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ONE DOLLAR

Enterprise zone offers a tool for growth

Incentive would offer property tax breaks to draw business

By DERRICK DePLEDGE
The Daily Astorian

Hoping for a sweetener that might attract new or expanded business, Clatsop County, the Port of Astoria, Warrenton and Astoria might collaborate on an enterprise zone that would offer property tax exemptions for three to five years.

The tax breaks could help draw businesses to portions of the county that are prime for development but lacking interested suitors.

A preliminary map of a Clatsop Enterprise Zone covers an industrial parcel in Knappa, Tongue Point, the

downtown corridor of Astoria, the Port, the Astoria Regional Airport, the North Coast Business Park in Warrenton, other industrial land in Warrenton and a mill parcel near Olney.

Clatsop County Manager Scott Somers and others behind the enterprise zone are not pitching the idea as a panacea, but a carrot that could make the county, which lacks a metropolitan labor pool and is isolated from the I-5 corridor, Portland International Airport and rail, more attractive to business.

"It's a tool," Somers said. "It's a tool to help promote investment."

Each of the four jurisdictions that might co-sponsor the enterprise zone are expected to consider resolutions in March. The county's application is due with the Oregon Business Development Department in April.

Aware of concerns about corporate welfare, Somers and others are stressing that the tax breaks would only apply to new investment, so the incentives would not diminish the existing property tax base. They are also emphasizing that the enterprise zone would not change local zoning.

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ENTERPRISE ZONE MEETING

Experts will discuss a potential Clatsop Enterprise Zone at a public meeting 6 p.m. Tuesday at the Judge Guy Boyington Building, 857 Commercial St. in Astoria.



Daily Astorian file

The Astoria Regional Airport in Warrenton includes three runways, several banks of recreational airplane hangars, two large hangars housing Lektro and industrial land to the south housing several businesses. The airport is included in the preliminary map of the Clatsop Enterprise Zone.

WINTER WARMTH

Northwest enjoys high temperatures

By MANUEL VALDES
The Associated Press

SEATTLE — Flowers are blossoming. Bees are buzzing. The sky is blue. Sunsets have been stunning. Temperatures have crept north of 60 degrees, and joggers are going shirtless.

This isn't a typical February in the Pacific Northwest.

While the Northeast is buried under snow, the opposite corner of the country has been hosting the opposite of the winter weather spectrum. The Northwest has had a record-breaking winter, but for warm temperatures.

Records highs were logged Monday and Tuesday in parts of Washington and Oregon as one of the mildest winters continues in the Northwest.

On Tuesday, meteorologists reported record highs of 61 degrees at Sea-Tac Airport, 63 in Hoquiam, 59 in Bellingham and 65 in Quillayute, Washington, while in north-west Oregon, McMinnville hit a record for the day of 66 degrees.

On Monday, the National Weather Service reported record highs of 59 at Sea-Tac Airport, 60 in Olympia, 62 in Hoquiam and 62 in Vancouver. In Oregon, record

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Photos by GARY HENLEY — The Daily Astorian



A day off, plus a strong east wind, equaled good kite surfing conditions at Trestle Bay in Fort Stevens State Park Monday.

Port is afloat in first 6 months

Audit looms, but financial picture appears clearer

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

For the first time in a long while, the Port of Astoria presented financial figures at a public meeting.

The financials were placed in the consent calendar portion to the Tuesday Port Commission meeting, which would have made them an action item to be voted on by the commission. But Executive Director Jim Knight, who has said he hasn't been confident in the accuracy of financial statements after June 2013, moved them to a nonaction advisory item, adding that they're still not ready to be voted on.

"I would say we're still at an 80 percent accuracy rate," said Knight, having new Finance Manager Jim Grey, who replaced the recently

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Cutler resigns Seaside GM post

Sunset Empire Park and Recreation Board begins recruitment process

By KATHERINE LACAZE
EO Media Group

SEASIDE — After about three years as the Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District General Manager, Justin Cutler has resigned, effective March 18, to take a position in Colorado.

Cutler officially submitted his letter of resignation at the district board's meeting Wednesday.

"This is a bittersweet move for me and my family," Cutler said. "I am proud of what our team and board has accomplished the last three years, from grants to growth of programs and a focus on facility updates. My family and I will miss our friends and colleagues."

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Riverwalk Inn owner beholden to many

Hotelier owes Port, city of Astoria and IRS

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

Brad Smithart owes a lot of money to a lot of people. Smithart is owner and operator of the Astoria Riverwalk Inn at the Port of Astoria through Hospitality Masters.

The Port of Astoria's counsel mailed a letter Feb. 9 giving notice of default to Smithart, and Executive Director Jim Knight publicly announced the action Tuesday at a Port Commission meeting. The Port's Finance Manager Jim Grey estimated that Smithart owes the Port about \$179,000.

The Port's counsel is still re-

searching when the process turns from a notice of default to the eviction process.

Smithart also owes the city an unidentified amount of transient room taxes. The city doesn't know how much, Financial Analyst John Snyder said, because Smithart hasn't given the city reports to gauge the taxes owed since June.

Meanwhile, the IRS filed a notice of federal tax lien against Smithart Jan. 14, claiming that he owes \$16,402.62 in back taxes.

Smithart, who also opened the Arc Arcade in downtown Astoria

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EDWARD STRATTON — The Daily Astorian
Hotelier Brad Smithart, who operates Astoria Riverwalk Inn through Hospitality Masters, owes a percentage of his gross revenues to his landlord, the Port of Astoria, transient room taxes to the city of Astoria and back taxes to the IRS.

