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A U.S. Coast Guard helicopter prepares to take off at the Astoria Regional Airport.

Photos by Lydia Ely/The Astorian

Port wraps up infrastructure projects at airport

Agency looking at more development

By ETHAN MYERS
The Astorian

WARRENTON — After completing two significant infrastructure projects at the Astoria Regional Airport, the Port of Astoria is eyeing more development.

The renovations included reha-

bilitation of the airport's ramp and replacement of the wastewater system. A new fishmeal processing plant has also broken ground at the Airport Industrial Park.

"As far as how the projects are going, I'm really pleased with the (wastewater) project, and the (ramp) project — phase two — I really don't know how that could have gone

much better. It was just smooth sailing from the beginning through," said Matt McGrath, the Port's deputy director, who oversaw the projects. "There were a few little hiccups, but something just very, very minor. The (wastewater) project, there were some hiccups, just because of circumstances beyond everybody's control with COVID."

Both renovation projects, McGrath said, were necessary due to aging infrastructure at the airport that dates back to World War II.

Columbia Pacific Construction, of Woodland, Washington, replaced over 5 acres of the airport's ramp, which had a poor substructure, causing the concrete to degrade over time.

"You have these panels that are 20 (foot) by 20 (foot), and they were actually starting to rock under the weight of some of the heavier aircrafts," he said.

See Port, Page A3

A new fishmeal processing plant has broken ground at the Astoria Regional Airport.



Former teacher finds passion for art

Baker has an impressionistic style

By ETHAN MYERS
The Astorian

When Vicki Baker reflects back on her teaching career, her face lights up with a smile.

Although it took several years of teaching in the Midwest to discover if the profession was right for her, she eventually found a home in Astoria in 1978 when she was hired to teach a small kindergarten class in Olney.

"I had five wonderful students,"

EVERYDAY
people

she said. "I remember packing them in my little Volkswagen bug, getting them all strapped in to see the Astoria Column because they had never seen the Column."

Any remaining skepticism was out the window, as Baker found a unique appreciation for the enthusiasm of kindergartners.

"We could sing songs. I could read books to them. They were happy to be there," she said.

She soon took over first and second grade in Olney, which she taught until her retirement in

1999.

Although Baker initially missed teaching and the enjoyment of working with kids, she has since found a new passion to occupy her time: art.

While she had taken art classes, it was a printmaking class with Royal Nebeker, a renowned artist in Astoria, that helped drive her appreciation of printmaking and art in general.

During the class with Nebeker, he had everyone pick a few pieces of their work to display. The feeling of showing off her art was something that stuck with Baker.

"I didn't sell anything, but when you get your work framed, it just makes it more precious ... it was just mainly that satisfaction

See Baker, Page A3



Artist Vicki Baker was a longtime teacher in Olney.

Hotelier prevails in permit dispute

State sides with developer of new riverfront hotel

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Astorian

A controversial hotel project on the riverfront may be back on track following a ruling by the state Land Use Board of Appeals.

In an opinion in late September, the appeals board reversed a decision by the Astoria City Council to deny Hollander Hospitality's request for a one-year extension on building permits for a Fairfield Inn and Suites. The state has ordered the city to grant the request.

The appeals board argued that city leaders imposed requirements that are inconsistent with or not spelled out in the city's code in order to deny Hollander's request. The state determined the city's decision "was outside the range of discretion allowed it under its code."

Astoria is investigating an appeal, City Attorney Blair Henningsgaard said.

See Hotelier, Page A3

Pandemic knocked students off track

Astoria, Seaside saw dip among ninth graders

By ETHAN MYERS
The Astorian

Rates for on-track graduation among ninth graders in Astoria and Seaside significantly declined during last school year's pandemic disruptions.

The Oregon Department of Education released school district profiles for the 2020-21 school year that document student success at schools across the state. The data showed that 57% of ninth grade students in the Astoria School District were on track to graduate. The Seaside School District's figure was 36%.

In order for students to be on-track to graduate, they must have completed at least one-quarter of graduation requirements during their freshman year, including summer school.

See Students, Page A3



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