-dose vaccine two or more months ago.

### Many already given

In Pacific County, 2,779 booster or additional doses have been given as of Nov. 20. Some 24.5% of all fully vaccinated individuals in the county have received a booster dose, with hundreds of booster doses being administered in the county each week since they became available.

A list of upcoming booster clinics in Pacific County can be found at [www.pacificcountycovid19.com/get-vaccinated](http://www.pacificcountycovid19.com/get-vaccinated). Any of the three vaccines currently available for use may be administered as a booster dose, regardless of which vaccine was used for the primary series. When getting a booster shot, bring the vaccination card received after the initial dose or doses were received.

With about 58% of the county population receiving at least one covid-19 vaccine dose, local health officials are hopeful that the county can avoid last winter's fate, when it was among the hottest spots in the country for coronavirus activity.

See Boosters, Page A8

## The Loren H. Corder Foundation kicks off food bank donation drive

Peninsula "matching" program begins third year

By PATRICK WEBB  
For the Observer

PENINSULA — Loren H. Corder is still helping people — 33 years after his

### IT'S UP TO US

Donations can be mailed to:

- Chinook Food Bank, P.O. Box 243, Chinook, WA 98614
- Ilwaco Food Bank, P.O. Box 494, Ilwaco, WA 98624
- Ocean Park Food Bank, P.O. Box 907, Ocean Park, WA 98640

death.

In life, the former auto dealership owner and aviation enthusiast was a behind-the-scenes philanthropist.

"He stayed away from the public eye and local politics, but rather helped people when they needed

help," said Chuck Mikkola of Ocean Park.

When Corder died in 1988, his will created a foundation to spread the wealth.

Over the years, the Loren H. Corder Foundation has steered more than

See Food drive, Page A8

## OBSD ex-teacher pleads guilty to child-porn charges



By JEFF CLEMENS  
For the Observer

SOUTH BEND — Daniel J. Schenk, 54, a former teacher for Ocean Beach School District who was arrested on Oct. 15, 2020, for alleged possession and dealing of child pornography,

has pleaded guilty to amended charges.

According to court records, the Washington State Patrol conducted a lengthy investigation spanning more than six months leading to his arrest at the school.

See Schenk, Page A8

Daniel Schenk, center, appeared in Pacific County Superior Court with attorney Shane O'Rourke for a change of plea on Friday, Nov. 19, after which he was jailed. Schenk was arrested by the Washington State Patrol in October 2020 at Ocean Park Elementary, where he taught fourth grade. There is no indication that local children were victims.

JEFF CLEMENS



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## Resort

Continued from Page A1

Chief Operating Officer Matt Liddle told the *Observer* last week. “After surveying several locations, we ultimately fell in love with the wilderness of the Long Beach Peninsula. We’re excited to bring guests to learn the rich history of this place, explore the region’s natural splendor, and reconnect with the powerful rhythms of nature on the Peninsula.”

“With extreme care for the natural environment,” Landscape architects 2.Ink Studio of Portland, EFA Architects led by Erik Fagerland of Long Beach, and Helligso Construction of Astoria will complete work at the 25-acre site in time for the 2023 camping season, Snow Peak said in a press release. Counting \$750,000 for site purchase in October 2020 and other related expenses, total project cost will be around \$10 million.

### Campground amenities

In high season, Snow Peak’s Long Beach Campfield will include a variety of camping experiences for around 150 guests per night at traditional walk-up campsites, tent platforms, camper-van sites, and about 10 Jyubako mobile cabins designed by noted architect Kengo Kuma. Cabins feature comfortable bedding, cabin amenities and private bathrooms.

A Snow Peak outdoor-equipment retail store will be onsite, featuring Snow Peak products for sale or rent, a market for prepared meal kits, groceries and camping sundries. The facility will include a heated



SNOW PEAK USA

The Snow Peak resort in Hokkaido, Japan is an example of the company’s nature-friendly approach to landscape design.

soaking tub and sauna in a Japanese-inspired onsen, and spaces for gatherings and interactive programming. Guests will park their cars in a lot at the entrance and transport their gear to their site via footpaths and high-efficiency carts.

