



Fishermen wait for word about the start of crab season at the Warrenton Marina.

Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian



ABOVE: Justin Wilson and Flynn Shaw prepare the fishing vessel Swell Rider at the Warrenton Marina ahead of the start of crab season. BELOW: Flynn Shaw and Justin Wilson secure crab pots on the Swell Rider.



Crab season: 'Even if it starts late, crabbing never really goes past March or April'

Continued from Page 1A

over the weekend to catch more crab for another meat test which revealed they are now at 24.6 percent meat recovery.

Corbin and others planned to go back to the processors this afternoon to try to negotiate a price for the whole area. However, fishery managers and crabbers said that with rough ocean conditions expected to follow a warm and sunny weekend, few boats would likely venture out even if they did settle on a price. Bar crossing restrictions were in place Saturday and Sunday on the Columbia River.

If price negotiations had gone differently from the start, fishermen could have set gear out over the weekend and started pulling it today, Corbin said. Sea swell and wind are expected to pick up later today, settle a bit on Tuesday and then roar back up again on Wednesday.

"Now it creates a different set of challenges," he said.

The late start has been a blow to the local economy. Crews who spent months preparing pots and loading boats have yet to be paid and restaurants hoping to offer locally caught crab are still waiting. Fish processors are on standby. Fishermen who switch over to fish halibut or cod in Alaska are looking at a smaller and smaller window of opportunity to make some money crabbing.

In Washington's Pacific County, fuel sales during the commercial crab season

and the Buoy 10 summer sport fishing season make up the bulk of the tiny Port of Chinook's revenue.

"Even if it starts late, crabbing never really goes past March or April," said John Demase, marina manager. "So that's a month and a half of fuel sales lost that we will not recover."

In Oregon, the commercial Dungeness fishery averages 16 million pounds per season and an average ex-vessel value of \$32.5 million, according to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. In Washington state, ex-vessel value averages approximately \$19.9 million. Landings fluctuate but average at about 9.5 million pounds each season.

Last season, crabbers landed 18.4 million pounds in Oregon by March and the season opened on Jan. 1 coastwide in Oregon and Washington. The season before opened on Jan. 4, though southern Oregon and California experienced varying opening times. Previous openings back through the 2010-2011 season all opened in December north of the Oregon-California border.

High levels of the marine toxin domoic acid have disrupted past seasons, delaying openers or even shutting down the fishery midseason. This season, elevated levels of the toxin will keep the coastline from Cape Blanco north of Port Orford to the Oregon-California border closed for at least the next two weeks. Fishery managers plan to conduct additional sampling in that area.

Bronstein: 'I wanted to find like-minded people'

Continued from Page 1A

"I got an opportunity to work with these things called PCs back in the early days," he quipped.

Bronstein lived in Silicon Valley for about 25 years and worked for prominent lawyer and venture capitalist Craig Johnson. As the world was being introduced to the internet, he helped lawyers in separate locations connect during meetings and share data electronically.

"We did things differently in the legal industry before the dot-com boom exploded," he said.

Soon after the Great Recession hit, he created a law app that helps lawyers keep track of their billable hours. He's continued to run the company since his move north.

Bronstein wanted to be close to family in Oregon, remain near the ocean and

practice his long-distance cycling hobby. He found all three opportunities in Astoria, a town he says has become a destination for cyclists on coast-to-coast or border-to-border journeys. He's hosted dozens of cyclists in his home since he first moved here.

"People tend to find the history and culture of the town fascinating," Bronstein said. "There's an attraction here."

Clatsop County, which favored Democrat Hillary Clinton over Trump by 6 percentage points in the 2016 election, also features a diversity of opinions on national politics. Bronstein said that, despite his left-leaning view, his goal is to encourage citizen participation rather than to change opinions.

"I wanted to find like-minded people and encourage others to become active," he said.

Dollar General: Set to open 1,000 locations this year

Continued from Page 1A

"Dollar General refiled their application with all the parking spots included, and is marching through the building process permit right now, with very little change other than the added parking I can see so far," City Planner Carole Connell said at Thursday's commission meeting. "They put it all in the back."

Cross Development hopes to build the 9,100-square-foot store in a vacant lot about 250 feet north of Highway 101 and Pacific Way, across from Fultano's Pizza and Bowling. The property is owned by Terry Lowenberg of Beach Development.

In their September denial of the variance request, the Planning Commission took issue with aspects of the application, including what city staff determined to be inadequate or incomplete plans for stormwater drainage, signage, septic systems, traffic congestion and fire safety.

In a traffic study conducted



R.J. Marx/The Daily Astorian

Site of a planned Dollar General store along U.S. Highway 101 in Gearhart.

by Dollar General, about 285 transactions per day are anticipated, with about 142 transactions per day by vehicle. The store would see about 2,000 transactions a week.

Police Chief Jeff Bowman had safety concerns about the new store, especially turns from the shared driveway onto Highway 101, which is posted at 40 mph. Bowman said the new store would lead

to increased calls for service, including disturbances, alarms and accidents.

Fire issues have been resolved, Connell said Thursday, after owners agreed to install a sprinkler system.

Traffic plans have been delivered and are still being reviewed for minor details, Department Review Coordinator Matthew Caswell of the Oregon Department of Trans-

portation said. The work entails restriping the existing center lane, since the double yellow striping doesn't allow vehicles to enter and travel along the center lane for turning. Roadwork will likely be done in the spring.

Stormwater plans may undergo review to see if they meet state code, Sweet said. "The only thing we're working on that's left is to make sure their drainage plan is adequate. Their plans seem to be appropriate."

Dollar General is set to open 1,000 locations this year, for a total of more than 14,000 stores nationwide, National Public Radio reported in December. It will have more stores than McDonald's has restaurants. The Astoria Design Review Committee last year rejected the design for a proposed Dollar General in the Mill Pond neighborhood.

"They're building in small towns all over the country," Connell said Thursday. "They're stock plans. They all look the same."