

## No tax hike for Cannon Beach fire

Extra money would have paid for firefighter paramedics

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

CANNON BEACH — The Cannon Beach Rural Fire Protection District will not propose a tax increase on this year's fire chief levy to pay for firefighter paramedics.

Residents will vote in May whether to renew the levy that pays for the fire chief's salary, expenses and training at the rate of \$0.1488 per thousand of assessed property. This rate will again bring in about \$141,469 to the fire district over five years.

Fire Chief Matt Benedict had suggested increasing the rate up to \$0.35 per thousand of assessed property and modifying the fire chief's levy into an operational one to allow funding for two firefighter paramedics.

But after a month of discussion, the fire district board came to a consensus that voters were unlikely to pass another tax increase after passing the \$99.7 million bond in 2016 for the new Seaside school campus. While the rate will remain the same, the board did vote to modify the levy so that revenue can be used for all operational and staffing needs, rather than just costs associated with the fire chief.

"I think wording is important," said board member Bob Cerelli. "This shows we have more options for this money that can be helpful with the overall needs of the district."

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## Hospitality leader known for design work

Martin was 'matriarch of Cannon Beach'

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

CANNON BEACH — Janice Kay Martin, who co-founded Cannon Beach's Steve Martin Management Co. with her late husband, died Saturday at her home in Palm Desert, California, after a battle with cancer. She was 77.

The 40-year-old company, which has been renamed Martin North, manages several Cannon Beach properties, including the Stephanie Inn, Surfsand Resort and Wayfarer Restaurant.

Martin's husband, Steve, died from cancer in 2000. She is survived by daughter Stephanie Snyder, Stephanie's husband, Ryan Snyder, and their two children. Ryan Snyder and his wife have operated Martin North and its properties since 2004.

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Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Cannon Beach Fire Chief Matt Benedict holds up the department's new drone for search-and-rescue operations.

## EYES IN THE SKY

Cannon Beach starts drone program following dramatic dog rescue

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



ABOVE: The fire department in Cannon Beach recently acquired a drone to aid in emergency operations. BELOW: The DJI Mavic drone folds up and is easy to transport. See more photos online at [DailyAstorian.com](http://DailyAstorian.com)



CANNON BEACH — Two months after a drone from a neighboring fire department aided in a dramatic rescue of a dog off a cliff at Ecola State Park, the Cannon Beach Rural Fire Protection District has a drone of its own.

Last month, the fire district voted to adopt a drone program that would assist in a variety of fire calls, a growing trend among both small and large fire departments.

The drone, which acts as a remote-controlled video camera, could aid in search-and-rescue calls, survey house fire damage and provide aerial footage of car accidents, Fire Chief Matt Benedict said.

Cannon Beach will join Hamlet and Knappa as among the first fire departments in Clatsop County to have drone capabilities.

"We want to keep up with technology. We don't want to become stagnant as a district with the same tactics," Benedict said. "This is just another tool in our toolbox."

The idea of starting a drone program came out of a Special Districts Association of Oregon conference Benedict attended last fall, which encouraged special districts of all kinds to take drone classes for surveying and safety purposes.

But the urgency to adopt a program came after a drone from Hamlet Fire Department played an integral role in identifying and rescuing a dog stranded on the side of a cliff near Indian Beach in

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**'THE PR AND THE RESULTS WE GOT OUT OF THE DOG RESCUE WAS WORTH THE \$1,000 INVESTMENT.'**

Mark Mekenas | a fire district board member

## Western snowy plover's Gearhart return proves elusive



Oregon Coast Aquarium

The western snowy plover is a threatened species.

Central, south coasts more inviting to bird

By **R.J. MARX**  
*The Daily Astorian*

GEARHART — Too much foot traffic and too many predators have made Gearhart's dry sand less inviting to one rare visitor.

The western snowy plover, a threatened species, last nested on Necanicum Spit in 2002. Without any recent sightings, the area schoolchildren dubbed "Birdy Beach" in 2014 will no longer be kept as an active bird

management site and seasonal restrictions will be lifted.

In 2013, the City Council agreed to assist the state in developing a shorebird conservation area meant to help the recovery of the species and enhance the habitat for other shorebirds. By limiting seasonal access, officials hoped the western snowy plover would return to traditional nesting sites.

While Nehalem Bay State Park saw the hatching of a western snowy plover chick last May for the first time in 30 years, most nesting sites on the North Coast, including Gearhart, haven't seen the species in a "very long time," Lau-

rel Hillmann, an ocean shores specialist with the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, told the City Council on Wednesday.

Less-trafficked areas on the central and southern coast are more inviting, she said, and will be the focus of future nesting protections.

The restricted area makes up about 25 percent of the 77-acre beach area between Gearhart and the Necanicum River.

Gearhart's seasonally posted signs advising of snowy plover habitat will no longer be posted, Oregon State Park

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