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ONE DOLLAR



## Decision nears on data center feasibility

Developer sets a deadline for early May

By EDWARD STRATTON  
*The Daily Astorian*

Mark Cox hopes to decide by early May whether the data center and technology incubator he's proposed at the North Coast Business Park in Warrenton is feasible.

Clatsop County last year approved a \$1.2 million sale of 67 acres to Cox's company, Agile Design, which hopes to develop the project on 19th Street across from Costco.

Cox has pitched the project as bringing a new, transformative industry to the region, including up to 76 local jobs with an average wage of \$75,000.

Data centers have been rapidly expanding in the Pacific Northwest because of an abundance of cheap water and power. Cox's site is also part of the Clatsop Enterprise Zone providing three- to five-year property tax breaks on new projects.

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### TAKE THE SURVEY

Agile Design has posted an online survey at [agiledesign.net/datacenter](http://agiledesign.net/datacenter) to gather public feedback about the proposed data center in Warrenton

## Deputy director sues housing authority

Claims punishment for whistleblowing

By BRENNNA VISSER  
*The Daily Astorian*

A top administrator for the Northwest Oregon Housing Authority who was put on administrative leave last spring is suing the organization and its executive director.

In a lawsuit filed on Monday, Teresa Sims, the deputy director, alleges that she has faced retaliation from Todd Johnston and the housing authority for speaking out about mismanaged public funds and unlawful hiring practices.

Sims is seeking nearly \$1 million in emotional and economic damages.

In May, Sims was placed on paid leave while the housing authority investigated whether she falsified records to allow her son and fellow employee, Benjamin Natividad, to receive public housing assistance while he was renting from his uncle.

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1949-2019



Bradley W. Parks/Oregon Public Broadcasting

Oregon Secretary of State Dennis Richardson poses for a portrait in 2017.

## Oregon Secretary of State Richardson dies of cancer

A Republican who broke Democratic dominance

By JEFF MAPES  
*Oregon Public Broadcasting*

Dennis Richardson, the first Republican to hold the Oregon secretary of state's office in nearly four decades, died Tuesday night following a battle with brain cancer, his office announced this morning.

Gov. Kate Brown will appoint Richardson's successor, who must be a Republican. But under the Oregon Constitution, that appointee cannot ascend to the governorship in the case of a vacancy, as is the normal chain of lineage.

The next in line of succession is now Oregon Treasurer Tobias Read, a Democrat.

Richardson, 69, in 2016 became the rare Republican to win statewide office in Oregon in recent decades. A trial attorney from Jackson County, he served 12 years in the Oregon House before he unsuccessfully ran for governor in 2014.

The name recognition he earned in that race — against Democratic incumbent John Kitzhaber, who resigned amid a scandal just weeks into his new term — helped set Richardson up for a successful campaign for secretary of state.

"He really thought you should be a moral actor in the world," said former state Rep. Peter Buckley, an Ashland Democrat who often clashed with Richardson on policy but came to admire him as a person. "He was always tremendously hardworking and a skilled advocate for his positions."

"There's just not a person down here (in state government) that doesn't have respect and regard for Dennis Richard-



AP Photo/Timothy J. Gonzalez

Dennis Richardson, the first Republican to win a statewide race in 14 years, pumps his fist at an election night event at the Salem Convention Center in 2016.

son," said former Republican Rep. Julie Parrish, who managed his campaign for secretary of state. "He's an honest broker."

Brown ordered that flags be lowered to half-staff in honor of Richardson.

"Regardless of what side of the aisle his colleagues sat on, we all knew Dennis' kind heart guided his career of service to the people of Oregon," Brown said in a statement. "His reputation for perseverance not only guided him through the fight with cancer, it also gave us all reassurance that he was fighting cancer with the same determination he brought to work every day."

Other tributes also quickly poured in. U.S. Rep. Greg Walden, an Oregon Republican, praised Richardson as a

"wonderful public servant, and a deeply loving husband and parent. Dennis' quiet competence and civility is such a rarity in today's world."

State House Speaker Tina Kotek, a Portland Democrat, called him "a man of integrity and a dedicated public servant."

Richardson, who didn't turn to politics until his 50s, freely admitted that he struggled as a young man to find his sense of direction. His first marriage ended in divorce while he was serving as an Army helicopter pilot in Vietnam.

He returned home having a "difficult time trying to figure out what I was going to do with my life, where I was

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## Astoria hires a new fire chief

Crutchfield spent career in Coos Bay

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ  
*The Daily Astorian*

Astoria has a new fire chief.

Dan Crutchfield, the battalion chief of the Coos Bay Fire Department, will take over the job on March 15. Interim Fire Chief Richard Curtis has led the department since September following the retirement of former Fire Chief Ted Ames.

Curtis will stay on

through the end of March to help ease the department's transition. The City Council approved an amendment of a personal services contract with Curtis in January to keep him while the city continued to look for a fire chief.

City Manager Brett Estes had anticipated the fire chief position could be difficult to fill given the unique demands of the job. The city worked with a recruitment agency to find possible candidates.



Dan Crutchfield

"Frankly, I really like that he comes from an Oregon coastal community," Estes said of Crutchfield. "He understands what it's like to live in this environment."

He believes Crutchfield will be a good fit for the community and the city. He described Crutchfield as possessing a "can-do" personality and said he is well-respected within the fire department and the city of Coos Bay.

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## Warrenton eyes master plan for Spur 104 zone change

Commissioners walk back an earlier decision

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ  
*The Daily Astorian*

WARRENTON — Walking back an earlier decision, the City Commission will now require a master plan to accompany a zone change to residential properties between U.S. Highway 101 and Spur 104.

The city will pay for

the plan and lead a public workshop to develop it over the next 90 days.

At a prior meeting, the commissioners voted 4-1 to approve a zone change to allow mixed commercial use at the wedge of properties. Mayor Henry Balensifer voted against the zone change because of ongoing concerns about how further development could exacerbate traffic issues in the area and impact more than just the people who already live there. He

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