



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Emergency personnel coordinate a beach rescue drill on the Long Beach (Wash.) Peninsula Monday in preparation for increased traffic on local beaches in summer. Since 2001, there have been more than 70 rescues and 10 fatalities.

## Drills: 'People need to know where they are'

Continued from Page 1A

them into the surf. The teams of rescuers — one driver and two clinging to a rescue board — take off into the waves to retrieve the U.S. Coast Guardsmen from Station Cape Disappointment and the National Motor Lifeboat School, volunteering as victims dumped from 47-foot motor lifeboats offshore.

By 6:40, all five of the people have been retrieved from the water and laid out at a field triage unit set up on the beach by local emergency responders. They are labeled by color in varying stages of injury, from anaphylactic shock caused by jellyfish stings to severe burns from an engine fire.

### Preparing for summer

The volunteers gather afterward to debrief in a nearby fire station. Doug Knutzen, the technical rescue team's president and member since 1985, says the operation was a success. He thanks the volunteers for coming down and hopes for a summer without any rescues.

According to an analysis by the Chinook Observer in 2014, there had been more than 70 rescues and 10 fatalities along the Long Beach Peninsula since 2001, many in late summer.

Bobbi Pulsifer, a local dispatcher observing the exercise, was on duty for more than 20 rescue-related calls last year, six or seven of them legitimate emergencies. She said calls often start



U.S. Coast Guard personnel were mock victims during a training exercise held near Seaview, Wash., Monday. More photos of the drill available online at [DailyAstorian.com](http://DailyAstorian.com)

with tourists unaware of their location.

"We can't stress enough the importance of where are you," she said. "People need to know where they are."

Knutzen stressed the importance of callers staying where they are and keeping an eye on who or whatever they see in the water to help direct rescuers at the scene.

### Don't swim

Rescuers have erected signs and run yearly awareness campaigns along Long Beach advising people against swimming in the ocean, which hides underwater drop-offs of multiple feet and rip currents that can drag someone several hundred yards out to sea.

Last summer, a 25-year-old woman from Seattle disappeared after swimming in the

ocean at night and has never been found. A 12-year-old girl from Warrenton was pulled 500 yards offshore before being rescued by the Coast Guard but dying later at Ocean Beach Hospital.

"We can't stop anyone from going in the water," said Eduardo Mendez, a local firefighter and member of the res-

cue team since 1999. "We're not cops."

Knutzen said Hawaii dwarfs the Pacific Northwest in drownings, but has no prohibition on swimming. He said rescuers try to educate as many visitors as they can, while staying ready to rescue those they can't reach before the surf.



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

Danny Miller  
The Daily Astorian

## Man Cave: 'I don't think it will be put to rest until the election is settled'

Continued from Page 1A

In an emailed statement today, Fulton said he has not seen the report. He said staff has still failed to answer several of his questions about whether alcohol-related activity violates Bales' lease, whether the Port's insurance adequately covers the activity and whether not disclosing the activity is a violation of state law regarding audited financial statements.

Detectives who conducted the special investigation said Fulton himself said the dispute over the hangar was political. Fulton and Commissioner Bill Hunsinger have suggested that the hangar could be used to help expand Life Flight Network, eliminating the need for a \$1.96 million bond measure also before voters in May. The bonds, which Fulton and Hunsinger oppose, would help finance the expansion of the medevac service and infrastructure improvements for future development at the airport.

Jim Knight, the Port's executive director, asked the Sheriff's Office in March to investigate after Fulton went public with his allegations against the Man Cave and peppered Port staff and the agency's insurers.

The special investigation backs up Knight, who had said the hangar does not violate Bales' lease with the Port or any Oregon Liquor Control Commission or Federal Aviation Administration rules. Port staff also said

in early April that the Port's insurers do not preclude coverage because of alcohol use.

"I'm really appreciative of the Sheriff's Office taking the time out of their busy schedule to look into this matter," Knight said. "It does seem that they performed a very thorough investigation."

Knight said he is hopeful the Sheriff's Office report will put the issue to rest.

Fulton and Hunsinger had told Bergin they thought the investigation was a waste of time and resources by the Sheriff's Office. Hunsinger, according to a memo from Knight, called Knight in late March in frustration over being drawn into the investigation. Hunsinger allegedly told Knight to get a gun to protect himself from unsavory people in the community, comments Knight complained were part of a pattern of "unprofessional, threatening and bullying tactics."

Bergin said Hunsinger's conduct was "concerning, but there was nothing criminal."

The Sheriff's Office findings come a week before the May election, as voters are already casting ballots.

"It's bothered us, my wife and me," Bales said of he and his wife, Ann. "It's bothered us. But we didn't have any fear about having a bad outcome, because we haven't done anything wrong."

Bales said the accusations against him were an obvious political smear. "I don't think it will be put to rest until the election is settled."

## Transportation: Plan raises about \$509 million per year in additional funding

Continued from Page 1A

- Add northbound and southbound lanes on Highway 217 through the Portland metro area.

- Widen Interstate 205 to six lanes from Oregon City to Stafford Road.

- Widen and seismically reinforce Interstate 205's Abernethy Bridge.

The plan raises about \$509 million per year in additional transportation funding. A transportation package that failed in 2015 would have raised considerably less, about \$300 million a year.

The money would come from increases in the gas tax and vehicle fees and a set of new taxes over the next 10 years, including:

- Gas tax increase from 30 cents to 44 cents.

- Tiered increase in title and registration fees, with higher increases for fuel-efficient vehicles, which pay less in gas taxes.

- Statewide payroll tax of one-tenth of 1 percent to pay for mass transit.

- Tolls to be determined.
- Bicycle excise tax of 5 percent.

- Dealer privilege tax of 1 percent on new vehicle purchases.

The state spends about \$1.3 billion a year on transportation system maintenance and upgrades. This proposal would bring that amount up to about \$1.8 billion.

The proposal came on the same day a KATU-commissioned poll indicated tepid interest in raising the gas tax, which is the mechanism for funding transportation in Oregon.

Forty-nine percent of 675 adult respondents indicated a gas tax hike was a step in the wrong direction, while 30 percent showed strong support for an increase, according to the poll conducted last month by Survey USA.

The 14 lawmakers on the Joint Committee on Transportation Preservation and Modernization will convene on Wednesday to discuss potential changes to the proposal before it is written into legislation. Public hearings on the proposal would likely be held in June.

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