

# Truck stalls on steep Astoria hill

## Bumper stuck on ground

By JACK HEFFERNAN  
The Daily Astorian

John Ross has been driving trucks for about 20 years and has never had one get stuck. But a steep hill in Astoria has ended not only his streak, but possibly his career.

"I officially retire," Ross said with a serious look on his face. "Twenty years is enough."

Ross was driving an 18-wheel Volvo semitruck this morning for PLR Transport when the back bumper caught the pavement and

stalled near Eighth Street and Franklin Avenue.

After scraping the ground, Ross — who lives in Vancouver, Washington, and has never driven in Astoria — tried to continue up the hill. But the doors in the back of the truck began to open, and his large load of animal food was in danger of spilling.

Neighbors could hear the scraping on the road from blocks away.

"He tried to go up and down a few times and jimmy his way through, but he quit when the load started to give," said Roger McGregor, who was sleeping inside his nearby home when he heard the commotion.

Ross was headed toward Brim's Farm & Garden on U.S. Highway 101 Business to drop off a load. The Google Maps app on his phone suggested he take 16th Street over the hill, but he thought differently.

"Usually with these animal feed loads, it's out in the woods," Ross said. "It's not city delivery."

Police and a tow-truck driver were still discussing a number of options for removing the truck as of late this morning. They may cut the bumper off, unload the food to lessen the load or use some type of large dolly to roll the truck down the hill.

"They're going to have to

come up with a plan," Astoria Police Chief Geoff Spalding said.

Out of Astoria's steep hills, the hill on Eighth Street near McClure Park is one of the steepest. The road flattens as cars approach the block from the bottom, steepens and then slightly flattens again before drivers reach the top.

Just to the side of the stalled truck was a large dent in the road after a similar vehicle nearly stalled last year.

"It's not just the fact that it's steep. It's the competing angles," Astoria Police Sgt. Chris McNeary said. "If it was just steep, it would be easier."



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

A truck loaded with animal feed got stuck on the steep hill on Eighth Street in Astoria.

# Mayoral race: For the past 28 years, Astoria has had only two mayors

Continued from Page 1A

The site of a caved-in lot at Heritage Square is a talking point for both Jones and Taylor, though neither have an immediate solution.

"We've got this hole in the ground that everybody's asking, 'What are we going to do with it?'" Jones said. One of the City Council's goals is to pursue a public-private partnership to redevelop the block.

Miller, who acknowledged he had little chance of winning when he announced his campaign, differs the most in his views of what he believes the city can accomplish. He would like to see the creation of city boards to address disaster preparedness and mental health. Many of the city's homeless suffer from the lack of local mental health services, he said, adding that the city's efforts to address homelessness are slow and weighed down by bureaucracy.

"We have a mental health problem in our community without the proper oversight," he said. "The city of Astoria turns to the county to solve (its) problems when we're the densest population in our county and we should be taking on some of our own responsibility."

### Experience

Both Taylor and Jones emphasize their experiences working with a variety of different people and agencies.

While in the Coast Guard, Jones led regional response teams and dealt regularly with local, state and private-sector groups. He has years of experience in disaster management

and crisis response, handling the aftermath of oil spills and Hurricane Katrina.

"My job was to learn how to listen to people and hear their concerns and then find whatever common ground we could find, then prioritize our efforts to move forward with limited resources," Jones said.

His background in dealing with disasters is especially relevant to Astoria and the North Coast, he said. In the case of a tsunami and earthquake, "I think it would be useful to have a mayor with the personal experience of working through major disasters, and who understands the federal response system."

Taylor points to her experience running a small business — Old Town Framing Co. downtown — and her work as an advocate as president of the downtown association.

"I know that just through my experience with the downtown association, I've been able to partner with a bunch of different entities in and around Astoria to get some things done," she said.

"I understand the plight of small businesses and the challenges that go along with that, and I'm pretty sure no other candidate can bring that to the table."

One question Taylor has been asked in her bid for mayor is how well she knows Astoria outside of downtown. But she said through her business, she has met people from all across the city.

"I think people respect what I've done downtown and maybe hope I can bring some of that to all of Astoria," she added. "I don't mean that to be, 'Only downtown matters

and the outside edges are failing.' I don't think that's true. I think you need a prosperous downtown core in order for everybody to flourish. I feel like my job is not complete."

Miller said his outsider's perspective is one of the things that makes him different from the other candidates. Over the Memorial Day weekend, he protested how the community treats people with mental illness by standing naked on the side of Marine Drive wearing a sign that read: "How we care for the least of us defines us as a community. Who are we?"

"I don't look at things through the same normalized lens," Miller said. "I never take that we can't do something about something because the problem is too big. There is always — if not a solution — there's always something different that you can try. ... And I will not stand for anybody being marginalized."

### Campaigns

Taylor and Miller decided early that they wanted to run for mayor. Jones, who declared his candidacy the day after Price withdrew earlier this month, has only just begun to campaign. He plans to develop a website, pull a campaign team together and begin going door-to-door throughout the city.

"I would like to learn more about the parts of Astoria which don't typically get as much attention as, say, the downtown, the urban core and

maybe Uppertown and the east side," he said.

For the past 28 years, Astoria has had only two mayors: Willis Van Dusen, the city's longest-serving mayor, first elected in 1990; and LaMear, elected in 2014.

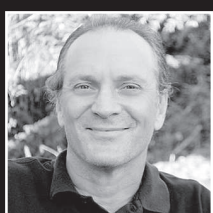
When Van Dusen announced his retirement, Taylor said people asked her if she would run for mayor, but she didn't feel ready. Her decision to enter the race this year, her first time running for public office, caused some anxiety in the social groups that count both her and Price as friends. The two women had been allies on a number of community projects, such as the Garden of Surging Waves and the restoration of the Tourist No. 2 ferry.

Signs advocating for Taylor — "I'm With Dulcye for Mayor" — have popped up along streets and in neighborhoods.

Though he is canvassing neighborhoods and ordered a run of campaign buttons and T-shirts, Miller sees the mayor's race primarily as a way to speak for people and issues he believes are under-represented or not represented at all.

The people city government most often hears from "are the squeaky wheels or the business owners," he said. "But a lot of people, you have to hunt them down, you have to make them feel comfortable because they're not used to being heard."

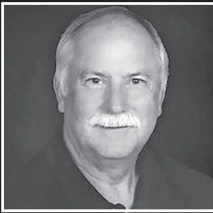
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