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ONE DOLLAR

INDEPENDENT REVIEW

County manager effective, but change lacked explanation

Tension among county workers could have been avoided

By **KYLE SPURR**
The Daily Astorian

An independent review of Clatsop County management shows the county operating effectively under Scott Somers,

the county manager, but found that tension and confusion among county workers could have been avoided had changes been better explained. The review — completed by Portland-based consultant Michelle Kennedy, of Kennedy Consulting LLC — took a comprehensive look at the county's goals and how management and the Board of Commissioners are pursuing those goals. Results are broken down into recommendations the board plans to examine and

possibly put into action. "Honestly, I thought the findings and recommendations within the report gave some positive and great constructive feedback that the county can continue to improve upon," Somers said. The estimated \$12,000 review, released Thursday, grew out of a request Somers made in January for a third-party assessment of his performance.

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Scott Somers



Dirk Rohne



Scott Lee

Trolley crew honors volunteers old and new



Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

The Astoria Riverfront Trolley makes its way west along the waterfront. For more photos, go to dailyastorian.com.

Four retirees celebrated for their service

By **ERICK BENGEL**
The Daily Astorian

Carl Abraham, a former volunteer of the Astoria Riverfront Trolley, remembers when he was about 7 years old during World War II and witnessed his friend and next-door neighbor, Leroy, get struck and killed by a train in Washington state while the boys were collecting iron for the war effort. "From that time on, I was scared to death of railroad tracks," Abraham said. Until 1999, that is, when Astoria procured the antique trolley named "Old 300," which was built by the American Car Co. of St. Louis, Mo., for the San Antonio Traction Co. in Texas in 1913. A city resident since 1975, Abraham became part of the all-volunteer restoration crew that worked five months and donated 3,000

man-hours to making Old 300 rail-ready. The trolley, he said, rekindled his love of railroad tracks. "This trolley kind of brought that back, and I just love trains now," he said. During a casual pizza-and-cake, beer-and-wine dinner held Thursday in the trolley barn on Industry Street, the nonprofit Astoria Riverfront Trolley Association honored trolley volunteers past and present — and, especially, the service of retired volunteers Abraham, Kenny Lockett, Don Morden and Nick Zafiratos. (Morden was unable to attend.) "I can't say enough about these four guys," Skip Hauke, a trolley association board member and the executive director of the Astoria-Warrenton Area Chamber of Commerce, said. "I know them all very, very well, and what they have given in time and effort and spirit just can't be repaid."



Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian
From left: Gene Itzen, Nick Zafiratos, and Ken Lockett, cut the cake during a retirement and reunion party for the trolley volunteers at the Trolley Barn Thursday.

'Huge toy'

The trolley may run on diesel, but it is powered by volunteerism — by the motormen and motorwomen who drive Old 300 along the riverfront from 39th Street to the Astoria Riverwalk Inn. By the conductors who usher riders on and off the trolley while regaling them with

Astoria's epic saga. By the mechanics who keep its bell clanging and its wheels rolling along the tracks and timber trestles. And by the paid part-time employees who train the operators, schedule the shifts and count the dollars that locals and tourists spend on the trolley's sit-down-and-sight-see experience. "You got a huge toy to play with, and you got a lot of people to show it off to," Lockett said. "What else can you ask for?" In 2013, the trolley's 100th year, Lockett — who has served on the trolley since its earliest days in Astoria — posed for the label art on Rogue Ales' Trolley Guy Ale — one of his proudest moments on the job. The midsummer thank-you meal Thursday — a version of the banquet the trolley crew rolls out every November — helped to ce-

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Oregon LNG, Army Corps clash over easement

Legal fight could derail terminal

By **HILLARY BORRUD**
Capital Bureau

PORTLAND — Lawyers for Oregon LNG and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers presented arguments Wednesday in a lawsuit over whether the liquefied natural gas company can force the federal government off an easement on the Skipanon Peninsula in Warrenton. The outcome of the lawsuit could determine whether Oregon LNG can build a liquefied natural gas export terminal on its proposed site at the mouth of the Columbia River. Local, state and federal officials are reviewing the \$6 billion project, which also includes a pipeline from Washington state through Columbia, Tillamook and Clatsop counties. Oregon LNG wants to build a liquefied natural gas export terminal on land sub-leased from the state and Port of Astoria, but the project site overlaps with an area where the Army Corps has deposited dredging spoils for decades. The federal agency obtained an easement from Clatsop County in 1957, according to court documents. **Dredging spoils** In a federal lawsuit filed in August, Oregon LNG claimed the Army Corps never had a right to submerged land within the dredging spoils easement. Clatsop County did not own the submerged land and the easement granted to the federal government "only purported to convey tide-lands," lawyers for the energy company wrote in a filing. The company asked the federal court to find that the Corps has no right or interest to the submerged lands where Oregon LNG plans to build the export terminal. In its response, the Army Corps cited sovereign immunity and said Oregon LNG did not have a right to sue the federal government under statutes the company referred to in its initial complaint. See **EASEMENT**, Page 7A

Resort developer could run out of time

Johnson says tough to fit project in three-year window

By **HILLARY BORRUD**
Capital Bureau

SALEM — State Sen. Betsy Johnson said a developer who is interested in building an eco-resort in Clatsop County could easily run out of time to do so, even with the three-year extension included in a bill Johnson recently helped to pass. "I do see it as tough to fit that window," Johnson, D-Scappoose, said of the extension lawmakers approved in the waning days of the legislative session. Johnson supported House Bill 3431 to give property owners who had planned to build destination resorts in the Metolius River Basin more time to apply to build smaller resorts elsewhere in the state. State lawmakers created a special exemption to Oregon land use laws in 2009, specifically for property owners with land zoned



State Sen. Betsy Johnson

for destination resorts in the Metolius River Basin. The legislation allowed those landowners to apply to build small resorts elsewhere in the state, because lawmakers had taken away their rights to apply to build in the Metolius River Basin with a 2009 ban on destination resorts in the area.

'Special carve-out'

"That was really a special carve-out for them to have the ability to go and execute some sort of development, a smaller type of development, but nonetheless a resort type development somewhere in the state that could use the economic boost," said Jon Jinings, a community services specialist for the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development in Bend. See **RESORT**, Page 7A



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