

# Santa drops in on Volcanoes Stadium



Eager kids and their adults lined up all afternoon to visit with Santa at Keizer's Volcanoes Stadium Saturday, Dec. 1.



ABOVE: Santa waves to the crowd after stepping off a helicopter that brought him to the stadium. RIGHT: The Bearded One visits with a family inside the gift shop.

KEIZERTIMES/Dee Moore

## Intermodal facility could be precursor to commuter rail

By ERIC A. HOWALD  
Of the Keizertimes

Brooks and Millersburg are now finalists for a new intermodal and transload facility that could come online as soon as the summer of 2020, but the facility, which would help local farmers get their products overseas and into the interior states, could further efforts for a commuter rail with a stop in Keizer Station.

"The focus now is freight, but it could include a passenger rail service in the future. We are including that capacity in the designs," said Kevin Mannix, executive director of Oregon Port of Willamette at a Keizer City Council meeting Monday, Dec. 3. "Putting in a commuter rail line will give a great opportunity to deliver commuters to the Portland area."

Oregon Port of Willamette is a lobbying coalition hoping to win a \$24 million state grant for the facility.

Brooks and Millersburg were the chosen finalists of five applicants and Mannix expects a decision as soon as January or February 2019.

"We could break ground next summer. We would want the facility ready to go by the summer of 2020," Mannix said.

If Brooks wins the competition, Mannix said the group plans to apply for matching federal funds.

The intermodal facility would primarily focus on agribusiness and getting Oregon products to larger markets internationally and the interior United States.

"The idea is to diminish traffic congestion on the highways and reduction of carbon dioxide emissions by use of rail," Mannix said.

Currently, most of the southern Willamette Valley's agriculture products are trucked to ports in Tacoma and Seattle in Washington,

but the region could support a more robust rail system, according to Oregon Port of Willamette's proposal.

The project would repurpose 205 acres of land north of Powerland Heritage Park as a facility for transitioning truckloads to the rails.

"We want trucks to be able to come in swiftly from Brooklake Road and deliver

or pick up cargo containers 24 hours a day," Mannix said.

The facility could service producers from Polk, Marion, Lincoln, Benton, Linn Lane, Douglas, Coos, Curry, Joseph, Jackson and Klamath counties. Each year, about 25,000 40-foot loads of straw, 3,000 loads of lumber, 1,350 loads of hay, 1,800 loads of pulp, 1,200 loads of potatoes and 2,500 loads of grain and seed make their way from those counties to ports in Tacoma and Seattle. Additional notable exports from the area include: onions, Christmas trees, nursery stock, and food, wood and metal products. The intermodal station could also facilitate imports for larger businesses like Lowe's, Home Depot, Target, Bi-Mart, Winco and Amazon — when its new fulfillment center opens in Salem.

"If we can get this grant, it will be the initiation of a dynamic process to deal with the transportation needs of the community," Mannix said.



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