

Sweet success at Phillips as ownership is changed

Name, many products, will stay the same

By KATHERINE LACAZE
EO Media Group

SEASIDE — Steve Phillips is enjoying sweet success — with a cherry on top.

After spending years of long hours in the kitchen making sweets for the well-known Phillips Candies shop on Broadway, he sold the shop to Mark and Marci Utti. Although ownership will change, the shop will retain its name as well as many of the products patrons know and love. Discussions between Phillips and the Uttis began in spring 2013. Phillips hoped to find someone who wanted to keep Phillips Candies relatively the same, name and all.

While the Uttis will purchase the business itself, TDM Enterprises — of which Mark Utti is a partner — is going to purchase the building. TDM Enterprises also owns the nearby Funland Arcade and the Seaside Fulton's Pizza on Broadway. The plan is for the transaction to close Oct. 1.

The goal, Phillips said, is a seamless transition for employees, suppliers and customers, with operations and product quality remaining stable.

Phillips's connection to the candy shop started in 1926, long before he was born, when his mother, Marguerite Blake, got her first summer job there at age 14. The candy shop, established in 1897, was already a well-established business in the community by then.

Blake remained seasonally employed at the shop throughout her college years. Even after she and her college sweetheart John Phillips were married and moved to Milwaukie for his job as a middle-school teacher, the couple continued to help out the owners in the summer.

In 1939, the couple purchased the candy shop, running it as a summer business from Memorial Day to Labor Day so John Phillips could continue teaching. The family resided in a small wooden cottage behind the shop.

Tricky situations

World War II brought with it some tricky situations for the family, as for many business owners. The store was profitable as people were making money, particularly through war-related industries. Instead, the struggle was to get products for candy-making during a time when sugar and other ingredients were strictly rationed.

"It wasn't like we have today, where we have all these candy stores where you can buy Jelly Belly candies and all that,"



Katherine Lacaze/EO Media Group

Steve Phillips, the owner and operator of Phillips Candies of Seaside, is preparing to retire and pass on his candy shop, which has operated since 1897, to new owners in October.

Phillips said. "It was what you made, and that was it."

His parents struck deals with local dairies, farmers and producers to get the items they needed.

Fortunately, he said, there was no shortage of demand. Phillips Candies would open its door at 1 p.m. to a line of people. Even with a limit of 2 pounds per customer, the shop would sell out within a few hours. They would then close the door and start making candy for the next day.

One summer, the family made more money than John Phillips's salary as a teacher, so they decided "this was what they ought to do," Phillips said. They stayed in Seaside to run the store year-round.

father's illness greatly expedited the process.

"I had about six weeks to two months to try and really learn as much as I could. And most of it was at home, with him sitting on the couch or in a chair, giving me as much information as possible," he said.

Taking over the store

In the spring of 1974, Steve Phillips bought the business itself from his parents, and took over the lease agreement for the building and property — both of which he would later acquire.

Even after his father's death, his mom continued to work at the shop until her late 80s.

"She would come in here and work almost every day. She just loved it," he said.

Throughout the years, little has changed at Phillips Candies.

"We've really tried to keep exactly the same formulas," Phillips said. "When someone comes in and says, 'Gee, I remember 20 years ago I was here and got rocky road; what's changed?' The answer is 'nothing.' The recipe is absolutely identical. Same product line, same chocolate."

Because tastes evolve, they added and removed a few products. The advent of emulsions replaced chemical-based extracts and "just enhanced the flavor and made it so much better," Phillips said.

Business got a big boost

by the nearby construction of Trendwest Resorts, now WorldMark by Wyndham. While the store experienced a nice, steady growth of 3 to 5 percent every year, Phillips said, the new resort brought "almost a 25 percent increase in business overnight."

The increase remained steady year round, and the store was staffed by two people instead of one during the winter, he added.

A new era

Through grade-school, Phillips played in the back while his parents were busy running the shop. At 10, he started taking on responsibilities like washing dishes and running the taffy wrapper. In 1974, he purchased the business and has been operating it ever since.

"I don't think I had a desire to ever do anything different," he said.

Nevertheless, the time is approaching for the business to change hands. Phillips admitted he's ready.

"Physically it's getting harder and harder to dump those 80-pound batches of candy," he joked. "I will be here to continue to make sure the quality of the product remains."

