



The Astorian

Port Commission pursues staff survey

Scrutiny after criticism of executive director

By **EDWARD STRATTON**
The Astorian

A divided Port of Astoria Commission voted Tuesday to anonymously survey employees about their experiences, escalating the

scrutiny of Jim Knight, the Port's executive director.

Commissioner Dirk Rohne brought the motion to have a consultant survey staff, which was approved by a 3-2 vote. Frank Spence, the commission's president, and Commissioner Bill Hunsinger voted with Rohne, while Com-



Jim Knight

missioner Robert Stevens and Commissioner James Campbell opposed the motion.

Rohne called for an investigation and staff survey after Matt McGrath, the Port's former director of operations, submitted a letter and observations describing Knight as dishonest, incom-

petent and incapable of running the agency. An ad-hoc finance committee also recently recommended an anonymous feedback loop for staff, including an annual survey.

Knight questioned the process for the survey, what questions would be asked of staff and how the results would be reported to the Port Commission.

"It's a little fuzzy as to what's the purpose of interviewing and asking the employees, my employees, questions about their employment with the Port," he said.

Annual, confidential surveys are a best management practice used by local governments, Spence said.

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Port needs to fix house

Consultant previews fresh strategic plan

By **EDWARD STRATTON**
The Astorian

The consultant hired to create the Port of Astoria's strategic plan told the Port Commission the agency needs to get on stable financial footing and address failing infrastructure over the next two to four years before focusing on broader economic development goals.

Mary McArthur, the executive director of the Columbia-Pacific Economic Development District, began work about three years ago on the business plan. She unveiled her final draft Tuesday to the Port Commission and a room packed with interested locals. The draft will make the rounds of local governments.

The business plan, an update of an outline from 2010, lays out the Port's economic development focus.

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Astoria to sell more carbon credits

New deal with The Climate Trust

By **KATIE FRANKOWICZ**
The Astorian

A plan to sell more carbon credits from Astoria's Bear Creek watershed could bring in around \$1 million in revenue for the city.

On Monday, the City Council unanimously approved an agreement with The Climate Trust, a Portland-based nonprofit, to purchase carbon credits in 2020.

In 2015, Astoria entered into a voluntary carbon program. The city agreed not to aggressively harvest timber in the 3,700-acre watershed that supplies Astoria's drinking water. In exchange, the city received carbon credits

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MILITARY DOES DRY RUN FOR CASCADIA QUAKE RESPONSE

A landing at Sunset Beach

By **R.J. MARX**
and **EDWARD STRATTON**
The Astorian

With the 75th anniversary of D-Day on Thursday, the military treated Clatsop County residents to their own landing at Sunset Beach.

The Navy sent two hovercraft ashore on Monday as part of a dry run to deliver emergency supplies after a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake and tsunamis. The Air Force delivered Humvees to the Astoria Regional Airport aboard two cargo planes.

