# Trident: 'This fireboat will be essential to fighting fires'

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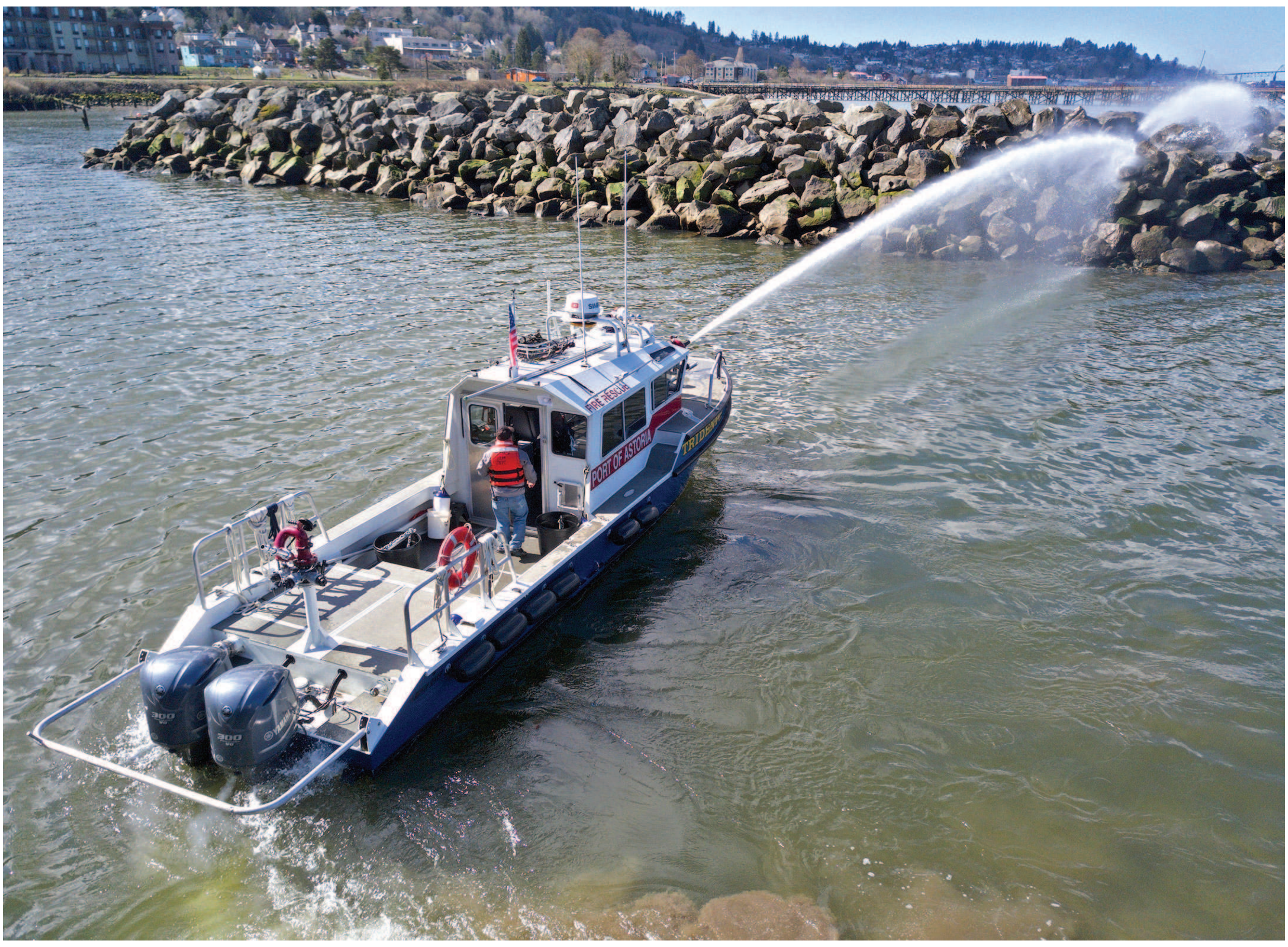

Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

**Astoria Fire Department personnel train on the Trident near Pier 39 in March.**

### Unused

The Trident came equipped as a search and rescue boat with thermal and night vision, along with advanced radar. But much of the electronics on board broke down while the boat sat unused at the marina.

"They're made to be out in the weather, but they're made to be exercised and taken care of," Jaworski said.

Local businesses said they wanted the vessel in operation and stepped in with funding, Jaworski said. Along with a $1,000 donation from Lum's Auto Center to fuel the Trident for training and a vessel checkup covered by the city, the training effort received another $3,000 in equipment from Englund Marine & Industrial Supply, which helped get the boat's radar working again.

While fire crews have received their initial training on the Trident, they still need to learn to drive the boat in rougher weather and darkness, Astoria Fire Lt. Terry Corbit said.

Tim VonSeggern and Scott Heesacker, both retired Portland firefighters and fire boat operators, led the training. The two stumped for the Trident in 2012 when the Port Commission was deciding whether to be a part of a $2.7 million ask with Clark County Fire and Rescue and the Vancouver Fire Department in Washington state for three new response boats along the Columbia.

VonSeggern, who grew up in Astoria and retired in Nehalem, said he was approached two years ago about training a crew for the fireboat. He and Heesacker have been traveling to Astoria pro bono, being put up by Pier 39 owner Floyd Holcom.

"This fireboat will be essential to fighting fires in these waterfront buildings, making a one-dimensional fire three dimensions," VonSeggern said.

"Everybody is trained," he said. "Now it's up to the Port and the city to hash out the particulars."

The city and Port are in the initial stages of updating an operations agreement laying out how and when the boat will be used, said Jim Knight, the Port's executive director. The two agencies have an existing agreement going back to 1993 that governed the operation of the Harry Steinbock, a fireboat gifted to the Port from Portland that rusted out because of electrolysis by 2005.

The existing agreement has the Port operating the boat and Astoria firefighters manning the cannon. Dan Crutchfield, the new Astoria fire chief, said the city is hoping the new agreement will have firefighters driving the boat as well.

"The more people we have trained, the faster we can assemble a team and get the boat up and running," Crutchfield said. "There are other resources like the Coast Guard, so we'll be talking about what type of incidents we'll respond to."

### Potential resource

The parties are hopeful the Trident will provide a resource that hasn't been available since the Harry Steinbock. The boat could be dispatched as far upriver as Lewiston, Idaho, for waterfront and shipboard fires.

The Trident could have been useful in several waterfront blazes, such as the 2013 destruction of Pacific Seafood along the Skipanon River in Warrenton, a 2014 fire onboard a fishing boat along the Youngs River and a 2017 pallet blaze near Astoria Warehousing.

VonSeggern recounted how after the Loma Prieta earthquake of 1989 broke many of the water mains in San Francisco, the fireboat Phoenix provided much of the water to save waterfront buildings. The Trident could prove similarly important after a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake, he said.

Corbit remembers being a crew member on land during the 1993 fire that destroyed the former Elmore Cannery, when the Harry Steinbock pulled up in the river to hit the fire from the water.

"The Elmore Cannery was actually out over piles," he said. "We weren't going out there. We were setting up our monitors to spray at it, but those guys coming over were just able to hit the back side of it and really supply a lot of water. It really helped with getting that stopped and controlled much quicker."