



Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

The new owners of the Circle Creek RV Resort are planning to expand and develop the southern portion of the property.

RV park: 'I believe in the economics of the North Coast'

Continued from Page 1A

Roper sold the property to JO OR Properties and Circle Creek Partners, registered to Loren Landau, a principal broker with Commonwealth Real Estate Services. The company manages manufactured and mobile home communities throughout the Pacific Northwest, including Four Winds Mobile Estates and Neawanna Mobile Home Park in Seaside. Commonwealth last year acquired Alder Creek Village, a 42-space, 55-and-older manufactured home community in Warrenton, for \$4.5 million.

The interest in Circle Creek stems from his growing up in southwest

Washington and visiting the Lower Columbia River region as a child, Landau said.

"I believe in the economics of the North Coast," he said, adding that RV parks have also become more attractive as state tenant laws become more unfavorable for landlords.

The 44 spots at Circle Creek RV Park occupy the northern half of the property, with a field to the south. Circle Creek Partners plans to invest in aesthetics and double the park's size in that southern field, hopefully starting construction in the fall after the busy season is over, Landau said. The hope is to have the additional spaces available by next summer.

The southern part of the resort is occupied by fire pits and picnic tables.



Bill: Financial relief could allow more investment in expansion and employees

Continued from Page 1A

"Right now, the way the system's set up, it's not a profit center for the distillery," Cary said. "It's a profit center for the state."

A Legislative Fiscal Office report estimated the bill would cost the state \$3.4 million in revenue between 2019 and 2021. The loss could be greater if distilleries reorganize and add to the 55 tasting rooms under the \$250,000 threshold.

But both Cary and Selberg said the financial relief could allow them to invest more in expansion and employees. The bill has received broad industry support, including from the Oregon Distillers Guild, a craft-distilling trade group. Selberg was one of two distillers to testify during the bill's first public hearing Monday in Salem.

The state's largest distiller, Hood River Distillery, maker of popular brands Pendleton Whiskey and HRD Vodka, has come out against the bill. The company argues the bill could undercut the liquor control commission and invite large, out-of-state competitors.

"We believe this legislation weakens the state system," Hood River CEO Ronald Dodge told Willamette Week. "We didn't start out with a state subsidy, and we have still been able to benefit from Oregon's system. The short-term gains included in



The Daily Astorian

Larry Cary, owner of Pilot House Distilling, said a bill letting him avoid state fees on the first \$250,000 in tasting room sales each year would help his company expand.

this bill do not outweigh the potential serious, long-term, harmful consequences."

The cut in state fees would come on the heels of the

Republican tax plan cutting fees on distilled spirits from \$13.50 to \$2.70 per gallon for the first 100,000 gallons produced.

Debt: Smithart moved to East Coast

Continued from Page 1A

Bidders must have cash or a cashier's check. The highest bidder will receive a bill of sale and the right to whatever amount Smithart is owed by Param as part of its judgment against the hotel's owner, the Port of Astoria.

Circuit Court Judge Dawn McIntosh has ruled that the Port is obligated to lease Param the hotel for two years, beginning in November, with a five-year extension option. The head of the company, Ganesh Sonpatki, had tried unsuccessfully since 2014 to take over operation of the hotel from Smithart, offering to pay off the debts he had accumulated

with the Port, city and county in exchange for his remaining lease. The Port Commission voted to accept the transfer of the lease, but the deal fell apart.

When Param takes over the hotel, the company would pay \$580,000 into an escrow account to satisfy its promise to pay Smithart's debts, according to the judgment. The Port would receive \$273,180 for back-due rent and revenue sharing, the city \$115,858 for lodging taxes and the county \$4,633 for property taxes. The remainder — \$186,327 — would go to Smithart.

But the Port has appealed the court's decision. The bidder in Thursday's auction

likely wouldn't see a return on investment until after the case is resolved.

Smithart, who has moved to the East Coast, questioned why the city isn't waiting for the court case to be resolved.

"It's a good ol' boy network," Smithart said, adding the collection effort by the city might not have happened if he had better connections.

