



Danny Miller/The Astorian

The Liberty Theatre will receive state money for stage renovations.

Money: \$1 million in lottery money coming to the Liberty Theatre

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Liberty Theatre

and four large warehouses totaling 120,000 square feet.

Brett Estes, the city manager, said the city has had a number of discussions with Business Oregon over the past couple of months about cleanup and redevelopment of the property. The city would act as a pass-through for the state money.

"It's a large piece of property that could have quite a bit of impact on the neighborhood," Estes said.

Astoria Warehousing Inc. closed the complex last year when its parent companies moved operations to the Seattle area. Several hotels operate just west of the warehouse, with another proposed to the east.

Fort George Brewery, which purchased land at the North Coast Business Park in Warrenton for a new distribution campus and pub, has shown interest in the Astoria Warehousing property. The company's ownership has declined to comment further.

County jail

The \$2 million in state general funds for the Clatsop County Jail project will go toward deferred maintenance at the former Oregon Youth Authority facility.

Monica Steele, the interim county manager, said the county has been working with Sen. Betsy Johnson, D-Scappoose, to get funding for deferred maintenance.

Johnson, the co-chairwoman of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means, has an important role in state spending.

"For years, Oregon Youth Authority had possession of that facility and the state didn't provide adequate funding for their asset to make sure the building is taken care of and there is a significant amount of deferred maintenance out there. And so we've been working with her this past year to get funding and she was able to do so," Steele said. "We are very excited."

"This was a long, hard fight that we truly appreciate her fighting on our behalf."

The Legislature did not approve Senate Bill 678, which would have provided \$1.9 million to fund the restoration of the Salvage Chief vessel for emergency response.

Floyd Holcom, who bought the Salvage Chief in 2015, believes the decommissioned vessel could be useful after a disaster.

Tiffany Brown, the county emergency manager, and others are skeptical about the project. Brown had alerted county commissioners to the bill last week.

"To get kicked in the stomach by your hometown team is purely unfortunate," Holcom wrote on Facebook. "They have no plan."

The Liberty Theatre landed \$1 million in lottery money.

The money will go to the development of a fully operational stage and puts the organization in the running for larger grants to fund a \$3.3 million capital campaign to modernize the theater and diversify the types of performances it can offer.

With money that has been raised through other efforts, the theater now has 40% of the capital campaign funded, according to Jennifer Crockett, the theater's executive director.

She heard late Sunday night that HB 5050 had passed with the theater's grant funding in place and was still processing the news Monday morning.

"This was just a crazy idea a year and a half ago and now we're well on our way," she said.

Work will begin immediately to improve the front of the theater and to renovate a concessions stand. "Those bring in money for operations right away," Crockett said. The theater has already hired an architecture firm and contractors.

The state money will go toward the expansion of the theater's stage, rigging, lighting and curtains, as well as the creation of dressing rooms and a loading area. Crockett said the theater worked with Johnson on a strategy. "We met with her first and she told us what we should ask for based on how big our project was and what she thought she could get into the budget."

"She said \$1 million so we asked for a million."

Liberty representatives ended up meeting with almost everyone on Ways and Means and traveled to Salem several times to present the project. The organization had already researched how the renovations would improve the value of the theater's offerings and provide economic benefit to the rest of Astoria.

Crockett and others involved with the Liberty started out confident their request for \$1 million would be approved. But with the turmoil in Salem this session, and walkouts by Republican senators, Crockett worried about lengthy delays.

If the funding had not passed muster at the Legislature, all plans at the Liberty would have likely been on hold for another year.

With the state money guaranteed and the capital campaign moving briskly forward, Crockett and the Liberty Theatre's board of directors are looking at how to begin increasing staff capacity. The organization plans to start an internship program and then staff for specialized positions, such as stage crew.

Nicole Bales and Katie Frankowicz of The Astorian contributed to this report.

Business: Redevelopment leads to new business

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projects, such as the former J.C. Penney Co. store being turned into a taproom and food court, the Waldorf Hotel building that will become workforce housing and the Norblad Building, where owner Paul Caruana has been steadily filling up with new businesses.

New development

Nowhere is the development more noticeable than on the western edges of downtown, historically less developed than the Commercial and Duane street corridors to the east. The redevelopment of two former Flavel family buildings at the intersection of 10th and Commercial streets has led to several new businesses.

Hillary Smith runs Hills Wild Flours doing custom online cookie orders for weddings, parties and other events. Smith kept tabs on the restoration by Marcus and Michelle Liotta of the M&N Building before approaching them about moving into a small storefront on Ninth Street next to South Bay Wild Fish House.

The Liottas have also added Wild Roots Movement & Massage, Terra Stones and their own Reclamation Marketplace to the building. Smith opens her shop on weekends offering cookies, scones and other pastries.

