



THE DAILY ASTORIAN

142nd YEAR, No. 252

THURSDAY, JUNE 18, 2015

ONE DOLLAR



Courtesy of the Cannon Beach Chamber of Commerce

Fantastical creatures, like dragon pictured here, tend to appear during Cannon Beach's annual Sandcastle Contest. This year celebrates the city's 52nd consecutive Sandcastle event.

Port audit clean, except for dirty water

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

The Port of Astoria has reduced annual operating losses over the past five years, a financial picture that would have been brighter had the port accounted for potential liabilities from groundwater contamination.

Jim Lanzarotta, an accountant with Moss Adams LLP, told the Port Commission during a presentation of the 2013-14 audit Tuesday night that yearly operating losses decreased from \$1.5 million five years ago to \$105,000 in 2013-14.

The Port's net position — assets minus liabilities — slipped by only \$7,789 in 2013-14, bringing it to \$19.5 million. That would have been a significant improvement in net position, Lanzarotta said, had the Port not been required all along to report potential liabilities for the cleanup of groundwater contamination throughout the central waterfront. The audit said accounting for the liabilities decreased the Port's net position by \$1.8 million.

The Port, which was named by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality as a potential responsible party for the pollution, had not been accounting for the potential liabilities, which stretch back to the early 2000s. The Port is negotiating through its lawyers with former oil company tenants and insurers, and expects to receive significant compensation for the cleanup. But Lanzarotta said the Port cannot report the potential compensation until it has the other parties dead to rights on paying out.

The audit listed the omission of liabilities as one of two of the Port's material weaknesses, severe enough to cause misstatements in the Port's financials that could not be prevented, detected or corrected. The other material weakness was a lack of segregation of financial duties, which Lanzarotta said is common to governmental entities with small staffs.

The Port's audit also listed five significant deficiencies in financial reporting, which were less severe than material weaknesses, and included the corrections staff have made to address the mistakes:

- Deficiencies in the recording of depreciable assets, resulting in a \$93,087 reduction in the Port's net position.

- Improper accounting of tenant improvements to Port property and rent credits that lowered the Port's revenue. The correction resulted in an \$18,684 decrease to the Port's net position.

See **AUDIT**, Page 10A

Take a foray into sand play

CB Sandcastle Contest event founders turned tragedy into an opportunity

By ERICK BENGEL
EO Media Group

CANNON BEACH — The Cannon Beach Sandcastle Contest, which celebrates its 51st anniversary this year, is, like all sandcastle events, an exercise in living with impermanence, in creating order and beauty while preparing for its destruction, in learning to let go.

For several sunny, enchanted hours, thousands of visitors descend on Cannon Beach's shoreline to watch dozens of sand sculptors build mighty, majestic figures: castles and dragons, sea creatures and cartoon characters — the inspiration seems inexhaustible.

Just about everyone has a good time: The sculptors — amateurs and masters — revel in the teamwork and craftsmanship, while the spectators stroll among the plots, awed and entertained.

But the end is written into the beginning. By sunset, all physical evidence of the sculptures will be erased, taken by the tides. And the canvas of the coastline will be blank once more, ready for another troupe of imaginative beachgoers



Courtesy of the Cannon Beach Chamber of Commerce

In honor of the first Sandcastle event, a sculpting team fashioned this car with a commemorative license plate. The Sandcastle Contest was born in the aftermath of the March 27, 1964, Alaskan earthquake when the subsequent tsunami flooded Cannon Beach and turned the city temporarily into a ghost town.

to momentarily shape nature to their will.

Schedule of events

Cannon Beach's Sandcastle Contest — the oldest in Oregon — falls on Saturday this year and

is the grand centerpiece of a three-day shindig.

The festivities kick off at 5:30 p.m. Friday with the Sandcastle Parade; the lineup begins at 5 p.m. at Spruce and Second streets.

This will be followed by a

"Bucket & Shovel" dinner with salad, spaghetti and clam chowder options on offer at the Cannon Beach Chamber of Commerce Community Hall from 6 to 7:30 p.m.

The Sandcastle Contest itself begins 7:30 a.m. Saturday down on the beach. Awards will be announced at 12:30 p.m. (Registration closes at noon Friday.)

That night, a folk music concert featuring several local musicians will be held at 7 p.m. at the Community Hall.

Then, at 8 p.m., a beach bonfire will be held at the Tolovana Wayside. S'mores will be served, but attendees must bring their own chairs.

Finally, a 5K Fun Run takes off from the beach at Second Street at 9 a.m. Sunday; registration begins at 8 a.m.

For more information, visit www.cannonbeach.org/businesses/SandcastleContest.

'64 or '65?

Confusion has cropped up lately among some locals regarding the origins of Cannon Beach's Sandcastle Contest, which received the Oregon Heritage Tradition award from the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department last year.

The 2014 Sandcastle Contest was variously billed at the "50th Sandcastle Contest," the "50th annual Sandcastle Contest" and the "50th anniversary" of the first contest doesn't help matters (though, to be sure, any of those distinctions qualifies the contest for the heritage tradition award).

See **CONTEST**, Page 10A

Ka-Boom! Fireworks create an eco-bombshell

Washington's laws allow explosives that damage beaches, sealife

By NATALIE ST. JOHN
EO Media Group

OCEAN PARK, Wash. — Most of the people who participated in last year's annual July 5 beach cleanup tossed their bags of soggy Independence Day litter into the dumpsters. But environmental activist Ellen Anderson took her trash home, sorted it into tubs and buckets, and analyzed the contents.

Anderson is concerned about an issue that has special significance on the Peninsula, where thousands of visitors come to take part in

the annual no-holds-barred Fourth of July celebration: The environmental damage caused by certain types of fireworks. She says one popular type of device, Saturn Missile Batteries, creates more plastic garbage than all the others put together — garbage that can pollute water and soil and harm aquatic animals.

For the last several years, she and the other members of her group, Environmentally Friendly Fireworks, have been trying to get policymakers and citizens to understand that this plastic litter can con-



NATALIE ST. JOHN — EO Media Group

Ellen Anderson displays some of the trash she has collected after Independence Day celebrations on local beaches.

tinue hurting the planet long after the party is over.

Patriotic pollution

On June 11, Anderson

laid a collection of tubs and buckets out in the garage of her beach-front Ocean Park home. A small pail was filled with flashy packaging and bits

of rope. Other tubs contained bulky plastic and cardboard bases in a variety of shapes. Several others contained colorful collections of plastic propellers, tubes, wings, spinners, and caps.

"I'm sure I'm the only one who collects this," Anderson laughed.

There's one collection that Anderson finds especially troublesome: The shoebox-sized container that holds more than 1,500 bits of plastic shrapnel collected from a roughly one-mile stretch of beach in a single day last year.

These bits are the byproduct of Saturn Missile Batteries, a common type of aerial

See **FIREWORKS**, Page 10A

