

County looks to lodging tax for new jail

Tax would fund personnel costs

By JACK HEFFERNAN
The Daily Astorian

Clatsop County may impose a lodging tax to help pay for personnel costs at a new jail in Warrenton.

Voters in November will decide on a \$20 million bond to turn the for-

mer North Coast Youth Correctional Facility into an expanded jail. County commissioners on Wednesday will discuss a 1 percent lodging tax to help cover personnel costs, including additional deputies, a nurse and mental health experts.

The rationale is that visitors comprise a significant number of inmates at the jail — an estimated 27 percent don't live in the county — and should help shoulder the cost of the

jail expansion.

The 1 percent tax would generate \$1.4 million annually in revenue for the county and cities, according to county estimates. The tax would be in addition to a 9.5 percent lodging tax the county already imposes, as well as lodging taxes set by the state and cities.

Under state law, 70 percent of the revenue from the new tax must be spent on tourism promotion, which

would leave 30 percent for jail operations. The county estimates the tax would produce \$980,000 a year to the county for tourism promotion, and \$420,000 for the jail.

The \$20 million bond would help relocate the county jail from Duane Street in Astoria to the former North Coast Youth Correctional Facility in Warrenton. The expansion would help resolve overcrowding and other concerns, giving the county the abil-

ity to house 148 inmates, up from 60. Annual jail operating costs — \$3.4 million this year — are estimated to rise by more than \$1.2 million if the jail is relocated.

"It's the right thing to do," Sheriff Tom Bergin said. "It's a smart move for our citizens that put up with the tourism issue. With tourism comes good people and bad people."

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Tourism grant causes controversy

Cannon Beach pulls money for bike trails

By BRENNA VISSER
The Daily Astorian

CANNON BEACH — In a rare move, the Cannon Beach City Council has pulled grant money the city's Tourism and Arts Commission had recommended for a controversial trail project.

The Northwest Trail Alliance wanted the grant for a network of bicycle trails on private timberland near Klootchy Creek County Park off U.S. Highway 26.

But city councilors and others were concerned the request was not related to the arts, was not within city limits, raised legal questions, and had no measurable benefit to the local lodging community.

In a 3-2 vote, the City Council moved the \$12,143 into a reserve. It is rare for the council to break from the commission's recommendation.

"We hate to go against the committee's recommendation, but (the project) just didn't fit," City Councilor Mike Benefield said. "If we're going to fund trails, let's enhance trails in Cannon Beach rather than spending money out in the county."

Matthew Weintraub, the vice president of the Northwest Trail Alliance, said the alliance is disappointed in the decision.

"It is disappointing for the Tourism and Arts Commission, as it undermines their work and expertise they put into evaluating the proposals and presentations," he said.

The controversy points to a larger disagreement within the city and the commission about the evolving purpose of the grant money.

Since 2008, the Tourism and Arts Commission has been charged with reviewing grant applications and regulating the distribution of the Tourism and Arts Fund, which was established with an increase in the lodging tax. Local nonprofits are to use the money to promote tourism activities that encourage people to rent rooms in Cannon Beach, with an extra emphasis on supporting the arts.

But some grant applicants have shifted away from this focus, with recent awards going to support new events like the Fat Bike Festival and promotional videos for the Cannon Beach Chamber of Commerce.

"The whole reason this started was to focus on the arts," said City Councilor Nancy McCarthy, who voted with Benefield and City Councilor Brandon Ogilvie against the money for bike trails. Mayor Sam Steidel and City Councilor George Vetter voted to defer to the commission.

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Astoria to get first look at renovated library options



Anne Odom shelves books at the Astoria Library.

Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

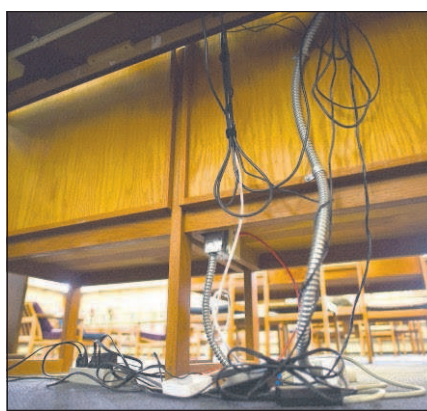
A \$5 million renovation project

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

Visions of what a renovated Astoria Library could look like will be on display at a City Council work session Wednesday morning.

City leaders and residents will get their first look at possible renovation scenarios developed by Hennebery Eddy Architects that vary slightly in scope, scale and cost. The scenarios would not extend the library's footprint on 10th Street and Duane Street but do offer more natural light, meeting and study spaces, enhanced children and young adult sections and improved staff areas.

The basement would be put to active use and the mezzanine, floating above the library's main floor and home to the fiction and young adult collections, would go. Shelves — now set close to each other in narrow rows — would be spaced farther



Renovations to the library could include improvements to electrical systems in the building.

apart to accommodate anyone who might want to browse books.

City Manager Brett Estes said he will be looking for further direction from city councilors after the architects' presentation: "Is what has been produced satisfactory? Is this what you're looking for in moving forward?"

Last year, the City Council opted to

renovate the existing, 50-year-old library rather than construct a new building, expand next door into the old Waldorf Hotel or branch out with a library and housing project at Heritage Square. The decision was rooted in a 2013 study of the library's needs and options by Ruth Metz Associates. That plan, with feedback from the community, laid out a "vision of what could be ideal for the library," Estes said.

The renovation scenarios draw heavily from the Metz study and take that vision to the next step: conceptual designs. Metz herself is back, as well, as a consultant.

Some of the work on the library will address long-deferred maintenance. The renovation project, under some scenarios, is expected to cost around \$5 million. The city has already set aside \$150,000 for design work and maintenance issues and \$1.6 million for future construction.

The Astoria Oregon Public Library Foundation was created to raise money for the project and is led by Mayor Arline LaMear.

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A summer job in Seaside turns into a life passion



Brenna Visser/The Daily Astorian

Karen Emmerling and Alexis Butler, right, have worked together for more than 11 years.

Butler finds a home at Beach Books

By BRENNA VISSER
The Daily Astorian

SEASIDE — Like many 15-year-olds, Alexis Butler was in search of a summer job.

That summer, she was drawn by the "help wanted" sign in the window at Beach Books in Seaside. She had always loved reading.

"I can get paid to talk to people about books that



I love? What's better than that?" Butler said.

What the 15-year-old Butler didn't anticipate was that 11 years later the book store would become both her career and her home.

Anyone who has perused Beach Books in the past decade most likely has met Butler, greeting customers with a smile behind the front desk or shelving books at the

store wedged at the corner of Holladay Drive and Broadway. She loves helping customers who wander into the store as a refuge, attempting to escape the chaos of the beach.

Tags with handwritten recommendations from Butler and other staff members hang from books on the shelf.

"There's so much out there. I like young adult, fantasy," Butler said. "But probably not sad, 'The Notebook'-type books."

When she's not at the store, Butler likes to travel and, well, read more books.

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