"It's nice having a shop so I can meet somewhere other than my house," she said. "Other than that, I'm just upstairs working."

Across Commercial Street, Julia and Matthew Myers opened Myers Therapy offering soft-tissue treatment in the corner suite of the Flavel Building, next to



Edward Stratton/The Astorian

Graphic designer Emily Engdahl, right, recently opened Blue Collar Collective with her partner and photographer Justin Grafton. The shop, on 10th Street across from the Astoria Transit Center, features the work of upward of 30 different artisans and smaller-scale makers.

Drina Daisy Bosnian Cuisine. The building's new owners, James and Lisa Long, fixed up the corner suite first and have been restoring a former clothing store next door.

The area around the Astoria Transit Center has added new Thai restaurant Curry & CoCo on Ninth Street and Blue Collar Collective, a partnership of graphic artist Emily Engdahl and photographer Justin Grafton. The couple provide creative services for small businesses and showcase the works of upward of 30 artists and smaller-scale makers in their storefront on 10th Street.

"The merchandising we have here is 100% Pacific Northwest and Oregon-connected or -focused, with a specific focus on small-batch producers and nontraditional artists," Engdahl said.

Next to Bloomin' Crazy Floral on Commercial Street, Jody Patterson Morrill opened Jody Rae photography, a studio specializing in portraiture. Like Smith, Morrill gathers most of her business online, photographing

visitors to the Oregon Coast.

"I'd say 90% of my clients are not from here," Morrill said.

On the east end of downtown, Jeff Schwieter recently opened his newest location of Schwieter's Cones & Candy, a chain of sweet shops stretching down the North Coast.

Ron Neva, co-owner of Astoria Wild Products, recently opened his new fish house, seafood shop and maritime-themed bar Hurricane Ron's in the former Charlie's Chowder House and Tiki Bar. William Hicks, who purchased the Abeco Office Systems building on Commercial Street, took down the metal siding, uncovered the second-story windows and restored the facade with a more colorful flair.

Amid a growing collection of alcohol-related businesses on Duane Street, Seth Howard and Michael Angiletta opened Blaylock's Whiskey Bar in the Wieveseik Building, formerly Columbia Travel, with more than 100 varieties of the dis-

tilled spirit.

A downtown cluster analysis by the association two years ago found potential growth in gift and craft stores, clothing and specialty food and drink.

"If you're looking at trends nationwide, it's not uncommon to see more food and beverage and dining," Heath said of the new mix of businesses.

Clothing store

The downtown association is still trying to recruit a general clothing store to replace J.C. Penney, she said. The taproom and food court effort, led by local apartment owner Sean Fitzpatrick and Baked Alaska chef Chris Holen, recently received \$148,880 from the Oregon Main Street Revitalization program, coupled with a \$103,640 local match, to restore the Duane Street facade of the former department store but has yet to begin construction.

One of Heath's signature accomplishments was helping attract Innovative Housing, Inc. to redevelop the former Waldorf Hotel next to City Hall into workforce housing. The group recently secured \$2.8 million from the state Housing and Community Services Department to cover nearly half of the development costs. The group will soon start inviting potential tenants to get their opinion on what amenities they need, Heath said.

On Wednesday, the downtown association cuts the ribbon on a new mural by artist Andie Sterling covering the 13th Street Alley, another beautification project meant to better connect businesses on Commercial and Duane streets.

Vaping: 'We openly talk about it in the classroom'

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The devices are unlawful for people younger than 21 to purchase. Health officials also worry about a lack of understanding surrounding the adverse health effects of vaping.

The county's Public Health Department recently surveyed school leaders, counselors and nurses. Educators reported extreme concern with the increased use of e-cigarettes and at least moderate familiarity with their prevalence, but less understanding related to how addictive the substances are.

"Pretty much what we found in the schools mirrors what's happening nationally," said Julia Hesse, the county's tobacco prevention specialist.

Jerome Adams, the surgeon general, issued an advisory late last year about a rising epidemic of e-cigarette

use by minors. The National Youth Tobacco Survey found a 75% increase in 2017 and 2018 in the use of e-cigarettes by high school-age children, and 50% among middle schoolers.

Hesse started hearing more from educators about the alarming trend this year, she said, especially from the rural Knappa School District.

"I've seen it all the way from 12th grade down to seventh grade," Smalley said of Knappa's experience.

The school district noticed students charging vaping devices in class and outlawed all electronics charging in response, she said. The district also partnered with the Clatsop County Sheriff's Office to begin issuing citations for the use of e-cigarettes on campus. The district is planning more training for incoming students, parents

and staff in the fall.

"We openly talk about it in the classroom," Smalley said. "We've tried to be really open and honest and have communication with kids."

