

# New tourism promotion, capital improvement fund money backed

Concern raised about grant to religious mission that helps the homeless

By **DERRICK DePLEDGE**  
*The Daily Astorian*

Recognizing the growth of tourism in Astoria, a city budget committee Wednesday night agreed to direct slightly more hotel-room tax money to the Astoria-Warrenton Area Chamber of Commerce and the Astoria Downtown Historic District Association.

The \$1.2 million proposed budget for the Promote Astoria fund would provide \$125,000 next fiscal year to the chamber for visitor services, up from \$115,000, and \$180,750 for the chamber's Lower Columbia Tourism Committee, up from \$170,750.

The budget would direct \$35,000 to the historic district association, up from \$20,000.

But the budget committee declined a request by Richard Hurley, a licensed tax consultant who serves on the committee, to expand the \$30,000 designated for arts and cultural promotion to \$50,000.

Increasing the arts and cultural promotion budget, other budget committee members said, would likely have to wait until the following fiscal year.

## Spending guidelines

Under state guidelines, 46.1 percent of the city's hotel-room tax collections go into the Promote Astoria fund, a policy that links visitor growth to tourism promotion.

While the budget committee acknowledged the success in advertising Astoria to tourists, some, including

City Councilor Cindy Price, want to have a broader philosophical discussion about city spending on the Chamber of Commerce.

The city's contract with the chamber is a decade old. The City Council might consider whether to require annual or biennial contracts that detail the terms of the relationship.

Price, who could not get an assurance that the council would take up the issue, voted against the extra money for the chamber.

## Catch-all fund

The budget committee supported a capital improvement fund outlay that reflects the City Council's recent backing of a \$500,000 down payment on a new \$880,000 ladder truck for the Astoria Fire Department.

A \$2.1 million catch-all fund that covers a range of city functions includes \$46,050 to encourage the work of community groups.

City Councilor Drew Herzog voted against the spending recommendation because of his opposition to the \$4,000 that would go to the Astoria Rescue Mission, a Christian mission that helps the homeless.

Herzog said he has information that the mission discriminates against women and same-sex couples. Last year, the City Council adopted a nondiscrimination policy that prohibits the denial of benefits or discrimination in city-funded services based on sex or sexual orientation, among other classifications.

Mayor Arline LaMear said the City Council might require the Astoria Rescue Mission to provide a letter assuring the city that it does not discriminate in order to receive the \$4,000. The mission received \$4,000 this fiscal year, money approved before the council adopted the nondiscrimination policy.

Hurley, who reviewed the mission's funding request for the budget committee, said he has concerns about public money going to a religious organization but determined that the mission provides an essential service for the homeless.

"They perform an important service for the city," Hurley said afterward.

Herzog said he has heard the mission does not allow the women it serves to attend women's studies classes at Clatsop Community College or let same-sex couples into its family program.

"For my conscience, I'd have to say, I could not go along with even a tentative adoption of a budget that gives money to an agency that discriminates," Herzog said.

David Newman, the executive director of the Astoria Rescue Mission, said today that he was taken aback by Herzog's claims.

While the mission is unabashedly Christian, and while Newman encourages women to read the Bible, he said he does not tell women not to attend women's studies classes at the college. He said that while he opposes same-sex marriage, he does not turn away gay people or couples. The mission has not yet launched a planned family shelter.

"We do everything according to what the word says," Newman said. "We're Christians, and it's a Christian program, and we're very up front about that."

The budget committee will meet again next Thursday night and is expected to make a final recommendation to the City Council on spending for the next fiscal year, which starts in July.

## ADHDA to host downtown cleanup

The Astoria Downtown Historic District Association (ADHDA) is organizing its annual Spring Cleanup of downtown from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday to get the downtown shopping area clean and attractive for locals and visitors. The cleanup crews are meeting at 10 a.m. at the Columbia Bank parking lot (at the corner of 11th and Duane streets) to hand out materials and assign jobs, such as picking up trash, cleaning lamp posts and trash cans, and clearing moss. Volunteers should bring their own work gloves and tools to remove weeds and moss. ADHDA is providing garbage bags and other cleaning materials, as

well as a free barbecue hot dog lunch for all volunteers.

Along with the regular cleanup activities, some volunteers will walk throughout town delivering membership brochures. Membership in the ADHDA is open to individuals and businesses, regardless of their location. ADHDA strives to encourage community involvement, and to continue to work and partner together to enhance and strengthen the downtown area.

Those interested in participating can sign up online at [www.astoriadowntown.com](http://www.astoriadowntown.com). For questions, contact Alana Garner at [alana@astoriadowntown.com](mailto:alana@astoriadowntown.com) or 503-791-7940.

## Head Start open for applications

Applications are being accepted for Head Start, a free program for children ages 3 and 4 that provides a pre-school classroom, nutritious meals, home visits and more.

For information or an application, call the Seaside Head Start at 503-738-0873 or the Warrenton-Astoria Head Start at 503-861-9681, or go to [www.nworheadstart.org](http://www.nworheadstart.org)



All events are open to the public and free to attend, but space is limited. Please RSVP.

## DISNEY DAYS

SATURDAY, MAY 16, 2015

AAA Travel

135 S. Hwy. 101, Warrenton  
2:30 PM (refreshments served 30 minutes prior)  
RSVP: 503-861-3118

Join us for a vacation planning event with **Disney guest Katrinka Allred**. Be prepared to be dazzled by Disneyland® Resort's 60<sup>th</sup> Diamond Celebration and other Disney vacation promotions.

Special AAA booking incentives will be available May 4<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> at all AAA Travel locations.



Disney CRUISE LINE



KEEP LIFE GOING™

Disney artwork, logos and properties ©Disney. Special booking rate applies May 4-18, 2015 at all AAA Travel locations in Oregon and the Southern 34 counties of Idaho.

**WANTED**  
**Alder and Maple Saw Logs & Standing Timber**  
Northwest Hardwoods • Longview, WA  
Contact: Steve Axtell • 360-430-0885 or John Anderson • 360-269-2500

**Taco Salad**  
WITH ALL THE TRIMMINGS  
**Friday May 1<sup>st</sup>**  
**\$8.00** 4 pm 'til gone  
"Karaoke Dave" at 6 pm  
ASTORIA AMERICAN LEGION  
Sponsored by Unit 12  
1132 Exchange Street 325-5771

# Is Your Financial Institution Changing?

## Make The Switch & Keep Your Money Local!

Your Really Local Credit Union



**Wauna Credit Union**

Mobile • Loans • Business • Mortgage

**Make The Switch Now**  
**\*Earn Up to \$90 Cash!**

And Maybe One of Our Limited Edition soft & fuzzy Bald Eagles!



[waunafcu.org](http://waunafcu.org) 800-773-3236

\*Membership with Wauna Credit Union is required to qualify for the special rewards and bald eagle. Some restrictions apply, including must be 18 years of age or older, must be a new membership only, and new membership must be established only at the Astoria, Astoria Safeway, or Warrenton Branches. Please visit our website or your nearby Wauna CU Branch for membership eligibility & complete special promotion details. This special offer ends June 30, 2015.