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ONE DOLLAR

'ADVANCE ASTORIA' FOCUS ON ECONOMIC GROWTH



Kevin Leahy, executive director of Clatsop Economic Development Resources, moderates a panel discussion during the "Advance Astoria" economic development strategy panel on Wednesday at Fort George Brewery's Lovell Showroom in Astoria.

Business leaders kick off development strategy

By ERICK BENGEL
The Daily Astorian

Several years from now, what will Astoria's business culture look like? What concerns and principles will have shaped the city's economic identity?

As the city begins work on a five-year economic development strategy — "Advance Astoria" — a panel of business owners and community leaders met in Fort George's Lovell Showroom Wednesday to kick off the brainstorming phase.

Their charge: to think big about Astoria's economic future.

Moderated by Kevin Leahy, executive director of Clatsop Economic Development Resources, the discussion featured Jim Knight, executive director of the Port of Astoria; Chris Breitmeyer, president of Clatsop Community College; Jeremy Towsey-French, owner of Reveille Ciderworks; Adam Zimmerman, president and CEO of Craft3, a nonprofit lending institution; and Shawn Busse, CEO of Kinesis, a Portland-based marketing firm.

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ABOVE: Panelists were charged to think big about Astoria's economic future during an economic development strategy panel Wednesday.

LEFT: Jeremy Towsey-French, owner of Reveille Ciderworks, speaks on a panel at the economic development strategy forum at Fort George Brewery.



Christian J. Wilkins



Adeena M. Copell

Couple charged in death of man

Newport victim found off Hwy. 30 near Astoria

By KYLE SPURR
The Daily Astorian

A Clatsop County couple is accused of killing a Newport man and stealing his motor home and car before fleeing to Arizona.

Christian J. Wilkins, 37, and Adeena M. Copell, 40, are charged with murder for allegedly killing 71-year-old Howard Daniel Vinge, whose body was found Friday wrapped in material off U.S. Highway 30, about 3 miles east of Astoria.

Vinge apparently died from blunt force trauma to the back of his head. After the alleged murder on Sept. 27, Wilkins and Copell reportedly stole Vinge's white 1993 Allegro Bay motor home with a dark maroon 1991 Lincoln Continental attached on a trailer.

The motor home was discovered abandoned about 12 miles east of Seaside at the intersection of U.S. Highway 26 and U.S. Highway 53.

Wilkins and Copell were found Tuesday near Flagstaff, Arizona, driving the Lincoln Continental they allegedly stole from Vinge. Arizona troopers stopped the car and arrested the couple for unauthorized use of a motor vehicle.

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Another Port deal hits a wall

Backer hinted at cargo service at Tongue Point

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

Yet another idea to develop North Tongue Point appears dead.

The proposal by retired attorney and entrepreneur Rece Bly to develop a bulk terminal at the Port of Astoria's leased dock space has stalled, with the two sides unable to reach an agreement.

The Port and Bly have been negotiating for months on a contract that would compensate him for bringing an unspecified cargo to North Tongue Point, a long-underutilized former U.S. Navy base coveted for its access to both rail and a channel of the Columbia River. Much of the discussion has been out of the public view. Bly attended a confidential executive session Tuesday with the Port Commission to discuss the proposal but said the two parties are still far apart.

"I wouldn't say I'm done dealing with the Port," Bly said. "There's nothing for me to do at this point. I signed an agreement, gave it to them. It's not acceptable."

Jim Knight, the Port's executive director, said his and the Port Commission's impression is that discussions are over.



Jim Knight

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Eighth Street Dam deadline passes

Water district weighs options

By DERRICK DePLEGGE
The Daily Astorian

WARRENTON — The Skipanon Water Control District did not respond to Warrenton's demand that it surrender ownership claims to the Eighth Street Dam by a Tuesday deadline.

Tessa Scheller, the chairwoman of the water district, said she did not consider the city's ultimatum worthy of an emergency meeting of the district's board.

The water district wants to remove the dam as a hazard and to improve fish passage on the Skipanon River.

Scheller characterized the city's actions as an "absurd land grab" and "bullying."

The water district's board will meet later this month to weigh options.

Akin Blitz, a Portland attorney for the city, sent a letter to the water district last week warning of a potential lawsuit to settle title or the city's seizure of the dam.

Blitz argues that the city owns the dam because the water district has removed the tide gates, which he believes invalidates an easement the water district was granted by the city in 1962 to operate the structure for flood control.

Blitz said he would wait until he can talk again with the City Commission before announcing the city's next move.

Practical considerations

The standoff is driven by philosophical differences over the value and control of the dam, yet practical considerations might influence how the dispute is resolved.

Scheller said she is waiting to hear to what extent the Special Districts Association of Oregon, which represents the water district in legal matters, will mount a defense against the city.

Some on the water district's board have said in the past that the district should transfer the dam to the city for \$1 to be free from any liability, a tempting idea in the face of an expensive legal fight over ownership.

Scheller said she has looked into

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