Taking note of our area’s sometimes-challenging winter maritime weather, the company said that in addition to cabins, “Snow Peak’s Japanese-designed tents and tarps are made for rigorous conditions and will provide protective spaces for our guests to sleep, eat, and gather for most of the year.”

The onsite retail store and café will be open to the public. “We’re excited to welcome locals to enjoy a cup of coffee or a cold pint on our beautiful patio overlooking the wetlands! In addition, our rental equipment will be available for Campfield guests and will focus on Snow Peak camping equipment — mostly tents, tarps,

and gathering gear,” company spokeswoman Amy May said.

### Wide-scale marketing

Long Beach Campfield will be marketed nationwide and in Japan.

“As our first Campfield in the U.S., this is a story that we are eager to tell, and we’ve already begun to share the project with our audience through our national channels,” May said. “In addition, we have a dedicated community in Seattle and Portland who are already excited to visit the Campfield in 2023, and we’re planning additional marketing efforts focused on those markets.”

“Our Japanese customers love sharing new experiences with Snow Peak. Between the Long Beach Campfield, our flagship retail store, and restaurant Takibi in Northwest Portland, we are creating an ecosystem of Snow Peak experiences in the Pacific Northwest that will

be a big attraction for our Japanese Snow Peakers!”

### Local cooperation

It took a year and a half of behind-the-scenes work to get to the groundbreaking. Snow Peak USA was complimentary about local cooperation, and said it looks forward to operating in concert with Pacific County’s business community.

“We’ve worked closely with Pacific County officials all along the way, and they’ve been incredibly welcoming and accommodating of our unique project. ... We plan to support small businesses in the community and have already started building relationships with some partners that we hope to work with.”

### Pro-environment

Four acres of wetlands will be restored at the site and Snow Peak pledges to operate with a pro-environment philosophy.

“Our guiding principle for the design of the Long Beach Campfield is ‘a destination retreat, orchestrated with nature, designed for human connection,’” the company said. “Stewardship of this lovely piece of the planet is deeply important to us, and we’ve worked closely with a local specialist on wetland mitigation and will be restoring several onsite acres of previously impacted wetland to its natural state with a focus on native plants. In addition, we’ll have paths throughout the site, so guests can wander through the forest, along the pond and waterways, and through the wetlands themselves while protecting the natural ecosystem.”

How the company runs its six resorts in Japan and the new one on the peninsula is shaped by Snow Peak USA CEO and Chairman of the Board Tohru Yamai.

“When I joined my father’s company years ago, I worked tirelessly to evolve

### MORE ABOUT SNOW PEAK

Founded in Japan in 1958, Snow Peak has been serving customers in the U.S. for more than 20 years, with a mission to unite people and alleviate the stresses of modern life through time gathering outside. Its Japanese-designed, lifetime-guaranteed outdoor goods serve as a catalyst for restorative experiences in nature. Focused on bringing people together, Snow Peak operates immersive retail locations in Portland and New York City, as well as a Portland restaurant, Takibi, “a Pacific Northwest izakaya that brings to life the brand’s belief that time spent sharing food and drink by the fire is the best way to connect with one another.” Visit the company online at [snowpeak.com](http://snowpeak.com).

Snow Peak into an outdoor lifestyle brand because of the joy camping had brought to my own life. As Snow Peak expanded, I realized we offered something greater than lifetime-guaranteed gear — memorable outdoor experiences that restore the human spirit,” Yamai said. “This realization sparked the idea of a campfield — a place for people to gather and experience the rejuvenating power of the outdoors. At Snow Peak, we believe time outside reconnects us with our truer selves and reorients us to the rhythms of nature. Our mission for the Snow Peak Long Beach Campfield is to create space for these experiences.”

## School bond

Continued from Page A1

Bonnie Lou Cozby, president of the Ocean Park Area Chamber of Commerce and the Ocean Park Village Club; and Bret Hopkins, WDFW officer and IHS head baseball coach.

OBSD officials reiterated to the FAC members that the scenarios being presented to them at the meeting were conceptual and by no means final products.

“This group is here to represent our community as a whole, and hopefully after today we’ll be able to come back and rework some things in a later meeting,” OBSD board member Tiffany Turner told the committee. “I think the whole idea is that [the district is] here to inform you of something, but really to listen to you and get feedback and get ideas in hopes that we really can come up with a concept that we can take to the board as a committee.”

