

Cannon Beach looks at lodging tax increase

By ERICK BENDEL
EO Media Group

CANNON BEACH — The city's first two budget meetings looking at fiscal year 2015-16 contained two crucial pieces of advice from City Manager Brant Kucera.

First, the city should increase the transient lodging tax, from 6 percent to 6.5 percent, solely to fund the Visitor Information Center through the Cannon Beach Chamber of Commerce.

Secondly, the city should invest in long-overdue improvements to the city's infrastructure.

The proposed FY2015-16 budget represents a 7.6 percent increase over the current fiscal year's budget — a jump from \$13,508,389 to \$14,539,865.

The increase is mainly because of the half-percent tax increase, which is expected to generate approximately \$139,000 for the Information Center, according to Kucera's budget message. The city is also counting on nearly \$400,000 in grant money to come its way, and approximately \$3,471,230

will carry over from this year's budget.

The city's spending on its personnel may increase by about 12 percent because two positions — the finance director and the information technology director — will now be filled by employees rather than be contracted, Kucera said.

The final two budget meetings will be held at 5:30 p.m. May 6 and 13. The May 13 meeting will include a public comment period; members of the business community in particular are encouraged to share their thoughts on the tax increase, Kucera said.

The City Council plans to vote on the budget at its regular June 2 meeting. If additional deliberation is needed, the council will hold a special meeting later in the month.

Tax increase

With the extra \$139,000, the Chamber of Commerce would be able to hire a full-time employee. This person would help upgrade the information center's operations and assist Courtland Carrier, the chamber's executive di-

rector, with marketing Cannon Beach, Kucera said.

Because the chamber is the town's primary economic development agency, money spent on the chamber is money spent on tourism, he said.

The issue, Kucera said, is not that Cannon Beach isn't funding its chamber well enough. The city, in fact, spends more money on its chamber than does Seaside; last year, Cannon Beach spent \$71,000, whereas Seaside spends a maximum of \$39,000 on its chamber.

The issue is that Cannon Beach has a chamber-run information center, which performs the same task as Seaside's Visitors Bureau but is funded far less — roughly \$125,000 compared to \$625,000, Kucera said.

Additionally, Cannon Beach's Visitor Information Center sees about three times as many walk-ins annually than does Seaside's Visitors Bureau, according to Carrier. In 2014, the Cannon Beach tallied 53,766 walk-ins to Seaside's roughly 20,000.

"In Seaside, the city takes that on as

an expense. Here, our chamber, a private organization, is doing that function for us," Kucera said, "and doing it at a very low, low cost."

The revenue the chamber receives from the tax increase would be on top of the Tourism and Arts grant, which is awarded to the chamber in varying amounts every year.

Capital improvements

After speaking with the department heads while preparing next year's budget, "it became very apparent to me very quickly that we have quite a bit of deferred maintenance that we need to address," Kucera said. "The time is high that we begin to address some of the capital issues that we have."

Among the proposed capital improvement projects Kucera, the city staff and the budget committee discussed Wednesday were:

- The ongoing renovation of City Hall
- Installing antennas at both the north-end and south-end emergency cache container sites

- Repairing and rehabilitating the surfaces of the city's downtown tennis and basketball courts

- Reconstructing the blocks between First and Third streets to make them ADA-accessible

- And constructing a new plaza at the west end of Second Street with benches, low lighting and a rebuilt sidewalk

At future meetings, the budget committee will consider possible improvements to the city's water system, sewer system and RV Park.

Though the city must maintain a healthy fund balance, Kucera noted that, after a while, a city's saving too much money can begin to seem gratuitous, especially if the money isn't reinvested in the community.

"If people don't think you have a plan for the money that you keep socking away, the logical question is, 'Why are you taxing me?'" he said. "I think we need to show people, 'Here's the plan for those taxes we've been putting away.'"

Spring chinook fishery reopens from Tongue Point upriver

OLYMPIA, Wash. — The popular spring chinook sport fishery on the lower Columbia River will reopen for two days — Saturday and Sunday — under an agreement reached by fishery managers from Oregon and Washington.

