



THE LOCAL LIE
COAST WEEKEND • INSIDE



LOGGERS LOOK TO REPEAT AS CHAMPS
SPORTS • 7A



Photos by Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

Shamek Daniels, center, swims to an emergency life raft with other Job Corps students during a training exercise Wednesday at the Tongue Point Job Corps Center in Astoria.

Highway upgrades slated near subdivision

Projects on busy stretch of U.S. Highway 101

By **KYLE SPURR**
The Daily Astorian

The state Department of Transportation wants to improve safety and ease traffic congestion on a stretch of U.S. Highway 101 in Clatsop Plains where an 87-lot subdivision is planned.

The Westlake Village subdivision is projected for 285 acres between U.S. Highway 101 and Sunset Lake. The property will be carved into 1-acre lots for single-family homes and land devoted to open space. Work will be done in phases and the project will likely not take shape for about three years.

The new housing development was approved by the Clatsop County Planning Commission in May with conditions, including an expectation that the state would install a southbound right turn lane and a northbound left turn lane on the highway. A traffic impact study required the improvements.

Bill Johnston, a state transportation planner, said adding the turn lanes and access to Westlake Village helps offset the development, but still does not account for the hundreds of added motorists in the area.

"It's actually loading the corridor with more traffic," Johnston said of the housing project.

In 2014, the Department of Transportation identified a nearly 7-mile stretch of U.S. Highway 101 from Camp Rilea Armed Forces Training Center to Surf Pines Lane as a priority to improve safety and reduce traffic congestion. A plan is in place and individual projects will begin as funding becomes available.

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JUMPING IN, JUST IN CASE

Future seamen tested on survival in the water

By **EDWARD STRATTON**
The Daily Astorian

The seamanship program at Tongue Point Job Corps Center is preparing for a seaman's worst-case scenario.

Students in the program, who come from all around the country to train as mariners, took turns Wednesday donning survival suits and leaping off the training vessel Ironwood into the Columbia River.

Surrounded by his students before the practice, instructor Jason Linnett, formerly of the U.S. Coast Guard and Navy, found the nearest piece of wood on the Ironwood to knock on, thankful he has never been on a sinking ship in more than 20 years of working on the water.

"The water is 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year," he said. "When we're out doing our things, it's trying to get in this boat. It's trying to find any little way that it can to fill this boat with water and take it straight to the bottom."

Dive practice

Linnett and the other instructors dumped a plastic tub over the side, out of which popped a self-inflating, 25-person raft.

Students formed a line and started slipping on their bright orange neoprene immersion suits. One by one, they hopped off the deck of the Ironwood, legs crossed, into the shallow, 50-degree waters near the dock. Their legs ballooned with the rising air in their suits on impact, spinning some students around as they tried to orient themselves.

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Job Corps Seamanship student Noah Wooten slips into an immersion suit before jumping off a training vessel into the water.



A Job Corps Seamanship program student jumps off the Ironwood training vessel while participating in a training exercise Wednesday at the Tongue Point Job Corps Center.

Smith returns from state hospital

Hearing on her mental state set for this month

By **KYLE SPURR**
The Daily Astorian

Accused murderer Jessica Smith returned to Clatsop County Jail Tuesday after a month-long stay at the Oregon State Hospital to determine if she is mentally ill or faking her erratic behavior.



Jessica Smith

Clatsop County Circuit Court Judge Cindee Matyas found reason to doubt Smith's mental fitness to proceed based on a suicide attempt in jail and an inconclusive report from a court-appointed psychologist.

Smith was transported to the state hospital May 3, where she was observed and evaluated.

A report from the state hospital will be sent to the court. A hearing on the results is scheduled later this month.

The report is expected to uncover whether Smith suffers from a mental disease or defect and if she is able to understand the nature of the court proceedings. If she is found to lack the fitness to proceed, the report will offer a recommendation for treatment and services to restore her capacity.

See **SMITH**, Page 5A

Brookfield names will replace Jim Crow

Some found the old place names racist

By **NATALIE ST. JOHN**
EO Media Group

WAHKIAKUM COUNTY, Wash. — Jim Crow Creek, Jim Crow Hill and Jim Crow Point will become Harlow Creek, Beare Hill and Brookfield Point.

The new names will honor the long-gone Columbia River cannery town of Brookfield and a few of the people who lived there, scrubbing the Jim Crow designations that many found racist.

The state Committee on Geographic Names unanimously agreed in May to adopt the new names pending final approval in October.



The Augustine (Gus) Budnick family stand in front of the post office in the former Columbia River town of Brookfield, Washington.

Photo courtesy of Joe Budnick

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