If the committee ultimately makes a recommendation to the school board to move ahead with a bond vote for any of the suggestions presented to them, Huntley said the absolute earliest a bond vote would be held would be next April.

The first part of this two-part story focuses on concepts presented at the meeting that pertained to the future of the district’s elementary schools. The second part, to run in next week’s *Observer* issue, touches on potential upgrades to the high school and athletic facilities and the next steps in the district’s planning process.

### Tsunami threat a key factor

The key focus of any potential upgrades to OBSD facilities, school officials said, would be centered around the health, safety and wellbeing of the district’s stu-



ERIC LANCAULT, ARCHITECT

In a plan being discussed in Ocean Beach School District, a new unified elementary school, seen above in a very preliminary artist’s rendering, would be built on tsunami-safe ground in Ilwaco near the existing Hilltop Middle School. This building would replace separate grade schools in Ocean Park and Long Beach.

dents and staff — particularly, safety from the threats posed by earthquakes and tsunamis.

As it stands, both of the district’s elementary schools, Long Beach Elementary (grades K-2) and Ocean Park Elementary (grades 3-5), are located in tsunami inundation zones.

Along with proposed remodeling and renovation work at the elementary schools — including replacing roofing, siding, windows and playground equipment — one possible avenue presented to FAC members at the meeting is to construct a vertical tsunami evacuation tower at each school. The tower at LBE would be located behind the school, and the OPE tower would be located across Pacific Way.

Vancouver-based architect Eric Lanciault, whom Huntley lauded as “practical,” was on hand to walk through each of the concepts presented at the meeting. In the case of the evacuation towers, each tower would be a minimum of 45 feet, in accordance with the latest maps from state agencies — although he acknowledged that the maps can and do change regularly.

The towers would be designed to hold 350 peo-

ple each, and would be built with the intent of being specifically for students and staff to use, not the general public.

It was noted that there have been some discussions with emergency management officials about a larger structure to accommodate the community at-large, if this is the concept that the committee recommends OBSD moves forward with.

“As I look at it, these are the best that can be done with a reasonable budget,” Lanciault said. “If we were to build a school today, we would design the whole ground-level to be break-away [walls]. The cafeteria would be upstairs, the generators would be upstairs and it would be a fully functioning building for days and days.”

A member of the committee asked whether it would be possible for the towers to be used for another purpose, such as housing a gym, when it’s not being used to ride out the worst-case scenario. Lanciault indicated that it could be feasible.

Another FAC member asked if the towers being proposed have a proven track record in locations that have been hit by tsunamis in the past. Lanciault said only a limited number of towers

exist in the United States, which obviously have yet to be put to use, but noted that Japan is the global leader in tsunami refuge structures and said theirs have withstood numerous tsunamis.

### The campus concept

While the evacuation towers were the first potential option discussed by the committee, the concept that received far-and-away the most attention by district staff and FAC members at the meeting was the possibility of a three-school campus in Ilwaco. The campus would consist of the already-existing Hilltop Middle School and Ilwaco High School, as well as a new two-story K-5 elementary school that could house up to 660 students.

Under this concept, the number of school buildings in the district would be cut from four to three — which board member Don Zuern noted could be a long-term financial benefit with the district only needing to maintain three schools instead of four.

The campus option offers some clear benefits, not least of which is ensuring that all K-12 students and staff would be out of the tsunami inundation zone if disaster were to strike during school

hours. Lanciault said the proposed location of the new elementary school, northeast of the middle school, and the campus as a whole, is “perfect”

“Unlike the tsunami towers, which have to be sunk so deep, this could be constructed like any other elementary school ... It’s the perfect place to create a campus for safety, security and oversight, and to build a new school,” Lanciault said.

One of the FAC members noted that, as a parent, the campus option could be appealing for households with more than one child. Others said they would be reassured that each of the district’s schools would be a stone’s throw away from Ocean Beach Hospital under this scenario.

Cozby said that she was concerned about how well north and south end students would integrate under this concept, with all of the schools being located on the southern end of the peninsula.

