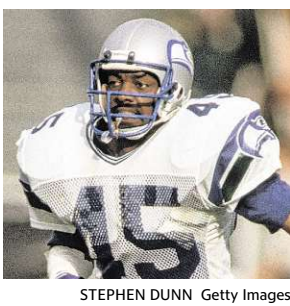




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THE BELLINGHAM HERALD

Can you ride e-bikes on Bellingham trails? It depends

BY ROBERT MITTENDORF
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More electric bicycle riders are using Bellingham streets, sidewalks and trails as the peppy little “e-bikes” grow in popularity. The growing trend is leading to confusion — and occasionally some squabbles — among e-bikers and people on foot, especially along Bellingham’s popular Greenways trails that connect the city’s neighborhoods. Bicycle advocates, as well as Bellingham Police and Parks and Recreation Department officials, are urging bike riders, drivers and folks on foot to use respect and common sense when they ride or encounter e-bikes on streets and byways. “A lot of this relies on people to make sensible decisions. It’s about being courteous and being smart,” Jamin Agosti of Walk and Roll Bellingham told The Herald in a phone call. City officials agree, Parks and Recreation Department Director Nicole Oliver said. “We recognize that conflicts can occur when different types of users share the same space. That is why we continue to emphasize trail courtesy and safe speeds through signage and education, reminding all users to yield appropriately and travel in a way that respects others. We will consider additional measures, such as signage or design changes, when persistent issues are identified. Overall, we depend on people to obey the rules,” Oliver told The Herald in an email. In 2021, Bellingham set a 15-mph speed limit for all bicycles in parks and on Greenways trails, according to previous Herald reporting. Agosti sees disagreements arising when e-bike riders use the Greenways network instead of streets. “When e-bikers feel unsafe they might choose to take a trail. (But) every bike is one less car trip,” Agosti said. That reduces traffic and moves the city closer to its climate goals.

CAN E-BIKE RIDERS USE TRAILS?

E-bikes come in three kinds, but under state and local laws, only Class 1 and Class 2 e-bikes are allowed on sidewalks and on trails:

- Class-1 pedal-assist with a motor that stops at 20 mph.
- Class 2: throttle-assist, and the motor stops at 20 mph.
- Class 3: Pedal-assist only. The motor stops at 28 mph and the bike must have a speedometer. Riders must be at least 16 years old. Class 3 e-bikes are allowed only on roads, including bike lanes.

License, registration and insurance aren’t required for e-bikes. Riders must follow traffic rules, including speed limits, and they must have working brakes, headlights

SEE E-BIKES, 3A

Snow calls the shots on opening day for Mount Baker Ski Area

BY JACK BELCHER
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The only thing stopping the Mount Baker Ski Area from opening is a lack of snow. All ground operations are ready to go and staff are on standby. Unfortunately, there is no estimated opening date due to poor weather conditions, according to Mount Baker Ski Area General Manager Mike Trowbridge.

In 2024, the ski area was able to open by Nov. 20. Unless there is a major shift in the predicted weather, it does not look like the mountain will be open by that time this year, Trowbridge said.

HOW MUCH SNOW IS NEEDED?

“This is like my 32nd or 33rd season at the mountain. Realistically, with these November snowfalls, it takes us about three days, four days, to get four feet of snow on the ground and go from

zero to hero,” Trowbridge told The Bellingham Herald. Despite above-average snowfall in October, a mix of high and low temperatures has made it tough to predict an opening day, according to Mount Baker Ski Area Marketing Director Amy Trowbridge. Ski area operators require between 20 and 40 inches of snow base at Heather Meadows in order to consider

SEE SNOW, 3A



RACHEL SHOWALTER The Bellingham Herald

Cars park in front of Rome Bakery and Market on November 11 along the Mt. Baker Highway in Bellingham.

Rome Grocery celebrates 100 years as community staple

BY ALYSE SMITH
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Tucked away in a quaint red building a few minutes outside of Bellingham is a 100-year-old business that has continued to be a Whatcom County staple throughout the years. Rome Bakery and Market, also known as Rome Grocery, opened in

1925 and packs “a big punch in our little store,” co-owner Andrea Rowe told The Bellingham Herald. The store and restaurant serves a variety of artisan pizzas, deli sandwiches, freshly baked goods and pastries, breakfast sandwiches, beverages and groceries. “The info that has been passed on to me is that the Rome Store opened in 1925. The building itself was built in 1915 down the road for a dance hall.

Ten years later it was brought up Sand Road to its current location on logs pulled by horses to be used as a general store for the Rome Community. At the time, there was a Rome schoolhouse across the street, a church down the road and the Rome Grange where it still stands today,” Rowe said. Since opening 100 years ago, the

SEE ROME GROCERY, 3A

La Niña winter nears, Whatcom County readies weather shelter

BY ROBERT MITTENDORF
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As another La Niña winter approaches with its promise of snow and freezing weather in the lowlands, Whatcom County officials are putting the fin-

ishing touches on a severe weather shelter for people living on the streets. Saturday was the first day that shelter operations can start — when the forecast calls for temperatures of 32 degrees and below for four hours or more. The Whatcom County Department of Health and Community Serv-

ices has hired staff and recruited volunteers to run a shelter where 60 people can get out of the cold, get a hot meal and use toilet facilities. And sleep. “We want to make sure that people feel safe and comfortable,” said Con-

SEE SHELTER, 4A



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