

# Town hall: 'Now we're the Babe Ruth of oil production'

Continued from Page 1A

While he supports renewable projects, Wyden said, it will be some time before those sources can meet people's needs. Jordan Cove in Coos Bay, he added, is far ahead of Warrenton in consideration for an LNG facility.

Wyden has regularly voted against any Keystone XL pipeline bill proposed by the Senate. As a member of the energy committee, Wyden said, he's been asked to approve the pipeline to lower gas prices.

"Now we're the Babe Ruth of oil production," said the senator about the U.S.'s surpassing of Saudi Arabia in oil production.

There are too many unanswered questions about Keystone XL, he said, such as why project backer TransCanada doesn't pay into the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund, something he and other senators are trying to ensure happens in a Keystone XL bill.

Kurt Englund, vice president of Englund Marine and Industrial Supply, said near-shore wave energy projects along the coast threaten prime fishing grounds in exchange for expensive energy often sold abroad. Wyden said the energy committee is trying to make sure the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management puts more of a focus on working with local fishing communities.

## Student focus

Students asked Wyden's opinion of the new Common Core State Standards, a controversial effort to nationalize and often toughen education standards, and standardized testing's influence on education.

Education needs accountability in a global economy where it's so integral to student success, Wyden said, but once again, the federal government needs to avoid creating a one-size-fits-all solution.



JOSHUA BESSEX — The Daily Astorian  
Sen. Ron Wyden spoke about many topics and answered audience questions Friday.

Students wondered what Wyden is doing to solve issues with the increasing wealth gap in America, along with the skyrocketing cost of college.

There's evidence that the education and wealth gap correlate, Wyden said, and constructive approaches should focus on improving America's social safety net through such

measures as a recent proposal by Obama to make community college free for the first two years.

Within education, he said, the focus needs to be on in-demand, high-paying professions. Wyden referenced the proposed Student Right to Know Before You Go Act co-sponsored by him and Republican Sen. Marco

Rubio from Florida. The bill would provide information to consumers on the price of colleges; earnings and debt loads of their graduates in various degrees; and other information to help gauge the competitive value of different colleges.

Wyden covered many other topics, including:

- **The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)**, which he said the U.S. should throw every effective strategy at, such as drone strikes, special forces and supporting indigenous resistance.

- **Liberty and security**, owing to Wyden's presence on the Select Committee on Intelligence and his questioning of the National Security Agency on the collection of metadata from American's communications. Wyden said liberty and security aren't mutually exclusive, and that collecting phone records erodes Americans' liberties without making them safer.

- **Flood mapping** by the

Federal Emergency Management Agency, which could force areas around Warrenton to raise their levees at an estimated cost of \$17 million. "I'm still not convinced that this whole new barrage of rules and regulations has been fine-tuned and balanced for small communities," Wyden said, once again decrying one-size-fits-all solutions.

- **Kate Brown**, who he feels confident in as Oregon's new governor. The two have worked together on a "Listening to Oregon's Future" tour to get the input of state high school students.

- **Border security and immigration.** Employers should be held accountable for employing undocumented workers, said Wyden, and undocumented people in the U.S. should be given a chance at citizenship if they learn English and haven't broken other major laws.

- **Gay marriage**, to which he said: "If you don't like gay marriage, don't get one."

# Wyden: 'I think the American tax system is a broken, dysfunctional mess'

Continued from Page 1A

and residents are challenging the Oregon LNG project as a threat to the Columbia River, property values and health and safety.

Wyden, a member — and former chairman — of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, said natural gas is a cleaner fossil fuel than coal. But he recognizes the environmental concerns about hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking," used to extract natural gas and the related methane emissions.

"I wanted Jordan Cove to have the chance to make its case. And I like to think the fact that I did it by the book,

and was straight with people, contributed to Jordan Cove having that kind of opportunity," Wyden said in an interview Friday.

"Warrenton is further behind in the process. And I think that those who are interested ought to just go forward with the process. I'm happy to look at it every step of the way.

"I do think Jordan Cove is ahead."

Wyden discussed LNG terminals, a labor dispute that has slowed work at West Coast ports, and life in the Senate minority during a stop in Astoria.

## West Coast ports

The senator said he spoke Thursday night with U.S. Sec-

retary of Labor Thomas Perez about the protracted contract dispute between the International Longshore and Warehouse Union and the Pacific Maritime Association that has disrupted the flow of goods at West Coast ports.

Wyden and U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Ore., had sent letters to the union and port management urging a swift resolution. The senators had called for the two sides to enter binding arbitration.

A tentative agreement on a new contract was reached late Friday just before a deadline set by Perez, who had warned he would move the negotiations to Washington, D.C., if the stalemate continued.

"My sense is that they are very much aware of the urgency here: literally millions of dollars being lost practically every few hours as a result of this," Wyden said of the White House.

