

Oil spill: Crews placed new boom around hotel

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The Coast Guard worked with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service on environmental assessments, with minimal impact to sediment and no reports of oily wildlife, said Lt. Berit Boyle, a supervisor in the Incident Management Division.

"The oil is sticking to the rocks, and it needs some tides going in and out to weather it down and bring it off the rocks," said Cmdr. Sean Cashell, chief of response at Sector Columbia River.

A new boom has been placed around the hotel and will remain

for another two weeks to a month, and an inner boom around the spill will stay in place for two to three months, Cashell said.

Robert Jacob, the owner of the Cannery Pier Hotel, has been forthcoming since the spill but recently informed the Coast Guard he could no longer pay for the cleanup, Timmons said. The Coast Guard opened the Oil Spill Liability Trust fund to pay for the immediate cleanup.

The hotel is not a regulated waterfront facility with the insurance expected of a marine terminal with a fuel storage tank, Berliner said.

"I think he's expending all dis-

cretionary funds that he has at this point," Berliner said of Jacob.

After the cleanup is over, an office within the Coast Guard's National Pollution Funds Center will send investigators to process claims, trying to recover costs from the responsible party, Berliner said. Jacob is working with the center on how people can submit claims for damage, with directions for affected property owners to be posted soon at the marina.

In the audience, former Astoria Mayor Willis Van Dusen said Jacob was unable to attend the briefing but wanted to thank the Coast Guard for all they have done.

Edward Stratton/The Daily Astorian

The Coast Guard will keep containment booms around the Cannery Pier Hotel for up to a month to help prevent the spread of oil from a nearby fuel storage tank that leaked into the Columbia River.



Cancer center: It cost \$16 million, \$13 million of which came from bonds

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Roughly 3,000 patients are expected each year at the region's first cancer therapy center. The 18,000-square-foot treatment facility and specialty clinic cost \$16 million, \$13 million of which came from bonds.

More than 700 people donated, including local business owners, officials and people who work at the hospital. Contributions of less than \$500 accounted for well over half of all donations, while some gave between \$50,000 and \$350,000.

Campaign leaders lauded donations from Dr. William and Deborah Armington, the Leinassar family, hospital board chairwoman Con-

stance Waisanen, state Sen. Betsy Johnson, the M.J. Murdoch Charitable Trust, Teevin Bros. Land & Timber Inc., the Lum family, the Henningsgaard family, the Autio family and the Phillips Family Trust.

"The contributions by hundreds of individuals and dozens of organizations were invaluable and inspiring," Columbia Memorial CEO Erik Thorsen said at the cancer center's opening.

Thorsen, Dr. Jeffrey Leinassar, foundation board chairman Michael Autio and foundation executive director Penny Cowden helped Van Dusen with the fundraising effort. About 75 percent of the donations came individually rather than from fund-

raising events. The crew made numerous phone calls to prospective donors, which Van Dusen estimated took about four hours of time each week.

"There wasn't one negative comment from anybody we spoke to," Van Dusen said. "That's very unusual in this town because there are a lot of strong personalities."

Van Dusen said the ability to reduce commute times for cancer treatment and the grassroots nature of the campaign immediately appealed to him. When calling donors, the former mayor usually would make the same pitch.

"We cannot let this opportunity get away," he would tell them. "It's not that I would like your help. It's that

I need your help."

One large donation of more than \$50,000 came from the family that owns the Minnesota Twins. Van Dusen, the owner of Van Dusen Beverages — a Pepsi bottling company — knows Bob Pohl, a part-owner of the team and longtime head of his own Pepsi bottling company. After hearing about plans for the hospital, Pohl called Van Dusen to ask how to pitch in. Years after Van Dusen aided one friend in his cancer recovery, another friend helped him raise money to fight the same disease.

"I have always thought from the beginning that this is a very important project, and I gladly accepted it," Van Dusen said.

Rates: Projects will be decided this spring

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sudden increase, and members of the public works committee raising concerns with certain aspects of the master plans, the city decided to table the rate increases.

The public works committee spent six months reevaluating different rate structures and phase-in options. The committee ultimately recommended financing only half of all projects. The pay structure would have increased rates by 50 percent over five years and generated \$2.1 million and \$1.6 million for improvements to sewer lines, water storage tanks and other infrastructure.

But city councilors worried that without full funding from rates, the system would not be maintained and would eventually depreciate. Lingering questions about whether the plans should be fully funded by rates alone led councilors to only approve the first year of increases, with a commitment to re-evaluate in a year.

