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CAN BEACH BALLS BANISH SEA LIONS?

Port plies other tactic to avert pinnipeds from favorite posts

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

Beach balls are fun for seals, but apparently scary for sea lions.

Visitors lined up Sunday along the Port of Astoria's East End Mooring Basin causeway to watch the sea lions on the docks below. Among them moved Jim Knight, the Port's executive director, clutching a string of twine attached to a small, multi-colored beach ball, the latest and possibly weirdest weapon used to evict the stubborn pinnipeds.

Knight scaled the barriers set up on P Dock, followed by Robert Evert, his permit and project manager, and Bill MacDonald, a Cannery Lofts resident who had suggested the beach balls.

"The idea is to just tie up some of these cheap things along the docks," MacDonald explained, comparing the practice to putting milk jugs on fences to keep deer out.

Unlike seals, who like to play with beach balls, MacDonald said he discovered that sea lions are frightened of the inflatable toys.

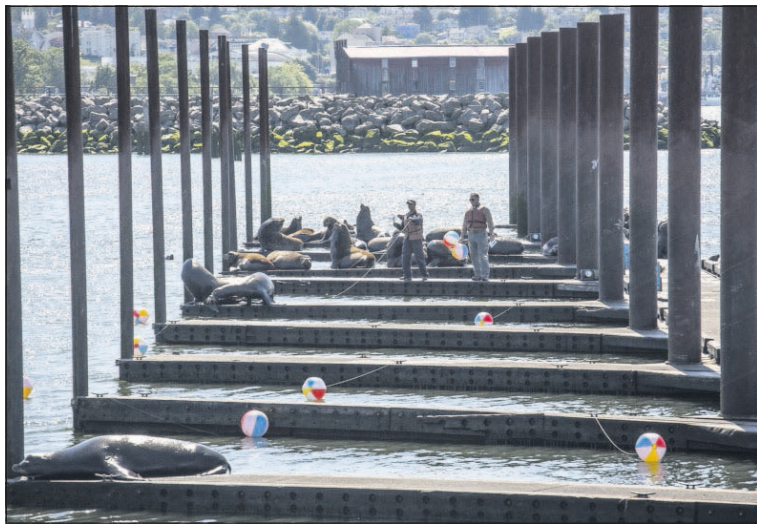
Sea lions scattered Sunday at the sight of the beach balls, whether tossed off the causeway or carried out onto the docks by MacDonald and Port staff.

"They're only a buck apiece," Knight said. "So for \$20, I can get a couple docks covered."

The Port has tried several methods to evict the sea lions, from the brightly colored surveying tape and pennants lining a couple of the docks near the basin's breakwater to lightly electrified mats being designed by Smith-Root Fisheries Technology and the chicken wire fencing erected at the foot of P Dock.



JOSHUA BESSEX — The Daily Astorian
A sea lion passes a trio of beach balls along the East End Mooring Basin.



JOSHUA BESSEX — The Daily Astorian
Jose Delgado, left, and Robert Evert, right, with the Port of Astoria, string beach balls along the docks of the East End Mooring Basin to deter sea lions.

By Tuesday evening, beach balls bobbed in the moorages up and down the finger piers of P Dock, almost entirely emptied of sea lions except for one or two stragglers.

Willy coming after Goonies
If beach balls are not a quirky enough sea lion deterrent, a fake, fiberglass orca will soon join the party at the basin.

JOSHUA BESSEX — The Daily Astorian
Jose Delgado, with the Port of Astoria, strings beach balls along the docks of the East End Mooring Basin Tuesday. The Port of Astoria is attempting to use the beach balls as a sea lion deterrent.

'They're only a buck apiece. So for \$20, I can get a couple docks covered.'

— Jim Knight
Port of Astoria's executive director

Knight said the 36-foot fiberglass whale, used as an advertisement and parade gimmick by Island Mariner, which runs whale-watching trips out of Bellingham, Wash., will arrive around June 12, the weekend after the "The Goonies" 30th anniversary extravaganza.

