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ONE DOLLAR

Hotel tax hike will help finance Astoria parks

Aquatic Center, sports programs spared for now

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

The Astoria Aquatic Center and youth and adult athletic programs are off the chopping block after the City Council agreed Monday night to

increase the lodging tax to help pay for parks.

City staff had said the cash-strapped Parks and Recreation Department required a minimum of \$425,004 to keep it afloat. If the City Council didn't approve two recommended funding options — a \$3 parks and recreation fee on water customers and an increase in the lodging tax from 9 percent to 11 percent — the city said it would have to consider closing the pools and eliminating the sports pro-

grams by the end of August.

The City Council tabled the parks fee, instead embracing voluntary donations and an increase to the lodging tax to fund parks. Donations can be made immediately, while the lodging tax increase will not take effect until January.

The tax increase alone will raise an estimated \$410,000 in revenue, enough to keep the pools open and

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Astoria City Councilor Tom Brownson preps for a meeting Monday at City Hall that included discussions of a proposed new fee and tax increase to fund park operations.

Colin Murphey
The Daily Astorian

SWAPPING NEEDLES

COUNTY WILL LAUNCH PILOT PROGRAM IN ASTORIA, KNAPPA

By JACK HEFFERNAN
The Daily Astorian

A needle-exchange program coming to Clatsop County later this summer is being lauded by public health officials concerned about the spread of disease, but some in law enforcement are wary.

The six-month program, funded by a \$50,000 donation from Friends of Columbia



Michael McNickle

Community Health, will begin in August. Specific times and locations have not yet been released, but nurses with the Clatsop County Public Health Department will establish one station in downtown Astoria and another in the Knappa area. The nurses will hand out a clean syringe for every used one they collect.

The Public Health Department will review the number of needles collected once the pilot program is complete to determine the viability of a permanent version. Clatsop County would become the ninth out of Oregon's 36 counties with a needle-exchange program and the first on the North Coast, Public Health Director Michael McNickle said.

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Colin Murphey/*The Daily Astorian*

A needle-exchange program coming to Clatsop County in August is concerning law enforcement but is being lauded by public health officials.

Big bucks go toward maritime sciences

Win for the college in the state Legislature

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

Clatsop Community College has secured \$8.1 million in state bonds to renovate and expand its maritime-science program.

State Senate Bill 5505 provided \$1.3 billion in general obligation and revenue bonds for capital construction projects around the state. The college's bonds will help add a second story and new infrastructure to the main building at the Marine and Environmental Research and Training Station, which houses the maritime-science program.

College President Christopher Breitmeyer, who testified on behalf of the bill in May, said the college had initially been left off the capital construction projects list, but fought hard to make sure the project was included.

"It's going to allow us to upgrade a lot of our infrastructure for the courses we have," Breitmeyer said.

Maritime science

The college offers one-year certificates and two-year degrees in vessel operations,

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Chris Breitmeyer



The Daily Astorian/File Photo
Bill Ham, a maritime-sciences instructor, shows the Electronic Chart Display and Information System computer-based navigation system simulator at Clatsop Community College, which received more than \$8 million in state bonds to help expand and modernize the program.

JUSTICE REINVESTMENT

Oregon takes new steps to reduce prison use

Grant money, sentencing reforms OK'd

By DERRICK DePLEDGE
The Daily Astorian

Oregon will invest another \$40 million over the next two years on incentives to counties to reduce prison use for drug and property crimes.

Along with the local grants, the state will also lessen the presumptive prison sentences for people convicted of theft

and identity theft and expand short-term transitional leave so inmates can get out of prison sooner. The first-time penalty for possession of heroin, methamphetamine and other illegal drugs will drop from a felony to a misdemeanor.

The grant money and the sentencing reforms are elements of justice reinvestment — an initiative to contain the growth of prison spending and lower the number of convicts who commit new crimes after they are released. Counties are encouraged to supervise more offenders locally,



Josh Marquis



Tawna Sanchez

prison use for drug and property crimes per capita since justice reinvestment began in 2013. District Attorney Josh Marquis, one of the initiative's most persistent critics, said he might join a legal challenge against the latest round of sentencing changes.

Oregon will spend more than \$1.7 billion on prisons in the two-year budget cycle, an expense that has convinced many state policy experts that prison should be reserved for violent criminals.

through probation, parole and county jails, and identify the ones who need treatment for drug and alcohol abuse or counseling for mental health problems.

Clatsop County has had among the highest rates of

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JUSTICE REINVESTMENT

Oregon has directed grants to counties to reduce prison use.

2017-19: \$40.1 million

Clatsop County: \$486,302

2015-17: \$38.7 million

Clatsop County: \$414,410

2013-15: \$15 million

Clatsop County: \$188,853

*Source: Oregon Criminal Justice Commission

