



Salmon come up to the surface to feed in the Warrenton High School fish hatchery Monday.

Salmon: Fisheries programs at Warrenton date to the 1950s

Continued from Page 1A

students, who have since moved up to management positions, prepare the hatchery for the eggs and arrange for the fish food.

Senior Brenton Davis, a hatchery manager, said students aim to grow their salmon fingerlings to around 1/50 of a pound each — big enough to handle the journey to sea, but not so big that the animals return to spawn before they are sexually mature.

“Around this time is when it gets scary,” senior Hunter Wilson said about the increase in temperatures, which helps both the salmon and potentially fatal bacteria grow faster.

The hatchery pulls water from rain runoff on the high school’s gym and from the Skipanon, sending it to a flume capable of holding 14,000 gallons. The water runs through an on-site sand- and UV-filtration system, before being gravity-fed into the hatchery.

Student built

Fisheries programs at Warrenton date to the 1950s, when students were raising fish in buckets under teacher Larry Ballman, but ceased in 2003 due to lack of funds.

But a modernized Fisheries Research and Rearing Facility was a 2005 student project led by Henry Balensifer, now a Warrenton city commissioner and graduate of Warrenton High School.

Balensifer brought the program back as a student manager, albeit in a deteriorating facility with a pump he estimated worked about 70 percent of the time. With extensive community support, the new facility — with new water



Ashleigh Rowles clips the fin of a salmon at the Warrenton High School fish hatchery Monday.



Brandon Williamson, a sophomore at Warrenton High School, shows a prototype of the “Salmon Cannon 3000” slide that will be used to release the salmon into the Skipanon River.

pumps, a backup generator and the ability to rear more than 300,000 salmon at a time — was built before the 2007-08 school year.

Starting with five students in 2005, Porter’s fishery program is now a competitive draw for students seeking hands-on science experience.

And next month, the hatchery will provide the community a chance to get close to salmon.

Outside the center Monday, sophomore Brandon Williamson was busy arrang-

ing painted gutters and tubing underneath a fish tank outside the hatchery, where from 3:30 to 7:30 p.m. May 13, area youths will have the opportunity to release a cup of salmon fingerlings into the wild, hopefully with a donation to Warrenton High Fisheries.

“It’ll be like a gumball machine,” Williamson said, describing the Marbleworks-or Mousetrap-like set of chutes down which salmon will slide into the Skipanon River several feet below. He dubbed the device “Salmon Cannon 3000.”



Warrenton High School students including, Christopher Elkins, right, feed salmon in the fish hatchery on Monday. More photos online at DailyAstorian.com

Center: Councilors were receptive to the proposal

Continued from Page 1A

“We have a 45-year-old building, built in 1971, and it’s a little tired,” Vandenberg said. “But she’s done her job, provided economic impact for 45 years.”

The majority of convention centers renovate or increase size about every 15 years, according to Vandenberg. “We’re now going on 25 years since that time.”

Vandenberg and Jon Rahl of the Seaside Visitors Center said the renovated center would significantly increase capacity, urgently needed to accommodate regional events.

“We need this renovation in order to stay competitive in order to satisfy our clients needs and maintain our contribution to the economic stability of our community,” Vandenberg said.

Meeting the need

The Necanicum Room would get 40 percent additional space, and room for meal functions would be up 40 percent. The Riverview rooms to the east would increase from 1,846 square feet to 3,408.

Architect Scott Steele, who prepared the 33-page renovation and expansion plan, showed councilors proposed enlarged meeting rooms, additional storage, administrative area, lobby and staircase alterations.

Goals are to bump out the existing Necanicum Room, support larger events, improve meeting spaces and bring in renovations under \$15 million.

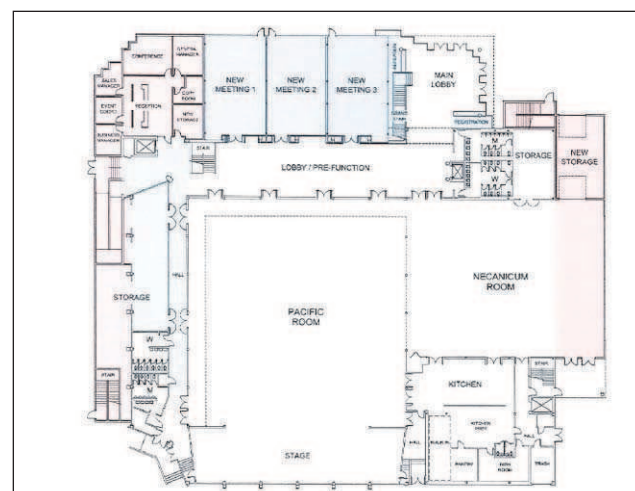
According to Vandenberg, “a lot of groups try to squeeze into the center and they try to make it fit, but reality is, it doesn’t fit. It doesn’t satisfy the needs of these groups.”

Councilors upbeat

Councilors proved receptive to the proposal.

Randy Frank praised it as “very well done.”

Mayor Don Larson described it as one of the best presentations brought before the council.



Steele Associates Architects LLC

Proposed renovation plans for the main floor of the Seaside Civic and Convention Center.

‘We have a 45-year-old building, built in 1971, and it’s a little tired. But she’s done her job, provided economic impact for 45 years.’

Russell Vandenberg

Seaside Civic and Convention Center general manager

“This is amazing,” Larson said. “Unbelievable.”

Last year, a request for a 40,000-square-foot renovation from Vandenberg and the convention center stalled when business owners objected to tax increases to fund renovations. That project would have doubled the size of the convention center and added a multistory 500-space parking structure.

Steele said the building would remain functional and operational during construction, “a little tricky, but it can be done.”

No sales tax

The preliminary design estimate stands at \$14.6 million, with “healthy contingencies,” he added.

He said it was “premature” to discuss how the project would be paid for. Last year’s proposal sought a combination of lodging and sales taxes, including a tax in Sea-

side’s Business Improvement District.

Next steps, Vandenberg said, will be to “take the project on the road,” with residents and civic groups.

“I’m not asking you to approve the project tonight,” Vandenberg said. “I’d like you to consider the project. To take it on the road, the Chamber of Commerce, the Rotary, the hotel owners, giving it some public opinion and hear and see. It’s their downtown, as well.”

A workshop with the City Council and the convention center could take place in two months, at which time the center could provide a final proposal within 30 days. “At that point I would come back to you and ask for you to finance this project,” Vandenberg said.

He and the team at the Visitors Bureau hope to attract “generations of people to come into Seaside,” he added.

march for babies®

march of dimes
A FIGHTING CHANCE FOR EVERY BABY



KAYA SURVIVED!
Born 4 months early and spent more than 5 months in the hospital.



Register at marchforbabies.org



**March for Babies
Lower Columbia - Astoria**

May 7, 2016

Time: 9am

Location: Pier 39 Parking

**COLUMBIA
MEMORIAL
HOSPITAL**