In the meantime, Island Mariner owner Terry Buzzard is making the whale remote-controlled.

"It accidentally was used in Bellingham," Buzzard said of the whale's effectiveness. "We were playing with it, and it seemed to scare the sea lions away. They left, but we don't have any reason why. That's why I told Jim, 'I'm not making any promises.'"

Mixed welcome

Sea lions at the basin continue drawing visitors, despite creative attempts by the Port to remove them from the docks and possible retaliation by people not so enamored with the fish-eating pinnipeds. The sea lion population has boomed since their protection under the Marine Mammal Protection Act started in 1972.

See SEA LIONS, Page 10A

Pay as you go

As fuel efficiency rises, state rolls out funding method to replace gas tax

By KATHY ANEY
EO Media Group

Hybrid and pickup owners drive the same highways and byways, but they don't pay equally for repair and maintenance of Oregon's roads.

When you compare a 2014 Toyota Prius and a 2014 Ford F-150 over 12,962 miles — the average driven by an Oregon driver each year — the F-150 pays \$216.03 in Oregon fuel tax to the Prius' \$77.77.

Rising fuel efficiency means fewer dollars for road work. Fourteen years ago, Oregon's Department of Transportation started looking for another way to fund road repairs.

"We have to modernize our funding model just as we've modernized our modes of transportation," said Oregon Department of Transportation spokeswoman Michelle Godfrey.

OReGO, a pay-per-mile program, is being road tested to possibly replace the fuel tax. Up to 5,000 volunteers will transmit mileage and fuel data from

See OReGO, Page 7A

Beefing up IT

State techies want \$16.9 million to boost cybersecurity

By HILLARY BORRUD
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Oregon's administrative agency wants lawmakers to spend roughly \$16.9 million over the next two years to upgrade computer systems and hire 24 new information technology employees.

Officials at the Department of Administrative Services want to improve management of major IT projects and state cybersecurity, after several high-profile project failures and data breaches.

Gov. Kate Brown announced earlier this year that hackers accessed metadata about the movement of information across the state computer network, and attackers also broke into databases at the Secretary of State's Office and the Oregon Employment Department in 2014.

The Department of Administrative Services, where the state data center and chief information office are located, presented two separate requests

See CYBERSECURITY, Page 7A

LNG protest draws hundreds to Capitol

By TRACY LOEW
The Statesman Journal

SALEM — Hundreds of people rallied at the Oregon Capitol Tuesday, calling on Gov. Kate Brown to block two proposed liquefied natural gas, or LNG, export terminals in the state.

"This is an assault not just on the environment, but an assault on democracy," speaker Robert F. Kennedy Jr. told the crowd. "It just is a bad deal all around."

Kennedy is president of the Waterkeeper Alliance, a national coalition of local groups advocating for clean water.

American company Oregon LNG is trying to build an

LNG terminal in Warrenton, on the North Coast near where the Columbia River enters the Pacific. A new pipeline would connect the terminal with one in Woodland, Wash.

Meanwhile, Canadian company Veresen Inc. wants to build an export terminal in Coos Bay, on Oregon's south coast. The Jordan Cove Energy Project would receive natural gas through a new, 232-mile-long pipeline.

Opponents say that 157 miles of the Coos Bay pipeline would cross private property, affecting about 700 landowners whose property could be taken by eminent domain.

It also would cross 400 bodies of water, many con-

taining threatened or endangered species.

Kennedy said LNG exports also will raise natural gas prices in the U.S. and will encourage more jobs to move overseas.

And the Jordan Cove facility would become the state's largest source of carbon pollution after the Boardman coal plant shuts down in 2020, he said. The hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking," used to extract the gas also raises environmental concerns.

"Leave the natural gas in the ground so that we and the planet can survive," former Secretary of State Bill Bradley told the crowd to cheers.

See PROTEST, Page 7A



Photo courtesy of Mary Ekorn-Jackson

Hundreds gathered Tuesday at the Oregon Capitol to protest two proposed liquefied natural gas export terminals in Warrenton and Coos Bay. A local contingent was among the protesters.

