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Counties win \$1 billion timber suit

Clatsop County opted out

By **ANDREW SELSKY**
Associated Press

ALBANY — Jurors on Wednesday found in favor of 14 western Oregon counties in a \$1 billion lawsuit claiming the state deprived them of revenue for decades by limiting logging in state forests.

The jury recommended the counties receive the past and future damages they had sought — \$674 million in lost revenue since 2001, and \$392 million in future

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Environmentalists sue to stop 9,000-acre timber project

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damages through 2069.

Clatsop County opted out of the legal challenge. The Board of Commissioners voted 3-2 in 2017 not to participate because they wanted more balanced forest management policies.

“We will not have comment until we have an opportunity to review the decision,” County Manager Don Bohn said in an email.

The Sunset Empire Parks and Recreation District also opted out.

Two dozen other taxing districts in the county, including the Port of Astoria, were part of the lawsuit. The taxing districts stand to receive \$176 million for past damages and \$109 million for future damages.

Blair Henningsgaard, an attorney who represents the Port and the Seaside and Jewell school districts, predicted the state

would appeal. “Round one is over,” he said.

Henningsgaard questioned the county commission’s vote to opt out. “They made a decision that in my opinion defies any kind of logic,” he said.

“I was told that they considered it to be a political statement, which is like having a tantrum. Clatsop County’s voice is important, but what they’re saying is we’re not going to tell you what we think ... As a lawyer, I don’t understand it.”

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Highway could narrow in Gearhart

Fewer lanes to improve safety

By **R.J. MARX**
The Astorian

GEARHART — U.S. Highway 101 could narrow in Gearhart to reduce crashes and injuries.

The highway would go from four lanes to two lanes with a center turn lane.

The configuration could reduce travel speeds and improve conditions for motorists trying to turn on and off the busy highway. One advantage is that it would make room for the turn lane and bicycle and pedestrian options without the need to expand the right of way.

The city, the state Department of Transportation and the Northwest Oregon Area Commission on Transportation heard plans for the potential changes at a meeting in Astoria last week. The commission is made up of local leaders and stakeholders to address transportation issues in Clatsop, Columbia and Tillamook counties and the western portion of Washington County.

“There’s a slew of things we need to address in Gearhart,” Ken Shonkwiler, a senior region planner with the Department of Transportation, said after the meeting. “We met with Northwest ACT to do more regional outreach and explain the importance of it.”

The state is conducting a facilities plan to look at pedestrian and bike access to address specific concerns this upcoming year, he said.

In 2017, with the adoption of its Transportation System Plan, Gearhart identified 11 projects to improve roadway segments and intersections that could cost an estimated \$23 million to \$25 million to complete.

Consultants prioritized investments with four tiers, from the \$1.2 million likely to be available through existing funding sources to a more than \$20 million wish list that exceeds the likely level of city and state funding through 2040.

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Astoria Ferry project in ‘hold-steady pattern’



Photos by Edward Stratton/The Astorian

The Tourist No. 2 is parked on the eastern side of the causeway to Pier 39 in Astoria.



Christian Lint, the owner of the Tourist No. 2, will oversee the next phase of fundraising to press the vessel back into service on the Columbia River, according to the Astoria Ferry Group.

Captain expected to take on bigger role

By **EDWARD STRATTON**
The Astorian

Efforts to press the historic Tourist No. 2 back into service on the Columbia River are in a “hold-steady pattern” as the Astoria Ferry Group seeks new board members and a stronger fundraising arm to move the project forward.

The ferry group, a nonprofit formed to oversee the ferry’s restoration after owner Christian Lint sailed it to Astoria from Bremerton, Washington, in 2016, issued a news release

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Jonathan Williams/The Astorian

Journalist Tom Hallman Jr. spoke at Columbia Forum on Tuesday about why stories matter.

Journalist says communities need storytellers

Pulitzer Prize winner spoke at Columbia Forum

By **JONATHAN WILLIAMS**
The Astorian

Tom Hallman Jr. was walking the streets of Seaside talking to people about fallen Sgt. Jason Gooding while other reporters were inside the convention center listening to the governor. His story made the front page of *The Oregonian*.

“We can get factual information on these stinkin’ cellphones but we can’t get meaning. The only way you get meaning is through stories that unlock what is in you already ... we do not give readers enough stories,”

he said. “We give them news reports.”

Hallman, a senior reporter at *The Oregonian*, is a Pulitzer Prize-winning narrative journalist and author of four books. He spoke about why stories matter at the Columbia Forum on Tuesday night at Baked Alaska’s Nekst Event space in Astoria.

Hallman has written stories about a goose named “Pat” in southwest Portland who keeps returning to the same spot it lost its partner, a Hells Angels funeral in California, a 6-foot-2-inch high school art student who tried out for a basketball team and girls getting prom dresses at the Oregon Convention Center.

“I write about the things that have nothing to do with news, but they work,” he said.

Getting started

Hallman, a Portland native, moved back after getting fired from his job in New York. He started his career at the *Hermiston Herald*. While there, he applied for a job at *The Daily Astorian*, but was rejected.

He said working at those newspapers helped him learn how to focus his interviews because people like to talk.

Finally, he got a job as a cops reporter at *The Oregonian*, which he did for 10 years.

He said at the time that beat

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