



Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

People attending a Memorial Day event in Warrenton watch as a Coast Guard helicopter drops a wreath into the water.

# Memorial Day: 'Nothing happy about it'

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Some in the crowd, like Steve Olson, come to the ceremony as a reminder of this sentiment. A member of Astoria Moose Lodge 408, Olson used to help facilitate some of the wreath ceremonies himself. Olson was dismayed that more people didn't turn out.

"People need to remember what this day is about. It's not just camping and barbecues," he said.

Sue Glen, the registrar of the local Daughters of the American Revolution chapter in Astoria, sees the ceremony as an homage to a family line that has seen combat since before the Revolutionary War.

As a wife to a service member for more than 29 years and the daughter of a Marine, Memorial Day is about remembering her roots.

"We need to remember our past to protect our future," Glen said.

For others, the day was about one veteran in particular. In the front row reserved for those who had lost someone in the line of duty sat the



Members of the Coast Guard color guard stand at attention during the Memorial Day event.

family of Warrenton local David Mitts, an Army sergeant who died in 2004 while serving in Mosul, Iraq.

On the hillside sat his twin Duane Mitts, and his cousin Johnny Breitmeyer, donning a cap of David's picture. They

reminded about his love of duck hunting, clam digging and his positive spirit.

"Being here, it's a way to be in his presence — to honor him. This is our way of remembering him," Breitmeyer said. "He's truly

missed. We're very thankful he chose to go into the armed forces and give us our freedom."

After the ceremony, the two had plans to carry on a 14-year-long tradition of having lunch at his grave.

# Port: Director wants agency to look at public-private partnerships

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The state, however, has canceled the competitive ConnectOregon grants through at least 2019 to focus on several specific transportation projects. Knight has signaled alarm bells, saying the loss of state money could cost the Port and other airports larger FAA grants requiring local matches the Port can't cover.

The Port last received \$1.5 million from the ConnectOregon program to repair the west side of Pier 2, where much of the region's seafood is transferred from boats to companies operating in the Port's processing warehouse. But the agency has held the state grant back in hopes of using it as a local match on \$10 million worth of pending damage claims it has with the Federal Emergency Management Agency dating back to a December 2015 storm.

FEMA has so far offered about \$1.5 million to help recover from the storm damage, Knight said. The Port has employed an engineering firm to prove its higher claims, and recently started reaching out to federal congressional representatives for help to speed the process along.

Next year's proposed budget includes just over \$400,000 in FEMA storm damage grants. The amount was the minimum the agency could hope to get, Isom said.

"If we don't get the money, the projects aren't going to move forward," he said of repairing storm damage. "It's sort of a middle ground, taking a conservative approach, but at least having something in our budget as a placeholder."

The Port recently hired Kevin Cronin, former community development director for the city of Astoria, to seek out a more diverse source of grant revenue. He has applied for several grants already, and will seek a federal grant worth at least \$25 million from the

Department of Transportation to help tackle a larger infrastructure project, Knight said.

The budget has also shrunk in response to the Port Commission's recent decision to abandon a lease at North Tongue Point, where the agency lost more than \$150,000 last year after expenses. Boatbuilder Hyak Maritime purchased the property from Washington Development Corp. and began turning the docks into a shipwright center.

Knight said the Port needs to look at more public-private partnerships to spur development on dilapidated Port properties, even if that means selling buildings but keeping land ownership.

"I'm looking forward to a new era of the Port of developing partnerships that can rebuild these really wonderful properties that have dilapidated buildings on them," he said.

The Port also has several other unresolved issues that could significantly impact its budget. The agency is negotiating a settlement on a multiyear lawsuit over the operation of the Astoria Riverwalk Inn; approaching a state recommendation on the cleanup of historical petroleum contamination on the central waterfront; choosing how to develop or dispose of other properties it owns on the Skipanon Peninsula; and determining how to most cost-effectively dredge its waterways.

"While staff is confident that it will obtain positive outcomes in each of the unresolved issues, the timing of resolution for several items remains uncertain," Knight said in his budget message. "It is likely, however, that these issues will be resolved during the coming fiscal year."

The Port will hold a second hearing of the budget Wednesday. The agency must adopt a new budget by the end of June.

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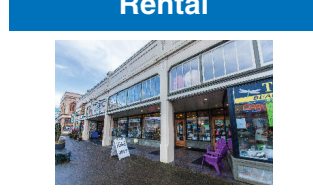
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