

# FALLING INTO PLACE

Logging makes way for Seaside's new schools

By **BRENNA VISSER**  
*The Daily Astorian*

**S**EASIDE — The new Seaside School District campus sits 200 to 300 feet above sea level with a panoramic view of the Pacific Ocean.

The breathtaking beauty is not only a reminder of life on the coast, but the earthquake and tsunami danger that prompted the move to higher ground. "Yes, this view is nice, but the nicest thing about this is our schools not being wiped out by a big wave," Seaside School District Superintendent Sheila Roley said. "We needed new schools, but safety for all kids was the catalyst."

Forty-two acres of the city's largely wooded backdrop have been logged and cleared so far to make way for the schools. On a tour through a maze of logging roads Thursday to check progress, school board members saw an undefined field of stumps, interrupted only by loggers and equipment loading the last of the timber.

The property is part of an 80-acre site given to the school district by Weyerhaeuser, which will sell the timber to local distributors.

"It's simply breathtaking," school board member Lori Lum said.

### In the zone

In 1999, the state published earthquake hazard maps showing Cannon Beach and Gearhart elementary schools, Broadway Middle School and Seaside High School would all be severely damaged in a major earthquake and tsunami. These schools were also identified as having a high potential for collapse.

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Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Seaside School Board members gather around an inclinometer at their feet at the new school construction site. The inclinometer is a device that monitors the stability of the ground.



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ABOVE: Timber is being harvested to make way for schools. BELOW: Seaside School Board members take a tour of the new school construction site that is being logged and developed.



# Bang, pow, boom — but safely

Caution called for on July 4th holiday

By **JACK HEFFERNAN**  
*The Daily Astorian*

Police and state parks will take some steps to ensure safety and respect tonight, but they also are calling on residents and visitors to regulate themselves on Independence Day.

Police typically receive a high volume of fireworks complaints around the holiday. Astoria Police, Warrenton Police and the Clatsop County Sheriff's Office have already received about 20 such complaints this week.

Astoria Police will have at least one additional officer patrol the city tonight during the fireworks show, though the department is still limited by staffing shortages. Officers will pay particular attention to possible open-container violations on the Astoria Riverwalk and illegal-firework use, Deputy Chief Eric Halverson said.

Differing fireworks laws between Oregon and neighboring Washington state are partly to blame for the illegal use, Halverson said.

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# Port's case against Smithart on hold

Separate suit over inn will go first

By **EDWARD STRATTON**  
*The Daily Astorian*

The Port of Astoria's legal case against heavily indebted former Astoria Riverwalk Inn operator Brad Smithart will have to wait for a lawsuit filed against the Port by Param Hotel Corp. to play out.

The Port sued Smithart and his company, Hospitality Masters, in November, claiming he failed to make \$323,000 in required payments during his operation of the hotel from 2012 to 2015. Smithart admitting to not paying the rent the Port seeks, but has denied other claims.

During a hearing Monday on the Port's motion for summary judgment against Smithart, who did not show up, Circuit Court Judge Dawn McIntosh said she had received a letter asking her to set aside judgment against Smithart until after the trial between the Port and Param.

Param had sought since 2014 to take over the remainder of Smithart's lease in exchange for paying his debts. The Portland company

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# New era hailed at Port

New commissioners sworn in Monday

By **EDWARD STRATTON**  
*The Daily Astorian*

The seats in the Port of Astoria Commission's chambers were full Monday for the swearing in of two new commissioners, part of what has been hailed as a new era for an agency long mired in controversy.

The five-member Port Commission now includes Frank Spence, a former city and county administrator who was elected in May to replace Commissioner John Raichl; and Dirk Rohne, a Brownsmead dairy farmer and former elected county and college representative.

"When I first got to this area four years

ago, they said, 'I wouldn't touch the Port Commission with a 10-foot pole,'" Spence said of the lackluster public perception. "So here I am, and I'm very excited about what is forthcoming. I look at it as a new era for the Port."

Spence was appointed president by his fellow commissioners, while Rohne was selected vice president. Spence takes over as president from commissioner Robert Mushen, who will now serve as secretary. Commissioner James Campbell was named treasurer. Commissioner Bill Hunsinger, who was away in Alaska, was chosen under-secretary.

Rohne, who has called for "boring but productive" Port meetings, thanked those who helped him get elected. "I look forward



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Dirk Rohne, left, accepts the Port of Astoria Commission oath of office from Clatsop County Sheriff Tom Bergin Monday.



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