

IN BRIEF

Police investigate death at Sunset Beach

Authorities are investigating a death at Sunset Beach on Sunday morning.

The case has been referred to the Clatsop County District Attorney's Office. No further information was immediately available.

Nordic park could open in 2021

The timeline to open a park celebrating Astoria's Nordic heritage has been extended another year.

The Nordic Heritage Park Committee had hoped to complete the new park at Peoples Park off Marine Drive by June, around the time of the annual Astoria Scandinavian Midsummer Festival. The committee now hopes to open the park in June 2021.

"We made the decision that we would not start the project until all the fundraising was in place," said Janet Bowler, vice chairwoman for the Nordic Heritage Park Committee.

A tentative dedication of the park is planned for June 16, 2021. The Nordic Heritage Park Committee has already raised around half a million dollars and needs just over \$648,000 in additional funds for the park. According to Bowler, the group is working on several big grants that appear to be promising.

The park also received a polished large granite slab valued at \$12,000 from a former Astoria resident, Stephen Dean, of Pasco, Washington. The slab arrived in Astoria on Friday and is destined to be engaged and set at the main entrance sign to the park.

Police focus on traffic safety Tuesday

The Astoria Police Department will have extra officers on duty Tuesday participating in a pedestrian safety enforcement program in conjunction with Oregon Impact and the state Department of Transportation.

— *The Astorian*

ON THE RECORD

Assault

• Nina Cervantes, 23, of Warrenton, was arrested Saturday in Hammond for assault in the fourth degree.

Sex abuse

• Jesse James Prout, 23, was arrested at Tongue Point Job Corps Center for sex abuse in the third degree and contributing to the sexual delinquency of a minor.

DUII

• Heather Diane Ziel, 26, of Magalia, California, was arrested Sunday on the Astoria Bridge for driving under the influence of intoxicants and reckless driving. She

allegedly rear-ended a vehicle, causing a traffic delay on the bridge. No injuries were reported. Her blood alcohol content was 0.21%.

• Madison Alyssa Ann Brookens, 21, of Washington state, was arrested Sunday on U.S. Highway 101 and Toyas Lane for DUII and reckless driving.

• James Scott Stephens, 42, of Everett, Washington, was arrested Saturday on W. Marine Drive and Bay Street for DUII, tampering with physical evidence, obstruction of governmental administration and resisting arrest.

DEATHS

Sept. 8, 2019

STENBLOM, Michael, 49, of Astoria, died in Astoria. Hughes-Ransom Mortuary is in charge of the arrangements.

Sept. 6, 2019

HALL, Johnnie Edwin, 74, of Las Vegas, died in Seaside. Caldwell's Funeral & Cremation Arrangement Center of Seaside is in charge of the arrangements.

Sept. 5, 2019

WIRFS, Ralph, 81, of Astoria, died in Astoria. Hughes-Ransom Mortuary is in charge of the arrangements.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

TUESDAY

Astoria City Council, 9 a.m., work session, City Hall, 1095 Duane St.

Clatsop County Planning Commission, 10 a.m., Judge Guy Boyington Building, 857 Commercial St., Astoria.

Warrenton City Commission, 6 p.m., City Hall, 225 S. Main Ave.

Lewis & Clark Fire Department Board, 6 p.m., main fire station, 34571 U.S. Highway 101 Business.

Clatsop Community College Board, 6:30 p.m., Columbia Hall Room 219, 1651 Lexington Ave., Astoria.

WEDNESDAY

Clatsop Soil and Water Conservation District Board, 10 a.m., 2001 Marine Drive, Room 113., Astoria.

Warrenton-Hammond School Board, 5:30 p.m., Warrenton High School library, 1700 S. Main Ave.

Clatsop County Board of Commissioners, 6 p.m., Judge Guy Boyington Building, 857 Commercial St., Astoria.

Wickiup Water District Board, 6:30 p.m., 92648 Svensen Market Road, Svensen.

THURSDAY

Warrenton Planning Commission, 6 p.m., City Hall, 225 S. Main Ave.

Seaside celebrates remodeled convention center

A \$15 million renovation project

By R.J. MARX
The Astorian

SEASIDE — On June 4, 2018, the Seaside Civic and Convention Center kicked off a \$15 million renovation and expansion project with a groundbreaking ceremony.

Fifteen months later, Russ Vandenberg, the convention center's general manager, welcomed residents, visitors and dignitaries to a ribbon-cutting celebration Thursday.

The convention center, built in 1970, was created to bring in business in the winter and shoulder seasons to help build the economy, Vandenberg told an audience of several hundred.

After an expansion in 1990 and a renovation in 1995, talks for a new project began in 2011.

This year, the convention center came through its "biggest facelift ever," Vandenberg said.



A ribbon-cutting event was held Thursday.

"We heard from clients over and over again," he said. "You need to build a bigger facility or we're going to have to move to a larger facility." And we paid attention, and got busy and started building a plan to expand. Eight years later, we're giving them what they asked for."