“When we went through the whole reconfiguration process years ago, one of the biggest arguments for why we needed to split up the schools the way we did was the fact that kids from the north end have a hard time integrating into the south end,” Cozby said. “And now, we want to bring them all [to Ilwaco]?”

Huntley said Cozby’s concerns about north end students fitting in and being able to participate in athletics and after-school activities is something the district has discussed.

“Right now, [peninsula students in the same grade] are together from kindergarten on up, so [the cam-

pus plan] would be very similar to that and I don’t see any big change there,” Huntley said. She also pointed to the district’s activities bus, which provides after-school transportation for students who are participating in school-sanctioned sports and activities.

Huntley also noted that data from a few years ago shows that the median student lives just south of Sid Snyder Drive in Long Beach, although the pandemic could have reversed recent trends. “The kids have moved more south.”

Members of the committee also had questions about busing logistics under this scenario. Huntley said bus times to and from school would be more efficient and practical under the campus concept, with buses being able to pick up entire neighborhoods and utilize a shared campus bus loop.

There was also some discussion about what to do with the unused LBE and OPE buildings if the campus concept became reality. Ideas that were floated during the meeting included having the LBE building house the district office and maintenance and technology departments, and possibly childcare, while the OPE building could be transformed into a community building. No firm recommendations were identified at this phase in the process, however, and FAC members cautioned against the district making any promises that they were not absolutely certain they could keep.

The second part of the two-part series about last Wednesday’s discussion will run in the Dec. 1 *Observer* issue.

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**SCHOOL BOND  
HOMEWORK: PART 2**

# High school, athletic upgrades also eyed by district

By **BRANDON CLINE**  
*Chinook Observer*

ILWACO — Although Ocean Beach School District officials and community members spent a significant amount of time at a Nov. 18 meeting discussing the fate of OBSD's two low-lying elementary schools and the possibility of a unified campus in Ilwaco, attention was also paid to the district's high school and stadium.

Ilwaco High School and the stadium that plays host to Peterson Field are the two facilities in need of attention the most, school officials told the Facilities Advisory Committee at last month's three-hour meeting. Both facilities are seriously at risk of failing in the event of an earthquake, they said, while the high school has a number of other operational shortcomings.

*See School bond, Page A6*

# Ilwaco council argues over fireworks ban

## Vote postponed

By **BRANDON CLINE**  
*Chinook Observer*

ILWACO — The Ilwaco City Council opted to postpone a vote on an ordinance that would ban the sale and use of consumer fireworks within city limits at an unusually contentious meeting on Nov. 22.

The decision to postpone the vote came after councilors were concerned about technical language in the ordinance that referenced existing Washington state law. The ordinance narrowly had the votes to be passed, but was pushed back until the council's next meeting on Dec. 13 to give councilors and city staff more time to iron out the language.

*See Fireworks, Page A8*

# State appeals court upholds reversal of halibut charter case

By **JEFF CLEMENS**  
*For the Observer*

ILWACO — The Washington Appeals Courts Division II has denied a request from the Pacific County Prosecutor's Office to reinstate the 2019 convictions of charter boat skippers David and Robert Gudgell. However, one of the men faces the possibility of a new trial.

In March 2020, Pacific County Superior Court threw out the convictions, which were reached in South Pacific District Court.

The two were convicted of high-grading while conducting halibut charters on their respective boats the *Westwind* and *Katie Marie* during a 2017 season by allegedly fishing over the limit and tossing

dead smaller fish overboard before returning to port.

Pacific Salmon Charters, which also included fishing boats *Pacific Dream*, *Sarah Kay* and *MarB II*, booked passengers for fishing trips when the alleged illegal activity took place on the *Westwind* and *Katie Marie*.

## **Eighteen counts of unlawful recreational fishing**

During their 2019 district court trial, a jury found David guilty of 10 counts of second-degree unlawful recreational fishing and one count of wasting. Robert was



OBSERVER FILE PHOTO

**Charter skipper David Gudgell might face retrial for 2017 halibut high-grading charges even though he has already served out the original penalties ordered by South Pacific County District Court Judge Nancy MacAllister.**

found guilty of eight counts of second-degree unlawful recreational fishing.

David served 27 and a half days in jail and completed 220 hours of community service. He was fined \$13,000. Robert served 20

days in jail and completed 160 hours of community service. He was fined \$8,000. The brothers may now be able to recoup some of what they paid in fines.