Lynn Jackson, principal at Astoria High School, said he saw the trend of vaping and e-cigarettes pick up over the past two to three years.

"It's just like the vapor itself," he said. "You're trying to find ghosts."

Confiscations aren't always effective because students often share the products, Jackson said. While fines can be part of the solution, he said, it is education that primarily tamped down on tobacco use in the U.S.

"One of the main strategies is making sure people know the health effects of vaping, that it's being taught throughout our student population," he said.

The county can offer

training for school staff but isn't funded to do education in the classroom, Hesse said. She pointed to policy changes as the most effective means of curbing use of e-cigarettes by minors.

The county health and juvenile departments created a tobacco retail license so far approved by the county, Gearhart and Cannon Beach, Hesse said. The proceeds of the approximately \$275 annual fee would go toward educating retailers and performing annual inspections.

"The best way public health will be able to help reduce the use of tobacco, vaping products and other inhalants is to reduce the availability of these products to our youth," Mike McNickle, the county's public health director, said in a recent news release. "The Tobacco Retail Licensing program will move the county in the right direction."

Champion: Cleanup has been a community effort

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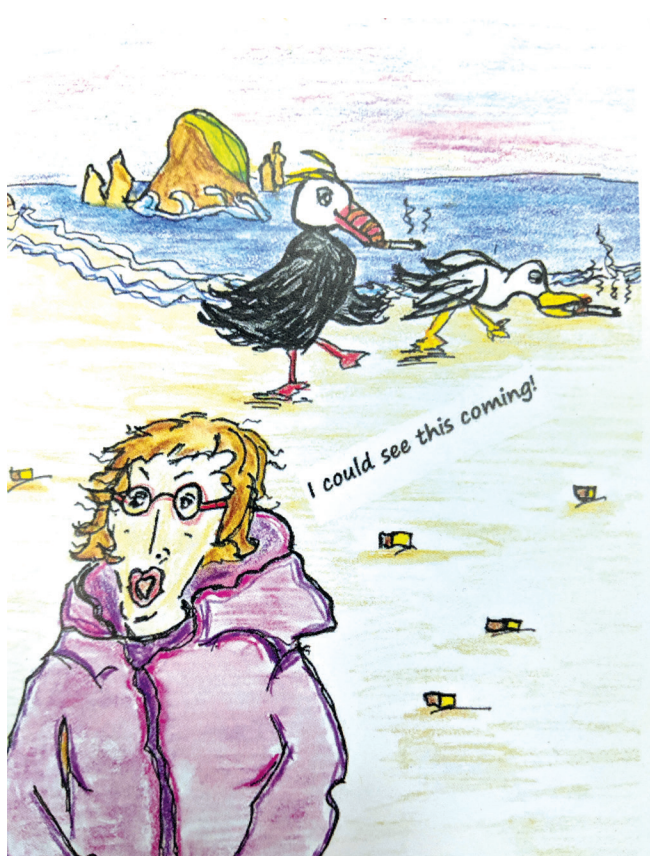
collected butts back to cigarette manufacturers and ask them (politely) to start taking responsibility for how to recycle their products — a piece of activism the city couldn't necessarily tackle.

The first 24 containers went up last week. Champion hopes to be able to install 80 in high traffic areas: at local businesses, at beach access points and elsewhere in the city.

"We're not here to say, 'Shame on you for smoking,'" Champion said. "This is about being a responsible smoker."

"The (Cannon Beach Chamber of Commerce's) motto states, 'Love Cannon Beach like a local and have it love you back,' and 'There is magic here,'" Champion wrote in her proposal to the City Council. "Those declarations are compromised by all litter, particularly toxic butt litter as visitors explore Cannon Beach."

"As a city that advertises as much as it does as a very special place, it seemed like



Katie Frankowicz/The Astorian

Lolly Champion designed what she calls 'a kind of silly' poster to raise awareness and educate people about cigarette butt litter.

a huge inconsistency to us that we had this many cigarette butts," Champion said.

The number of discarded cigarette butts predictably surges after holidays and

over busy weekends. They accumulate on sidewalks and on the beach, where they are found by Champion and others who routinely roam the community picking up butts.

"You begin picking them up and you pick up more and more and it just becomes this kind of compulsive reaction," Champion said.

The pickers will compare notes when they encounter each other on their rounds, "How many did you pick?"

Despite all the upfront work Champion has put in to get the disposal containers in place, dealing with cigarette butt litter has been a community effort, she said.

But like other community pushes to curb the use of single-use plastic bags on the North Coast, cigarette butt disposal in Cannon Beach is kind of a drop in the bucket when it comes to addressing the larger issue of plastic pollution.

"I guess it's just little steps. And is it going to change the world? No," Champion said. "It's still worth doing."