



Photos by Edward Stratton/The Daily Astorian

Along with a new maritime sciences building, a master plan for the Marine and Environmental Research and Training Station would include improvements to Clatsop Community College's automotive and welding courses.

Workforce: 'Just today, there are 21,500 job openings. ... There's going to be even more'

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The college's career-technical campus, the Marine and Environmental Research and Training Station, attracts maritime students from around the U.S., along with workers who come for professional development. The campus also plays host to automotive, welding and firefighting programs.

The college, with the only maritime program on the Oregon Coast, was recently named the state's designated maritime training college. It is also poised to become one of several maritime centers of excellence, a federal designation that could provide more support.

The college has been exploring a \$14 million capital campaign to match \$8 million in state bonds it was promised by the state. Christopher Breitmeyer, the college president, has called the campaign an opportunity to help train people locally for high-paying, high-demand jobs and bring attention to a relatively hidden campus.

"I think that we have a very, very unique opportunity to serve our community, the region and really meet some national needs, in terms of the maritime industry," he said during a college board meeting Tuesday.

Much of the maritime training takes place in the 23-year-old maritime sciences building staff say has antiquated utilities and technology not suited for modern education. Other classes are held in a small, deteriorating shack owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers next door, and on the college's training vessel, the Forerunner.

The \$8 million in lottery-backed state bonds the college was promised require



Some of Clatsop Community College's maritime classes are held in a deteriorating U.S. Army Corps of Engineers building next to campus. The college is hoping to modernize its maritime programs.

at least an equal match by 2021. Architects with SRG Partnership, contracted to create a master plan for the campus, originally looked at adding a second story to the existing maritime sciences building. But the building was constructed before more stringent seismic standards and is located on dredge spoils that could liquefy in a large earthquake.

"With liquefaction, the building can be expected to be moved anywhere from 2 feet vertically (and) 15 to 25 feet horizontally," said Gary Danielson, a senior associate with SRG, during a presentation of the master plan to the college board Tuesday. "So a big jump for any structure."

SRG found it would be more cost-effective to build a new 8,700-square-foot academic hall on a larger pad supported by more than 1,000 stone piers digging 60 feet into the ground to prevent the building from moving in an earthquake. Installing the piers is estimated at nearly \$1.9 million, while the total cost of the new maritime building is pro-

jected to be around \$20 million by 2021.

The college this week held listening sessions with local officials, maritime workers and potential supporters to publicize the capital campaign.

In addition to the new maritime building, the campaign would help pay to modernize welding and automotive classes; improve Liberty Lane heading into campus; build a new carport for vehicles being worked on by students; add new equipment such as ship simulators for the college's programs; and build a nature trail.

Clatsop County voters in 2014 passed an \$8 million bond measure as the local match on a \$16 million rebuild of Patriot Hall, with the other half funded by state lottery bonds. Breitmeyer said the college felt the need to raise its own money to improve the South Tongue Point campus. Much of the donations would likely come from maritime companies and other groups affected by the training the college provides, he said.

The college board will

decide in the fall whether to pursue a capital campaign. Consultant Catherine Crooker, who has said the campaign will depend on several multi-million-dollar donations driving interest, is approaching large potential donors and will provide a recommendation in the fall on whether the campaign is feasible.

Esther Moberg, a college board member, said she is concerned about the timing of a campaign, given the recent Patriot Hall redevelopment, and wants to make sure there is sustainable growth for an expanded maritime program.

Staff have estimated the college could handle double the maritime students it currently serves by adding courses to meet industry demand, Breitmeyer said.

"I'm pretty confident in those numbers, in terms of the growth and sustainability of the program, given the needs of the industry," Breitmeyer said Tuesday. "Just today, there are 21,500 job openings — that's today. As we move forward and people age out, there's going to be even more."

Developer: Hollander has the option to appeal

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With the reasons for the denials finalized, Hollander has the option to appeal. The company has not seemed interested in taking that route, though, Estes said.

In June, a company representative said Hollander would likely look at other plans, and that there was flexibility to change the hotel's appearance and incorporate the community and city critiques. The company did not immediately respond to a request for comment Tuesday.

The company is under no city-imposed deadlines to begin developing the lots off Marine Drive.

Hollander held a community meeting earlier this year to discuss the design of the proposed hotel, but was criticized for presenting plans at the June hearings that appeared unchanged from earlier drafts.

People who testified against the proposal said the plans did not reflect feedback the company received from the community.

"If they get anything through this, it is that they need to listen," Jared Rick-enbach, the president of the Design Review Committee, said Tuesday.

"They didn't listen enough to mow the lawn yet, though," said committee member Sarah Jane Bardy.

Scam: 'We just live in fear of someone's vacation getting ruined'

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"(This home) has been in our family for generations. So when something like this happens, it's almost personal. How dare you take our house and scam somebody?"

Vacation rental scams are not uncommon. According to the American Hotel & Lodging Association, 15 million rental scams last year cost Americans \$1.3 billion.

O'Brien's case is one of only a few Cannon Beach has seen in awhile, Cannon Beach Police Chief Jason Schermerhorn said, but he noted it likely happens more often than reported.

"I think sometimes people don't come forward because of embarrassment, or they think you can't track down the scammer," he said. "But people should report, because there could be something different about your story that could be the detail that helps us find them."

Police initially tried to track down the fake advertisement and the phone number the family used to communicate about the rental, but both were already wiped by the time the report was filed. Because the family used a check to pay in full, the payment could not be tracked or stopped like a credit card transaction.

This is what makes investigating these cases difficult, Schermerhorn said.

"It's frustrating because it feels like there really is no recourse," O'Brien said.

While many local rental companies have yet to face scams, many, like Linda Beck-Sweeney of Cannon



Brenna Visser/The Daily Astorian Consumers should be wary of scams when renting property.

Beach Vacation Rentals, take precautions.

Properties can only be booked through the company's website or another accredited platform, Beck-Sweeney said. She only accepts credit cards and checks every guest in person. Often, scammers will give customers access codes before they arrive at a property, and then disappear when the code doesn't work.

Her company also monitors sites like Craigslist. But this is a time-consuming task for a small business, she said, making it unlikely the team catches every fake advertisement.

"We just live in fear of someone's vacation getting ruined," she said.

While finding the person who scammed the family who showed up at her door is unlikely, O'Brien hopes people looking to vacation on the coast will use her story as a lesson.

"There's not much we can do to make people stop doing this, but the word needs to get out for people to understand to not use Craigslist to do a rental, and that you need to be able to use something credible," she said.

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If you smell a rotten egg or sulfur odor, you hear a blowing or hissing sound, or you see blowing dirt, it could be a gas leak.

What to do.

Leave your home and the area immediately. Don't use any electrical device such as a light switch, telephone, appliance or garage door opener. And don't try to find the leak yourself.

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