



Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

A Recology employee moves recyclable paper products for processing at the Astoria Transfer Station.

## Recycling: Some struggle to pack all the bins in one place

Continued from Page 1A

Communities have invested decades into educating the public and putting recycling systems in place.

“Just because it’s become inconvenient ... because now maybe there’s a cost associated with it, it is not a good enough reason to start throwing it away,” Peters said.

He added, “I don’t see a time now or even in the near future where I’ll come up in front of you and say, ‘We’ve got to throw it away.’”

Recology hopes to continue to invest in Astoria and provide more education about recycling options. On Tuesday, Peters introduced Rhonda Green, who will be the company’s waste zero specialist in Astoria. It is not a new position, but in the past it has functioned more as a public relations job. With Green, the

company hopes to get back into the schools with recycling programs and education and to work with local businesses to audit their waste streams. They also hope to continue building participation in the curbside recycling program.

“I don’t think it’s reasonable to expect 100 percent of people to participate,” Peters said. A participation rate of 80 percent would be ideal, though.

### Curbside pickup

The new bins showed up in August and pickup began in September. While people are able to opt out of the program, they are not able to opt out of the increased fees that go along with it. The curbside pickup options added a few dollars to a customer’s bill. Astoria residents can still bring glass and other recycling as well as yard debris to the transfer station off Williamsport Road them-



A recycling bin full of glass products sits among several for public use at the Astoria Transfer Station.

selves and forgo the new bins. When former general manager Fred Stemmler discussed the program with the City Council

last year, he said the company expected around 10 to 20 percent of customers might decline one or both carts. He

expected the program would build gradually.

City Councilor Cindy Price and Mayor Arline LaMear had

voted against the changes, with Price saying she was concerned about where people would put the extra bins and the havoc a windy or stormy day could cause, especially for people living on Astoria’s steeper hillsides.

Wander any of Astoria’s neighborhoods, and many residents have clearly struggled to find a way to pack all the bins in one place. The old commingled recycling and new yard debris bins are especially large. If people also have opted for larger garbage bins, it can get even more crowded.

But it’s been a mild winter, Price said Tuesday. Tipped-over receptacles have not been a major issue, though lack of space has been challenging at her house and at others in her neighborhood, she said.

Peters has said he will look into options for small containers and report back to the city.

## Fires: ‘These homes are old and wooden’

Continued from Page 1A

portion of the front of a house on the street was charred. No one was inside the home at the time.

The first incident took place near midnight on Jan. 6 at the home of Mari Inaba and Ben Crockett. Someone appeared to have set fire to articles of clothing and tried to ignite a gas meter, damaging small areas on the front porch and side of the house.

Crockett, after hearing commotion, got out of bed and noticed flames outside before quickly extinguishing the threat.

“If I had noticed it a minute later, I wouldn’t have been able to stop it,” Crockett said.

No suspects have been identified, Spalding said. All of the fires took place on a section of the street south of the Goonies house and a small Franklin Avenue overpass. Though different portions of the properties were burned, each house sustained small scorch marks near the front door.

“There’s really nothing necessarily to connect the latest one other than it’s a fire,” Spalding said. “From the outside, it certainly looks like a connection, but we can’t know for sure right now.”

Early Tuesday, Astoria fire responded to a blaze inside a garage next door to the scene of the second incident. The inside of the garage was scorched, but the fire appeared to be caused by an electrical malfunction. A Suzuki motorcycle was charging in the



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

A fire caused damage Tuesday to a garage on 38th Street in Astoria but was not suspected by authorities to be connected to cases of suspected arson on the same street.

garage before the fire started, Astoria Fire Chief Ted Ames said.

The people who live at that home — two adults and two children — were unharmed.

Ames pointed to evidence at the scene — including the direction of the blaze and the fact that the fire started inside the garage — in his determination that the charging motorcycle was the likely cause.

Ames admitted, though, that the coincidence was unlike any he had seen in his decadeslong career.

“Everyone is under

the assumption that this is related,” Ames said. “It’s just bad timing.”

Astoria police and fire, the Clatsop County Fire Investigation Team and a representative from the Oregon State Fire Marshal will continue to investigate the fires.

“These homes are old and wooden,” Suzy Sweet, who lives on 38th Street, wrote in a Facebook message to The Daily Astorian. “If it keeps happening something really bad will happen.”

Spalding said he has spoken to residents about forming a neighborhood watch group.

The department will also increase patrols in the area, possibly including an extra officer working overtime.

Crockett was testing his new security camera on the front deck Tuesday as officials continued their investigation up the street. He also recalled how he, Inaba and other neighbors awoke just after 2:30 a.m. Tuesday to the sound of the garage fire.

As he and Inaba stood on their front lawn, a neighbor walking his dog greeted them.

“Nothing brings the neighborhood together like arson,” he said.

## Boat crash: Video shared on Facebook

Continued from Page 1A

Larsen, 75, pleaded not guilty in September to three counts of fourth-degree assault, three counts of recklessly endangering another person and one reckless operation of a boat charge in connection with the case. An early resolution conference in the criminal case has been scheduled for later this month.

Larsen, a Roseburg resident who owns the Harbor-

view Resort in Hammond, could not be reached for comment Tuesday by The Daily Astorian. He told The Oregonian last week that allegations he was using his cellphone before the crash are “fake news.”

A video of the incident — taken from a camera on the smaller boat — was shared on Facebook by Angling Oregon — a website operated by McMahon.

• Watch the video: <https://youtu.be/agWmkZYU31Q>

## Port: Commission next meets in three weeks

Continued from Page 1A

activated in November, 14 months behind schedule, after multiple delays, weather damage and a \$22,000 fine from the state for not finishing in time.

Port staff had outlined a plan to have tenants help cover the cost of the stormwater system based on the square footage of land they lease in the area being serviced. The Port would cover slightly more than half the cost of the loan. The most-affected tenants are Englund Marine, Astoria Forest Products, Bornstein Seafoods, Bergerson Construction and a nearby commercial building complex.

Port Executive Director Jim Knight, absent from Tuesday’s meeting because of a surgical procedure, had previously said he was waiting until the system worked to bring a financing plan to tenants. Now that the stormwater system is active and the issue popping up in the newspaper, Englund said, he’d like to get an idea of the plan to pay for it.

Port Commission President Frank Spence sought to reassure Englund that answers are coming.

“You will be contacted and have discussions before our next commission meeting,” Spence said.

The Port Commission next meets in three weeks.