

Port looks to relocate ailing shipyard, popular boatyard

State grant could help finance move to Skipanon Peninsula

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

The Port of Astoria Commission affirmed its support for the ailing Astoria Marine Construction Co. Tuesday night, with a signed letter and an idea for the shipyard's possible relocation.

Port commissioners and Executive Director Jim Knight talked Tuesday about what project they should present for an upcoming state infrastructure grant application. Relocating Astoria Marine Construction Co., and possi-

bly the Pier 3 boatyard, to the Skipanon Peninsula emerged as a top priority.

AMCCO's lawyer, Carson Bowler, recently said the company probably can't continue to operate at its Lewis and Clark River shipyard because of the costs of cleaning up environmental pollution dating back to World War II shipbuilding.

Connect Oregon

ConnectOregon VI, offered through the Oregon Department of Transportation, uses Oregon Lottery revenue to invest in air, rail, marine, transit, and bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure projects that promote economic development. The grants can pay up to 70 percent of a project's cost, with the receiving agency matching 30 percent.

The grant application cycle opens in October and ends in

late November. There is \$4.5 million available to each of the five legislatively approved ConnectOregon regions. Clatsop County is in Region 2, along with most of northwestern Oregon west of the Cascade Mountains and south to Lane County.

The Port received a ConnectOregon V grant of around \$500,000 as the local match on a nearly \$4.8 million grant to repave a runway at the Astoria Regional Airport. The agency received a \$1 million ConnectOregon IV grant to rebuild several hundred feet of Pier 2's eastern side.

Knight said the Port has fallen into a wonderful opportunity, with an upcoming grant application and AMCCO in need of a new home. Perhaps the Port could move the boatyard from Pier 3 to property on the Skipanon Peninsula, Knight said, solv-

ing multiple problems.

Pier 3 has faced overcrowding problems since the boatyard, which opened in 2006, was joined by Astoria Forest Products' log yard, developed last summer. Undue amounts of copper in the stormwater running into the Columbia River from the boatyard also required the Port to develop a stormwater treatment plan.

Knight said the Port has the full support of state Sen. Betsy Johnson, Gov. Kate Brown's office and the North Coast Regional Solutions Team, a gathering of regional agencies, in any effort to try and relocate AMCCO. He said the Port could work with the solutions team to get a short-term grant to hire consultants to help plan a move.

"The trickle-down effect they have with the fishing community is substantial,"

Commissioner James Campbell said, adding AMCCO affects the fishing fleet and the processors taking in their catch.

Pier 2 also needs help

The Port Commission also discussed needing to repair the west side of the 101-year-old Pier 2, where seafood processors land and load fish into their processing plants, and where there are many metal sheets covering holes in the decking, and damaged pilings underneath.

"Overall, the condition of the Pier 2 west facility was found to range from critical to good condition; many of the deficiencies observed appear to be due to deferred maintenance," said a 2013 report by marine engineer Bill Gundersen of PND Engineers Inc. in Seattle. Gundersen's report also recommended the Port

repair the problems on Pier 2 within 10 years to avoid wholesale fixes.

Whatever project the Port chooses, Commissioner Stephen Fulton said, it needs to be aware of the 30 percent match. The Port risked losing the \$1 million ConnectOregon IV grant because prior engineering had underestimated the amount of work needed and left the Port with more than \$300,000 in cost overruns.

The future of the grant could be at risk too. At a recent Northwest Area Commission on Transportation meeting, Commissioner Robert Mushen said, there were talks of the ConnectOregon program being in future doubt. The program gave \$340 million to infrastructure projects over the first four grant cycles. But by Connect V, the offering was down to \$40 million statewide.

Man pleads not guilty to possession of child porn, firearms

By KYLE SPURR
The Daily Astorian

The 76-year-old Astoria man arrested earlier this month for illegally possessing firearms, body armor and child pornography pleaded not guilty Tuesday in Clatsop County Circuit Court and was taken back into custody.

William James Dixon Jr. appeared in court after being indicted on charges of first-degree encouraging child sexual abuse, felon in possession of a firearm and felon in possession of body armor.

Judge Paula Brownhill was surprised to see Dixon in court and out of custody since she previously set his bail at \$500,000. He was released from jail without posting any bail due to the jail's overcrowding.

"I'm not happy the jail released him," Brownhill said. "I don't think he is safe in the community."

Brownhill reset his bail at

\$500,000 and he was taken into custody after the court hearing.

Astoria Police assisted the Oregon Department of Justice Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force Sept. 1 related to a child pornography investigation at Dixon's residence at 101 Madison Ave..

During a search of the residence, investigators found a 9 mm pistol, a .22-caliber pistol and ballistic body armor that Dixon was prohibited from possessing.