*See Reversal, Page A8*

# Pandemic-era home prices increase 54%

*Chinook Observer*

LONG BEACH — Pacific County home prices continued a historic climb this summer to a level more in line with our scenic coastal setting, rising 54.2% from the pre-pandemic summer of 2019, the authoritative Washington Center for Real Estate Research reported.

The median price jumped from \$213,000 in summer 2019 to \$232,700 in 2020, before surging to \$328,400 this summer, the University of Washington-based center said. Compared to the summer of 2020, the county median was up 41.1%, which the real estate cen-

ter singled out the sharpest gain in the state. The county's increase was more than double Western Washington's overall 16.7%.

The price of larger homes with four or more bedrooms shot up more than 92% in the county this summer to a median of \$612,500, compared to the statewide gain of 18.4% to a median of \$686,600. Three-bedroom houses in the county went up 32.8% to a median of \$354,200 and two-bedroom houses rose 45.3% to \$282,700.

Despite its spike in popularity, Pacific County remains a bargain compared

*See Home prices, Page A6*



LUKE WHITTAKER

**The pandemic presented the perfect storm for a foraging renaissance, according to Oregon Master Naturalist Rebecca Lexa, pictured, who experienced a rapid rise in interest in her foraging courses that specialize in identifying culinary mushrooms.**



## **MUSHROOM RULES**

Cape Disappointment State Park is a posted "No mushroom harvesting" area, in part to discourage people from beating trails through the dunes in search of species containing psilocybin. Check for signs in other state parks for specific rules in each.

It is unlawful to harvest any species of mushrooms in our area's extensive National Wildlife Refuge system.

Be sure to obtain permission before mushroom hunting on private property, and to obey regulations on public property.

PHOTOS BY LUKE WHITTAKER

**ABOVE: This mature *Psilocybe azurescens* mushroom is a strongly hallucinogenic species that attracts an army of furtive fungal foragers to coastal areas of Pacific County each fall. BELOW: Foragers search for the world's most potent psychedelic mushroom, *Psilocybe azurescens*, near the Discovery Trail in Long Beach.**



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CHINOOK OBSERVER

Superintendent Amy Huntley told members of the Facilities Advisory Committee at a meeting last month that the Ilwaco High School building could serve Ocean Beach School District's needs for another half century if necessary upgrades are made.

## School bond

Continued from Page A1

### Serious IHS renovations

While both Hilltop Middle School and IHS are located on the hills of Ilwaco and expected to be safe from the threat of a tsunami, OBSD officials said the state of the high school building itself is what makes it a safety hazard in the event of an earthquake. The building was resurrected in 2015 after district voters supported a facilities levy, allowing grades 9-12 to move into the school.

"This building is actually pretty awesome. It's served us well for 50 years," said OBSD Superintendent Amy Huntley, adding that Eric Lanciault, the architect working with the district on the concepts presented to the FAC, told her that it could serve the district well for another 50 years with some renovations. "It's very well-constructed, but it isn't earthquake-safe, so we do have some earthquake retrofitting that needs to happen."

Along with making the necessary seismic upgrades, Huntley said the building's 1970s-era heating system has never been upgraded. The company that designed the heating system had gone out of business when Huntley started at OBSD in the 1990s, and ultimately led to the situation today — a process of replacing parts that OBSD Facilities Maintenance Director Chris Patana calls "Frankensteining."

"If you talk to the kids, you'll hear that some classrooms are hot and lots of classrooms are freezing, and I think that anyone who's gone here to school would verify that," Huntley said.

The pandemic, Huntley continued, has helped the district discover that the high school's ventilation is also not up to par and has been a safety issue over the past two school years. The building also has sewage and electrical issues, noting that the large cafeteria the meeting was held in had a total of four outlets.

"That was great in 1970; they didn't need any more than that. In a modern age, that's not sufficient," Huntley said.

Other possible high school renovations and upgrades floated by district staff and Lanciault include:

- Modernizing the kitchen, largely unchanged since the school first opened, and possibly making it multi-purpose for both kitchen staff and classes to allow IHS to offer culinary arts courses.

