

# Shipwright: Recent shipyard closures have left few options

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investing in the company, adding employees and buying equipment.

"This year, I feel like they just saw that we've been investing in our own company," she said. "And this year, we kind of dove deeper into the environmental aspect."

WCT requested a 200-foot-long, 60-foot-wide tent where employees can work on tugs, barges and commercial fishing boats out of the wind and rain, speeding up the turnaround on projects. Under the tent will be a filtered drainage to catch byproducts from welding, painting and other vessel work.

Cook said the self-contained nature of the work station creates broad appeal among environmental and other agencies, while helping the company turn around boats that much faster.

"Generally, there are five or six projects going on at one time. Others are outside," he said. "This allows us to turn around projects quicker, not having to deal with outside elements."

Several years ago, the Port of Astoria relinquished a lease at North Tongue Point early, having lost significant sums trying to reinvigorate the former U.S. Navy seaplane base. Ending the lease early allowed Hyak Maritime, a regional tug- and barge-builder, to buy the property from Montana-based Washington Development Co. and begin its redevelopment into a shipwright hub, led by WCT.

The company received support for the shipyard grant from local, state and federal politicians, along with state officials. During a recent Astoria City Council meeting, Mayor Bruce Jones said he's written letters of support the last few years for WCT's application. U.S. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici was among several in Oregon's



The Astorian

Local shipwright WCT Marine & Construction received a federal grant to build more outdoor covered workspace at North Tongue Point.

*'THE MARITIME ECONOMY IS ESSENTIAL TO RURAL COASTAL COMMUNITIES ACROSS NORTHWEST OREGON AND THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST.'*

U.S. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici

congressional delegation who supported the application.

"The maritime economy is essential to rural coastal communities across Northwest Oregon and the Pacific Northwest," the Oregon Democrat wrote in a letter of support. "Without a well-equipped shipyard, no vessel is safe on the ocean or the Columbia River — a major

shipping route."

Bonamici pointed out recent shipyard closures that have left fewer options for repairs and fabrication. Astoria Marine Construction Co., a specialist in wooden boats, was felled by pollution from contracts to build minesweepers for the Navy during World War II and the Korean War. Owner Tim Fastabend



The Astorian

WCT Marine & Construction employee Jeremy Milligan cut the outer skin of a ship in 2016 to remove an engine. A federal grant the company secured will help build more covered workspace outside a former seaplane hangar.

is unsure of how and whether his company will go on in some reduced form after a

multimillion-dollar cleanup on the Lewis and Clark River is removed.

The Port once planned a large boatyard on Pier 3 surrounded by marine-related businesses. But boat work took a back seat to the more lucrative income of Asian log exports, which have collapsed during a trade war with China. The Port's boatyard is also limited by the 88-ton mobile boat lift it uses on Pier 3 to hoist vessels onto land.

The Port of Toledo, several miles up the Yaquina River from Newport, has invested around \$10 million buying and fixing up a former private boatyard, much of it paid for by state and federal grants. The port has installed a 300-ton travel lift to hoist boats, along with several covered work stations.

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## COVID-Positive or Negative, the Advice is Isolate

Living during a pandemic is different in so many ways from living during ordinary times. On the news and on social media, we see terrifying images of people dying. We hear about hospitals and hospital workers stretched to their limits, and beyond, as they struggle to keep up with the disease without becoming sick themselves.



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Working as a healthcare provider these days is also different—and not just because a disease has reached pandemic proportions. It is because the disease we are facing is new.

New diseases must be studied for some time before effective treatments can be found. It also takes time, not only to develop vaccines against the new disease, but even just to develop tests that can reliably identify the disease.

### How reliable are the tests?

Some medical tests are very reliable because scientists have had years to refine and improve them. For example, the influenza test we use at Columbia Memorial Hospital (CMH) has a sensitivity of about 97-percent for Influenza A and 100-percent for Influenza B.

However, the tests that have been used to look for the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19 are only about 70- to 80-percent sensitive. That means that for every 100 people who are infected, only about 70 to 80 of the tests will come back positive. So, even if you were tested and your test came back negative, COVID-19 could still be the cause of your symptoms.

### Is the coronavirus here?

The pandemic has felt different here than in other places,

in part because we don't have as many sick and dying people here. We've been protected by our distance from bigger cities, our physical distancing from each other, and the quick action of our state and local legislators to close places where people tend to congregate. Our community has been relatively lucky.

This does not mean that the novel coronavirus isn't circulating in our area. As of April 13, there were six positive test results in Clatsop County and one in Pacific County. One reason there haven't been more is that there are only a limited number of tests available.

Tests and other medical supplies are being sent to where they are most needed. The cities that have been hit the hardest are running low on testing kits, important protective equipment, hospital rooms, and even ventilators. Hospitals in those areas will receive more of the available resources than CMH and Clatsop County.

Fortunately, this has not affected the quality of medical care given at CMH. Everyone who needs medical evaluation and treatment still receives it. We have been preparing ourselves every day to care for sick people using the equipment we have.

### Why isn't everyone being tested?

Because there are not enough tests to diagnose every person who may be infected with the novel coronavirus, CMH has developed criteria to determine who should be tested. This is based on CDC guidelines and follows the recommendations of the Oregon Health Authority and Clatsop County Public Health.

The most important reason for testing is to track the movement of COVID-19. Because the current test is not very reliable, the test result does not change the fact you should follow the advice provided by the CDC.

Anyone who has been seen at CMH for concerning symptoms has been told to act as though they have COVID-19, regardless of testing. The treatment is the same for people with positive and negative test results. People who are well enough to take care of themselves at home receive

the same advice for CDC-recommended supportive care.

### How do I take care of myself and my family?

Regardless of test results, continued physical distancing is important. To protect yourself and others:

1. Cover your coughs and sneezes.
2. Wash your hands before you touch any surface—including your face. And then wash your hands again after the touch.
3. Keep a distance of at least six feet between you and others.
4. Get exercise every day and practice good hydration and nutrition.
5. Stay up-to-date by checking the CDC website.

Information about COVID-19 changes almost every day, but is available to everyone on [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov). You can read about symptoms, how to prevent transmission of disease, how to treat your symptoms or care for a family member, how to disinfect your home, how long you should stay in quarantine, how long before you should go back to work, and many other topics.

The CDC provides the most reliable information and advice, but if their website doesn't answer your questions you can call the CMH COVID-19 hotline at 503-338-4699. The hotline is staffed by CMH nurses weekdays 9 a.m.-5 p.m., and supported by providers and pharmacists.

Remember, there will be people who are infected by the novel coronavirus but who do not meet the hospital's threshold for testing or have a negative test result. These people may unknowingly pass the novel coronavirus to others. For this reason, continued physical distancing is so important. Even when better tests become available, we should still do all we can to prevent a resurgence that might hit Clatsop County harder than it has been hit so far.