



Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Troy Constantine prepares the fishing vessel Swell Rider for the crab season.

## Defendants in pot blast suit blame worker

Legal fallout from a 2016 explosion

By EDWARD STRATTON  
The Daily Astorian

The defendants in an \$8.9 million lawsuit over an explosion and fire at a Uniontown marijuana processor are trying to turn the tables on the worker who was badly burned in the blast.

In court filings, the defendants argue Jacob Magley's claims are barred because he helped illegally manufacture the marijuana extract involved in the 2016 explosion.

Magley was injured inside a basement leased by Jason Oei and William "Chris" West at the corner of Portway and Industry streets. He spent months in the hospital recovering from burns to much of his body.

Magley, who lives in Portland, filed suit in Multnomah County Circuit Court against Oei and West, along with their companies Astoria Trading Co., Higher Level Concentrates and High Tide Biological. He claimed the two had been dabbing, a method of consuming marijuana vapors involving an open heat source, while making hash oil using butane, igniting the fire. Oei and West have pleaded guilty to felony assault in the third degree and misdemeanor reckless endangerment. Each received three years probation.

Magley also sued property owner Richard Delphia and several of his companies; two of investor John Harper's companies; and Sweet Relief, an Astoria marijuana store that leased space above the processing operation.

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## Rule changes for crab

Tracing path from catch to consumer

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ  
The Daily Astorian

As closures related to harmful marine toxins continue to plague Oregon's lucrative commercial Dungeness crab fishery, new rules are under consideration that will help state fishery managers trace crab after it is caught and respond with more flexibility.

In April, the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission will consider making permanent several rules introduced this crab season. A related bill is working its way through the Legislature.

Right now, large swathes of the coast can get closed down due to high levels of toxins like domoic acid. The rule changes would narrow the areas to be closed if there is an increase in toxin levels, based on records that may be required as a result of the bill. It would also allow for more flexibility in evisceration orders, like the one in place along a portion of the southern coast where only crab with their guts removed can be sold.

Seafood businesses have to keep more detailed records on who they buy crab from, where it was harvested and who they sell it to this season — information the state said is "essential to support and strengthen crab traceability through the market chain." The state also included measures to make biotoxin testing procedures and fishery management responses more transparent.

The state hopes to achieve two outcomes with these changes, said Caren Braby, marine resources program manager with the Department of Fish and Wildlife. Fishery managers want to protect consumers by making crabs more traceable as they travel from boats to processors and then to other buyers, but they don't want to leave fishermen

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Troy Constantine works on the Swell Rider.



Crab pots sit ready at the Warrenton Marina.

## Regulators want more money to police pot

State wants 17 new positions and money for investigations

By CLAIRE WITHYCOMBE  
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Amid mounting pressure to shore up controls on legal cannabis, Oregon regulators want more money to enforce state laws and rules.

In early January, U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions alerted states that had legalized recreational marijuana that he was rolling back the Obama administration's guidance on marijuana prosecutions. Sessions' memo effectively leaves it up to federal prosecutors in each state to exercise individual discretion when it comes to enforcing violations of federal marijuana law.

Billy Williams, Oregon's top federal prosecutor, claimed this month that the state has a "massive marijuana overproduction problem," and that weed grown in Oregon is leaking into the illicit market and across state lines. And state auditors said in a report that Oregon's cannabis licensing and tracking systems have weaknesses that could overlook illegal activity.

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## Astoria selects architect for library work

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ  
The Daily Astorian

The Astoria City Council unanimously approved a contract Monday night with an architectural firm to begin assessing the condition of the Astoria Library, kicking off the first phase of renovation work on the 50-year-old building.

A selection committee that included Library Director Jimmy Pearson and City Manager Brett Estes recommended going with the Portland-based firm Hennebery Eddy Architects Inc. The total cost of work will not exceed \$77,210.

The firm will also help establish what the library needs in terms of space and develop three conceptual designs. This work is part of what city staff and fundraising partners

refer to as the first phase of the project. The renovation work itself is the second phase, and comes with a \$5 million price tag.

"I feel like we've got the future of the library in very good hands right now with our current library director and the people on this selection committee," City Councilor Zetty Nemlowill said before making a motion to approve the contract.

The city already has \$1.6 million set aside for future construction. A nonprofit tasked with fundraising for the renovation work has a goal of raising \$3.5 million and has already raised about \$125,000 since October.

"This is sufficient for us to begin the real work of major fundraising," said David Oser, retired chief financial officer for nonprofit lender

Craft3 and the foundation's treasurer.

Oser said the money has enabled the foundation to acquire necessary equipment and software and hire Kate Deeks, an Astoria Library Advisory Board member and liaison to the foundation, for six months to manage fundraising efforts.

The city hopes to begin work on the library in 2019.

In other business Monday:

- The City Council passed a resolution to help facilitate environmental remediation for an oil spill in the Columbia River near the Cannery Pier Hotel in January. Up to 4,200 gallons of oil have leaked into the river since strong winds caused the pier to collapse and rupture an old tank.

The resolution does not come with any financial obligation.



EO Media Group

The Oregon Liquor Control Commission wants to add 17 new positions and money to fund grants for investigations into illegal marijuana.