

Carbon: Part of revenue would go into capital improvement fund

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But the city harvests about 750,000 board feet of timber a year. Last year, the harvest was larger — just under 850,000 board feet — and the city netted about \$350,000 for the capital improvement fund.

Revenue from the carbon credits would also go into the capital improvement fund.

“The harvest level that we’re able to do annually under this program is no different than what we’ve been doing,” said Ken Cook, Astoria Public Works director. “So this is not crimping our style necessarily. The level we’ve been harvesting ensures that the water quality is not harmed.”



JOSHUA BESSEX — The Daily Astorian
Hemlock grows in a area of the watershed blown down during the 2007 storm. The hemlock was planted in 2009.

Pantry: 32 people showed up asking for food for each of their families

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As the pantry’s opening drew near, the pantry volunteers told their customers of the impending transition. Still, the volunteers always knew there was a chance that something would go wrong.

The numbers spoke for themselves: 32 customers, each representing his or her own household showed up, requesting food for a total of 121 people (the all-time record is slightly more than 130), according to Molly Edison, the pantry manager. The largest order went to eight adults and three children.

The previous week, it was 21 households requesting food for 97 people. Before that, it was 19 households requesting food for 76 customers.

Loading up

“We always get hit hard and heavy in the first half hour,” Judy Mace, a volunteer, said. But, nearly an hour into their work, the customers just kept streaming in, Nancy Littell, a volunteer, observed.

Though relieved that most customers had no trouble finding the pantry, one distressing detail stood out: Three new families had placed orders.

“Usually, when they’re new, they’re more desperate, so we load them up (with groceries),” Barb Knop, a volun-



ERICK BENGEL — EO Media Group
Judy Wood, a pantry volunteer, grabs some canned goods to fill out a customer’s order. Each pantry volunteer manages a specific section of the packing room.

teer, said. “They usually wait until they’re very hungry to come.”

Upon arriving, each customer fills out a shopping list, which often includes items for health and hygiene. An order packed with wheat crackers, peanut butter and frozen green beans may also contain dog food, diapers and detergent. Every order — replete with groceries donated from Costco and community members, or purchased through the Clatsop Community Action Regional Food Bank — comes with beans and rice. Generally, customers wait no longer than 20 minutes for their order, Wood said.

While the volunteers, ever quick on their feet, loaded

up tubs with everything from eggs and butter to toothpaste and toilet paper, the customers, some with walkers or powerchairs, scanned tables overrun with loafs of bread and fresh fruits and vegetables, depositing a few into the bags and boxes they brought with them.

Meanwhile, volunteer Melissa Corwin, the “kid lady,” played in the corner with the children, who occupied themselves with Legos and coloring books. Asked if any of the children, who normally range from 2 to 10 years old, can conceptualize what the pantry is all about, and why their mom or dad goes there every week, she said, “I have no idea. They just come and play,” adding that they probably experience

it like any other shopping trip. “We just have fun.”

The pantry, which is open 3 to 5 p.m. Wednesdays, doesn’t necessarily provide enough food to last their customers for an entire week, “but it gives them a good start,” Wood said.

‘Thrilled’

In their larger, roomier 1,710-square-foot oceanview home — which Pastor David Robinson, of the Cannon Beach Community Church, blessed shortly before customers started showing up — the volunteers noticed that “We’re walking a lot more,” Knop said, smiling.

“Which is good,” Wood added.

But what really matters, volunteer Susan Martin said, is what the customers think.

“They’re thrilled,” said Edison, adding that she didn’t hear any criticism. (For reasons of confidentiality, this reporter wasn’t able to interview customers.)

That the pantry — which operates “like a little family,” Duncan Fenison, a 14-year-old volunteer, said — needs to exist at all in response to local hunger needs, however, can be painful to dwell on.

“It breaks my heart,” Rockne Wickham, a volunteer, said. “I wish there (were) more jobs for people. Hopefully, the recovery keeps on going.”

Scam: 290,000 scam calls have been reported

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contact the elderly, recent immigrants, and those who are not native English speakers. Some callers threaten their targets with serious consequences such as arrest, deportation or license suspension if they don’t immediately send cash or prepaid debit cards to cover a debt, while others tell the target that they have a refund coming, and try to trick them into providing private financial information.

Since October 2013, the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA) has received reports of roughly 290,000 of these scam calls. They estimate that about 3,000 victims have collectively paid over \$14 million as a result of the scam.

In late 2014, a local couple told the Chinook Observer about an alarming exchange with a man who demanded money for a nonexistent tax debt — they did not pay, and reported the incident to the police. But another local couple was not so lucky. Tuesday morning, a spokesperson for the Long Beach (Wash.) Police Department said that a woman visited to the police station to warn officers about the scam. When a man claiming to work for the Treasury threatened her with legal consequences, she rushed to purchase \$5,000 in prepaid debit cards and read the card numbers to the man over the phone. The representative said this incident shows just how convincing these criminals can be, because the victim was a well-educated woman who was quite savvy in other regards. County dispatchers’ call reports show that a handful of other Pacific County, Wash., residents received similar calls in late 2014.

