

Astoria: 'The coastal economy is humming'

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Overall, more than 63,000 visitors came to the Historical Society's museums in 2014.

"I think we have been a little known gem for quite some time that people are finally discovering," Burns said.

Burns credits part of the increased attendance to a discounted joint ticket to all the museums. The joint ticket program started about two years ago and allows visitors to visit all three museums with the same ticket. The joint tickets have increased foot traffic from one museum to another, Burns said.

In addition, the Historical Society partnered with the Riverwalk Inn and the American Empress steamship to attract more visitors.

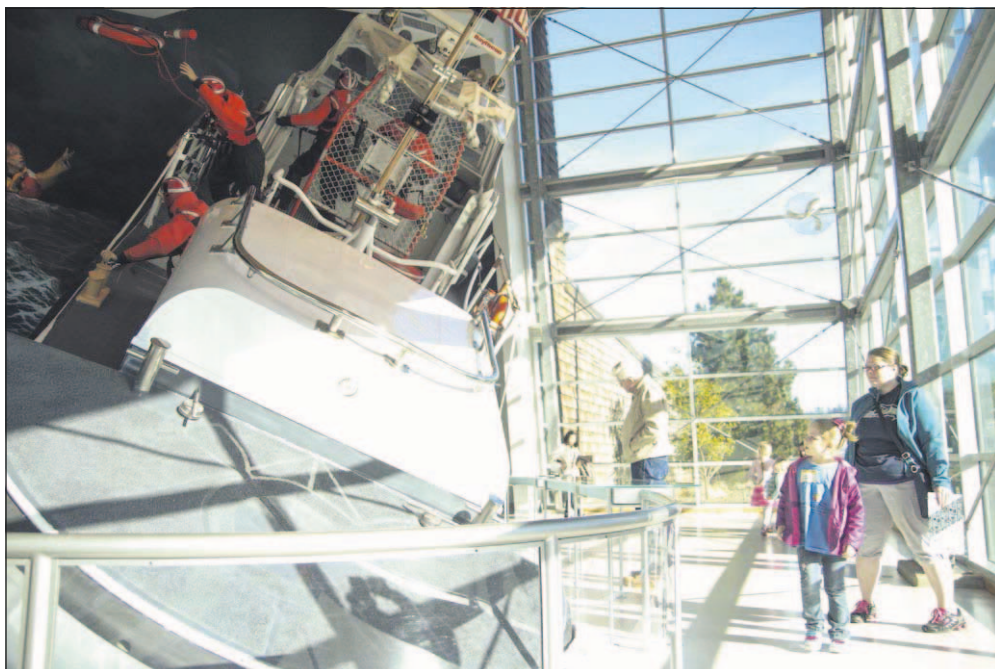
Guests at the Riverwalk Inn are offered joint tickets to the museums with their stay.

Passengers on the American Empress steamship can show their boarding passes, which act as tickets to the museums.

"We all like to say in the tourism business that Astoria, the coast and Clatsop County have been discovered," Burns said. "A lot of that discovery is self-made."

Outdoor experiences

Lewis and Clark National Historical Park welcomed its 9 millionth visitor earlier this year dating back to the park's formation in 1961. Since its in-



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Brittany, right, and Zoey Thorne tour the Columbia River Maritime Museum during an Oregon Connections Academy-sponsored trip in January. Since 2012, the Maritime Museum increased from about 88,000 visitors annually to more than 105,000 in 2014.

augural year, the national park has seen annual attendance grow from 69,000 to nearly 245,000 last year.

Park Superintendent Scott Tucker said his park is reaching the same attendance levels it had during the Lewis and Clark bicentennial celebration a decade ago.

Since 2011, the national park increased attendance 25 percent.

Many of the visitors are locals, Tucker said. The national park has attracted locals by adding 15 miles of hiking

trails, kayak tours and other recreational opportunities. An extended outreach to local schools is another factor, according to Tucker.

"The public is looking for outdoor experiences and looking for ways to get families out into nature," he said.

At Fort Stevens State Park, the campsites are filling up more than ever. Campsites occupied in March increased by 1,753 or 64 percent compared to March 2014.

Mike Stein, North Coast district manager for Fort Ste-

vens State Park, said cheaper gas prices and a steady economy have encouraged people to take more trips to the state park.

"The coastal economy is humming. I think that is good for us," Stein said. "Even today, we see our occupancy this coming weekend looks really good."

Happy to come here

Skip Hauke, executive director of the Astoria-Warrenton Area Chamber of Commerce, said he has seen the Astoria



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Harriet, left, and Robert Morris walk into The Louvre exhibit at the Heritage Museum Tuesday. The Heritage Museum saw a 63 percent rise in number of visitors in 2014.

'People are happy to come here. They are getting good service, good products, good food. People won't come back if they are not happy.'

— Skip Hauke

executive director of the Astoria-Warrenton Area Chamber of Commerce

area change for the better in the past decade since he joined the chamber.

