



Ron Baldwin/For The Daily Astorian  
Coast Guard personnel observe the Hero cleanup.

# Hero poses an oily mess for cleanup crews

Sunken vessel worries local shellfish farms

By RON BALDWIN  
For The Daily Astorian

BAY CENTER, Wash. — Washington Department of Ecology contractors found more oil than they expected on the Hero, the historic vessel that sank last weekend on the Palix River in Bay Center.

Working from a small boat alongside U.S. Coast Guard personnel, workers from Global Diving and Salvage began removing the oil soaking devices placed earlier in the week. While inspecting the fo'c'sle section of the ship, the crew discovered more oil than could be handled by the absorbent pads and floats. The driving rainstorm that prevailed through Thursday afternoon did not seem to affect the workers.

"We found more oil today than we anticipated, so I'm requesting a vacuum truck to remove it," said Chief

Petty Officer Brad Bennett, the Coast Guard officer in charge. "With strong tides and the storm, we could have trouble."

Shellfish farmers have worried about the Hero for some time. Their fears were fulfilled when the vessel went down. A light sheen remained close to shore on Thursday despite efforts earlier in the week. A major spill was not expected because the main diesel fuel tanks were mostly empty, but even a small spill can have a profound effect on the valuable shellfish industry.

Salvage efforts and responsibility remain in doubt. The ship rests on the muddy bottom that is owned and controlled by the Washington Department of Natural Resources. None of parties involved are willing to discuss salvage and cleanup at this time. Both Department of Ecology and Coast Guard crews are expected to monitor the vessel closely until a plan is agreed upon between the owner, a local resident, and state agencies.

# Owners put Cathlamet brewery on the market

River Mile 38 goes up for sale

By EDWARD STRATTON  
The Daily Astorian

CATHLAMET, Wash. — River Mile 38 Brewing Co. is up for sale.

Three years ago, Drop Anchor Brewery opened on Third Street in Cathlamet with 12 investors. Less than a year after opening, the brewery faced a trademark lawsuit from California's Anchor Brewing and changed its name to River Mile 38 Brewing.

The brewery is now owned by six partners, including Richard Erickson, Steve Sharp, Andy Lea, Rob Stockhouse and Barry Aiton in Cathlamet; and Danna Speer in Texas. Erickson, a managing partner in the brewery, said the owners, two in their 50s and the other four in their 60s and 70s, are looking for someone younger to take the brewery to the next level.

"We all have other jobs," he said. "We opened this up to be like a little clubhouse."

Erickson said the owners are selling the entire business and remaining lease with the Port of Cathlamet for \$550,000. The port had built a 1,500-square-foot building for River Mile 38, which includes a 10-barrel brewing system and five 10-barrel fermenters producing about 400 barrels of beer a year.

"We have 14 beers on tap in our brewery," Erickson said.

The brewery's taproom opens two days a week in the winter and three in the summer, with five part-time employees. People want the brewery open longer, Erickson said, which means more work and beer production.

He said River Mile 38 dis-



Submitted Photos  
River Mile 38 Brewing Co., formerly Drop Anchor Brewery, resides inside a 1,500-square foot brewery and taproom next to the Elochoman Slough in Cathlamet, Wash.



tributes as far north as Redmond and Tacoma, Washington, and east to the Columbia River Gorge, with a new distribution agreement recently signed for Oregon.

"We'll try to sell to locations along the Columbia River," he said. "People want to drink local beer. Tourists come (and ask) 'What's local?'"

Erickson said the partners will hang on until the right person comes along to take over and keep growing.

"We're in a little niche market, but it's just been better than we ever dreamed," he said. "We never imagined we'd have to work this hard."



Submitted Photo  
River Mile 38 Brewing Co., formerly Drop Anchor Brewery, opened on a hill overlooking the Elochoman Marina in Cathlamet, Wash.

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