

Port: Agency’s focus on jobs and revenue

Continued from Page A1

The \$2 million project was funded by the Federal Aviation Administration.

While nothing is imminent, McGrath said, the Port has plans for additional ramp improvements in the coming years, along with taxiway and runway renovations.

As for the wastewater system replacement, cracks in the pipes and other issues with the older sewer infrastructure led to the intrusion of groundwater during heavy rains.

“Of course, in Astoria, and especially in Warrenton, which is primarily wetlands, there’s just a huge possibility for groundwater intrusion,” McGrath said.

The newer pressurized sanitary system, McGrath said, will be nearly impossible to infiltrate.

Big River Construction began implementing the \$400,000 project back in May, which was partially funded by a state grant.

Scoular

As part of an agreement with Warrenton, the wastewater system replacement had to be completed prior to any significant development at the Airport Industrial Park. Since the project is complete, Scoular has made progress on the foundation of their fishmeal processing plant.

The Omaha, Nebraska-based company hopes to open the plant by next summer. The plant will employ around 10 people to collect scraps from local seafood processors and turn them into pet and aquaculture food.

Scoular’s project faced several hurdles. In addition to the wastewater issues, there were concerns that the operation would attract birds near the airport.

The U.S. Coast Guard and Life Flight Network expressed worries that birds



Photos by Lydia Ely/The Astorian

Scoular hopes to open a new fishmeal processing plant by next summer.



The terminal for the Astoria Regional Airport is seen from the parking lot.

could threaten aircraft, but Scoular assured the city that seafood scraps and the fishmeal would be sealed in a space with filtered air. The company also agreed to take steps to prevent roosting on the plant’s roof.

The project also had permitting obstacles, McGrath said.

“We’ve got the city and the county to think about and then, of course, the environmental side, so a lot of boxes to check, but those are all checked,” he said.

Future of Airport Industrial Park

Since the Airport Industrial Park’s creation along the

main approach to the airport over three decades ago, the 22 acres of pastures and wetlands has remained undeveloped. But as the Port works with Business Oregon and Clatsop County, that could change.

“We kind of look at Scoular as being the lead blocker for the development at the airport,” McGrath said.

The Port has been in discussion with several businesses that are potentially interested in the industrial park, McGrath said, and the new infrastructure will make the process of adding tenants a lot smoother.

McGrath said the costs of overdue maintenance have

plagued the airport. One of the Port’s focuses is bringing in enough jobs and revenue to the industrial park to make the airport self-sustainable.

“This has been long overdue on the Port’s side. I think that we’ve let the developable land out here — we’ve just let it languish,” he said. “So now we’re really ramping up and getting to a point where we have the ability, we have the support, we have the staff to really push these development projects ahead.”

As a master plan for the next decade takes shape, the Port sees a lot of potential in the Airport Industrial Park.

“It’s nice to see that there’s not only push from the Port, but there’s a tremendous amount of support that we’re getting from the state and from the Legislature and from a lot of people around the community,” McGrath said. “... That’s not always been the case, there’s been a lot of turmoil at the Port previously.

“So it’s nice to see these projects moving ahead and us slowly climbing the ladder out of the hole.”

Hotelier: Hollander hopes to build four-story hotel

Continued from Page A1

“The ramifications include the requirement that the city interpret its ordinance the way that LUBA did, but it is not clear from either opinion exactly what that means,” he said.

Mark Hollander, the president and CEO of Hollander Hospitality, could not be reached for comment.

Hollander hopes to build a four-story, 90-room Hilton-brand hotel at the base of Second Street on the site of the former Ship Inn restaurant.

But the proposal from the Bellingham, Washington, hotel management company caused consternation among some in the community who questioned the need for another large, chain hotel along the waterfront and worried about the impact to river views. Hearings on the hotel occurred as the city revived discussions about tighter development rules for riverfront properties.

The City Council approved Hollander’s proj-



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Hollander Hospitality wants to build a Fairfield Inn and Suites at the former location of The Ship Inn.

ect at the end of 2018. The company applied for a one-year extension before permits related to the hotel were set to expire last December, but was denied. Hollander appealed the matter to the Land Use Board of Appeals, which sent the decision back to the City Council for review. City councilors again denied Hollander’s request, so the company again appealed to the state.

