

CORONAVIRUS



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Metal sheets cover sections of the rotting dock at Pier 2 at the Port of Astoria.

Port zeroes in on Pier 2 fixes

An infrastructure priority for seafood processing

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Astorian

Without logs, seafood is the only commodity coming across the Port of Astoria's docks.

But a patchwork of metal sheets prevents workers from falling through the rotting docks, while a failing seawall threatens the warehouse where hundreds are employed churning out packaged seafood.

With a strategic plan in place and growing trust from government partners, the Port is spending more than \$240,000 to get a detailed-enough fix for Pier 2's issues to apply for several large federal grants.

The west side of Pier 2 stretches 800 feet out into the Columbia River. The metal sheet pile seawall holding the pier in is only 8 feet out from the western edge of the seafood processing warehouse.

Matt McGrath, the Port's deputy director, said the close proximity has caused the two load-bearing walls to bow out, threatening failure.

"We want to move this sheet pile wall out as far as we possibly can, and that's going to solve a number of our

issues," he said. "One is that you're not having to worry about any of the load plane from the building causing any failures to the sheet pile wall. Another is that when you move this wall all the way out ... to the existing dock line, your maintenance costs basically go to zero."

What McGrath called the "Cadillac" option could minimize the Port's maintenance on the dock for 50 to 75 years and solve a major safety issue. The less desirable option is to keep the seawall next to the warehouse and replace the dock on Pier 2, which McGrath said would lead to the same issues in the future.

The Port Commission paid KPFF Consulting Engineers more than \$250,000 in 2019 to study the issues with the pier. Last week, the Port Commission approved more than \$248,000 for the firm to come back with the most feasible fix and enough specificity to go after federal grants.

"Even though it is a big number, the overall scope of Pier 2 justifies that," Dirk Rohne, the president of the Port Commission, said of the new contract. "And it's nice that we're actually preparing the Port to be able to move forward on this, even though it is a process."

Shane Jensen, the Port's grant writer, hopes to go after three large grants through the U.S. Maritime

Administration that could fund Pier 2.

The Port Infrastructure Development Program, specifically for Port projects around the U.S., was funded at \$225 million in the recent omnibus funding package passed by Congress. The Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development grant for various transportation projects received \$1 billion, as did the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America grant.

Port staff has estimated \$7 million to fix Pier 2. All three federal grants are within a range that could cover the project, Jensen said, but the key is whether KPFF's report is done soon enough or with enough detail to satisfy the federal agency.

"My understanding is it should be finished in April," Jensen said. "The three (Maritime Administration) grants are likely to be due in May. So there's going to be a very tight window."

"It is important to get these projects and the Port's needs in front of these agencies," he said. "So, the fact that it is very unlikely the Port would be awarded all three grants is not a reason to not apply for all three."

Several years ago, the Port received a \$1.5 million state infrastructure grant as part of a \$2 million project to repair the west side of Pier 2. Jim Knight, the Port's executive director at

See Port, Page A6

'IF YOU LOOK AT THE PORT'S MISSION, IT ONLY MENTIONS A FEW THINGS. IT TALKS ABOUT SAFETY AND THE ENVIRONMENT, AND THEN IT ALSO DISCUSSES JOB CREATION AND ECONOMIC GROWTH. AND THIS PROJECT TOUCHES ALL OF THOSE THINGS.'

Will Isom | Port's executive director



Betsy Johnson



Suzanne Weber

Johnson, Weber fear public being left out

Legislature opens virtually during coronavirus pandemic

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Astorian

The first few months of the state Legislature will be done virtually, with the state Capitol closed to the public until Marion County can go from the extreme to low-risk category on coronavirus metrics.

Both state Sen. Betsy Johnson and Rep. Suzanne Weber, who started attending virtual committee meetings last week, fear a loss of public involvement.

The soonest the Capitol could open is in March, with no daily floor sessions of the House and Senate until at least April. The galleries of the House and Senate, usually reserved for the public, will be used for voting to expand the physical distance between lawmakers.

See Legislature, Page A6

MORE INSIDE

County reports new virus cases • A6

City transfers senior center

Ownership shifts to seniors

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Astorian

Astoria has transferred ownership of the Astoria Senior Center on 11th and Exchange streets to seniors five years after an \$1.8 million renovation.

The city secured a community development block grant in 2014 to renovate the dilapidated senior center with a new commercial kitchen, LED lighting, roof, windows, heating, ventilation and air conditioning. After the renovation, the city began a lease with Astoria Senior Center Inc. that would increase the group's financial responsibility for the building over five years.

The agreement expired in December, and the group voiced its intent to take over the building. The senior center must remain in the same use in perpetuity or be transferred back to the city.

See Senior center, Page A6

Olstedt leads Gulls into new era

A debut delayed by the pandemic

By GARY HENLEY
The Astorian

SEASIDE — Marla Olstedt would have made her Seaside varsity basketball coaching debut Friday night.

In their original revised schedule because of the coronavirus pan-



demic, the Lady Gulls were set to open their shortened 2021 winter season in a nonleague game against Vernonia. It also would have been the first varsity basketball game in Seaside's new high school building.

Unfortunately, action on the new court, opening night and Olstedt's debut will all have to wait for another time.

Everything's still on hold in the world of Oregon high school sports, but Olstedt and the Gulls will eventually play that first game.

Any delays won't stop Olstedt from continuing her life's goal.

"I knew that basketball was always going to play a very big role in my life. What that looked like, I really didn't know, but I couldn't be luckier," she said.

On the bright side, she tells herself, "I'm coaching for my alma mater, our program is supported by a great community and I've got a program with great girls."

See Olstedt, Page A6



Jeff Ter Har

Marla Olstedt previously served as an assistant coach for Mike Hawes at Seaside. The girls basketball program now belongs to Olstedt, a former player for the Gulls.



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