



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Construction work continues on a bridge at the waterfront in Astoria.

## Bridge project: Situation could continue through May

Continued from Page 1A

before the project wraps in May, as a lack of parking and restricted access discourage customers. They have lost 19 parking spaces, they told the City Council. Newer, less-established businesses are even more concerned about the ability to weather a drop in customers.

Without major repairs or complete replacement of the short bridges at the base of Sixth through 11th streets downtown, the city ran the risk that the structures would be closed entirely — and with them access to the Astoria Riverwalk and businesses on piers. Rather than continue making costly repairs each year, the city worked with the Oregon Department of Transportation to secure grant funding for full replacement work on all six bridges.

Contractors are tackling bridges at the base of Seventh, Ninth and 11th streets. Next fall, they will begin work on the Sixth, Eighth and 10th street bridges.

Detour signs route pedestrians down 10th Street and 12th Street, but people can no longer walk straight down the Riverwalk to access businesses on the 11th Street pier. Chain link fencing blocks off bridge construction areas. Parking on the pier and at the base of 11th Street is gone for now.

It's a situation that could continue through May.

Aleesha Nedd, owner of the

Naked Lemon Bakery and one of the Allens' tenants in the Pier 11 building, said she appreciated how much Public Works Department staff have communicated with businesses. But, she said, she has seen her profits drop by 33 percent, "sliding into 50 percent."

"It's been really hard to work around and we know it is a reality that has to be done," she said.

The city's policy is to not promote individual businesses. With this project, which is managed by the Department of Transportation, the city has stuck to generic "businesses open during construction" signs. The Astoria-Warrenton Area Chamber of Commerce and the Astoria Downtown Historic District Association had planned to help the businesses advertise and maintain visibility even while obscured by chain-link fencing and machinery.

But not all of the businesses are members of the chamber or the downtown association — groups that require fees for membership, Nedd pointed out.

To Nedd, the city and the state have caused the problem for the 11th Street businesses. The businesses should not have to pay money to outside groups to get representation and advocacy, she said.

Mayor Arline LaMear expressed her belief that the town could rally to help support the businesses with their patronage during construction.

"This is a great town," she said. "We can do this. We can

support you and if everybody does their part ..."

"I think that's a great outlook to have," Nedd countered. "However, I think that we do still rely on tourism coming through the Riverwalk area. I think that for locals to be alleghiant to small businesses is great and I think that all of us in this room going in and doing our part is awesome."

"But realistically," she added, echoing arguments made by Phil Spencer of Smoked Bones BBQ, also in the Pier 11 building, "I think the signage can really be improved and helped and worked upon with extra money."

City Councilor Cindy Price agreed.

"They're members of Astoria, they're residents, they're small businesses who have contributed a lot to this city and I think unless there's some legal reason — specific legal reason — why we as a city cannot put up good signage and good lighting that directs anyone in there, we should do it," she said.

The city has permission to put up informational banners on the contractor's fencing. "What it's kind of come down to is the chamber facilitating that," said Cindy Moore, assistant city engineer.

City Manager Brett Estes said the chamber and the downtown association planned to provide help regardless of membership. Estes said he will brainstorm with these groups and city staff to see what can be done.

## Homeless: As many as 30 people may be living in wooded campsites

Continued from Page 1A

Police and other city employees still plan to go into the woods today to begin cleaning up trash at abandoned sites where people are no longer camping. Dumpsters are already set up and employees and volunteers mobilized, Spalding said.

City Councilor Cindy Price, as planned, will begin to contact homeless people who received police notices to see if they need help accessing resources or contacting social service organizations. On Friday, a representative from Clatsop Community Action will join police and other city employees in the woods to offer further assistance.

Police decided to begin passing out cleanup notices as well as resource guides to connect people with social services after the City Council finalized an amendment to a "no camping" ordinance to

forbid camping on city-owned forestland.

Social service groups have estimated as many as 30 people may be living in campsites in the woods around Astoria. Some campers have been there for several years, but their numbers seem to have grown in the past year, neighbors say.

For the homeless campers, the woods offer a relatively secure place to live that is still within walking or cycling distance to town. But people living in surrounding neighborhoods are concerned about the amount of car and foot traffic down their streets, people coming and going at all hours.

Meanwhile, city leaders have worried about health and human safety in the woods, especially the ability to respond to an emergency where there are no access roads or lighting.

Advocates who attended the City Council meeting Monday praised the police

and social service organizations like Clatsop Community Action and Helping Hands for their careful and measured approach to working with the homeless campers. But Astorian Rick Bowers still worries about people who get lost in the cracks.