## In the minority

The Republican takeover of the Senate after last November's elections gave the GOP control of Congress and cost Wyden the chairmanship of the Senate Finance Committee.

While Oregon's congressional delegation is dominated by Democrats, Wyden is not pessimistic about the potential loss of influence.

"If you look at my record, I've gotten as much done in

the minority as I have in the majority," he said.

Senate Republicans hold a 54 to 44 majority over the Democrats and two independents who caucus with Democrats.

Senate Republicans have to defend significantly more seats than Democrats in the 2016 elections.

"And I think we'll take it back in 2016," said Wyden, who is up for re-election next year. "But I don't want people to think that you send our delegation to Washington and you just sit around if you're not in the majority.

"The reality is, as you know, neither side has 60 votes" to break filibusters and

fully control the Senate.

Wyden believes there is opportunity for collaboration with Republicans on issues such as tax reform.

"I think the American tax system is a broken, dysfunctional mess," he said. "Basically, you've got the tax tail wagging the economic dog."

The senator wants a tax code that is fairer to the middle class and small businesses, provides stronger incentives for research and development to help drive innovation, and promotes clean energy development.

"There's an opportunity here to exercise what I call principled bipartisanship," he said.

# McQuhae: 'Society places a premium on things of beauty, like views'

Continued from Page 1A

The same can't be said of the proposed Chapman Point dune grading project that McQuhae helped bring before the Planning Commission last spring.

The sand dunes in Chapman Point, where McQuhae owns a home with his wife, Diana, have grown by tens of feet, blocking the beachfront views of houses built in the late 1990s and early 2000s. McQuhae and the Chapman Point Homeowners Association had hoped the city would lift the subdivision's restriction on dune grading, allowing them to shave down the dunes west of their property just as homeowners at Breakers Point and Ocean Avenue are allowed to do.

But the opposition came out in force, arguing that it would degrade one of Cannon Beach's most striking landscape features and diminish a beloved public resource.

These arguments do not resonate with McQuhae.

"Society places a premium on things of beauty, like views. Views go with property," he said. "Land that has a view commands a premium. It does; it's more expensive. It's more expensive because it has a view."

People who own their prop-

erty, he said, "have a right to protect the value of their property. I can't imagine why (some residents) think that we would want to despoil our front yard, but they seem to think that that's what we're up to."

Dune grading at Chapman Point eventually will have to happen, he said, because letting the dunes continue to build up unchecked is "just not cricket. It's not fair to have people lose a great portion of the value of their property due to public opinion."

## Into the past

Born in Saskatoon, Canada, McQuhae — who also owns a home in rural Washington County — earned a bachelor's degree in applied science at the University of British Columbia and a Ph.D. at London's Imperial College of Science and Technology. For 30 years, he worked in the semiconductor industry. At Northern Telecom Limited in Ottawa, Canada, and at Intel in Hillsboro, he helped develop the processes for manufacturing silicon chips for modern electronic devices.

After retiring in 1999, he began looking into the origins of his unusual Scottish name — "You don't find too many of us in this world," he said — and

embarked on a family history research project. "I got into that in quite a big way."

Ten years later, McQuhae had more or less finished the project.

He spent many hours sifting through sheets of microfiche and reels of microfilm, piecing together his lineage as far back as he could. Through the Church of Latter-day Saints — which has an enormous database of birth records, burial records, marriage records and census records — he traced his ancestry, on his mother's side, back to Germany in the early 1800s and to England in the mid-1700s. On his father's side, he traced it back to Scotland in the mid-1700s.

Beyond a certain point, his family history goes silent because there are no more records to find. Nevertheless, McQuhae's research gave him tremendous insight into the past.

"You're learning about the times, the era they lived in, the type of conditions there were, what people did for a living, what things cost," he said. "You're just absorbing all kinds of information that's there, not because you're looking for it but because it's peripheral to what you're looking for, and it just presents itself."

A family's having up to

13 children was "quite common," he said. "Losing three of those children to childhood illnesses was quite common. They didn't have cures for diphtheria, measles. Many

children died of tuberculosis."

He never met his father's mother and barely remembers his father's father, "but through studying family history, I feel I know them, and I

feel I know their parents."

Asked whether he enjoys the spare time retirement affords him, McQuhae smiled and said, "I seem to fill it."

— Erick Bengel

# 'Mega Sink': Volunteers remove 539 pounds of debris from the South Jetty

Continued from Page 1A

They carry flame retardants and other toxics, along with "legacy pollutants" such as PCBs and organochlorine pesticides discarded by industry and farming. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has reported that microplastics contain PCBs, a probable carcinogen, at levels up to a million times higher than in seawater.

