



THE DAILY ASTORIAN

142nd YEAR, No. 192

THURSDAY, MARCH 26, 2015

ONE DOLLAR

Warrenton dam will go, but how?

Project helps salmon, water quality, but property owners question impact

By **DERRICK DePLEGGE**
The Daily Astorian

WARRENTON — The Eighth Street Dam is obsolete.

Built over the Skipanon River in 1963 to help with flood control, the earthen dike, which has no emergen-

cy spillway, has exceeded its 50-year life span. The state has described the dam as a significant hazard that probably poses increased risk to residents in a major flood.

Yet a unique \$1.2 million arrangement between the Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce, the

Skipanon Water Control District and the city to demolish the dam and build a one-lane bridge over the river has been darkened by complaints from property owners.

The Bonneville Power Administration, under pressure to restore salmon habitat, would finance

CREST's removal of the dam to help improve fish passage and water quality. The Water Control District, which owns the dam, would shed an expensive burden. And the city would preserve emergency access through a bridge over what is now a private gravel road.

Several property owners and businesses, however, are demanding a wider bridge or another access point to land in the middle of the city that might one day be used for greater development. Some — including Mayor Mark Kujala's family, which owns Skipanon Brand Seafood and other property near the river and the

See DAM, Page 10A

Japanese flags begin journey home



JOSHUA BESSEX — The Daily Astorian

Ed Bartlein, a WWII veteran and member of PNP-41st Signal, is helped up by Rex and Keiko Ziak, right, before handing over the Yosegaki Hinomaru flag he collected during the war at the OBON 2015 Returning Ceremony at the Barbey Center Monday. The ceremony was the first public transfer of Yosegaki Hinomaru to OBON so that they can be returned back to families in Japan. See more photos online at www.dailyastorian.com

Souvenirs of war are returned in ceremony

By *The Daily Astorian*

Seven decades after the end of World War II, a group of American veterans gathered in the Barbey Center at the Columbia River Maritime Museum in Astoria Monday to peacefully return souvenirs of war back to their rightful owners.

The souvenirs are Japanese flags the American soldiers acquired during the war. The flags were prepared by the Japanese soldiers' families and friends before sending them off to war.

Each Japanese soldier carried at least one flag with them during battle.

See FLAG, Page 10A



Ursula Bassett smiles as she shows a photo of her late husband, Dale Bassett, after returning the Yosegaki Hinomaru he brought back from WWII at the OBON 2015 Returning Ceremony at the Barbey Center Monday.

JOSHUA BESSEX
The Daily Astorian

Astoria Ford site for sale

Dealership readies to move to Warrenton

By **EDWARD STRATTON**
The Daily Astorian

As Astoria Ford seeks to move to Warrenton, Ray and Ruth Birdwell seek to sell the property it leases to Dan Gouge at 668, 710 and 750 W. Marine Drive in Astoria, just south of the New Youngs Bay Bridge.

The properties have recently been listed on Remax River & Sea, Trulia, Zillow and other real estate sites for \$3.5 million.

The land has more than 40 acres and includes 3.64 usable acres, or more than 30,000 square feet, with sunset views facing Youngs Bay and two buildings used by Astoria Ford. Much of the land is submerged.

The most recent combined real market value, according to Clatsop County property records, was about \$3,056,000. But the listing real estate broker, David Hoggard of Remax, said the unique location, size and zoning make the property special.

"It's kind of a tough determination, because there's not a property like it right now," Hoggard said.

"You could put a hotel there. You could put apartments in there."

Hoggard said the intent is to sell all three properties at once.

Since 1997, Gouge has leased the site for Astoria Ford. Before that, it housed Birdwell Motors, Garcia Motor Co. and Hauke's Bayside Sentry market. Astoria Ford is the last major dealership in Astoria, after Ocean Crest

See FORD site, Page 10A



Clatsop County Webmaps
This 40 acres, with 3.64 usable acres where Astoria Ford is sited, is for sale for \$3.5 million.

Replacing gillnets: Agencies weigh next steps

By **KATIE WILSON**
EO Media Group

COLUMBIA RIVER — Purse and beach seine gear could be a part of the regular Columbia River commercial salmon fishery this year, drawing from the same pool as the rest of the fleet — even when it comes to the number of fish they can keep or handle before everyone has to stop fishing.

Whether or not the new seine fishery will exist has come down to a question of numbers. Specifically, which numbers.

After testing seine gear on the river following a mandate from Oregon Gov. John Kitzhaber to phase out the use

of commercial gillnets on the mainstem of the Columbia, Washington and Oregon's advisory group, the U.S. v. Oregon Technical Advisory Committee, initially said release mortality numbers from the replacement gear (purse and beach seines) were much too high. The group said that while only 8.3 percent of wild steelhead died after being caught in beach seines and released, 34.3 percent of Chinook salmon and 38.4 percent of coho caught in the same nets died.

But those aren't the only numbers out there. There are several versions, in fact.

"We still don't even have mortality rates finalized," said John North, Columbia River



Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

A purse seine vessel operates on a foggy day in Washington waters.

program manager for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

And until Oregon, Wash-

ington and the various managers that oversee the salmon fisheries agree on which numbers they're going to use, any commercial seine fishery is on hold.

Coming soon

Stuart Ellis, of the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission and chairman of the states' advisory committee, said a report as well as the committee's recommendations should be released in the next week or so.

It is, he said, a policy choice as to what numbers ultimately are used in setting a seine fishery. The decision is a matter of vital importance, since the duration of commercial and sport seasons hinge on number of wild-spawning salmon that are inadvertently killed.

Until that decision is made it is "extremely difficult to

See GILLNETS, Page 10A

