

Repair work continues on Astoria's waterfront bridges

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

Major construction work to replace three waterfront bridges in Astoria is well underway, but contractors are behind on the bridge the city hoped would be completed first.

Business owners at the base of 11th Street say their profits have taken a severe hit this winter because of the bridge replacement work. Construction has closed direct access to a large building on Pier 11 that houses a number of businesses and has also limited parking availability.

In an update to the City Council on Monday, Assistant City Engineer Cindy Moore said contractors discovered roadway damage and issues with a tunnel that runs under 11th Street when demolition work began on the short bridge that leads out to the pier.

Crews have since stabilized the tunnel and replaced a deteriorating storm pipe. A crane is now back at work on 11th Street removing old piles. Moore expects contractors to start installing new piles this week.

The same contractor is working on all three bridges at the same time, and work on Seventh and Ninth streets is farther along. All work on the three bridges must be completed by the Memorial Day weekend.

The project, managed by

the Oregon Department of Transportation on behalf of Astoria, aims to replace six waterfront bridges in the city. The short structures at the bases of Sixth Street through 11th Street provide access to the Astoria Riverfront Trolley tracks, the Astoria Riverwalk and the piers beyond.

The city opted to replace the six bridges instead of continuing to make costly repairs each year. The bridges were already restricted to a 3-ton load limit, the lowest allowed before a bridge must be closed to all vehicles.

Businesses have continued to adapt to the disruption caused by ongoing construction. The Naked Lemon, a small bakery at Pier 11, announced at the end of January that the shop would be closed to the public beginning in early February. The bakery will continue to take and fill custom orders and host events.

"Though this is not our preferred choice, this shift gives us flexibility to use our resources to focus on what we do best — creating cakes, cupcakes and french macarons," a post on the bakery's Facebook page stated.

The city worked with the Astoria-Warrenton Area Chamber of Commerce and the Astoria Downtown Historic District Association on more signs to help businesses during the construction — with mixed results, business owners said.

Work on the next three bridges will begin in October.

Knife River plans quarry decommissioning

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

Knife River Corp. is preparing for a future decommissioning of part of its Seaside quarry.

The company recently applied for a conditional use permit from the county to expand quarry operations to an 11-acre strip of land directly uphill and to the east of the existing 56-acre quarry. The land is zoned for forestry and has historically been used for commercial logging.

The company proposes to grade the strip of land at a 50 percent angle and replant it with commercial timber, turning a sheer quarry wall into a steep, forested slope once adjacent mining is complete.

"It's just looking to the future and making sure we're good stewards of the land," said Tony Spilde, a spokesman for Knife River.

Knife River, one of the largest construction materials producers in the U.S., purchased the 56-acre Seaside quarry last year from local timber and mining magnate Shawn Teevin and Scappoose-based construction contractor Thomas Fischer for around \$10 million, including equipment. The two had purchased the site in 2006 and operated it as Teevin & Fischer Quarry.

A quarry reclamation plan must be approved by the county and the state Department of Geology and Mineral Industries "to assure quarry sites are restored and reha-



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Knife River Corp. proposes to grade and replant an eastern portion of the Teevin & Fischer Quarry, seen on the left, as a steeply forested hillside once adjacent mining is finished.

bilitated in a way that accommodates other permitted land uses upon the completion of mineral and aggregate resource extraction."

The proposed grading would occur over several years.

"We've got several years, many years of material

there," Spilde said.

Knife River's plan will be heard by the Clatsop County Planning Commission on Feb. 12.

Warrenton man pleads guilty to making hoax calls to the Coast Guard in 2016

The Daily Astorian

A Warrenton man has pleaded guilty to four counts of communicating false distress messages to the Coast Guard and one count of making a false statement.

According to court docu-

ments, Bud O'Neil Burkleo, 36, was arrested in March in connection with four hoax distress calls to the Coast Guard between April and November of 2016.

In response to each call, the Coast Guard dispatched rescue personnel. Coast Guard

investigators came to speak to Burkleo about the false calls in December of 2016, and he initially denied that he made them. He pleaded guilty to the allegations in federal court on Jan. 23.

Burkleo will be sentenced in Portland in May.

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Alan Hickenbottom

Alan Hickenbottom is the Oregon Project Manager for LEAN Energy US, the national education and advocacy organization for Community Choice Aggregation. A native Oregonian, Alan has been an Oregon renewable energy and clean tech entrepreneur for more than 15 years. He is a current or former board member of Clean Energy Works Oregon, NW Environmental Business Council, Oregon Business Association, Build Local Alliance and the Oregon Natural Desert Association.

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ATTENTION!

PORT OF ASTORIA COMMISSION AND PUBLIC:

This letter is to inform the public because I had to call ODOT myself to find the status of the Port of Astoria-ODOT Connect Grant for the improvement of Pier II. Over the past few weeks I have been corresponding with Staff at the State of Oregon regarding this facility improvement grant. I now have documents that confirm the Executive Director (Mr. Jim Knight) has cancelled the Port's awarded grant.

The contract shows the ODOT total grant was for \$2.2 Million; the Port's match was \$660,000 and the ODOT match (free money) was \$1,540,000.

Mr. Knight released this grant without telling the commission about his decision to give away free money. This has happened previously when Mr. Knight released the Bornstein Seafood building collateral from the loan guarantee and when Mr. Knight misrepresented the agreement of the tenants to pay 50% of the cost of the storm water treatment system.

Recently the Port Staff has proposed a seafood landing tariff on our hometown fishermen and processors; it was represented that this tariff would be used to fix our docks. I just do not understand why Staff would cancel this free ODOT grant and ask our local fishermen and employers to pay to fix the Port's facilities.

As a Commissioner it is my responsibility to review and have confidence in the maintenance of the Port's facilities and it's financial health; but Port Staff continues to operate without publicly telling the Commission what is going on. I am trying to point out that the Port should operate transparently and the requested documents should be available to the public so it understands why the Port of Astoria is failing.

Regards,
William (Bill) Hunsinger
Commissioner

Paid for by:
Bill Hunsinger
Port Commissioner

Cc: Port of Astoria Commission