He and his wife tried to help one homeless woman find housing for a night recently through Clatsop Community Action, but the woman had a certified comfort dog, which took her out of the running for overnight shelter options in Astoria if she wanted to keep the dog with her.

The woman was given the option to kennel her dog overnight but refused to be separated from it — an understandable dilemma to Bowers and the Clatsop Community Action caseworker trying to help her.

"So there are gaps in spite of just the wonderful services here," Bowers said.

## Wendy's: Closest branch currently is located in Longview, Washington

Continued from Page 1A

Asked how he'll recruit in such a difficult environment, Harris said the company offers competitive wages compared to other fast-food restaurants and a good culture.

"A large number of our

people work more than 32 hours a week, which is kind of what we consider full time," Harris said.

Wendy's is one of the largest fast-food chains globally, with more than 6,500 locations. The closest Wendy's to Warrenton is a branch in Longview, Washington. The

only other location on the Oregon Coast is in Coos Bay.

During an investor meeting last year, the company unveiled plans for an additional 1,000 locations by 2020, including 500 more in North America, according to Nation's Restaurant News, a food service publication.



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Haystack Rock is one of the more iconic natural features on the Oregon Coast.

## Haystack Rock: 'No one surveyed identified as local'

Continued from Page 1A

visited the rock before and whether it is important to protect Haystack Rock for stewardship purposes.

Some of the findings, like the fact that 95 percent of visitors agree it's important to preserve the rock and 49 percent of visitors were between the ages of 35 and 54, were to be expected, he said. About 75 percent were women, and 56 percent were aware of the program before arriving.

But other findings, like 50 percent of all visitors coming from outside of Oregon and the fact more than a third have visited the marine reserve more than 10 times, were a surprise.

"And no one surveyed identified as a local, so that was just amazing to me ... that so many people outside Oregon were coming back again and again," he said.

For awareness program staff, the results were an accurate representation of what they have been seeing on the beach. On a larger scale, the

results also mirror the rise the state is seeing in international tourism, which has grown about 11 percent since 2012, according to a report from the research firm Tourism Economics.

"We almost expected to have higher than 50 percent outside of Oregon, so that doesn't surprise me," Keyser said. Many of the program's interpreters are from out of state and started volunteering after multiple visits, she added. "It's such a unique place," she said.

In the past few years, the program has introduced new initiatives to be more inclusive of a more diverse visitor profile, including a beach wheelchair program and bilingual interpreter for Spanish-speaking visitors.

Program staff believe the survey indicates the program's recent shift to serve more as an educational body rather than as an enforcement group at the rock is working, and will ultimately help to show the program's relevance in future grant opportunities.

"It validates why we're here. It shows that there is interest ... that we have the capacity to bring more people from outside the area," outreach coordinator Pooka Rice said. "From a grant perspective, it's significant because it shows there's more potential for the program."

As for the original question, the answer still isn't clear as to what motivates people to come visit the rock. About half of the respondents expected some form of interpretive program, while others were surprised the landmark was conserved and protected, not clearly indicating whether an interest in environmental stewardship was driving their visit, Keyser said.

But the numbers indicate more people from more places want to keep coming.

"It's not like we want to advertise and bring more people to here ... that's not our job," Keyser said. "But we do know that number is going to increase, and that we will need to capacity to keep educating."

**“** I used to think that advertising was just ads (billboards, print, radio, TV, etc.). We funeral directors aren't known for our PR skills since we are generally the antithesis of self-promoters. I can deal with the grim specter of death 24/7, but one sit-down with multimedia sales rep. April Olsen of The Daily Astorian and I knew I was living in a cave, and the complex world of advertising somehow morphed into something I didn't recognize. I am thankful for April's assessments, guidance and out-of-the-box thinking that has us moving toward a more integrated way of advertising. Simply throwing a dollar amount at Facebook or Google showed us that we were in the dark and limiting ourselves. I'm extremely grateful to have someone like April who understands the complexities of the advertising world, allowing me to devote more time to the things I do best.

**John R. Alcantara - Funeral Director**  
*Hughes-Ransom Mortuary & Crematory*

**REACH**  
 NEW CUSTOMERS!

- Drive More Business
- Find New Customers
- Marketing Customers from print/digital experts
- Gain Exposure. Over 10,000 Clatsop county readers every day

**Talk to our customer success team today! 503.325.3211**

**THE DAILY ASTORIAN**