

Future bond for new schools likely in Seaside district

Superintendent: schools need to be replaced

By R.J. MARX
The Daily Astorian

SEASIDE — Despite a crushing defeat in 2013, the Seaside School District is once again looking at ways to protect students, faculty and staff from crumbling schools in low-lying, at-risk areas of Seaside and Gearhart.

Seaside School District School Superintendent Doug Dougherty said the district was working with consultants to determine "possible timelines and scenarios" for replacement of Broadway Middle School, Gearhart Elementary School and Seaside High School. About 1,550 students are enrolled in the district.

"There are four schools along the Oregon Coast in the inundation zone, and we have three of those," Dougherty said. "Our goal is to have students out of every one of these schools as soon as possible."

The "\$128.8 million Question" in 2013 — a 30-year bond designed to pay for a single school on a hillside east of Seaside Heights Elementary School — was defeated by voters 62 percent to 38 percent and failed in 10 of 11 school district precincts.

Not only is a tsunami likely to unfold in the region one day, according to Dougherty, each of the Seaside schools needs major capital improvements and may not be worth the cost of rehabilitation.

Cannon Beach Elementary School, facing crumbling infrastructure and flood risk, closed in 2013 as a result of a study begun in the 1990s.

Broadway Elementary School was built in 1946 and Gearhart Elementary School was built in 1948. Seaside High School was constructed in 1958, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency lists the building as having a "greater than 10 percent collapse potential."

Dougherty said each school has an "anticipated useful life" of

about 40 years. "We're patching them together the best we can," he said. "Something's got to give."

Seaside Heights Elementary, built in 1975, does not have the plumbing, electrical and ventilation issues common to the other schools and is located at a much safer elevation, Dougherty said.

School closed in Cannon Beach

After tsunami threats became widely recognized in the 1990s, Dougherty asked state geologists at the time if the Cannon

The study revealed that after an earthquake, tsunami waves could be as high as 70 or 80 feet. The study recommended any school be sited at least 80 to 100 feet in elevation.

"And all of our schools, Cannon Beach, Seaside High School, Broadway Middle School, and Gearhart, are all 15 feet or lower in elevation," Dougherty said. "It's a problem for everyone, and no one had a clue prior to our research."

Dougherty said the average recurrence interval of earthquakes in this zone is 244 years.

nario, we still wouldn't get everybody up there in 20 minutes," Dougherty said.

Today, about 85 Cannon Beach students are bused to Seaside. A proposed charter school in Cannon Beach is also expected to provide education for city residents.

Future bond plan awaits

While high costs sunk the 2013 bond vote, Dougherty said he was optimistic that a new proposal could be less than the bond issue that went down in 2013. "We know the price was a significant issue with a lot of people," he said.

Dougherty said he expects a bond to be presented within a year and a half or later, because the economy here has not fully bounced back. In addition, the district still has to pass a local option levy in November to maintain staffing levels. "If that does not pass, we would have to reduce our staff, because it goes directly into the classroom," he said.

While there are no plans or cost estimates at the moment, Dougherty said he did not expect the cost of a schools bond to exceed that of the one presented to voters in 2013. Grants and partnerships, along with lower energy or construction costs in an improving economy, could lead to greater affordability, he said.

Dougherty said he hopes to get future construction done all at once rather than piecemeal, because, he said "once you pass a bond, the odds of passing another bond are not high."

"The school district will definitely be addressing this in the future," he said.

'There are four schools along the Oregon Coast in the inundation zone, and we have three of those.'

— Doug Dougherty
Seaside School District superintendent

Beach school's 39-foot elevation was safe during a potential natural disaster.

According to Dougherty, geologists told him "they thought so," but their data was insufficient to provide scientific verification. The cost for a research study and scientific modeling came in at \$30,000, too much for the schools to bear alone.

Dougherty went to the Cannon Beach City Council and Fire Department, and the three entities financed the study.

It soon became apparent that the original study was going to become what Dougherty described as "a much more extensive project."

The geologists called in the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration and other federal agencies, and at no extra cost to the local entities, received an internationally peer-reviewed study that took 3 1/2 years to complete, studying oceanographic patterns going back more than 10,000 years.

The study examined risk in the Cascadia Subduction Zone, 70 miles off the Oregon Coast, an active geographic region running from just south of the Oregon border to about the south end of Vancouver Island.

"We know it's been 315 years since the last one, and we know we are in the time period," he said.

Cannon Beach Elementary School was shut down in 2013 for two reasons, Dougherty said. "It was right on the beach, at the mouth of a river and we were told by geologists and by structural engineers not only would the building collapse, but there was a 99 percent certainty the Fir Street bridge would collapse."

There was concern that students would be unable to travel the 1.3 miles to higher ground in the danger period after a quake. "Even under the best case sce-

Walk for alternative transit

The Daily Astorian

North West Transportation options will host its first event of the Astoria Drive Less Save More campaign Friday at 6 p.m. with a river walk toward alternative transit options and ice cream.

The walk begins at Maritime Memorial Park at 10 Basin St. and ends at the Sunset Empire Transit Center at 900 Marine Drive, where walk participants can indulge in free ice cream. The walk is about a mile.

The campaign, which began in June and will run through September, brings alternative transportation kits directly to the doors of residents who request the free, individualized packages, which can in-

clude information about bus schedules, carpooling, bike maps and more.

Shasia Fry, North West Transportation Options Specialist, said they have already received orders for about 200 kits.

"We've actually had a great response," she said.

Interested residents can request information online or through order forms delivered through the mail. From there, the information delivered to them on foot or by bicycle.

The most popular information requested is public transportation options for connecting from Astoria to other cities, Fry said. Another popular option has been bicycling information. The campaign provides a map that highlights bike-friendly streets.

Caregiver workshops on Mondays

The Daily Astorian

SEASIDE — A Savvy Caregiver workshop is being held from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Mondays, June 13 to Aug. 17, in Education Room E at Providence Seaside Hospital, 725 S. Wahanna Road in Seaside.

The six-week workshop is designed for caregivers who assist persons with dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

The course is free to all family caregivers, but registration is required. To register, call Michelle Lewis at 503-861-4202.

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Robert MacKenzie

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Q: Who is the artist that created the 2015 Astoria Sunday Market poster?

A: Robert MacKenzie was asked to create a special image just for our Market poster this year. He is from Portland and a frequent vendor at the Market. He creates his work using acrylic, latex and enamel paint on sheet metal with a resin spar varnish clear coat. He had to scrub the shiny varnish off so we could get a clear shot of the image and it came out beautifully.

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A: For Internet Explorer or Safari, click the little "Gear" icon in the top right hand side of the window. For Chrome or Firefox click on the three lines in the top right hand corner. For Opera, click on the word Opera, top left hand corner, and then click "Settings." There you can change your home page, where downloads are kept, and much more.