

County population surging after years of stagnation

Migration is source of sharp population gains

By BRANDON CLINE
Chinook Observer

PACIFIC COUNTY — The population is booming in our nestled corner of south-

west Washington, according to new data from the U.S. Census Bureau announced last month.

The Census Bureau released annual population

estimates for 2020 on May 4, showing that Pacific County has had one of the fastest growing populations in the state over the latter half of the 2010s, after experiencing a

slight decline in the first half of the decade.

While the figures are not official results from the 2020 Census, it's difficult to imagine that they will deviate much from the official Census

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County grappling with new drug law

One plus: State is providing more treatment funding

By JEFF CLEMENS
For the Observer

SOUTH BEND — Possession of illegal drugs is once again a criminal offense in Washington state, but it now comes with a catch. Agencies inside Pacific County are already working to figure out how to go about the new law while also complying with its new stipulations.

Gov. Jay Inslee signed the bill into law on May 13 after the Legislature scrambled to develop a solution to combat illegal drug possession after the State v. Blake decision by the Washington Supreme Court earlier this year.

State justices tossed out a long-standing felony drug possession law as unconstitutional because it discriminated against those who unintentionally possessed illegal drugs. The new statute changes a definition to specify that knowingly possessing drugs is against the law.

Under the new law, simple possession of illegal drugs will be a gross misdemeanor with a maximum penalty of up to 90 days in jail and up to a \$1,000 fine. However, the first two

See Drug law, Page A12

WEEKEND TRAGEDY

COAST GUARD SUSPENDS SEARCH FOR 14-YEAR-OLD SWEEP OFFSHORE



LUKE WHITTAKER

A woman watches from the surfline as a Coast Guard motor lifeboat searches offshore for a missing 14-year-old boy on Monday, May 31, in Long Beach. The search was officially suspended Tuesday morning.

By LUKE WHITTAKER
Chinook Observer

LONG BEACH — The Coast Guard officially suspended its search for a missing 14-year-old boy, now presumed to have drowned after being swept offshore Monday afternoon, May 31, in Long Beach.

The beach was intensely crowded with holiday weekend vacationers enjoying summer-like weather. The tide was starting to rise at the time of the accident and surf conditions were moderate.

"We haven't closed the case but we've suspended the search pending further developments," said Coast Guard Sector Columbia River Lt. James Davis on Tuesday morning.

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LUKE WHITTAKER

A Coast Guard helicopter combs the surf in search of a 14-year-old boy swept offshore on Monday, May 31 in Long Beach.

Old LBPD station becoming visitors, business services center

City, LBMA strike deal for use of downtown building

By BRANDON CLINE
Chinook Observer

LONG BEACH — Before the new station for the Long Beach Police Department was even christened, the soon-to-be old station has already found a new tenant.

At a May 20 special meeting, the Long Beach City Council unanimously voted to approve a contract between the city and the Long Beach Merchants Association. The contract will see the city contribute \$20,000 annually toward LBMA operating the building as a visitors and merchants services center for the next three years.

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IHS graduation edging closer to normal

Ceremony to be held at football field

Chinook Observer

ILWACO — Graduation at Ilwaco High School will look much different than last year's all-virtual affair, but it won't quite return to the pre-pandemic normal that feels like a distant memory.

The outdoor graduation ceremony for the IHS class of 2021 is set for Saturday,

MORE PHOTOS

High school senior photos: Pages A8-10

June 5, at 5:30 p.m. at Peterson Field. It's a BYOCU affair — bring your own chair and umbrella.

Each graduating stu-

dent in good standing will be allocated five tickets that they can distribute to family members for the ceremony, although requests for extra tickets were allowed. On the back of each ticket is a health attestation that each person is required to fill out in order to attend the ceremony.

Attendees are asked to

wear a mask during the ceremony, and to distance themselves from other family pods. With worries about the weather in mind, families are permitted to bring a pop-up tent if they so choose, as long as it is set up so it doesn't block others' view.

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LUKE WHITTAKER

Left to right: Ilwaco seniors Dylan Simonson, Keegan Kemmer, Abigail Knopski, Tianna Ramsey and Kylie Gray pose for a photo during a parade honoring the 2021 Ilwaco senior class.



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