- Enhancing safety and security by relocating offices near the entrance of the building and creating a commons area. "The architecture of this building is actu-

*'IF YOU TALK TO THE KIDS, YOU'LL HEAR THAT SOME CLASSROOMS ARE HOT AND LOTS OF CLASSROOMS ARE FREEZING, AND I THINK THAT ANYONE WHO'S GONE HERE TO SCHOOL WOULD VERIFY THAT.'*

Amy Huntley, Ocean Beach School District superintendent

ally very, very, very good and conducive to expansion and creating an overall commons," Lanciault said.

### Athletic improvements eyed

If the FAC were to recommend moving ahead with a bond vote that included the campus proposal, the track, field and stadium would need to be relocated to make room for the new elementary school.

The 43-year-old stadium is on its last legs after renovations this summer extended its lifespan for another 3-5 years, although Huntley told the committee it is still not earthquake safe "at all" after those repairs. The stadium has been a thorn in the side of OBSD essentially since construction began in the late 1970s. The initial project, which included the addition of a tennis court and other athletic amenities, received federal grant funding, but funds ran out before the project could be completed.

"Every single board that has been here in my [29 years] has grappled with what to do about the stadium. And over time, the problems get worse and worse," Huntley said, mentioning water leaks and falling chunks of concrete falling onto the floor of the weight room located inside the stadium during the 2019-20 school year.

To that end, one of the possibilities the district presented to the FAC was construction of a new track, field and stadium located closer to IHS than the existing structure is. The proposed stadium would have a seating capacity of 1,000 people — compared to the current stadium's capacity of 1,200 — and would be rotated to take prevailing winds into account. The track would be resurfaced, and the field would receive new drainage while also transitioning from grass to artificial turf.

The goal of this concept, Huntley said, is to construct a stadium facility that is actually maintainable.

Whether the campus concept is OK'd by the committee or not, Huntley and Patana are adamant that the district needs to come up with a long-term solution for the stadium in short order.

"Moving [the stadium] doesn't cost any more than leaving it where it is," Hunt-

ley said.

A new stadium isn't the only athletic facilities upgrade that the district is eyeing. Separate from proposed operational upgrades at the high school, one concept presented to the FAC at the meeting is addition of an auxiliary gym at IHS, located next to the existing gym, with a new weight room and locker room located below.

"The idea being that while the building is going through upgrades for the infrastructure, including earthquake stability, there's the opportunity to increase the safety and increase the sports areas and make them safer as well," Lanciault said.

### What's next

Unsurprisingly, the final topic on the agenda revolved around the finances of the potential options presented to the committee.

The district presented rough cost estimates for each of the concepts to the FAC, but cautioned that any figures they saw were extremely preliminary.

The committee was also asked to keep in mind that some of the options presented to them conflicted with each other. For instance, moving ahead with plans for a new tsunami-safe elementary school in Ilwaco would mean that the plan to construct evacuation towers at OPE and LBE would not move ahead. However, the new elementary school would also require the district to move forward with plans for replacing the stadium facility and relocating the bus garage.

The district has an estimated debt capacity of about \$110 million — the largest amount the district could ask voters to support in a bond vote. Lanciault explained to the committee that certain concepts proposed at the meeting, such as renovations at the high school, could be scaled back. Sticking to just the crucial seismic and operational upgrades and fore-

going the construction of an auxiliary gym and other renovations would save a substantial amount of money.

OBSD would also likely be eligible to receive some financial assistance from the state when it comes to any non-athletic facilities work that might be done at IHS. District staff were also hopeful that it might be able to tap into funds from the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which was signed into law on Nov. 15.

The district is eyeing January for the next FAC meeting, which is the earliest the committee could make a formal recommendation to the school board. In the meantime, OBSD officials asked members of the committee to think about the concepts presented at the meeting and to discuss them with their social circle — family, friends, coworkers — and gauge feedback.

"This committee could decide to do nothing," Huntley told the *Observer*. "We're not running a bond, I guess is what I would say, and at this point we're not sure we're going to. That's what this committee will help us decide."

"It feels to me, personally, like [the 2003 bond] was just yesterday, when we remodeled those buildings. But it's been 20 years ... facilities age and they need stuff, and the state doesn't fund us in such a manner to save money for large maintenance projects — which is quite unfortunate."