"When you do a 20-year master plan, it's something you'll be constantly modifying and evaluating. We're

trying to anticipate what's going to happen, but approving these plans doesn't commit us to any single project," City Manager Bruce St. Denis said. "Each year we will evaluate what needs to be done, and any project will be vetted and ran through the budget process."

The question of how much residents should pay for repairs on a system that is disproportionately large for a community of 1,700 to serve the influx of tourists continues to be raised by both city councilors and residents.

Jeremy Clifford, owner of Voyages Toy Co., argued tourists should contribute more to subsidizing the costs of infrastructure improvements before raising rates.

"We have 1,600 people living in Cannon Beach, but we have 500,000 people visiting every year. Clearly 500,000 people use significantly more Cannon Beach water than the 1,600 citizens," he wrote in a letter to the city. "Therefore, it is illogical to force the citizens and the businesses in Cannon Beach to pay for the entirety of the water infrastructure

costs when the majority of the wear and tear is coming from tourists."

Clifford suggested the city consider a food and beverage tax similar to Ashland, which uses the revenue to fund water infrastructure and parks. He also suggested picking one of the city's parking lots and metering it for day use.

"If only 10 percent of tourists paid \$5 to park all day, the city would generate \$250,000 in parking revenue. Use that revenue to fund your city water issues," he said.

Others, like Mike Manzulli of the Ecola Creek Watershed Council, supported the rate increase to fix what he said has long been a culprit in high bacteria readings at outfalls that drain onto the beach. A section in the water and wastewater master plan highlighted 40 different locations where sewer pump stations and pipelines had leaks that could be contributing to high bacteria readings at places like the Gower Street and Chisana Creek outfalls.

"The public health issues surrounding these leaks in the Chisana and Gower basins

demand immediate attention and high prioritization," he continued.

The projects that will be financed with the new revenue will be decided during the city's budget process this spring, St. Denis said.



Astoria police have offered a reward in an arson investigation in Uppertown.

Arson: Numerous police agencies have been involved in the investigation

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Soon after the investigation began, the Astoria Police Department applied for the reward money from a special fund maintained by the state fire marshal. The application was approved Monday morning.

"Basically that's money applicable to anybody providing information leading to an arrest of the individual or individuals responsible for lighting the fires," Police Chief Geoff Spalding said.

Numerous police agencies, Astoria fire, the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco Firearms and Explosives, the Clatsop County Fire Investigation Team, the Clatsop County District

Attorney's Office and a representative from the fire marshal's office have been involved in the investigation. But officials have yet to find enough evidence to identify a suspect.

"We have some things that we're looking at, but nothing substantial," Detective Ken Hansen said. "Basically, we're looking for the needle in the haystack. A lot of people will provide information. Somewhere in that information will be something that breaks open the case."

Hansen, a 29-year veteran of the police department, said such a reward offer is rare in Astoria.

"Arson fires are dangerous to people and property and are very serious crimes," he said.

Seaside: Concerns about traffic surfaced during public comment

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with the exception of one. Lingering concerns about traffic surfaced during public comment Tuesday.

With construction of the new Seaside school campus nearby, neighbors, including Cooper Drive residents, fear construction and school traffic will overwhelm already burdened city streets.

"This construction will be taking place at the same time as construction for the schools," Seaside resident Mary Kjemhus said.

Speeding traffic could cause a hazard on the blind hill near the entrance to the subdivision, she said. "I want to get it on the radar — how do we slow traffic along there?"

Resident Kemy Kay Kjemhus said the new homes could bring at least two cars per family, with four trips per day going out — "472 cars on that little country road at Wahanna and Avenue S."

To get onto Cooper Drive is already "extraordinarily hard" on school days, both in mornings and afternoons, she added.

Planning Commissioner

Richard Ridout, who voted against approval, said sidewalks should have been included. "I'm not ready to give up on the need for there being a sidewalk there," he said.

Traffic improvements along Avenue S will likely be among city and school district priorities, Planning Commission Vice Chairman Bill Carpenter said.

Sidewalks will likely be a priority of the city and school district, Commissioner David Posalski added.

Carpenter and Posalski were joined by Chris Hoth, the commission's chairman, and commissioners Teri Carpenter, Lou Neubecker and Ray Romine in the 6-1 vote to proceed.

After the meeting, Ritchie said his first steps would be to improve underground utilities already installed and to record the subdivision plat.

Plans are "a little different" from those first submitted more than a decade ago, he said. "They've put in a few more requirements, but I'm glad to provide some housing for the community."

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