In arguments before the

appeals board, Hollander claimed poor economic conditions tied to the coronavirus pandemic were a factor in the request for a permit extension. Hollander also expressed concern about shifting city codes and expectations for waterfront development. Hollander wanted to pause plans for the hotel to better evaluate the implications of the city’s new codes.

The city pushed back against Hollander’s assertion of economic hardship. Henningsgaard argued that Hollander applied for the extension before the full economic force of the pandemic could be felt and had done nothing to advance construction at the site for more than a year prior to the request for an extension.

At the same time, other hotel projects in Astoria continued to move forward, Henningsgaard noted.

In the earlier decision the state had sent back to the City Council, the appeals board said the city needed to address Hollander’s argument about poor market conditions. To compare the project to other hotel projects which continued to progress even during the pandemic — such as the Bowline Hotel, which involved the renovation of an old fish processing building near Buoy Beer Co. — was not relevant, the state said.

Baker: Her style explores shapes and bright colors

Continued from Page A1

of presenting something you have worked on and letting other people see it,” she said. “That has really been my motivation for showing and selling art, is just to share what I’m doing and hopefully some people will enjoy it.”

While she will always value the creative process of printmaking, Baker eventually discovered her love for painting and has stuck with it ever since.

Baker’s impressionistic style explores shapes and bright colors.

“A lot of people find my work emotional. They immediately make up a story to go with it. And even

if that’s not really what I was doing when I created it, I love hearing that kind of response,” she said.

Doing art has allowed Baker to be engaged with the community in many ways. She is a member of Tempo Gallery, a local collective of artists. She has also been a part of Trails End Art Association in Gearhart for over two decades.

Over the course of her self-taught art career, Baker has been influenced by a number of people and things, but one source stands out the most.

“I loved creating art with kids. It’s just so fresh,” she said. “I would say that their art was really an inspiration to me to be much freer with my own art.”



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

The coronavirus pandemic disrupted on-track graduation rates for ninth graders in Astoria and Seaside.

Students: Programs developed to help get students back on track

Continued from Page A1

The rate across Oregon last school year was 74%. The rates in Astoria and Seaside were regularly higher before the pandemic.

“The 57% doesn’t surprise me,” Astoria Superintendent Craig Hoppes said. “The majority of our high school kids were not in session last year, so when kids are not in school, we have a hard time engaging them. That’s what those numbers tell us. It was hard for kids to be able to learn at home.”

Hoppes said the school district is implementing programs to work with students to get them back on track after a tumultuous year of coronavirus restrictions.

“The way I frame the (numbers) is we need to get kids in school — at school — and we can help and support them when they are in-person a lot better than we can do remotely,” he said.

Seaside Superintendent Susan Penrod could not be reached for comment.

The other school districts in the county had higher on-track graduation rates. Seventy percent of ninth graders in the Warrenton-Hammond School District were on-track to graduate last school year.

Warrenton-Hammond Superintendent Tom Rogozinski called that number “moderately disappointing,” but understood how they got there.

“(It’s) pretty consistent

with what we expected,” he said. “It’s hard to know — from a program evaluation standpoint with the pandemic influence — what to make of the data. We are putting some programs in place to mitigate some of the more disappointing parts of that data.”

The Knappa School District’s figure was the highest in the county at 90%.

“We’re very pleased to see those (numbers),” Knappa Superintendent Bill Fritz said. “We attribute that to the good work of our high school team. We have a team of teachers that work together — it’s called our high school on-track team — and they look at each individual student and make sure that they’re making appropriate progress and if they are struggling they reach out to the students and families to try to figure out how to help them get back in line with their academic learning.”

Jewell School District did not have enough students to qualify for an on-track graduation rate for ninth graders.

Although the rates for on-track graduation among ninth graders took a hit during the pandemic, on-time graduation rates for seniors continue to improve. That figure was 91% in Astoria, 74% in Warrenton-Hammond, 93% in Knappa, 80% in Seaside and 100% in Jewell.

The graduation rate across Oregon was 83% last school year.

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