



The Daily Astorian

Crabbing boats unload on the west side of Pier 2 in 2016.

## Port Commission fixes security truck snafu

By EDWARD STRATTON  
The Daily Astorian

The Port of Astoria Commission on Tuesday retroactively approved the purchase of a new Ford security truck by staff that had violated the agency's rules on spending.

Jim Knight, the Port's executive director, said staff knew about a \$25,000 spending limit but forgot to secure commission approval before buying the truck for nearly \$29,700.

The Port had previously budgeted \$20,000 for a new security truck. To avoid a future audit finding, the commission needed to retroactively approve the purchase, Knight said.

Commissioner Bill Hunsinger, who was not at the meeting Tuesday, had taken issue with the Port buying the truck from a dealer in the Portland area instead of from a local company.

Local dealers did not have the kind of truck the Port was looking for at a low enough mileage, Knight said, and so the Port expanded its search to Portland and found a suitable vehicle. The Port used local companies to install security features on the truck, he said.

Commissioner Dirk Rohne, after crediting Hunsinger with bringing the issues around the security truck to light, said the Port could have gone to local dealers with its requirements and been accommodated, even if the truck came from elsewhere.

"I think that was a missing step that could have supported our local car dealers," Rohne said.

## Port: An ODOT inspection last year found 48 bents

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Several years ago, the Port received a \$1.5 million state Department of Transportation grant to replace a large area of the deteriorated dock on the west side of Pier 2. Knight recently gave up the grant after the Port was unable to raise the local match of \$660,000, and after the agency realized the issues underneath the pier would make any dock work ineffective.

While Pier 2 west is the worst side, much of the structure under the east side is also in need of dire repair. A Department of Transportation inspection late last year found 48 bents "with minimal or no bearing under the timber posts or on top of the timber piles."

The state recommended an immediate 3-ton weight limit and a complete closure of the east side of the pier beginning this month if the repairs were not completed. The Port has enacted the weight limit and repaired

several of the bents in-house, but has not shut the pier down.

A similar state recommendation led the Port to shut down a causeway over the East Mooring Basin last year.

It will take months before the Port can finish enough of the repairs to remove the weight restrictions on Pier 2, Knight said, but the east side of the pier is not as bad as the west.

"We're not in trouble with ODOT," he said.

## Forum: App can help people track appearances of moles over time

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encourage people to examine their skin and seek treatment if things seem off — to increase their "melanoma literacy" — will launch in Portland in May.

It's an experiment, an attempt to replicate something that happened in a northern German city, which offered free skin cancer screenings and saw a dramatic decline in the death rate due to melanoma. All because people were looking at their skin.

Oregon has a similar population: The pale-

skinned descendants of northern Europeans who are more likely to get skin cancers like melanoma in the first place.

"We're going to repeat the experiment, but we're going to set it up right," Leachman said.

If they get it right, she believes they could change how early detection is understood and pursued for other types of deadly cancers.

"Melanoma is the perfect model for early detection," she said. "It's the one that you can see. It's the really lethal, fairly common cancer in Oregon that you can

actually see."

"So," she added, "we start with melanoma but then we move to other cancers, too, because there are other cancers that can benefit from early detection but you don't know how to really do it until you've done it. So we're creating a model as we go."

But the researchers are also going to ask themselves a series of questions: Did they increase literacy? Did they save lives? Was it cost-effective?

"Because you can imagine that if I'm successful and I'm able to tell every single

person in the state, 'Just look at your skin and if you see something, do something,' and I do that and it floods the system with all these people who think that they may have a melanoma and a lot of biopsies get done, a lot of those may not need to be done," Leachman said.

For Clatsop County residents and other rural Oregonians, there is often a disconnect between the medical care they need and what's available locally. In the audience for Leachman's talk, most of the people who saw dermatologists regularly went to urban areas for

screenings and treatment.

Through the war on melanoma, however, Leachman is working with family doctors as a starting point for understanding what might be changing on a person's skin.

A growing or changing mole doesn't need to look like the textbook pictures for someone to take action. Just being "body aware," aware of changes to the skin, and seeking out information and treatment is enough to lead to the better outcome, she said.

There are technological changes for early detec-

tion in the works, as well. E-visits could be one way to bridge the gap between rural needs and urban medical facilities. There is a new app — MoleMapper — that helps people track the appearance of moles over time.

For Leachman, the big step is for individuals to start paying attention to their own skin.

In a twist on the public safety message, "If you see something, say something," Leachman and her partners want Oregonians to think, "If you see something, do something about it."

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