"We kept the character," Hauke said. "Yes, we are a tourist destination, but we are not a touristy town. We have a lot of shops downtown, and they are unique shops."

Along with the efforts made

by the museums and parks, Hauke is impressed with the work local businesses have done to attract visitors.

"People are happy to come here. They are getting good service, good products, good food," Hauke said. "People won't come back if they are not happy."

Buyer's remorse: Model shows people demand all that bad news

PULLMAN, Wash. — Bad news in the media got you down? News consumers have only themselves to blame, says new research showing that it's actually buying habits that drive negative press.

The research looks at the negative news phenomenon through the prism of economic science. And while previous studies have focused on the supply side by examining media output, this analysis is among the first to investigate a negative news bias from the consumer or demand side.

Washington State University Professor Jill McCluskey and colleagues at the University of Leuven in Belgium created a theoretical model that illustrates how consumers get more value from negative news than positive news.

Focusing on newspapers, the researchers looked at the way people use information from news articles to enhance their well-being and avoid losses. Their model analyzed how much happiness consumers derived from choosing either bad or good news. The results showed greater individual benefit from reading the bad news.

Collectively, this tendency creates a societal preference for negative news stories, said McCluskey.

"Newspapers act on this demand by reporting more bad news to attract readers and sell more papers," she said.

The study was published in the journal *Information Economics and Policy* and funded by Research Foundation-Flanders and the KU Leuven Research Fund.

Avoid risk and make wise choices

The researchers built their model on an economic theory asserting that as an individual's income increases, the impact of each additional dollar diminishes.

"When you are very poor and hungry, for example, each dollar is worth a lot as it helps you buy enough food to eat," McCluskey said. "But once you have more money and can count on regular meals, it's the losses that will affect you more. In terms of happiness and well-being, a \$1,000 loss will affect you more than a \$1,000 windfall."

The same idea applies to information offered in newspapers, the Internet, TV or radio. In their model, the researchers used a measurement called utility to assess the benefits or drawbacks people get from con-

suming a good or service - in this case, positive and negative news stories.

Their findings highlight a strong human tendency to avoid risk.

McCluskey said consumers read good news to glean information about benefits from a positive event, which might improve their own income or welfare. Reading about the success of a Fortune 500 company, for example, might help one decide to invest in their stock.

Bad news, on the other hand, provides information on how to avoid a negative event or loss to one's well-being. Reading bad news helps consumers avoid making bad choices.

"Food scares are a good illustration as they are widely covered by the media," McCluskey said. To protect their health, "people

choose to avoid the suspected food - such as beef during the mad cow disease scare, or spinach with the E.coli outbreaks."

Over time, McCluskey said the model clearly showed individuals gain a greater advantage from reading bad news than good news. These consumers, either consciously or subconsciously, then continue to choose newspapers with more negative reporting. In response, news outlets take advantage of that risk aversion to maximize their profits.

Downside to bad news

Despite its benefits to readers, bad news generates negative consequences of its own, the researchers found. For instance, too much bad news can be depressing to some people.

Skewing media toward bad news can also cause heightened

fear of risk that differs from the scientific consensus, like concerns about genetic engineering, said McCluskey.

A recent study by the Pew Research Center in cooperation with the American Association for the Advancement of Science showed that 88 percent of scientists believe genetically modified foods are safe, while only 37 percent of the public agrees; and 87 percent of the scientists said humans are the primary cause of climate change, in contrast to 50 percent of the public.

And bad news can lead to extended or exaggerated responses to a negative event.

"Even after the E. coli scare was over, people still wouldn't buy spinach," McCluskey said. "There can be a lot of impact on growers, and wasted food, with these scares."

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For more information call 325-7275 or visit www.astoria.or.us for position descriptions and online applications.

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70 HELP WANTED



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Case Manager and SOCWI Coordinator

Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare is seeking to fill 2 FT positions:

CASE MANAGER -- provides outreach, group & individual skills training and case management for clients with severe and persistent mental illness using a team approach.

Requirements: a Bachelor's Degree is preferred, specializing in Mental Health, Social Work, Psychology, or Human Services.

A minimum of three years of experience in the social service field with mental illness or chemical dependency is preferred. Applicants must be able to complete all paperwork as required by OAR's and the agency.

SOCWI COORDINATOR -- This grant-funded position provides wraparound and case management services for children and their families that are involved in the Systems of Care Wraparound Initiative. Meet with families to identify needs and current services. Work with the families to establish a wrap team of people and providers important in the client's life, set up monthly team meetings. Coordinate care, help families access services. Maintain a caseload of up to 15 clients. Work with the SOCWI Project Leader to develop and maintain the systems of care presence in the community.

Both positions require QMHA status, computer and writing skills (Spanish speaking a plus). Requires valid ODLE, pass criminal history check. Exceptional benefits include Medical/Dental/Retirement. Salary DOE and based on current union contract for QMHA of \$29,001.00 to \$39,541.00.
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