

Tyson Burnard is Player of the Year

SPORTS • PAGE 7A

THE DAILY ASTORIAN

FisherPoets on the line

COAST WEEKEND

142nd YEAR, No. 172

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2015

ONE DOLLAR

At Bear Creek Dam, A SHIFT IN POWER

Water rates could drop because of new turbine

By DERRICK DePLEDGE
The Daily Astorian

Coaxing more value from the Bear Creek watershed, Astoria has a new hydroelectric turbine that will power its water treatment plant and generate excess electricity that can be sold to PacifiCorp, an investment that could potentially save water rate-payers money.

The \$400,000 project, financed by grants, is the latest creative move to harness the 3,700-acre watershed that is the source of Astoria's drinking water. The city has also agreed not to aggressively harvest timber in the watershed in return for carbon credits that could bring in six figures annually over the next decade and play a small role against climate change.

The new hydroelectric generator, which will be dedicated at a ceremony at Bear Creek Dam Monday afternoon, will produce enough electricity to erase the \$9,000 a year the city is spending to power the water treatment system along with excess power worth an estimated \$2,200 a year.

"We're looking at ways to wisely use the city's resources," said Ken Cook, the city's Public Works director. "Water flows in that pipe to town 24 hours a day, 365 days a year."

"It has enough of what they call 'head' that the height is right for taking that power that's just wasted and making use of it."

The 30-kilowatt generator is located at the base of Bear Creek Dam east of the city near Svensen and is expected to produce about 154,645 kilowatt-hours of electricity a year. The water treatment system uses about 90,000 to 100,000 kwh annually, according to the city, leaving about 50,000 to 60,000 kwh left over for sale to PacifiCorp through what is known as net metering.

Thirty kilowatts is enough power to provide electricity for about 16 homes, so the new turbine is considered small.

"It's utilizing a resource that's been there for years and years and years but has just not been tapped," Cook said.

The city had studied both wind and hydroelectric power for the Bear Creek watershed but found that wind is not practical because

See DAM, Page 12A



Photos by JOSHUA BESSEX — The Daily Astorian

The vault containing the hydroelectric turbine is seen from the top of the Bear Creek Dam Tuesday. The turbine will harness water flowing from the dam to generate electricity to power the water treatment plant, plus excess to sell to PacifiCorp.



PacifiCorp's Nick Graiff walks by a series of power conversion units and inverters at the top of Bear Creek Dam. Alternating current from the turbine is converted into direct current in the power conversion units below, before passing through the inverters above, which converts it back to a usable alternating current.

Betsy's 26 bills

State senator tackles Hanthorn Cannery lease, levee bills, more

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

State Sen. Betsy Johnson, D-Scappoose, is a chief sponsor on 26 bills in the Oregon Legislature. Several directly affect the Oregon Coast in a big way; and several are on behalf of her North Coast constituents.

Senate Bill 306 may have the biggest impact here. It would permit the Oregon Infrastructure Finance Authority to provide financial assistance for levee projects that contribute to improvement, expansion or repair of infrastructure systems and are essential for use or development of farm, industrial or commercial land.

"This is an economic development bill," Johnson said. "I can't sell my house if I live behind an uncertified dike."

See BETSY, Page 12A



State Sen. Betsy Johnson

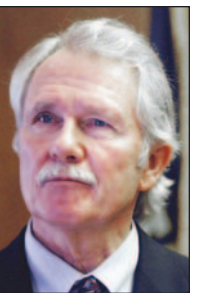
FBI, IRS join in Kitzhaber clamor

PORTLAND (AP) — The director of the Oregon state Department of Administrative Services says he was questioned two weeks ago by agents from the FBI and the IRS in a federal investigation of former Gov. John Kitzhaber and his fiancée, Cylvia Hayes.

Michael Jordan also disclosed Wednesday in an interview with The Oregonian that state technicians went through the offices of the governor after Kate Brown took office to gather computers and other electronics used by Kitzhaber staffers. Jordan says they told him they did so after discussions with the office of U.S. Attorney Amanda Marshall.

Marshall's office didn't return a call seeking comment, and Brown's office declined comment, the newspaper reported.

See KITZHABER, Page 12A



John A. Kitzhaber

Coast Guard Cutter Alert rescues sea turtles

The two were tangled in nets, plastic bottles

The Daily Astorian

Two sea turtles caught in fishing net were freed earlier this month by a Coast Guard rescue swimmer.

The Alert, a Coast Guard cutter homeported in Astoria, encountered the struggling turtles while on patrol Feb. 10 in the eastern Pacific, according to a statement from the guard.

The cutter's bridge watch team flagged plastic containers used as buoys floating in the water and then saw the



Submitted photos

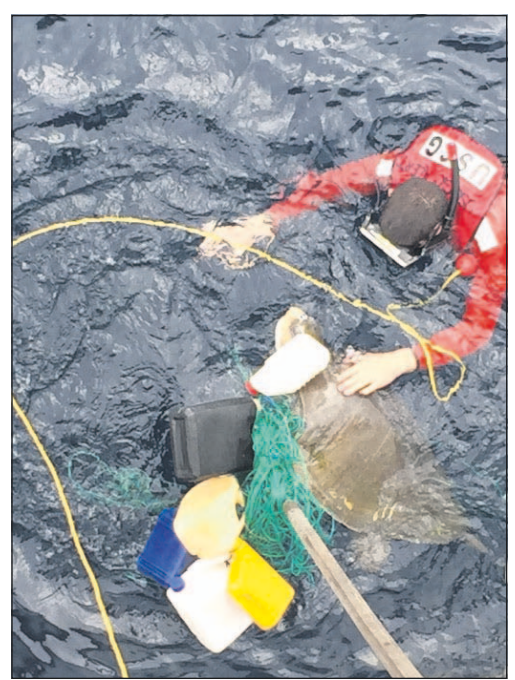
Alert's crew maneuvers closer while attempting to snag the nets entangling two sea turtles with a pole to keep the turtles in place.

two entangled turtles.

"Jumping into the ocean to free a couple of sea turtles is not something you wake up in the morning expecting to do" Seaman Brandon Groshens, Pendleton, said in a statement. "It was a really great feeling as they swam away, knowing

that we just saved their lives."

Commander Brian Anderson, the Alert's commanding officer, said he was "especially proud of my diligent watch standers, and how the crew quickly came together in performing their good deed for the day."



Seaman Brandon Groshens of the Coast Guard Cutter Alert, evaluates which line to cut to free the second of a pair of sea turtles tangled in containers.