High counts of spring chinook passing Bonneville Dam over the past week allowed the two states to reopen the fishery for at least two more days, said Ron Roler, Columbia River policy coordinator for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Federal fish-counters stationed at the dam counted more than 17,000 adult spring chinook salmon Tuesday and 11,000 more Wednesday, prompting officials to raise this year's estimated run size to at least 220,000 upriver fish.

"That's a lot of fish over the dam in two days, and it really helped to boost confidence in this year's spring chinook run," Roler said.

"We'll be watching those numbers closely in the days ahead to see if we can give anglers some additional days on the water."

The spring chinook fishery has been closed below Bonneville Dam since April 16, after a two-day extension and a total catch of 10,130 upriver fish in six weeks of fishing.

During the upcoming weekend, anglers can again retain one hatchery adult chinook salmon as part of their daily catch limit. The area reopening to spring chinook fishing extends from the Tongue Point/Rocky Point line upriver to Beacon Rock for boat and bank anglers, and to the fishing boundary below Bonneville Dam for bank anglers.

Anglers may also fish for shad and hatchery-reared steelhead when the spring chinook fishery is open. For both salmon and steelhead, wild fish with an intact adipose fin must be immediately released unharmed.

Tap dancers storm the Liberty stage

Little Ballet Theatre puts on their tap shoes to bring an all-tap dance show, Tap Festival 2015, to the Liberty Theater stage at 7:30 p.m. Saturday. Guest tappers include the Hollywood Dance Center tap dancers from Portland, directed by Marilynne Ward Belden.

A former Astoria dancer, Belden owns and operates the Hollywood Dance Center, and holds annual tap dance seminars with some of the nation's top tap dancers. Her groups perform annually at Disneyland and on cruise ships.

Also appearing will be the Main Street Tappers, a group of local women who have danced

together for eight years. Retired teachers, a nurse, an artist and business women, make up the group.

The audience is traditionally invited on stage to take a quick tap lesson, with or without tap shoes, providing even more fun for the participants and observers.

The doors open at 7 p.m., and tickets are available at the door. Adult tickets cost \$10, seniors and students are \$5, and there is no charge for children younger than 6. Proceeds from the event will go to the Little Ballet Theater Inc. grant foundation.

For information, call 503-861-1971.



HUGH MCKENNA — For The Daily Astorian

Classic cars cruise Camp Rilea

Jim Emery affixes his show number to the windshield of his 1952 Citroen Traction Avant, one of the more unusual vehicles among the 102 cars at the Lower Columbia Classic's 15th annual 50's Cruise Reunion at Camp Rilea Saturday. Emery of Scappoose happened to be in the area, heard about Saturday's show and decided to join in his first car show.

Traction Avants, French for traction forward or front-wheeled drive, were built from 1934 through 1957, mostly with small four- or six-cylinder engines. They had the world's first monocoque or unit body, a design used by most cars today. When Em-

ery brought the Traction Avant six years ago, it was primarily a body with a collection of parts stuffed into the interior. He sourced parts from around the world, with many of the original parts coming from Belgium. He installed the running gear from a 1984 Chevrolet Corvette to provide power, handling and braking not dreamed of during the 1930s when the car was designed. Other features of the Traction Avant are front opening "suicide" doors, semaphore turn signals that pop out of the door pillar and a windshield that opens from the base to provide ventilation.

Meet Astoria candidates

The finalists for the Astoria community development director post will appear Tuesday evening at a public meet-and-greet.

The city is hiring a new community development director to replace Brett Estes, who became the city manager last year.

The five finalists are Gary

Leikness from Los Alamos, N.M.; Mark Mussman from Huntington, Ind.; Catherine Sinnard from Monument, Colo.; Kyle Walker from Clackamas; and a person whose name will not be released until Tuesday.

The meet-and-greet will be held from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Barbey Maritime Center.

For updates: www.dailyastorian.com



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The family of
Mary Forrester Kankkonen

would like to express their appreciation to all those who honored her by attending her 90th birthday celebration.

In addition, thanks to those who, after her passing a week later, sent cards and donated to her beloved 1st Congregational Church and to the Clatsop County Historical Museum.

Special thanks to Dr. Aaron Sasaki for his kindness in caring for Mom. We miss her every day.

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