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ONE DOLLAR

State OKs new enterprise zone

County, Port and Warrenton partnered on tax break effort

By **DERRICK DePLEDGE**
The Daily Astorian

Businesses looking to build or expand in Clatsop County have a new incentive: property tax breaks. The Oregon Business Development

Department has approved the Clatsop Enterprise Zone, which will offer property tax exemptions on new plants and equipment for three to five years in return for job growth and maintaining minimum employment levels. Clatsop County, Warrenton and the

Port of Astoria partnered on the enterprise zone as a tool to attract new businesses. The enterprise zone covers land planners have targeted for development, including the Astoria Regional Airport and the North Coast Business Park.

Astoria chose not to participate in the enterprise zone after some on the City Council had misgivings about partnering with the Port due to a history of mistrust. So the Port's piers in Astoria and property at Tongue Point, which Port executives are eager to redevelop, are not part of the enterprise zone.



Scott Somers

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Crossing the Columbia



Deckhand Mark Hoover walks the deck of the Oscar B ferry prior to letting cars aboard at the terminal on Puget Island, Wash. The new ferry is significantly larger than its predecessor.

Ferry route a way of life for some

By **DAMIAN MULINIX**
EO Media Group

CATHLAMET, Wash. — It isn't a long ride, but you can't really blame people for wanting to get out and look around on a sunny day, especially on the Columbia River.

"This is gorgeous," said Joy Cooper, of Portland, as the new ferry, Oscar B, left the terminal on Puget Island recently. She last rode the ferry "years and years ago" when it was the Wahkiakum making the trip across the river to Westport, Ore. The ferry ride takes all of about 15 minutes, but driving to get to the same location would take up to six times as long.



Cars exit the Oscar B as a line of cars wait to board at the dock in Westport. It takes about 15 minutes to cross the Columbia River on the ferry.

And with the new, larger Oscar B, the short sojourn is a pleasure.

"I was totally surprised," Cooper said. "I was amazed that we still have ferry service, and that it's as nice as this. It's a great tradition."

The Oscar B is the last ferry still operating on the Columbia

River. From the Cathlamet area, the alternatives include driving east to Longview, crossing the river and then driving west on OR-30, which takes about an hour, or driving west and taking the Astoria Bridge to Astoria and driving east on OR-30, which

takes more than 90 minutes. Neither one is a good option for someone who works on either side of the river.

"I used to work over at the mill in Wauna," said Ray Stoddard, who, as a Puget Island resident, finds the ferry valuable. "I've been riding regularly for the last five years, but I've used it off and on most of my entire life. It's pretty nice."

Pete Ringen, director and county engineer for the Wahkiakum County Public Works Department, said the ferry transports many commuters who work at the Wauna mill early in the morning, and then again around 5 p.m. But there are also many other travelers just looking for a scenic shortcut.

"On sunny days there can be more people that take it on trips to Astoria or Clatskanie," he said. "Saturday and Sunday between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. tend to be busier on summer weekends."

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Corps halts bird culling, for now

Contractors prevented from killing birds now that chicks have hatched

By **KATIE WILSON**
EO Media Group

EAST SAND ISLAND — Contractors for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers didn't kill a single double-crested cormorant on East Sand Island near Chinook from June 11 to June 17.

The Corps, which established a management plan for the birds earlier this year, says chicks are the reason.

Under that management plan, the Corps' contractors, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services (APHIS), cannot kill birds that are provisioning — tending to or providing for — chicks.

The Corps didn't receive its depredation permit and record of decision from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which had to approve taking birds protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, until April, and a record of decision from APHIS until the end of May. By that time, nesting was in full swing on East Sand Island.

The cormorants are seasonal visitors; they come to nest, and when they're done nesting, they leave.

From May 24 to June 10, however, the Corps' contractors, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Wildlife Services, shot only 125 double-crested cormorants and sprayed oil on eggs in 1,769 nests.

Under the one-year depredation permit issued by Fish and Wildlife, the Corps' contractors can kill up to 3,489 double-crested cormorants, take 5,879 nests and accidentally kill up to 105 Brandt's cormorants, which also nest on the island, and 10 pelagic cormorants, which sometimes fly nearby, through Jan. 31, 2016. The permit must be renewed annually.

This is one piece in a larger management plan. Ultimately, the goal is to reduce the colony from about 14,000 breeding pairs to 5,600 by 2018.

Now, given the number of provisioning chicks, the Corps is adjusting operations, said Corps spokeswoman Amy Echols.

"We're not performing any boat-based shooting because we don't know if one of those birds is helping to take care of chicks," said Bob Winters, project manager for the Corps in a phone interview June 22.

And they've held off on any on-island shooting for now.

"To date we haven't had any culling opportunities because most would occur on the west side because there's no chicks present ... but there's been eagle disturbances making those birds kind of jumpy," Winters said. "They're not committed to that portion of the island, yet."

The portion of the island the double-crested cormorants use for nesting is divided into fenced quadrants and monitored on the ground and from the air. Using both observation and aerial photography, APHIS identifies birds that are not in nesting patterns and shoots them, Echols and Winters said.

Wabi Sabi takes first in sandcastle quest

Annual event almost tranquil compared to 2014 crowds

By **ANDREW R. TONRY**
For EO Media Group

CANNON BEACH — A year removed from the celebrated 50th anniversary, the 2015 Sandcastle Contest's estimated 10,000 attendees seemed almost quaint by comparison. Competition in the Masters division, however, remained near the Cannon Beach event's high-water mark.

Wabi Sabi took first place. Along with medals and bragging rights, the 10-member team received a check for \$1,200.



Spectators photograph Wabi Sabi as the team builds its first-place sandcastle.

ANDREW R. TONRY — For EO Media Group

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