

THE DAILY ASTORIAN

146TH YEAR, NO. 107

DailyAstorian.com // TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2018

ONE DOLLAR



Nick Wheeler concentrates on sewing in his upstairs studio at Astoria Makers.

Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Van Dusen Building comes to life with Astoria Makers

A space for craftsmanship

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

Since being purchased by Astoria Maker Industries more than a year ago, the Van Dusen Building at 10th and Duane streets downtown has nearly filled up with all manner of craftsmanship.

On the ground floor, Glen Herman and his employees with Astoria Makers take on light-scale manufacturing jobs, such as hundreds of tap handles being shipped around the Pacific Northwest with Fort George Brewery's kegs. Ceramicist Audrey Long is next door throwing pots. Upstairs, a diverse collection of writers, photographers, painters, a cartographer and a bag maker make their own hours.

Originally thought of as a membership-driven coworking space, Astoria Makers has transitioned toward a collective of studios and artisans separate in operation but connected by a mission of promoting art and creativity.

Herman and business partner Stephan Eiter acquired the building just over a year ago from The Harbor, a regional advocacy group for victims of sexual and domestic violence that needed to shed the property and save money. Astoria Makers spent the past year building out the space into upstairs and basement studios, along with a retail storefront, workshop and ceramics studio on the main floor.

See MAKERS, Page 7A



Edward Stratton/The Daily Astorian

Astoria Maker Industries spent the last year building out the Van Dusen Building into a collection of studios and workspaces.



Glen Herman works on a project in the studio.

Colin Murphey
The Daily Astorian

Knappa looks to bond to improve schools

A baseline of \$10M

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

KNAPPA — The Knappa School District has begun looking at a new property tax bond to improve its campuses, with a baseline of \$10 million to avoid raising taxes beyond current levels.

The school district last passed a 20-year bond of \$5.5 million in 2001 for campus improvements. The bond comes off the tax rolls in 2021. Like other districts, Knappa is looking at replacing it with another bond, the only way most can afford significant improvements or new construction.

An analysis by bond consultant Piper Jaffray found the school district could ask for \$10 million without raising voters' taxes above the level of \$2.54 per \$1,000 of assessed property value under the current bond, school Superintendent Paulette Johnson said. The district could also apply for a \$4 million state matching grant if a bond passes.

See KNAPPA, Page 7A

Hammond man charged after lengthy car chase

Allegedly fled police on Thanksgiving

By JACK HEFFERNAN
The Daily Astorian

Charges were filed Monday against a Hammond man who allegedly led police on a lengthy chase in Astoria and Warrenton on Thanksgiving before causing a crash into a building.

An Astoria police officer attempted to stop a silver 2015 Chrysler 200 on Marine Drive near Eighth Street just after 3:40 p.m. Thursday. The car was moving at 40 mph, which was nearly double the speed limit.



Preston Alexander Medjo

See CHASE, Page 3A

Port of Astoria gets clean financial bill of health

Agency has improved accounting

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

The Port of Astoria, a cash-strapped agency struggling to fix its crumbling infrastructure, has received a clean bill of health in a recent financial audit.

Brad Anderson, a representative with accounting firm Talbot Korvola & Warwick, said the Port earned an unmodified opinion on its finan-

cial statements for the previous fiscal year, the best result an agency can hope for in an audit.

The audit, covering July 1, 2017, through June 30, looks over the Port's assets, liabilities and net position. While it shows the Port's financial woes, it also points a picture of the staff's work to make the agency more efficient.

The agency's overall net position — assets minus liabilities — decreased by nearly \$331,000 over the past fiscal year, according to the audit, but has increased by more than \$2.5 million over the past two years.

The agency's gains in net position over the past two years are mainly because of multimillion-dollar federal aviation grants for repairs at the Astoria Regional Airport. The Port took a \$935,000 hit on its net position from having to account for future retiree health care costs.

"That's not a hard cash liability you have to plan for, like you would for planning your log business and things like that," Anderson said. "It's a liability you'll see over time through rate increases in your health care benefits."



Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

The cash-strapped Port of Astoria recently received a clean bill of financial health in an audit.

See PORT, Page 7A

