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ONE DOLLAR

Airport 'Man Cave' invites scrutiny



Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

Philip Bales at his airplane hangar, known as the Man Cave, Monday at the Astoria Regional Airport.

Fulton makes clubhouse a political issue in Port campaign

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

WARRENTON — For nearly a decade, retired dentist and Air National Guard aviator Philip Bales has invited people into a flight-themed, conservative-tinged clubhouse — dubbed the Man Cave — at his hangar next to the main terminal at Astoria Regional Airport.

Inside the 5,000-square-foot hangar, along with a few airplanes, is a motley collection of recliners and couches arranged like theater seating under a large projection screen. A stocked bar sits in the corner under its own decorative awning, with taps fed from a kegerator and a portrait of movie star John Wayne greeting visitors.

"It just makes it a place to come and gather, and it promotes the airport," Bales said.

He and others have been perplexed by Port of Astoria Commissioner Stephen Fulton's decision to make the Man Cave a political issue in the May special district election.

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Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

The entrance to Philip Bales' Man Cave at the Astoria Regional Airport is marked by a collection of conservative stickers.

JUSTICE REINVESTMENT

County to look at prison use

Clatsop high for drug and property crimes

By DERRICK DePLEDGE
The Daily Astorian

Judge Paula Brownhill on Tuesday said she will assign a work group to look at whether Clatsop County is sending too many felons convicted of drug and property crimes to prison.

The county is among the top five in prison use for drug and property crimes since the state began tracking data under the justice reinvestment initiative. The work group, with representatives from the District Attorney's Office, the Parole and Probation Division and the defense bar, will examine sentencing orders and probation and determine whether improvements are necessary.

The state has awarded nearly \$54 million in grants to counties since 2013 to supervise felons locally and reduce more costly prison use. Clatsop County has received more than \$600,000.

At a meeting in Brownhill's courtroom Tuesday afternoon among judges, prosecutors, probation officers and defense attorneys, the presiding judge of the Circuit Court asked whether the county is at risk of losing state grant money.

"It's possible that they'll take the money back from the counties that aren't performing," said Lt. Kristen Hanthorn of the Sheriff's Office Parole and Probation Division.

Sheriff Tom Bergin said it is unlikely the county will lose state grant money in the next two-year budget cycle, but could later. The sheriff also said some counties, "and we might be one of them," could withdraw from justice reinvestment if the state applies pressure.



Judge Paula Brownhill



Sheriff Tom Bergin

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Costs of managing pot taxes get high

By CLAIRE WITHYCOMBE
Capital Bureau

SALEM — The costs of administering Oregon's recreational marijuana tax have escalated since initial estimates in 2015, and may be poised to increase again.

In part, that's because it's not yet clear just how much it will cost to build a secure, five-station payment area in the Oregon Department of Revenue.

The project, department

officials say, is intended to accommodate the cash tax payments characteristic of the marijuana industry, which due to federal law is largely excluded from mainstream banking services. Many retailers make their monthly payments in cash and in person, and right now they use another area of the revenue building that was renovated for temporary cash handling.

The tax has proven a considerable windfall for the state,

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Department of Revenue

The temporary marijuana payment station at the Department of Revenue in Salem. The costs associated with collecting marijuana taxes have been more than originally estimated.

Smaller schools, seismic worries

Bill seeks funds for quake check

By PARIS ACHEN
Capital Bureau

SALEM — The tiny Alsea school district is asking state lawmakers to approve funding for a seismic needs assessment in small school districts that were excluded from a statewide seismic survey in 2007.

The Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral

Industries conducted the survey to determine how many schools would need retrofits to withstand a catastrophic earthquake, which are estimated to strike the coastline an average of every 300 years.

A bill sponsored by state Rep. Julie Parrish, R-West Linn, would appropriate \$1 million to assess seismic needs at those schools that were excluded.

"Given the state of our

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