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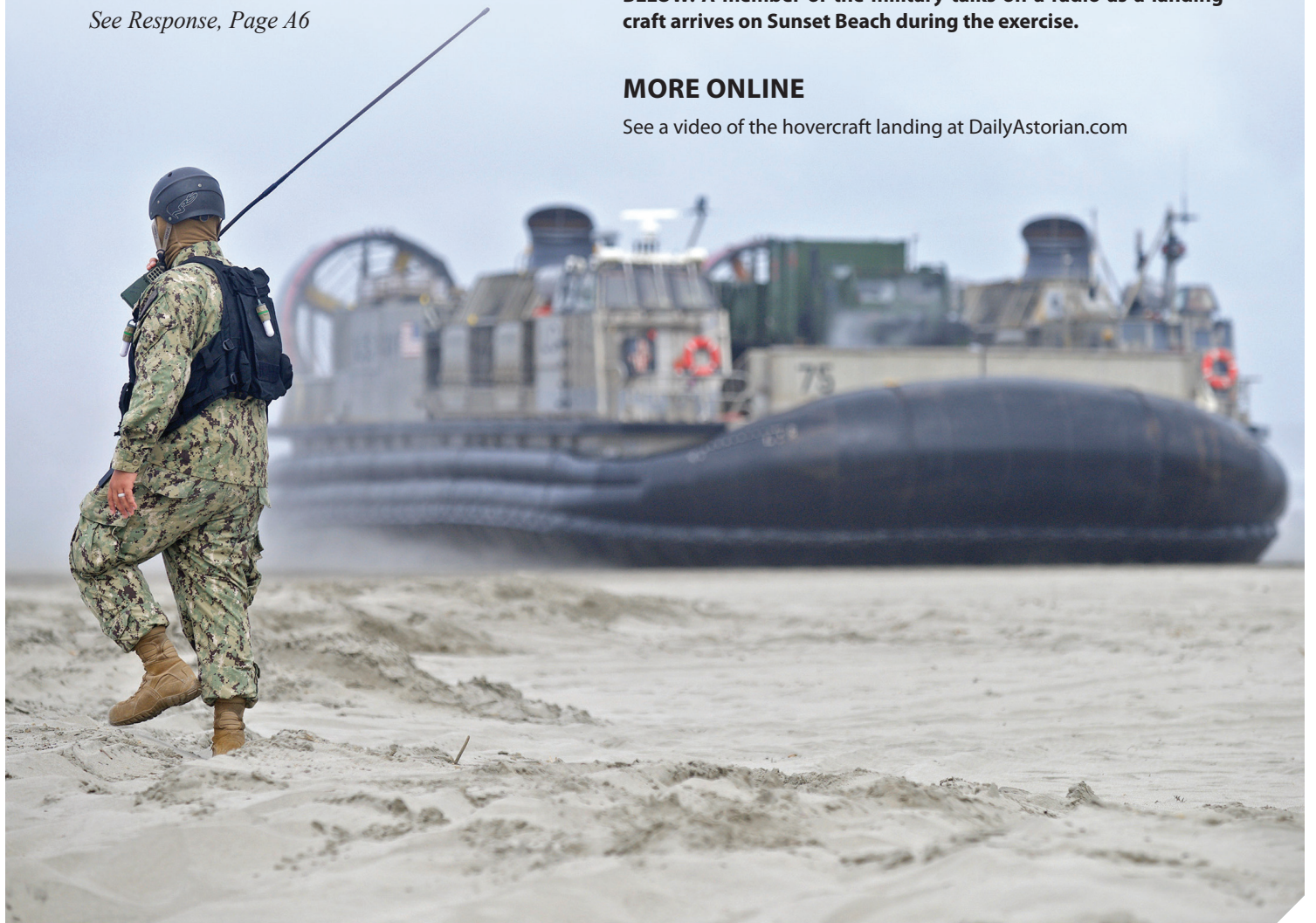


Photos by Colin Murphey/The Astorian

ABOVE: Crew members pilot a landing craft onto Sunset Beach. **BELOW:** A member of the military talks on a radio as a landing craft arrives on Sunset Beach during the exercise.

MORE ONLINE

See a video of the hovercraft landing at DailyAstorian.com



After suicides, some want signs on the Astoria Bridge



Colin Murphey/The Astorian

Emergency responders circle underneath the Astoria Bridge after a man jumped in May.

Two men jumped from the span in May

By **KATIE FRANKOWICZ**
The Astorian

After two apparent suicides at the Astoria Bridge in May, emergency responders and state officials say there is little they can do to dissuade people from jumping off.

But two local pastors believe suicide prevention signs could be an important first step.

Karen and Fred Humber, co-pastors at Peninsula Church of the Nazarene in Long Beach, Washington, wrote to the Oregon Department of Transportation days after one man jumped off the Astoria Bridge and ahead of a second apparent suicide on Friday.

"One death is too many," they wrote. "A sign posted, especially more than one, can help a person pause long enough to reconsider their actions and prevent death by suicide on the bridge."

The Humber's asked if the state could post signs containing suicide prevention hotline numbers and information at regular intervals in both directions along the entire 4.1-mile span.

But the answer was "no."

The Astoria Bridge is closed to pedestrians, so there is the question of who such signs would target, as well as safety concerns, said Lou Torres, a spokesman for the Department of Transportation. The signs might distract motorists and create unintended hazards, and he is not

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