



# THE DAILY ASTORIAN

145TH YEAR, NO. 168

DailyAstorian.com // THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2018

ONE DOLLAR

## Stretching the lodging tax



Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Cannon Beach city councilors might turn the former elementary school into an event center.

### Cannon Beach and other cities experiment with tourism money

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

**C**ANNON BEACH — Looking to make creative use of the lodging tax, Cannon Beach may divert money from tourism promotion to an event center.

The idea came up during the early stages of contract negotiations with the Chamber of Commerce, which has been getting the tax money since 2015. The chamber uses 70 percent of the funding generated by state and local lodging taxes to promote tourism. City councilors are considering redirecting a percentage of that money to buy the former elementary school building for an event center.

“Granted, it would take away funds you are receiving,” Mayor Sam Steidel said at a city work session, “But it would also go into a project we think is pertinent and supports tourism.”



Tourists enjoy the beach in front of Haystack Rock.

Cannon Beach joins a growing number of cities exploring how to use lodging tax dollars for capital projects or maintenance needs.

With more cities and counties facing budget shortfalls, there’s an effort to broaden the definition of what counts as tourism-related spending.

The Astoria City Council voted last year to increase the lodging tax from 9 percent to 11 percent, with the intent to

use some of the money for maintenance at city parks known to have heavy tourist traffic. Bend voted to reduce the percentage of lodging tax designated for tourism promotion in order to pay for road repairs, a move that is being legally challenged by the Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association as a violation of state law.

See **TAX**, Page 5A

**‘THE GROWTH IN OREGON HAS BEEN GREAT. BUT AT WHAT POINT DO YOU HAVE A DESTINATION THAT’S NO LONGER A DESTINATION BECAUSE IT’S BEEN LOVED TO DEATH?’**

Wendy Johnson | intergovernmental relations associate with the League of Oregon Cities

## Woman dies after being pinned under her vehicle

By **JACK HEFFERNAN**  
*The Daily Astorian*

A woman was killed this morning after being pinned underneath her car near 12th Street and Kensington Avenue in Astoria.

Neighbors say the woman stopped her 2007 black Honda Accord on the steep street, turned the wheels and walked behind it to place de-icer. While her back was turned, the car began to slide down the hill. She tried to dash away, witnesses said, but the wheels caught her legs and slowly rolled over her upper body.

“It didn’t even look like it was going to hit her at first,” said Charles Raffington, a neighbor who was taking out the garbage in front of his house when he saw the accident about 9:30 a.m. He said he immediately called police and ran over to see if the woman was OK.

“The first time she screamed it was like, ‘What is going on?’ The second time was more of a panic,” he said.

Raffington said she initially was responsive before passing out. She was declared dead by emergency personnel on the scene.

Authorities have not publicly released the name of the woman.

## County fair nearing budget limitations

Money for materials and services is tight

By **JACK HEFFERNAN**  
*The Daily Astorian*

The Clatsop County Fair & Expo is nearing budget limits just halfway through the fiscal year, and officials are pointing to a unique — often confusing — management setup as the cause.

The budget for the fair is nearly \$1.4 million, a 10 percent decrease from the previous year. The fair spent nearly all of its materials and services budget — roughly \$438,000 — in six months.

The remainder of the budget is relatively on track, but the fair will need to take a number of steps to provide materials and services for the rest of the year.

“That is concerning to me. I have shared that on several occasions with the Fair Board,” Monica Steele, the county’s budget and finance director, said at a recent Board of Commissioners

See **COUNTY FAIR**, Page 7A

## To save steelhead, Oregon trucks sea lions to the coast

### A passport to a Newport beach

By **CASSANDRA PROFITA**  
*Oregon Public Broadcasting*

Oregon wildlife managers are trapping sea lions at Willamette Falls and trucking them out to the coast in an effort to protect a very fragile run of steelhead.

Biologists estimate the sea lions at Willamette Falls are eating at least a quarter of the winter steelhead run. At that rate, they say, there’s about a 90 percent chance at least one population of the fish will go extinct.

Bryan Wright, a biologist with the Oregon Department of

Fish and Wildlife, said the state is waiting for federal approval to kill sea lions at Willamette Falls. In the meantime, they’re moving as many sea lions as they can to the coast.

“Everyone knows it’s not a long-term fix,” he said. “It’s barely a short-term fix. ... But right now, it’s the only tool we have, and it does save about three steelhead per day according to our estimates.”

So far, they’ve moved three sea lions to the beach near Newport. That’s given the marine mammals the chance to demonstrate that they can swim back in a matter of days.



Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Sea lions are being trucked to the coast to save steelhead at Willamette Falls.

See **SEA LIONS**, Page 5A