As the weather warms up, much of the plastic debris threatens to leach such harmful chemicals into a wetland site frequented by killdeer, snowy owls, pelicans, small mammals, reptiles and clams. He said the animals often mistake the microplastics for food, eating them and tearing up their digestive tracts.

Of particular concern right now, said Ward, is the coming nesting season from March 15 to July 15 of snowy plovers,

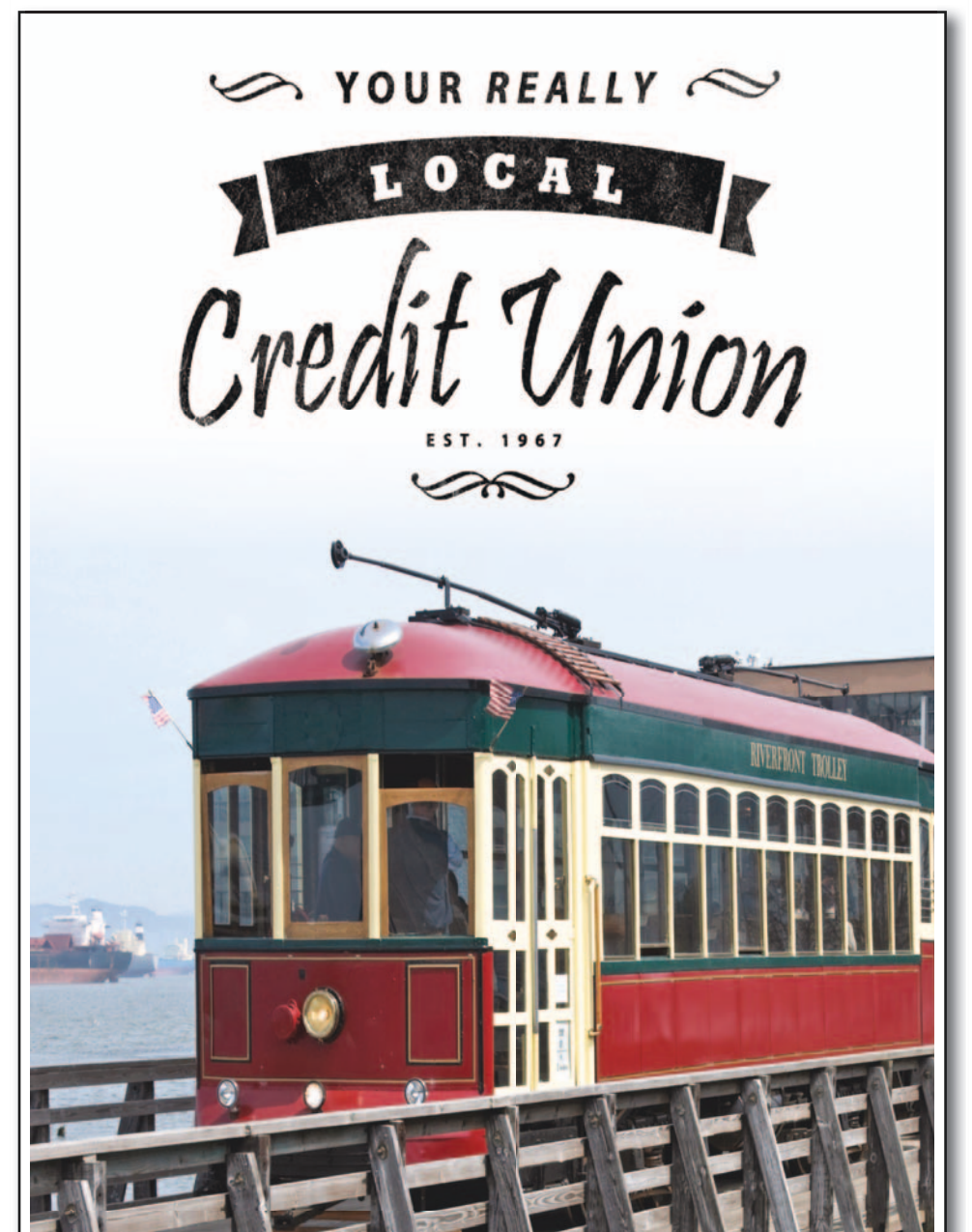


Submitted photo  
About 50 volunteers, human and equine, picked 539 pounds of debris — much of it small, hard-to-reach microplastics — out of a tidal inlet next to the South Jetty at Fort Stevens State Park.

protected under state law and under the federal Endangered Species Act. Clatsop Spit is one of several snowy plover management areas designated by the state.

Ward said he's now partner-

ing with solid waste agencies in Tillamook County to clean the beaches of Manzanita using his system of an electrostatically charged screen that takes microplastic debris out of sand as it filters through.



**Wauna Credit Union**  
Mobile • Loans • Business • Mortgage

800-773-3236 • waunafcu.org

