



COAST RIVER BUSINESS JOURNAL • INSIDE

## AUTHOR GRIEVES OVER THE LOSS OF HIS HUSKY

FRIDAY EXTRA • 1C



## Every fort needs a few good friends



Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

David Lindstrom, Friends of Old Fort Stevens secretary, talks about the historic gun built in 1899 mounted on Battery Pratt at Fort Stevens State Park historic area. The Friends of Old Fort Stevens group works to preserve and restore parts of the park.

## Old Fort Stevens survives with volunteer care

By KYLE SPURR  
The Daily Astorian

WARRENTON — Walking through the historical area of Fort Stevens State Park transports visitors back to when the military fort was active during the Civil War and World War II.

A restored Civil War earthen fort illustrates how the fort was originally built with dirt and surrounded by a moat with a drawbridge. The fort was used to protect against a possible British attack toward the end of the Civil War.

A row of artillery gun batteries allows visitors to envision the fort's only action in World War II, when a Japanese submarine fired shells near the fort in June 1942.

To help share the local history, the nonprofit group Friends of Old Fort Stevens continues to plan renovation projects around the fort. The group collects funds by selling firewood and items in the military museum store.

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Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

Visitors roam around a flagpole at the Fort Stevens State Park historic area Thursday. The flagpole is an item the Friends of Old Fort Stevens group is looking to renovate.

**'... I applaud the Friends for all the work they have done over the years. It's been incredibly beneficial for the park.'**

John Koch  
park ranger

## Fritsch resigns in Warrenton

City manager was target of criticism by opponents of dam removal

By DERRICK DePLEDGE  
and ERICK BENGEL  
The Daily Astorian

WARRENTON — City Manager Kurt Fritsch resigned on Thursday, telling city commissioners at a special meeting that he had become a distraction.

Critics who oppose the removal of the Eighth Street Dam over the Skipanon River had targeted Fritsch and had sought to undermine his management with commissioners.

Fritsch said that sometimes "the manager becomes a distraction. And that can inhibit your ability to move forward. And that's not a good place to be. And I don't want to be a distraction."

The City Commission voted 4-0 to authorize Mayor Mark Kujala to sign a separation agreement with Fritsch. The agreement provides Fritsch with a severance payment of six months in wages — an estimated \$49,500 — along with vacation and other benefit payouts. A non-disparagement clause stipulates that the city will not disparage Fritsch and that Fritsch will not publicly criticize the city.

Linda Engbretson, the city recorder, was named interim city manager.

Fritsch, who has served as the city's chief executive since 2011, declined to comment



Kurt Fritsch

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## Two severed cables caused phone outages

Emergency dispatch was down on North Coast

The Daily Astorian

Phone service in Clatsop County and parts of southwest Washington was knocked out Thursday after two different fiber-optic cables were severed.

Service was restored Thursday evening. The city of Warrenton severed an unmarked fiber-optic cable while repairing a water service line, compromising phone service in the region.

There was also another cable severed at the Lewis and Clark Bridge in Longview, Washington. Early reports point to possible vandalism to the cable on the bridge, Astoria Police said.

The outage affected 911, land lines and some cellphones.

In Warrenton, before repair crews went to work on U.S. Highway 101 on a railroad right of way, the city asked Oregon Underground Notification Center to check for communication lines, gas lines and other hidden service lines.

The agency did not mark the fiber-optic line, so Warrenton went ahead with the planned repair and unknowingly cut a phone line, interim City Manager Linda Engbretson said.

Astoria Dispatch opened its new system allowing texts to 911 during the outage. But the service is still in the testing and evaluation phase, so the texting portal has been turned off. It should be available again permanently later this summer.

## Keep your hands off the seal pups

NOAA reminds people not to handle or pick up the young seals

By PHUONG LE  
Associated Press

SEATTLE — As harbor seals are being born in the Pacific Northwest, marine mammal advocates up and down the West Coast are urging people not to touch or pick up pups that come up on beaches and shorelines to rest.

At least five times this season, well-meaning people have illegally picked up seal pups in Oregon and Washington thinking they were abandoned or needed help, but that interfer-



AP Photo/Elaine Thompson

A harbor seal pup rests on seaweed-covered rocks after coming in on the high tide in the West Seattle neighborhood of Seattle in October 2011.

ence ultimately resulted in two deaths, said Michael Milstein, a spokesman with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries.

It's an ongoing issue along the entire West Coast, from Alaska to

California, when people who think they're doing the right thing end up stressing or harming the animals instead, officials say.

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