OBSD also has a survey set to go out to the wider community that will in part ask for feedback about the district's facilities. The survey is expected to go out sometime in December, and will ask for feedback on a number of issues the district is working to address.

"We really do value engaging with the public, so we want to make sure we're making opportunities for the public to engage with us on topics they find most important. That's kind of the goal of the survey, but certainly we will have some facilities questions there to help inform the process," Huntley told the *Observer*. "We know that it's sometimes hard for people who don't have children in the school system currently to know what's going on ... so we want to be able to address their questions just as much as the parents."

## Commissioners voice support for PUD broadband grant

**SOUTH BEND** — Early in November, Pacific County Commissioners Lisa Olsen, Michael Runyon and Frank Wolfe tackled a few big tasks including hopes of improved internet in the county.

High-speed internet or lack thereof has been a hot topic in the county in recent years with the digital age taking over like a wildfire. Most regions of the county are significantly limited to what providers are available and service often comes with hefty prices and slow service.

Commissioners made a move to show support of Pacific county PUD's goal to bring fast broadband internet to all citizens in the county. The agency is currently pursuing upwards of \$25 million in grant funding for broadband internet. All three signed a letter of support to the Washington State Broadband Office with the Washington State Department of Commerce.

"We see this project as exceptionally important for the entirety of the Pacific County as it plans to address the lack of affordable and accessible broadband in our area," the commissioners wrote.

### State v. Blake

The Washington State Supreme Court in February ruled that the state's felony drug simple possession law was unconstitutional.

Current and former felony drug convictions were tossed out or vacated. Fines imposed as a result have to be refunded, which is expected to cost millions.

The commissioners, at the request of the auditor's office, authorized setting up a checking account to dispense the payments to former defendants.

"This is something every county in the state is having to do because of this decision," Olsen said. "So everybody is kinda trying to figure their way through it."

## Home prices

Continued from Page A1

to the statewide median of \$578,500. In Western Washington, only Grays Harbor County was lower. San Juan was highest, at \$887,500.

The median is that price at which half the sales in a county (or the state) took place at higher prices, and half at lower prices. While average prices are not reported, they tend to be 15-20 percent above the median.

### Affordability down

Based on local household incomes, mortgage rates and other factors, Pacific is among 21 of the state's 39 counties where buying a house theoretically remains within reach for an average family, the center's quarterly report indicates.

On average, a typical experienced home-buying family in Pacific County had 106% of the income needed to qualify for a mortgage on a local median-price residence, compared to families statewide who only had about 92% of what was required.

Affordability has eroded in the county, falling from 134% in the summer of 2020. This drop of 28 percentage points was the second-biggest change in the state.

First-time buyers, who

are assumed to have lower incomes and smaller down payments, will find it difficult to afford a house in all but five counties — all located in Eastern Washington. In Pacific County this summer, first-time buyers had only 78% of the income required to purchase a typical starter home.

In the summer of 2020, the real estate center figured Pacific County first-time buyers had a more achievable 98% of what they needed to qualify.

### Availability up

There was a greater than 21% increase in the number of houses sold in Pacific County this summer compared to the summer of 2020.

Incentivized by rising prices, more owners listed homes this summer, leading to a 20.5% increase in available inventory compared to a year earlier. Even so, available listings were only about one-quarter what they were in the summer of 2014. Statewide this past summer, the housing inventory declined 13%.

Fifty percent more residential building permits were issued in Pacific County this summer compared to summer 2020. They tripled from the summer of 2019. Statewide year-over-year, building permits were up 24.3% this summer.

## —LEGAL NOTICES—

### NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING COUNTY COMMISSIONER DISTRICT BOUNDARY REALIGNMENT

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a public hearing will be held Tuesday, December 14, 2021, at 10:00am, or as soon thereafter as possible, by the Board of Pacific County Commissioners via Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/347547406>. The purpose of the hearing is to consider realignment of county commissioner district boundaries in accordance with RCW 36.32.020 and 29A.76.010. Public comment will be received at the public hearing or can be mailed to P O Box 187, South Bend, WA 98586.

Marie Guernsey, Clerk of the Board  
Published Dec. 1 and Dec. 8, 2021  
Legal No 338-21



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