

Campbell, Rohne, Spence win big in Port races

Battle for control of the Port

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

Clatsop County residents gave a resounding vote of approval Tuesday to the Port of Astoria's political and executive management, handily electing James Campbell, Dirk Rohne and Frank Spence over Stephen Fulton, Dick Hellberg and Pat O'Grady.

More than 34 percent of registered voters cast ballots in the special district election, a significant increase in turnout from



Dirk Rohne

2015, when Port Commissioners Robert Mushen and Bill Hunsinger ran unopposed and less than 23 percent of voters participated. Voting was also up slightly from 2013, when Fulton and Campbell were elected, and more than 32 percent of voters cast ballots.

Taking sides

Two distinctive sides had cut across all three Port races. Fulton, Hellberg and O'Grady

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James Campbell, left in red jacket, and Frank Spence, right, celebrate their leads in the Port of Astoria Commission races Tuesday night at Fort George Brewery after early election results.

Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Airport bond measure fails

Money was for Life Flight, airport work

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By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

Voters on Tuesday narrowly rejected a bond measure to finance improve-

ments at the Astoria Regional Airport, a blow to the Port of Astoria's plans for future development.

The bond measure, which had broad support

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SECOND LIFE

CITY GETS FIRST LOOK AT POTENTIAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING AT WALDORF HOTEL



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Astoria's Waldorf Hotel may get a second life as affordable housing if developers get their way.

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

Developers hoping to turn Astoria's Waldorf Hotel into workforce housing gave the city its first look at exactly how affordable the housing might be Tuesday night.

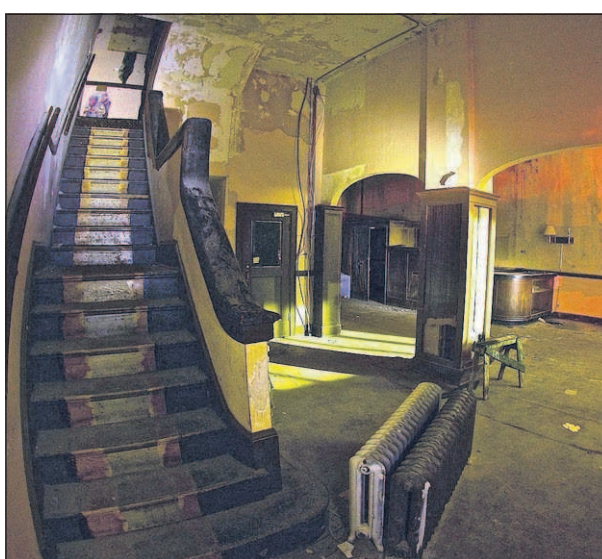
Studio apartments could cost between \$425 and \$525 a month in the Waldorf's second life as a 40-unit apartment building. Julie Garver, the housing development director for Portland-based nonprofit Innovative Housing, told the city's Historic Landmarks Commission during a presentation introducing the project. One-bedroom apartments could cost between \$440 and \$540. Renters must fall within certain income requirements

— among other things — to qualify for a unit. Four units would rent at market rate at \$825 to \$875 a month, and not carry the same income restrictions.

Lot of promise

Innovative Housing develops multifamily, low-income apartment buildings in Oregon and Washington state. The group has refurbished a number of old and historic buildings to give them new life as affordable housing, but the Waldorf — built as the Merwyn Hotel in the 1920s — sandwiched between the Astoria Library and City Hall on Duane Street and vacant for decades, presents a unique challenge.

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Jeff Daly/For The Daily Astorian

A Portland nonprofit hopes to gather the funding to remodel the Waldorf Hotel into apartments.

Emerald Heights rolls back gas charge

Deed restrictions delay new charges for tenants

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

Emerald Heights Apartments has delayed a move to charge renters for natural gas because it would violate deed restrictions meant to keep the Astoria apartments affordable.

Tenants were told they would have to pay for gas starting in June or risk eviction. But after The Daily Astorian asked Edita Smith, the property owner, about deed restrictions that extend until October, the new policy was delayed.

Emerald Heights is one of the few remaining sources of affordable housing for low-income residents in Astoria. When Smith and her husband acquired the apartment complex from the Clatsop County Housing Authority in 1992, they agreed to maintain the apartments as mixed-income for 25 years. The restrictions preserve 60 units in the sprawling 300-unit complex for very low-income renters, and 180 units for low-income tenants. The rent includes the cost of providing utilities.

"Ms. Smith did not recall that the deed restriction included a limitation on utilities," Lawrence Popkin, a Seaside-based attorney for Smith, wrote in an email Tuesday. "She will now delay the change in policy (gas utilities) until the deed restrictions expire in October. The tenants will receive a notice informing them of the delay."

When the deed restrictions lapse, it opens the door for Smith to rent all of the apartments at market rate. But Smith, according to her attorney, plans to keep rent rates the same.

"Other than the change in policy regarding payment of gas utilities, no other changes are planned," Popkin wrote.

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Housing, preparedness top county's agenda

Forty area leaders gather in Gearhart

By JACK HEFFERNAN
The Daily Astorian

GEARHART — Elected officials and staff in Clatsop County seem to agree on two things: housing and emergency preparedness are the major issues, and political will is the key to address them.

Roughly 40 officials gathered Tuesday night at McMenamin's Gearhart Hotel and Sand Trap Pub to dis-

cuss the challenges facing the county, the second time in the past year or so that city and county leaders have met to talk through policy concerns.

County Community Development Director Heather Hansen said the county is aware anecdotally of discrepancies between wage levels and the location, availability and cost of housing and its impact on business retention, expansion and recruitment. The problem: the county is unsure of any solution because there isn't enough data to support the anecdotal evidence.

Officials discussed a recent six-month, \$100,000 study



Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

Seaside pictured from the air. County and city leaders discussed the housing crunch Tuesday in Gearhart.

by Tillamook County, which Hansen said is in a similar situation to Clatsop, that identified

specific data about the area's housing markets and possible solutions.

The report differentiated between coastal and inland markets and highlighted factors such as a low-wage economy, scarce land supply and absentee landlords. Ten possible solutions included creating a countywide housing coordinator position in the county and rezoning.

Attendees appeared enthused. "Let's just steal this," Seaside Mayor Jay Barber quipped.

Barber used the Seaside City Council's vote next week about rezoning a plot of land on North Wahanna Road for a

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