

Pacific's home supply dwindles, prices more than double in seven years

LONG BEACH — Pacific County home prices increased 9.9% in all of 2019 compared to 2018, according to a University of Washington report. This about equaled the statewide increase of 10%.

The annual median home price — meaning half sold for more and half for less — was \$207,800 in the county last year, up from \$189,100 in 2018, UW's Washington Center for Real Estate Research reported.

Looking at longer trends, Pacific County home prices more than doubled between 2012 and 2019. Cowlitz and Wahkiakum were the only other two among the state's 39 counties to experience that level of price escalation. All three continue to have home prices considerably below the state 2019 median of \$398,200.

Pacific County's summer 2019 real estate market saw about the same number of sales as in summer 2018, but prices were 17.9% higher than in the previous summer.

More recent data from the Northwest Multiple Listing Service show a steep 26.6% decline in active listings, with only 127 countywide in December. Median prices also declined in December to \$205,000, nearly 10% less than in 2018. The statewide median was \$445,000, an 8.6% increase.

Fewer listings in Clatsop as median price rises to \$350,000

ASTORIA — As the new year began, Clatsop County continued experiencing a tightening home market coupled with gradually increasing prices, according to data compiled by the Clatsop Association of Realtors, MLS, Inc.

There was a 20.1% drop in active listings this January compared to the same month in 2019 — 195 compared to 244 in January 2019. There were 52 new listings in January, 22.4% less than in January 2019.

The county's median sales price this January — meaning half sold for more and half for less — was \$350,000, up a fraction of a percent from \$348,625 in January 2019. The average sales price — which entails totaling dollars and dividing by the number of sales — was \$406,323 this January, up 2.7% from a year earlier.

Clatsop houses have been selling fast, spending a median of 77 days on the market, compared to 125 days in 2019, a 38.4% decrease in selling time.

Crabbers face changes imposed to avoid whale entanglements

ILWACO — Significant changes are ahead for crabbers in a regulatory effort



COSTCO CONNECTION
Nancy Gorshe and chef Michael Lalewicz, owners of The Depot restaurant in Seaview, are featured in the cover story in February's Costco Connection, the magazine sent to millions of Costco members. The article is about couples who collaborate in running successful businesses. The Depot, considered one of Washington state's top restaurants, clearly qualifies as a success.

to limit impacts that equipment has on migrating whales.

Starting May 1, 500-pot license holders will be limited to 330 pots in the summer and 300-pot licensees will be cut to 200 pots. Crabbers fishing after May 1 will have to buy summer buoy tags. Winter replacement tags will only be issued between March 1 and April 30, with 500-pot licenses limited to 15 replacements and 300-pot licenses to 10.

Starting March 3, license holders and operators can only use the amount of line reasonably necessary to compensate for tides, currents, and weather." Slack line floating on the surface is believed to lead to whale entanglements.

As of Dec. 1, crab line used in Washington must have 12 inches marked in red at the top near the buoy and at the bottom near the pot. This is so gear can be identified as coming from Washington.

Oregon, California and the National Marine Fisheries Service are expected to coordinate with Washington in making sure the rules work together on the West Coast.

Stantec studying sediment impacts on Washington coast oyster industry

PACIFIC COUNTY — A global firm has been awarded a project to evaluate Willapa Bay and Gray Harbor estuaries in an effort to investigate the growing impacts of scour and sediment deposition on the oyster industry in Pacific and Grays

Harbor counties.

The project is phase II of the Twin Harbors Sediment Study, a three-phase process initiated by the Grays Harbor Conservation District in 2015. Stantec, an engineering, architecture and consulting firm, was brought on for the second phase of the study, which focuses on protecting and enhancing the shellfish industry in the two counties.

Pacific and Grays Harbor combine to cultivate 25% of the country's oysters, but shellfish aquaculture has been negatively affected due to excessive sediment movement caused by nearby river flow, dredging and bulkheading, changing ocean conditions and variations in the tides and winds. These problems have been reported on for 30 years, which has caused continuous degradation in commercial shellfish cultivation in the area.

"Farming shellfish — and protecting the beautiful waterways necessary for shellfish to live — is a way of life that has existed since before statehood in rural Western Washington," said Wayne Wright, Stantec Principal Scientist and Project Manager, based in Bellevue. "We are humbled to be leading efforts to help support the rapidly deteriorating shellfish industry, a major economic resource for the entire state of Washington and look forward to getting underway."

In a press release, Stantec said it seeks to obtain a better understanding of the sedimentation and erosion dynamics in Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor, identify

impacted areas and potential new sites for shellfish aquaculture, and define mitigation measures in greater detail to offset impacts to shellfish growing beds.

The firm will also be capturing ultra-high-resolution imagery of the estuaries and performing an in-depth analysis of where the most active sediment is, while also identifying stable areas of sediment where oysters can grow safely.

Free and low-cost business readiness and planning workshops scheduled

OLYMPIA — Coastal Bizworks, a new program of Olympia-based non-profit organization Enterprise for Equity, helps individuals explore self-employment and businesses plan a stronger start-up or expansion. This spring, Enterprise for Equity extends its offering of business readiness and planning workshops to Grays Harbor and Pacific counties for residents and local business owners.

Information provided includes how to market your business, strengthen your operations, manage your business finances, track your customers, grow your business over time, and so much more. Business coaching is a key component of the training and is offered to support the specific needs of owners and their businesses.

The series includes a one-hour information session, a two-day Business Readiness Workshop, and a Business Planning Course that runs April through May 2020. Thanks to a federal grant, the only expense to the students will be a \$185 fee for the 40-plus hour Business Planning Course. The other workshops are free.

The information session is scheduled at the Valley View Health Center's Community Room, 300 Ocean Ave., Raymond, on Tuesday, Feb. 18 at 9 a.m. To reserve a spot, preregister by contacting Beth at 360-704-3375 or via email beth@enterpriseforequity.org. Anyone interested in the workshops or unable to attend these dates may contact Beth for more information.

This program offers classes locally to Grays Harbor and Pacific county residents through special funding by the Washington State Community Development Block Grant Program with federal funds provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Enterprise for Equity provides the possibility of micro-loans up to \$25,000 to those who have completed this program and qualify under their income standards and application process.

Those interested may also follow the Facebook page for updates and links to pre-registration information: fb.me/coastalbizworks.