



A humpback whale makes an appearance on the Astoria waterfront Monday. The whales have been in the Columbia River since late September, lured by abundant food and possibly reacting to El Niño conditions.

Edward Stratton/The Daily Astorian

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ONE DOLLAR

FROM THE GROUND UP

Local developer reimagines the Astor Hotel

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

This summer, local developer Paul Caruana became the sole owner of the John Jacob Astor Hotel, the pre-eminent architectural landmark in downtown Astoria.

The building, mostly used for subsidized housing with businesses on the ground floor, is in the midst of a sprucing up, while Caruana imagines a future mixed-use hotel and apartment building, anchored by a public gathering spot in the former hotel lobby.



Paul Caruana

Caruana started in spring repainting and waterproofing the building. For the top six floors, he hired Pioneer Waterproofing Co. Inc., whose employees can be seen raising and lowering themselves on scaffolding, slowly painting the building's facade a creamy Navajo white.

"We're trying to keep the building from leaking, so we're caulking the window perimeters," said Mike Crawford, a project manager with the company. "And we're doing some concrete patching on some areas that have deteriorated. And then we're adding a waterproof coating to the walls."

Caruana estimated the project is already more than halfway through and will be finished next summer.

"I want it to look like a warm marshmallow sitting on top of a shining emerald," Caruana said, explaining the dark green paint scheme he hopes to start putting on the base of the Astor Hotel next spring to make the building stand out from the streets and sidewalk.

After the departures last year of Vintage Hardware and Klassy Kloset, the ground floor of the Astor Hotel was largely vacant. But Caruana has



Edward Stratton/The Daily Astorian

Since spring, owner Paul Caruana has been sprucing up the John Jacob Astor Hotel.

since filled all the storefronts, including Caruana Inc.'s offices, a co-working office space started by Street 14 Coffee owners Jennifer and Micha Cameron-Lattak, Party Jesters party supply store and 4 Seasons Clothing. The most recent addition is Doe & Arrow, a men's and women's clothing boutique and vinyl record store opened two months ago by Chelsea Johnsen and Austen Conn.

Common Space

At the heart of the first floor is the dilapidated, yet still grandiose, lobby of the Astor Hotel, with original porcelain tile, working fireplace, light

bulb-ringed John Jacob Astor Hotel sign, crumbling columns and a large staircase leading up to a mezzanine.

Caruana, who said he sometimes lights a fire and hangs out at night, hired an interior designer to turn the lobby into a public gathering place. The rendering includes a lounging area, desks, a coffee bar and a front desk for possible lodging in the hotel.

"Everything from the columns in will be rebuilt," Caruana said. "It's all an idea right now, but it seems like there's a big need for common space."

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Move the date or take a hike

Hood to Coast: At a crossroads or an impasse?

By KATHERINE LACAZE
EO Media Group

SEASIDE — Change the date or look for another place to hold your race, Seaside business owners told representatives of Hood to Coast at a city workshop Monday night.

In response, Hood to Coast representatives may be ready to pull the popular fundraiser and internationally renowned race.

"We're not trying to be adversarial," Hood to Coast Chief

Operating Officer Dan Floyd said. "We want this to work in Seaside. If it cannot work for us and Seaside, I think it's fair to say we can move on. It's OK. It's not a threat. We're not playing a poker game or anything. If it's better for the community, we can move on."

Operating Officer Dan Floyd said. "We want this to work in Seaside. If it cannot work for us and Seaside, I think it's fair to say we can move on. It's OK. It's not a threat. We're not playing a poker game or anything. If it's better for the community, we can move on."

A response to a petition

Seaside City Council held its second public workshop regarding Hood to Coast on Monday night. A group of 87 business owners — up from about 70 two weeks ago — wrote a letter to

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Still time to get Oregon LNG comments to FERC

Lawmakers, city had asked for extension on today's deadline

By ERICK BENGEL and DERRICK DePLEDGE
The Daily Astorian

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission will not formally extend today's deadline for public comment on the draft environmental review of the Oregon LNG project but will consider late comments.

"For now, the deadline is

still set for today," Tamara Young-Allen, a commission spokeswoman, said this morning.

However, the commission will accept and consider comments submitted after the deadline and urged the public to submit comments as soon as possible.

"Our staff will look at comments submitted after the deadline date," Young-Allen said. "Our staff wants to hear from the public, and it's very important that you get your comments in as soon as you possibly can."

U.S. Sens. Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley and U.S. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici asked the federal agency in September

to extend the comment period by 60 days so residents would have more time to examine the lengthy document.

The Astoria City Council agreed Monday night to also seek a 60-day extension, citing the experience of Jennifer Rouda, an energy planner in Astoria who has had difficulty in obtaining hard copies of the draft environmental impact statement and supporting documents.

"Unfortunately, community members that were expecting to be able to get copies of these materials at the public meetings to take home to complete more detailed reviews of the technical information and FERC's analysis were not able to do so," Astoria

Mayor Arline LaMear wrote in a letter to the federal agency.

The draft environmental review, released in August, found that construction and operation of the \$6 billion terminal and pipeline would adversely affect the environment.

The draft statement concluded, however, that the project's impacts to water quality, fish and wildlife habitat and other areas of concern would be reduced to less-than-significant levels if Oregon LNG takes the mitigation measures the company has proposed, and additional measures recommended by commission staff.

In September, the commission's environmental staff held

two public comment meetings at the Clatsop County Fair & Expo Center where 77 concerned citizens spoke out against the project and three spoke in favor.

The Astoria City Council voted in September to oppose the project as a potential threat to the environment and public safety.

Oregon LNG wants to build a terminal on the Skipanon Peninsula and an 87-mile pipeline that would link up with a natural gas pipeline in Washington state.

Warrenton is weighing development permits for the project, and several state and federal agencies are also conducting reviews.

