

THE DAILY ASTORIAN

146TH YEAR, NO. 124

DailyAstorian.com // THURSDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2018

ONE DOLLAR



Port moves toward ship fee

Money would help pay for maintenance at Pier 1

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

In the face of legal warnings from the shipping industry, the Port of Astoria is moving toward charging a fee on passing ships to help pay for maintenance at Pier 1.

The Port, strapped for cash, has been looking for ways to raise more money to repair its aging infrastructure. Commissioners last year broached the idea of charging anchorage fees, although maritime attorney Michael Haglund said the Port would need to provide necessary services.

Port staff last month opened the possibility of charging landing fees on seafood processors and fees for passing ships, contracting Haglund to explore the possibilities. Haglund reported back that the Port has broad authority to charge fees in its jurisdiction, which stretches to the Washington state side of the Columbia River.

The Port has talked about limiting fees to passing vessels 250 feet or longer, capturing oceangoing ships and leaving out fishing, sailing and other smaller boats.

The possibility of new fees has brought out representatives from the shipping industry in opposition.

Kate Mickelson, executive director of the Columbia River Steamship Operators' Association, which represents oceangoing vessels, has cautioned the Port to keep the river's ports competitive. She has cited a U.S. Supreme Court ruling that shot down a property tax imposed on oil tankers by Valdez, Alaska, because the Constitution bars states from enacting tonnage fees without an act of Congress.

At a Port Commission meeting on Tuesday, Mickelson brought along Dave Boyajian, a ship captain and attorney with Portland firm Schwabe, Williamson & Wyatt. The Supreme Court ruling was broad in its restrictions against ports charging visiting or passing ships, or every town along the river would be doing so, he said.

"Throwing good time and good money after bad has never been a good way to go after and try to increase revenues," Boyajian said. "Certainly the Port needs to increase revenues, but this particular avenue, the door is closed on it."

Haglund disputed Boyajian's argument. He said the Port is looking at a harbor fee, rather than a tax like in Valdez, to support the maintenance of Pier 1, the only structure large enough at the mouth of the Columbia where ships can tie up in case of emergency.

Pier 1 periodically plays host to vessels ordered to make repairs by the Coast Guard. Haglund referenced the most recent example, the 600-foot,

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Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Two-way traffic returns to Bond Street, leaving behind trails of light in this long exposure photograph.

BOND STREET RELIEF

East-west connector reopens to two-way traffic

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian



ABOVE: A construction crew works to repair Bond Street in September. BELOW: Officials check on the work on Bond Street in September.



Do you suffer flashbacks of summer traffic snarls every time you drive through Uniontown on Marine Drive?

Good news: Bond Street is open to two-way traffic again.

Merry Christmas.

The street, which provides an alternative east-west connector through the city, opened ahead of schedule, and ahead of an official ribbon-cutting planned for Friday afternoon.

The city still must install a fence on one side and is waiting for the materials to become available.

"But we're not going to keep it closed just for that," said Jeff Harrington, Astoria's public works director.

A portion of Bond Street was reduced to one lane of westbound traffic in 2007 after a landslide that has been moving since the 1800s impacted the road. The city had hoped to build a retaining wall against the slide, widen the road and reopen the street to two-way traffic last year, but record rainfall delayed the project until late this summer.

It's an exciting development for city leaders, who noted the need for full access to the street when they awarded a construction contract in September.

"We are all really looking forward to that, given the traffic woes in Astoria," City Councilor Zetty Nemlowill, who represents the west side, said at the time. "It will be good to have that open again."

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Cannon Beach Academy could close



Brenna Visser/The Daily Astorian

Students from Cannon Beach Academy glue marine plastics to a mural of a sea star.

Low enrollment, unpaid pledges

By BRENNNA VISSER
The Daily Astorian

CANNON BEACH — The Cannon Beach Academy could close before the end of the school year if a \$75,000 shortfall is not addressed in the next few months.

The public charter school's financial situation is due to lower-than-expected enrollment and uncollected pledges.

"The board of direc-

tors is committed to keeping Cannon Beach Academy operating. We will make a concentrated effort to secure our pledges and, if necessary, to conduct fundraising activities," Kellye Dewey, the school board president, and Barb Knop, the treasurer, wrote in a joint statement. "The board sincerely hopes that our donors who have pledged their financial support of the school through pledges are able to honor their commitments to the Cannon Beach Academy."

As of last week, the charter school had received

only about \$35,000 of the expected \$100,000 pledged for the school year, leaving more than two-thirds of pledged money outstanding. Additionally, about \$10,000 outside of pledges will need to be raised to close the gap.

"I don't know how to impress upon the board the importance of getting our pledges," Amy Fredrickson, the academy director, said at a December board meeting. "I don't know if people truly understand how urgent it is that we need their money."

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