Renovations and upgrades to ballrooms,

offices, the lobby, lighting, storage and more are among the major changes, as the facility grew from 46,000 square feet to 55,000 square feet, an increase of 19%.

Vandenberg offered credit for the on-time, under-budget project to the convention center staff and commissioners, contractors, management team and city partners. Throughout construc-

tion, the convention center remained active and booked: Of 420 construction days, it was occupied for 290. "To keep your staff working with 300 or 400 bridge players who don't even like to hear someone sneeze is a very difficult task," he quipped.

The renovation and expansion was financed by an increase in the city's lodging tax, from 8% to 10%, which went into effect last summer.

The convention center has already booked 10 new events because of the expanded space, Vandenberg added.

"In 1970 the council and the commission brought this plan together to build a convention center," Mayor Jay Barber said at the event. "A lot of people said, 'A convention center in Seaside? Who would come to a convention in Seaside?' And here it is all these years later, two other renovations and this \$15 million one."

"This is the facility in our community that drives the city's economic engine."

Dredging to improve channel in Ilwaco

Federal money helped project

By LUKE WHITTAKER
Chinook Observer

ILWACO, Wash. — The never-ending struggle to keep south Pacific County's maritime link to the Columbia River is again underway.

Dredging to deepen the Ilwaco Channel commenced in August. The dredging is part of \$1.2 million received in federal funding for channel maintenance announced last spring.

The crucial sediment removal is necessary for keeping the local waterway navigable and retaining access to the Port of Ilwaco for commercial and recreational vessels.

Channel condition surveys revealed spots shallower than 5 feet, which will be deepened to the required 18-foot depth, according to Darrell Jamieson, project manager for J.E. McAmis, a marine contractor tasked with doing the heavy digging.

Initial sediment removal started around the jaws of the channel, but has gradually moved further inside the channel in recent weeks. Using a bucket scoop, the



Luke Whittaker/Chinook Observer

A dredge operator maneuvers a scoop of sediment to an awaiting barge.

dredge is capable of removing 10 yards of sediment at a time — about 27,000 pounds, or about nine Toyota Priuses. "It's sand all the way up by Fort Canby then it gradually turns to fine sediment," Jamieson said during a boat tour of the dredge work in August.

Each scoop is unloaded into a "dump scout," a barge capable of carrying about

1,200 yards of sediment to the spoil drop site.

Changing tides, currents and boat traffic complicate channel dredging.

"It's really sneaky and snaky," Jamieson said. "It will take the barge everywhere, so we have an assist boat that trails behind it and we leave on slack tides."

During the Renaissance, Leonardo da Vinci designed

the draga cavafango, or mud dredge, a simple apparatus that would be a primitive starting point for the technologically advanced dredges of today.

"Today we have GPS and dredge software that shows where the bucket is, the channel — everything," Jamieson said. "Before, you just dug off of range markers."

Biofuels project gets lease on Columbia River

By COURTNEY FLATT
Northwest Public Broadcasting

The Port of Columbia County has approved a controversial lease for a biofuels project.

The county says it will bring jobs to the area. Some environmental groups are concerned about previous deals gone bad involving the project's backers.

Port of Columbia County commissioners say Next Renewable Fuels will invest more than \$1 billion in a new biofuels project at Port West-

ward. The facility would turn used cooking oil, animal tallow and seed oil into environmentally friendly, renewable biofuel.

The port's executive director, Doug Hayes, said the biofuels project would bring 200 jobs. Hayes said the fuel could be used in cars now and would help reduce Oregon's carbon footprint by offering an alternative to burning gas and diesel, fossil fuels that emit greenhouse gases that are contributing to climate change.

The facility could end up producing 50,000 bar-

rels per day at full capacity. It would ship the renewable feedstock in and then it would be shipped "back out to the Pacific Ocean and traded along the West Coast," Hayes said.

"You can have both a well-paying energy industry that is also environmentally cautious," he said.

But environmental groups say these project backers aren't so cautious. They've been linked to a failed bio-diesel project in eastern Washington that left behind a toxic cleanup site.

The worry is, if this proj-

ect also fails, it could turn into a fossil fuels export facility, Dan Serres, with Columbia Riverkeeper, said.

"If something goes awry with this so-called renewable diesel refinery, the Port of Columbia County could be left with a mess on its hands," Serres said.

The project's backers also attempted to build a refinery at the Port of Longview, which eventually rejected the proposal.

If all the permits and funding are approved, the Port Westward renewable biofuels facility could be built by 2022.

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JORDAN'S HOPE FOR RECOVERY

3rd Annual
RALLY AND FUN RUN/WALK
September 21, 2019
10am - 1pm
Astoria High School

Speakers including
Oregon Attorney General, Ellen Rosenblum
Music, Booths, Fun Activities for the Kids, and much more!

More Info & Online Registration at
jordanshope.org/2019funrun

Welcome Back to Church Sunday & Street Picnic

SEPTEMBER 15TH, 2019
Classes 9:45am • Worship 10:45am

Join us for our annual Street Picnic following the morning service

Burgers and Hotdogs provided

Bring your neighbors and friends

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