"I told Mark that I could teach about 80 percent of this operation in about six weeks," he added. "But the other 20 percent is going to take a couple years. It's just the facts of life."

Campfires prohibited in state parks

The Daily Astorian

The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department is prohibiting all campfires in state parks and other properties owned and managed by the department, effective immediately. The ban includes but is not limited to designated fire pits, tiki torches and candles. The ban also extends to fires on ocean beaches.

"Our goal is to avoid any accidental fires on OPRD property that

would further tax limited firefighting resources," MG Devereux, the department's deputy director, said in a statement. "Most communities have sent local firefighters and equipment to help with wildfires throughout the state. An unintentional fire in a state park would add an unnecessary burden to firefighting efforts."

The state park ban does not apply to propane stoves or charcoal briquettes for cooking, but there may be

local fire restrictions that do limit propane stoves and briquettes. Visitors planning a trip should check with park staff for the most current information, or call the state park information line at 800-551-6949, or go to www.oregonstateparks.org

This ban will remain in effect for at least one week and will be re-evaluated based on fire status, weather, and guidance from state and local fire officials.

Federal funds sought for bridge fixes

By KYLE SPURR
The Daily Astorian

Clatsop County Public Works recently submitted a request for \$6 million in federal funding to replace one county bridge and rehabilitate three others.

If funded, the projects would take place between 2018 and 2021.

The bridge eligible for replacement is at the Klootch Creek Park, two miles east of the U.S. Highway 26 junction near Seaside. The 100-foot-long bridge over the Necanicum River offers access to the park and to acres of private timber land.

"It's an important bridge to

maintain," Public Works Director Michael Summers said. "It's important for fire access."

The three bridges in need of rehabilitation are:

- The Rodney Acres Bridge on Dolphin Road over the Skipanon River in Warrenton;
- A Youngs River Road bridge over the Klaskanine River south of Astoria;
- Stavebolt Bridge on Logan Road over the Stavebolt Creek south of Astoria.

Summers said each bridge is made of timber components reaching the end of their useful lives. He wants to remove the wooden components and install

new steel or concrete structures.

"I want to remove the timber structure and put in a steel structure," Summers said. "It's a long process, and this is just the start of it." The Oregon Department of Transportation bridge engineering section distributes the federal money to qualified projects throughout the state. The funding is competitive since there is a total pot of between \$25 million to \$50 million.

"They have to pick and choose," Summers said. "There is a lot of need statewide."

If any of the local projects are chosen, Clatsop County would have to submit a 10 percent funding match.

Land trust seeks input on accreditation

The Daily Astorian

SEASIDE — The North Coast Land Conservancy is applying for national accreditation and is inviting public comment on its application. The land trust accreditation program recognizes land conservation organizations that meet national quality standards for protecting important natural places and working lands forever. A public comment period is now open.

The Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance, conducts an extensive review of each applicant's policies and programs. "As we approach our 30th year, achieving national accreditation will help us demonstrate to our friends and supporters that we are doing what we say we do: responsibly conserving Oregon's coastal lands,

in perpetuity," Executive Director Katie Voelke said.

The commission invites public input and accepts signed, written comments on pending applications. Comments must relate to how the land conservancy complies with national quality standards, which address the ethical and technical operation of a land trust.

For the full list of standards, to learn more about the accreditation program,

or to submit a comment, go to www.landtrustaccreditation.org. Comments may also be emailed to info@landtrustaccreditation.org, faxed to 518-587-3183 or mailed to the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, Attn: Public Comments, 36 Phila St., Suite 2, Saratoga Springs, N.Y. 12866.

Comments on the land conservancy's application will be most useful by Oct. 31.

Clatsop Dems meet next week

The Daily Astorian

Local environmental issues will be addressed at the Monday meeting of the Clatsop County Democrats, which takes place from 6:30 to 9 p.m. at the Astoria Yacht Club, 300 Industry St., Suite 201.

Bruce Buckmaster, who was recently appointed to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Commission, will speak about the fish and

wildlife issues the commission faces.

Forestry expert Bob Van Dyke will give an update on the changes proposed for Clatsop County forest lands.

There will also be an update from the Democratic Party of Oregon Environmental Caucus, which met on Sunday. Two members of the Clatsop County Democrats are officers in the environmental caucus.

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