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ONE DOLLAR



Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

Pedestrians walk by downed trees and sunken earth along the Astoria Riverwalk near the Columbia River Maritime Museum on Tuesday.

## Library redo's scope may shrink

Cost estimates too high, Astoria councilors say

By ERICK BENGEL  
The Daily Astorian

The Astoria City Council will review cost estimates for a new library and housing project at Heritage Square and could discard design components that some councilors feel are unnecessary or expensive.

City planning staff and a consultant have put the cost of the mixed-use project at between \$29.7 million and \$38.7 million, but those figures could fall significantly if, for example, councilors choose not to support underground parking or streetscape elements.

The City Council agreed to discuss cost estimates next week after a work session Tuesday at the Astoria Public Library where councilors

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## Winter storms leave costly mark

Local officials hope for state and federal help

By EDWARD STRATTON  
The Daily Astorian

The Port of Astoria's West End Mooring Basin, usually calm behind the breakwater, turned into a wave pool in December during heavy rains and storm surges.

"These docks here were really moving," said Robert Evert, the Port's permit and project manager, who estimated more than \$250,000 in damage. "In some of the areas of the marina, we had 3 feet of dock movement."

Since the winter storms and Gov. Kate Brown's emergency declaration in Clatsop and 12 other counties, Evert and others have been busy tallying the wreckage in the hopes of compensation by the state and federal governments.

Today, the state Office of Emergency Management and Federal Emergency Management Agency visit to conduct preliminary damage assessments, checking the damages claimed by local agencies.

"Every county has a monetary threshold which, once reached, enables the county to request assistance from the state," said Tiffany Brown, the Clatsop County emergency manager. "In Clatsop County that threshold amount is \$3.56 per capita or about \$132,000."

Even with just the damage at the Port, she said, the county seems to have passed the threshold.



Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

Damaged pilings at Pier 2 as a result of boats hitting the pier during last month's storms are shown.

### RELATED STORY

Storm damage takes toll at Ecola State Park, Arcadia Recreation Site. Page 3A

#### Central waterfront

Possibly the hardest-hit agency during the storms was the Port, one of the largest waterfront landowners in the county.

The wave action in the marina and around the Port's central waterfront broke and bent upward of 60 wood and metal pilings, Evert said. A metal piling, used by Evert to calculate replacement costs, runs

the Port \$3,250, leaving nearly \$200,000 worth of pilings needing replacement.

At the Port's boat haul-out on Pier 3, several pilings and a dock were damaged, along with the gangway to the underside of the boat hoist, replaced temporarily with a ramp of scaffolding boards.

The storms wreaked havoc on boats tied to Pier 2, with whitecaps

pushing and pulling vessels from their moorings.

"It was blowing so hard that it literally broke the cleat off the face of the pier," Evert said of a broken tie-up next to the Marine Spill Response Corp. barge, the Oregon Responder. "Those are the cleats we use to tie up cruise ships."

On Dec. 11, Evert said he was called to the Port to deal with a tug being pushed away from the pier at low tide by a broken post underneath. He said the Port still

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## Union fees vs. free speech

Oregon labor unions fear setback in Supreme Court case

By PARIS ACHEN  
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Oregon is one of more than 20 states that could feel significant impacts from a U.S. Supreme Court case that seeks to strip a longstanding power of public sector labor unions to collect fees from workers who decline to join.

The Supreme Court heard oral arguments Monday, in a case brought by a group of 10 California teachers who say the mandatory fees trample on the free-speech rights of workers who oppose the union's causes. The court is scheduled to release its ruling in June, according to the Center for Individual Rights, a nonprofit law firm that represents the teachers.

If the teachers are successful, the case could reverse a nearly 40-year precedent the court set in 1977 to allow for the mandatory fees.

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## Farm bureau leader calls out feds on burn policy

Similar practice landed Oregon ranchers in jail

By DAN WHEAT  
Capital Press

OKANOGAN, Wash. — It's "outrageous and hypocritical" that the federal government imprisoned two Oregon ranchers for a backburn that got away from them and burned a little over 100 acres of public land while federal and state agencies backburned thousands of acres of private land in Okanogan County last summer and were not held

accountable, the president of the Okanogan County Farm Bureau says.

"My definition of homeland security is America's ability to feed itself. There is nothing more important. America has to stop the war on agriculture," said Nicole Kuchenbuch, a rancher and county farm bureau president.

"If this nation's farmers and ranchers are forced out of business, America has succeeded in staging her own famine," she said.

"The media tendency is to turn things into racial or socio-economic issues and vilify ranchers as a bunch of ignorant honkies. It's import-

ant to realize the American government is oppressive to all colors of people and everyone just wants to be free, healthy and prosperous," she said.

Incidents like ranchers and militia occupying the seasonally closed Malheur National Wildlife Refuge near Burns happen when people feel so "abused" by government that "they feel they have no other choice," Kuchenbuch said.

"I don't agree with having a standoff, but they captured the attention of the United States," she said.

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Dan Wheat/Capital Press

Casey and Nicole Kuchenbuch and her father, Rod Haerberle, look up information on a computer in their ranch house between Okanogan and Conconully, Wash., in August. They faced many decisions with loss of 6,000 acres of grazing land to the Okanogan fire.