In the press release, IRS Commissioner John Koskinen said that federal workers never try to shock or scare citizens into pay-

ing a debt, even when they really do owe money.

“The first IRS contact with taxpayers is usually through the mail. Taxpayers have rights, and this is not how we do business,” Koskinen said.

Nonetheless, these calls can be surprisingly convincing, because the scams have gotten quite sophisticated. According to the press release, “Scammers are able to alter caller ID numbers to make it look like the IRS is calling. They use fake names and bogus IRS badge numbers. They often leave ‘urgent’ callback requests.” The callers may even know a lot about their intended victims.

According to the IRS, there are several tell-tale signs that a caller may be a con artist:

- Scammers demand immediate payment, but the IRS provides opportunities to discuss the amount of the debt or file an appeal.

- Real IRS workers never demand a specific payment method, such as a prepaid calling card, and they never ask for debit or credit card numbers over the phone.

- Scammers often threaten to call the police or make an arrest. The IRS does not send local law enforcement to handle tax issues.

What to do:

- If you know you owe taxes or think you might owe, call the IRS at 800-829-1040. The IRS workers can help you with a payment issue.

- If you know you don’t owe taxes or have no reason to believe that you do, report the incident to the TIGTA at 800-366-4484 or at www.tigta.gov.

- If you’ve been targeted by this scam, also contact the Federal Trade Commission and use their “FTC Complaint Assistant” at FTC.gov. Please add “IRS Telephone Scam” to the comments of your complaint.

Vision: ‘Why would you want to live anywhere else?’

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“I’m very happy with what has been compiled,” Commissioner Sarah Nebeker said. “It sounds like a utopia. Why would you want to live anywhere else?”

Clatsop Vision 2030 Together also identifies 13 community values to protect over time, including the natural setting, quality of life, living wages jobs and accessible health care.

The initiative’s mission states, in part, “Together, we ensure that Clatsop County will remain our shared home — a special place where future generations grow together as we live, work, recreate, contribute and thrive.”

Doug Zenn, of Zenn Associates, previously told the Board of Commissioners in a September work session the single largest theme he heard from the public workshops was about the county’s natural setting, whether it be protecting nature, leveraging it financially or using it for tourism and employment.

“Natural setting — that is probably the single biggest theme that we heard from the community process in some manner,” Zenn said at the time. “It was by far the most frequent thing we heard.”

Zenn Associates made at total of 13 trips to Clatsop County over the past year. The firm has completed similar vision projects in Hillsboro, Tualatin and Coeur d’Alene, Idaho.

County Manager Scott Somers said the next step is for staff to bring back an implementation plan for Clatsop Vision 2030 Together. Somers expects staff to have a plan ready by the Board of Commissioners’ annual retreat planned this spring. No date has been set.

“I would anticipate probably March, maybe February, maybe somewhere around the board retreat might be a time to present an implementation plan,” Somers said.

The implementation plan would potentially include involvement from groups such as the local chamber of commerces, arts council and Rotary clubs.

Commission Chairman Scott Lee encourages the community to view more information about the initiative online at www.2030together.com



Daily Astorian file
The once-proposed Bradwood Landing liquefied natural gas terminal site hugs the Columbia River near Georgia Pacific’s Wauna Mill, background, in a photo from 2007. When putting together the final draft of Clatsop Vision 2030 Together, Portland-based consultant Doug Zenn, of Zenn Associates, said the largest theme to come out of the public workshops held throughout the county was natural setting, whether it be protecting nature or leveraging it financially.

“At the board retreat we will definitely talk about Clatsop Vision 2030 Together and implementation and ways to move forward,” Lee said.

In other business:

- The Board of Commissioners agreed to change its meeting times and hold both of its monthly meetings at 6 p.m. Wednesday. Previously, the first meeting of the month was held at 10 a.m.

- Association of Oregon Counties Executive Director Mike McArthur offered to have the AOC assist the county in finding a firm to conduct a 360 performance review of County Manager Scott Somers, which Somers requested at the last meeting. The commissioners will set a workshop next month with AOC to discuss the matter further.

- Budget Director Monica Steele asked the Board of Commissioners to consider and adopt the county’s 2015-16 budget policies and strategic plan/budget reduction strategy. The policies establish guiding



Daily Astorian file
Frank Bernards, of Roy, taps his shovel handle on the ground while hunting for razor clams at low tide on Indian Beach in Ecola State Park last summer. One of the six focus areas of Clatsop Vision 2030 Together is environment, natural resources and recreation.

principles and instructions associated with the county’s preparation of its annual budget. The board approved it unanimously.

- The commissioners approved an increase to the vaccine administration fee to better recover the costs involved. The county recently contracted with insurance companies to pay a set vaccine administration fee of \$54.77 for the initial vaccine and \$14.19 for each subsequent vaccine given at the same time. The contract would result in full cost recovery. The current administration fee of \$21.96 for the initial vaccine is half of what it costs to administer vaccines.

- The Board of Commissioners directed the newly formed ad hoc Wetlands Advisory Committee to address Arch Cape-Cove Beach Local Wetland and Riparian Corridor inventories. The inventory information was completed in 2011, but has not been adopted by the board.



Zenn Associates graphic