

# THE DAILY ASTORIAN

145TH YEAR, NO. 208

DailyAstorian.com // THURSDAY, APRIL 19, 2018

ONE DOLLAR

**FIREFIGHTING** | THREE-DAY COURSE

## 'Not gonna die today'



Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Firefighters practice rescuing a colleague during a training exercise in Astoria.

### Firefighters convene in Astoria for survival and rescue training

By JACK HEFFERNAN  
The Daily Astorian

The mood started to shift as a few dozen firefighters finished their lunch break Friday inside a damp, abandoned building on Marine Drive.

"We're done taking it easy," said Jason Bostron, a Sterling, Colorado, firefighter, as "Welcome to the Jungle" by Guns N' Roses blared on a stereo. "We started out a little timid. Now we're going to ramp it up a notch."

Firefighters were about to continue the first day of survival and rescue training. The Randy Carpenter Memorial Fund — named after a Coos Bay fireman who died when a roof collapsed in a burning building — sponsors the training. Classes have taken place as far east as Wisconsin, and firefighters often use vacation time to learn how to handle life-or-death scenarios.

"It's just nice being around people who want to be good at their job, being around passionate people and pushing the limit, really," said Tyler Myers of the Hoodland Fire District. "It was the best 'worst class' I've ever taken."

They escape or rescue others from obstacles in full fire gear, with blinders over their face shields and music ringing out in the background.

"I think this class is really good at teaching you about you," said instructor Ron Schmitt, of the Estacada Rural Fire District. "These are the 1-percenters."

As the next series of drills after the Friday lunch break drew closer, Natasha Bedingfield's "Pocketful of Sunshine" boomed.

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Firefighters with blinders installed in their face masks practice a rescue operation.



Personnel from fire departments across the state take a break during a three-day training exercise in Astoria.

## Longtime Port tenant leaves for Tongue Point

Bergerson will move storage and offices

By EDWARD STRATTON  
The Daily Astorian

Marine contractor Bergerson Construction Inc., a tenant of the Port of Astoria for more than 40 years, is moving its operations from the central waterfront to Hyak Maritime's North Tongue Point marine fabrication and repair yard.

"The recent purchase of North Tongue Point by Hyak has presented us with the best possible location in the local area for staging our marine construction activities," said Greg Morrill, president and majority owner of Bergerson. "We are very excited as this will provide superior moorage for our floating assets, yard space with better access to the water and without competition from other operations."

The relocation will take place in phases over the next six to eight months, Morrill said, starting with the company's storage and moorage on the central waterfront and Pier 3. The company will either lease or sell its offices at 55 Portway St.

Matt McGrath, the Port's director of operations, said Bergerson's move will allow the Port to lease more land on Pier 3 to Astoria Forest Products and potentially bring in several more log ships each year, increasing the agency's revenue.

Bergerson Construction was founded in 1968 by Darryl Bergerson, who transferred the company in 1997 to Dennis Bjork, his general manager at the time. Bjork in 2009 transferred the company to Morrill, his general manager, and then-Project Manager Mike Puckett, now a vice president. The company has been involved in many of the region's marine construction projects, from rebuilding the city's 17th Street Dock to repairing the Port's piers.

The Port Commission voted late last year to relinquish the remainder of the agency's 10-year lease at North Tongue Point, a former Navy and Coast Guard base valued for its access to both a derelict rail spur and a side channel of the Columbia River but in need of major work.

The Port had struggled to find big tenants or make a profit on the property. Staff estimated the Port lost around \$2 million operating the site since 2009. Marine contractor J.E. McAmis, a tenant at North Tongue Point since the 1980s, left in 2016 for land it purchased and built into a new headquarters at the confluence of the Columbia and Cowlitz rivers.

Ending the Port's lease allowed Hyak Maritime to purchase the property from previous owner Washington Development Co. Hyak is developing North Tongue Point into a full-service marine fabrication and repair facility for tugs, barges and commer-

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**STATE HOUSE** | DISTRICT 32

## Industry, incumbents back Tillamook commissioner Josi

By EDWARD STRATTON  
The Daily Astorian

Tim Josi, a Tillamook County commissioner and former state representative, has gathered the backing of the regional business community and incumbents in the state Legislature in his Democratic campaign for state House.

Josi is running in the May primary against political newcomers John Orr and Tiffany Mitchell, to replace state Rep. Deborah Boone, D-Cannon Beach, who will retire after her seventh term ends in January. He has raised more than \$75,000 as of Thursday, compared to nearly \$45,000 for Mitchell and around \$13,600 for Orr.

Timber interests Hampton Lumber and Warrenton Fiber have each donated \$3,000 to Josi, who also received \$5,000 from the Orloggers Political Action Committee representing the timber industry and \$1,500 from Teevin Bros. Land and Timber Co.

The Davis Wright Tremaine Client PAC, run by the law firm representing Tillamook and 13 other counties in a \$1.4 billion timber lawsuit against the state, also gave Josi \$2,500. Clatsop County has opted out of the lawsuit.

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**STATE HOUSE** | DEMOCRATIC PRIMARY

## Forestry issues a dividing line for state House

By JACK HEFFERNAN  
The Daily Astorian

Opinions on forest management among the Democratic candidates for state House District 32 appear, in some ways, to be as different as two sides of a timber line.

Clatsop County and local school districts haul in more than \$20 million a year from timber harvests. The revenue has led to debates over how to balance the economic reliance on timber with environmental protection.

While Tim Josi is generally supportive of modern timber harvesting

practices, Tiffany Mitchell and — to a lesser extent — John Orr have called for changes.

Discussions at the state and county levels lately have revolved around a \$1.4 billion lawsuit in which counties are suing the state, claiming the Department of Forestry has not held up its agreement to maximize timber harvests. Clatsop County was the only one of 15 eligible counties to opt out of the class-action suit.

In March, the county also withdrew from the Council of Forest Trust Land Counties, a subcommittee of the Association of Oregon Counties comprised of commissioners from areas

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