Investigators also found disguises such as a fake mustache and wig.

"He indicated he was going to commit a robbery," Chief Deputy District Attorney Ron Brown said.

Dixon was convicted for mail fraud in 1989 and for bank robbery in 1991 in Portland. He served more than three years in prison.

He is due back in court next month for an early resolution conference.



William James Dixon Jr.



Former Astoria Mayor Willis Van Dusen accepted a Phoenix Award on behalf of the city for the redevelopment of the city's old landfill into CMH Field. Erik Thorsen, the chief executive officer of Columbia Memorial Hospital (clockwise from left); Fred Stemmler, the general manager of Recology Western Oregon; Craig Hoppes, the superintendent of the Astoria School District; and City Manager Brett Estes also attended the award ceremony in Chicago this month.

Astoria recognized nationally for CMH Field

Brownfield redevelopment wins award

The Daily Astorian

Astoria has been recognized with a national environmental award for converting the city's old landfill into CMH Field.

The 12-acre athletic com-

plex, the new home of the Astoria Fishermen, opened last fall. The \$8 million project was a partnership between the city, Columbia Memorial Hospital, the Astoria School District and Recology Western Oregon.

The Phoenix Awards, sponsored by the nonprofit Phoenix Awards Institute, recognize the successful redevelopment of contaminated property, known as brownfields. CMH Field

was one of 20 projects honored nationally at an awards ceremony in Chicago earlier this month, timed for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's National Brownfields Conference.

Astoria had previously won a Phoenix Award in 2001 for the transformation of the contaminated Astoria Mill property into the Mill Pond Village housing development.

Former Astoria Mayor Willis Van Dusen accepted the Phoenix Award on behalf of the city. Erik Thorsen, the chief executive officer of Columbia Memorial Hospital; Fred Stemmler, the general manager of Recology Western Oregon; Craig Hoppes, the superintendent of the Astoria School District; and City Manager Brett Estes also attended the event.

Unemployment up, but state still enjoying job growth

The Daily Astorian

The Oregon Employment Department reported Tuesday that the state is experiencing its highest rate of job growth since 2005.

Oregon's payroll employment added 4,400 jobs in August, following a revised gain of 7,400 in July, according to a release Tuesday.

In August, leisure and hospitality added 2,100 jobs, and government added 1,600. The other 12 major industries performed close to their normal seasonal patterns.

Over the past year, Oregon's payroll employment has expanded by 60,400 jobs, or 3.5 percent. This is the state's fastest job growth rate since February 2005. In terms of total jobs added during a 12-month period, the last time Oregon added more than 60,000 jobs over a year was toward the end of the high-tech boom in May 1997, when Or-

egon added 61,500 jobs.

Nearly all of the major industries grew by between 3 percent and 5 percent over the last year:

- Leisure and hospitality grew by 9,400 jobs, or 5.1 percent.
- Retail trade grew by 9,700 jobs, or 4.9 percent.
- Transportation, warehousing and utilities grew by 2,700 jobs, or 4.8 percent.
- Manufacturing grew by 5,800 jobs, or 3.2 percent.
- Construction grew by 3,000 jobs, or 3.8 percent.

None of the major industries cut jobs substantially over the past year, but financial activities and mining and logging each were essentially flat.

Despite strong payroll job gains in recent months, Oregon's unemployment rate edged up to 6.1 percent in August from 5.9 percent in July. However, the mark was lower than the 6.9 percent unemployment rate last August.

Toddler struck by vehicle remains in serious condition

By KYLE SPURR
The Daily Astorian

WARRENTON — The 22-month-old toddler who was struck by a van Friday morning remains in stable but serious condition at a Portland-area hospital.

The young boy has multiple injuries and is undergoing various treatments, according to Warrenton Police.

Police continue to investigate the incident, Chief Matt Workman said, but it does not appear any citation or actions will be taken against the driver of the van.

The accident occurred at SW 9th Street and South Main Avenue. Witnesses assisted the young boy, who was under the vehicle, until police, fire and Medix arrived.

The child was not trapped so he was moved to a Medix ambulance and immediately transported to Columbia Memorial Hospital in Astoria. He was later transferred by Life Flight to Portland.

The boy apparently ran into the roadway from behind some landscaping bushes.

Police went into the boy's home after the accident with the state Department of Hu-

man Services and a temporary placement was arranged for two other children in the home.

The mother went with the boy from the accident scene to Columbia Memorial, then to Oregon Health & Science University Hospital in Portland.

A police officer and state

human services caseworker met with the boy's mother at the hospital and obtained a statement.

The investigation continues and reports will be forwarded to the District Attorney's Office as soon as they are complete and other witnesses are contacted, Workman said.

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