Smithart could have filed for bankruptcy, but he said didn't feel it would be right. He previously had a plan to repay his debt to the city but quickly fell behind.

"If the sale would have gone through with Ganesh like it was supposed to, then the Port and city would have been paid," he said.



Oregon Department of Forestry

As Democrats in the Legislature propose a 'cap-and-trade' carbon measure, timber companies and several lawmakers are advocating for a bill that would require the Department of Environmental Quality and Department of Forestry to evaluate using natural ecosystems to absorb and store carbon as an alternative.

Carbon: Oregon's wildfires produce more emissions than industrial sources, vehicles

Continued from Page 1A

carbon while promoting economic development, as well as using tax incentives for companies to reduce carbon emissions.

Under House Bill 4109, the study would also examine regional approaches to reduce carbon emissions "other than adopting or participating in a greenhouse cap-and-trade system."

Oregon's annual wildfires emit more carbon monoxide, nitrous oxide, fine particulates and volatile organic compounds than industrial sources or vehicles, said state Rep. David Brock Smith, R-Port Orford, the bill's chief sponsor.

Supporters of HB 4109

argue it would encourage discussions about thinning overstocked federal lands that are prone to catastrophic forest fires.

There's also an opportunity to direct harvested timber toward novel products such as cross-laminated timber, or CLT, which is used for larger-scale buildings.

These objectives can be accomplished without sacrificing viewsheds or native fish — otherwise, projects would just wind up in court, said Ken Humberston, a member of the Clackamas County Board of Commissioners.

However, the bill encountered some mild criticism from the Nature Conservancy, an environmental nonprofit.

While the group supports

carbon sequestration to fight climate change, the science isn't yet conclusive as to the best return-on-investment for carbon sequestration, said Catherine Macdonald, the nonprofit's Oregon conservation director.

The study should be expanded to include Oregon State University and to examine the most effective methods to increase carbon sequestration, she said.

A work session on HB 4109 is scheduled for Thursday, which is the legislative deadline for the proposal to be approved by the House Agriculture Committee.

The Capital Bureau is a collaboration between EO Media Group and Pamplin Media Group.

FEBRUARY 20

Clatsop County District Attorney Josh Marquis

A Columbia Forum Presentation



Josh Marquis is about to start his 25th year as Clatsop County's District Attorney. First appointed by Gov. Barbara Roberts in 1994 after the recall and criminal conviction of his predecessor.

A graduate of the Honors College and Law School of the University of Oregon, he has spent most of his 37 years as a lawyer as a prosecutor, first in Eugene, then Newport, and as Chief Deputy DA in Bend before coming to Astoria. He also spent time as a newspaper reporter and speechwriter in Los Angeles and two years as a criminal defense lawyer. He

lectures and teaches to lawyers and others across the nation and overseas and has been asked to testify four times before Congress. Marquis served as President of the Oregon District Attorneys Association and Vice President of the National DA's Association, on whose board he still serves 21 years later. He is married to City Councilor Cindy Price. For more than 20 years he's been a jazz programmer at KMUN and appeared in SHANGHAIED IN ASTORIA every year since 1994.

TO ATTEND:

For Members: Dinner & Lecture: \$25 each; Lecture only: no charge

For Non-Members: Dinner & Lecture: \$35 each; Lecture only: \$15 ea.

Appetizers will be available at 6 p.m. • Dinner will be served at 6:30 p.m.

The speaker will begin after the dinner service is complete and non-dinner members and guests of the audience take their seats.

Forum to be held at the CMH Community Center at 2021 Exchange St., Astoria.

ColumbiaForum

FOR RESERVATIONS OR TO JOIN COLUMBIA FORUM CONTACT: Holly Larkins at 503.325.3211 ext. 227 or hlarkins@dailystorian.com by Feb. 18, 2018

Columbia Forum is sponsored by:

The Daily Astorian • Craft3 • OSU Seafood Laboratory • KMUN-FM Cannery Pier Hotel & Spa

