

Fuel oil vessel hits bridge in Astoria

ASTORIA (AP) — The Astoria-Megler Bridge between Oregon and Washington was closed Wednesday after it was struck by a 900-foot tanker that broke from its moorings at the height of the season's first severe coastal storm.

The vessel floated about 200 yards across the Columbia River shipping channel. It ran aground as it struck a concrete footing of the bridge.

The tanker carried no cargo but did contain 588,000 gallons of bunker fuel oil for its engines. None of the oil leaked, said Coast Guard spokesman Lt. Michael Stone.

The National Weather Service reported wind gusts of 63 mph at 1:22 p.m., just a few minutes after the Keystone Canyon broke free.

The 4-mile bridge, which carries U.S. 101 across the Columbia River, would remain closed until the ship was pulled free and the structure could be examined, said Chuck Curtis, district engineer for the Oregon Highway

Division.

The ship's stern was aground, and its bow was resting against the footing on the west side of the bridge.

The damage to the vessel included a 4-foot gash on its port bow, the Coast Guard said. Port of Portland officials said the Keystone Canyon would be brought to the Portland Ship Yard on Thursday for repairs.

Three tugboats were at the scene, and four more were being brought down the Columbia River from Portland. The seven tugs were to try to free the vessel Wednesday evening when tide conditions were most favorable.

The ship's crew and three Coast Guard inspectors were on board when the cables holding it to the pier broke free. Although the Coast Guard couldn't say for sure that weather caused the cables to snap, the incident occurred just as the storm was passing through.

The ship, owned by Keystone Shipping Co.

of Philadelphia, had come to Astoria on Tuesday for what port officials described as a routine inspection.

Wind gusts as high as 93 mph were reported at Tillamook and 75 mph at Netarts. Tillamook County authorities reported some trees had blown down and sewers were backed up by the heavy rain.

The wind caused scattered power outages, including one that forced closure of Astoria Middle School about 1 p.m.

Power outages also were reported in the Portland area, where the winds knocked tree limbs across electricity lines.

Traffic was rerouted from the Astoria-Megler Bridge. Vehicles either had to take a ferry across the river at Westport, about 20 miles to the east, or to the nearest bridge at Longview, Wash., 48 miles to the east.

U.S. 101 already was closed at Manzanita, 55 miles south of Astoria, by a rock slide that occurred Sunday.

Man accused in hit-and-run gains release from custody

HILLSBORO (AP) — A Portland man who tested positive for drugs on the day he allegedly struck and killed an Aloha woman in a hit-and-run earlier this month was released from jail Tuesday night.

James Patrick Streicher was released from Washington County Jail after posting \$10,000, about 10 percent of his \$100,535 bail, sheriff's Sgt. Terry Hill said.

Terms of Streicher's release require him to live with his mother in Portland, stay away from drugs and alcohol and not get behind the wheel.

Tests made public Monday show Streicher had traces of alcohol, cocaine and marijuana in his blood on Oct. 14, when he is accused of running down Jennifer Lynn Kreamer, 19, of Aloha.

Streicher faces charges of manslaughter, assault and probation violation. He is accused of driving the pickup that struck Kreamer from behind as she walked along the shoulder of a road near Beaverton.

Streicher has two drunken driving convictions. Portland police also arrested Streicher for driving with a suspended license in July 1990.

Congressional candidate accuses opponent of lying

LONGVIEW, Wash. (AP) — U.S. Rep. Jolene Unsoeld on Tuesday night accused Republican challenger Linda Smith of lying in claiming that Unsoeld's father supports Smith's run for Congress.

Turning to Smith in the closing moments of a debate that had turned angry and bitter, the 3rd District Democrat said Smith was taking advantage of Unsoeld's father, 90-year-old Stanley Bishoprick.

Unsoeld said her father, a longtime Republican, backed some of Smith's legislative races

in the 1980s. But she condemned Smith for insinuating that Bishoprick favored her over his daughter.

"You have repeatedly talked about my father," Unsoeld said. "You have said that he is on your campaign committee and that he has contributed to your campaign. It's been seven years since he has even made a contribution to you. What prompts you to tell such a whopper? That's what it's called, a lie."

The charge drew loud boos and applause from the crowd of about 250 at the Woodworkers'

Union Hall. The gathering was about evenly divided between Smith and Unsoeld supporters.

Smith, a conservative state senator from Vancouver, replied that "anything that was said was never meant to hurt Stan or Jolene."

She acknowledged that Unsoeld's father is ill and not capable of being involved in the campaign.

"Never would I bring him out and wave him around," she said. "I would not claim an endorsement from your father."

Unsoeld, as she has in the

past, showed transcripts of tape recordings that she says show Smith claimed Bishoprick's support.

After the debate, Smith said Unsoeld is "desperate and looking for ways to attack me." But she did not deny any of the statements about Bishoprick that Unsoeld attributed to her.

Earlier in the debate, Smith argued that the country needs a balanced budget amendment and term limits to restore the government to the people.

Unsoeld called both proposals simplistic solutions.

Washington senator opposes proposal for freeway tolls on commuters

BAINBRIDGE ISLAND, Wash. (AP) — U.S. Transportation Secretary Federico Pena, campaigning here Monday for Democrats, suggested freeway tolls during peak commuting hours to help ease traffic congestion.

Republican Sen. Slade Gorton quickly criticized the proposal. He said he can't wait for another member of Clinton's Cabinet to visit the Northwest and suggest additional tax increases.

"All this administration can do is come up with ideas for new taxes," Gorton said Tuesday in a telephone interview.

"It is amazing that he would come out here and campaign for these candidates by saying we are going to impose a new tax on commuters," the Washington Republican said.

Ron Sims, Gorton's Democratic challenger, said Tuesday in Spokane he was against the tolls suggested by Pena.

He also said for Pena to campaign for Democratic candidates by talking about new taxes wasn't very wise.

Pena said the special rush-hour tolls on selected highway lanes would help encourage mass transit.

"If you are absolutely determined to use your car, and use it during a high-congestion period, congestion pricing makes sense," Pena said.

Under congestion pricing, Pena said, dri-

vers would be charged a toll for rush-hour access to a fast lane — off-limits to other traffic during peak commuting times.

The idea is to cut down rush-hour freeway travel by people who are not going to work. About half the drivers on Seattle-area freeways during morning rush hours are not commuters, state transportation officials say.

Gorton said he would oppose any such effort in Congress.



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