



WHAT HAPPENS WHEN SANTA CLAUS FALLS INTO THE COLUMBIA RIVER?

FIND OUT INSIDE | COAST WEEKEND



Illustration by Sally Lackoff

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ONE DOLLAR

A long slog

'IT'S A LOT OF PAPERWORK. IT'S EMBRACING THE PROCESS.'



Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

Erosion and storm damage from last December's storms are still visible along the Astoria Riverwalk.

Local agencies still waiting on federal money for storm damages a year ago

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

High winds and record rainfall ravaged portions of the North Coast last December, leading to state and federal emergency declarations.

With the declarations came the potential for the Federal Emergency Management Agency to pay three-quarters of the cost of storm damage repairs through the state. A year later, most agencies in Clatsop County that reported damages are still trying to get some or all of the money and start repairs.

Leaning locusts

Perhaps the most visual representation of the slog to get federal relief are a patch of locust trees just east of the Columbia River Maritime Museum, still leaning over the water from coastal erosion caused by the storms.

Astoria had initially tried to include the trees as part of the city's FEMA claims to repair about 20 spots of erosion along the Astoria Riverwalk. But the trees are on property owned by the museum.

"We ended up opting out of FEMA," said Dave Pearson, the museum's deputy director. "As a private nonprofit, they weren't going to give us the money."

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\$100,000 Flooding caused logjams along some Clatsop County roads during storms a year ago. County road crews spent more than \$100,000 cleaning up, \$89,000 of it reimbursed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.



Clatsop County Public Works



City of Astoria

The city of Astoria is exploring bioengineered alternatives to repair a landslide near a city water line along Pipeline Road and Bear Creek. The landslide was part of damages from storms a year ago, for which the city and other agencies are still seeking reimbursement from the Federal Emergency Management Agency for repairs.

Port evicts CREST tidal study

Commissioners gripe about the king tide monitoring

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

Port of Astoria Commissioners Stephen Fulton and Bill Hunsinger, two consistent critics of the Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce, raised a stink at the Port's Tuesday meeting about CREST placing tidal monitors last week at the Vera Slough tide gates outside the Astoria Regional Airport.



Stephen Fulton



Bill Hunsinger

The two commissioners attempted to pass a motion asking that the equipment be removed from the site, despite Port Executive Director Jim Knight having already asked CREST staff to remove the equipment. The motion failed.

Knight said he gave CREST permission to access Port property and install probes around tide gates to monitor water levels during the king tides, one of the three highest tidal events of the year. Knight said CREST wanted to help the Port, at no cost, understand the effect of king tides on the airport at Vera Slough, a tidal inlet near the Warrenton end of the Youngs Bay Bridge.

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Pacific County leaders hope to save youth camp

By NATALIE ST. JOHN
and NICK NIKKILA
EO Media Group

NASELLE, Wash. — Pacific County leaders are optimistic that Naselle Youth Camp can be saved.

Washington state Gov. Jay Inslee called for closing the youth camp — one of the county's largest employers — to trim \$7.4 million in his two-year state budget.

The medium-security facility houses about 70 to 90 teen and young adult male offenders. The governor proposes closing the camp in 2018, and relocating the youth to Echo Glen Children's Center in Snoqualmie and Green Hill School in Chehalis.

"The mood is pretty blue, bruised," Naselle Youth Camp Superintendent Pat Escamilla said.

The superintendent said staff are anxious, and have many unanswered questions,

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Pat Escamilla

Hotels, city quibble over room tax definition

Room taxes in Cannon Beach now apply to all 'non-optional fees'

By LYRA FONTAINE
The Daily Astorian

CANNON BEACH — Hotels and vacation rentals are concerned about Cannon Beach's interpretation of the lodging tax.

In September, lodging operators received a letter from the city that required lodging tax collection to include "non-optional fees." These could include booking, late checkout, extended stay, pet, extra guests, cleaning, hot tub and cancellation fees.

Representatives from local hotels and vacation rental companies say this

interpretation conflicts with the municipal code. Lodging industry members from 16 local businesses — including Hallmark Resort, Stephanie Inn, Ocean Lodge, Tolovana Inn and Surf-sand Resort — have asked the city to vet the new requirements through a public process.

The Jan. 3 City Council meeting will address the lodging companies' concerns.

After auditing 10 lodging operators, the city found that some hotels did not collect tax on certain fees subject to the



Submitted Photo

Owners of the Lighthouse Inn and other Cannon Beach hotels seek to clarify the city's room tax. The matter comes before the council Jan. 3.

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