

# the Astorian

149TH YEAR, NO. 80

DailyAstorian.com // TUESDAY, JANUARY 4, 2022

\$1.50

## In Cannon Beach, distinctive tsunami sirens need a new owner

Maintenance and upgrades are costly for the famous 'mooring' warning system

By NICOLE BALES  
*The Astorian*

**C**ANNON BEACH — The city's famous "mooring" tsunami warning sirens are in need of a new owner.

The Cannon Beach Rural Fire Protection District, which installed the Community Warning System — known as COWS — in the 1980s, has decided to move away from managing the system.

Fire Chief Marc Reckmann said maintenance and upgrades are costly, making it unsustainable for the fire district to continue to own and operate the seven 40-foot tall siren towers around Cannon Beach and Arch Cape.

"It is outside of the district's responsibility to manage those and maintain them," he said. "Emergency management does not fall within a fire district. It falls within a city and a county."

The fire district's board agreed to start trying to shift the responsibility to the city or county. In the meantime, Reckmann said the fire district will continue to broadcast the iconic mooring sound on the first Wednesday of every month.

Picked as a playful joke by the late fire district board member Alfred Aya Jr., the mooring sound is a riff off of the system's acronym.

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Photos by Lydia Ely/The Astorian

**ABOVE: 'Mooring' sirens warn against tsunamis in Cannon Beach. RIGHT: A tsunami evacuation sign near Haystack Rock points beachgoers uphill.**



## Shipping troubles snarl ag exports

Delays lead to increased costs

By GEORGE PLAVERN  
*Capital Press*

**TANGENT** — As congestion at ocean ports along the West Coast has continued, Alexis Jacobson has seen her schedule thrown into chaos.

Jacobson is the international sales manager for BOSSCO Trading, a company based in Tangent that sells grass straw from farms around the Willamette Valley to customers in Japan and South Korea. The straw is used as feed for beef and dairy cattle.

Under normal circumstances, Jacobson spends roughly an hour a day working with ocean carriers to ensure their cargo makes it aboard ships bound for Asia.

That was before COVID-19 inflamed a nationwide shipping crisis that has snarled ports, catapulted costs and left agricultural exporters scrambling for options.

"We're constantly making a plan, and then changing that plan because of circumstances out of our control," said Jacobson, who now spends most of her time each day calling audibles whenever a vessel is late or the booking is canceled. Timetables are constantly in flux, and often change with only a few days' notice.

BOSSCO Trading is hardly alone. Just about every Northwest farm exporter — from Oregon hazelnuts to Washington state apples to Idaho potatoes — is feeling the pinch.

Shipping containers that once sat on the docks for three to eight days are now waiting a month or longer to be loaded onto vessels, depending on their destination.

In some cases, carriers are foregoing Asia-bound exports altogether, opting instead to send empty containers back to Asia, where they are loaded with higher-priced merchandise such as clothing, footwear and kitchen appliances. Critics of the practice describe it as a money grab, with the industry reporting record profits this year of more than \$200 billion.

The price of shipping exports from the U.S. is also skyrocketing. Jacobson said general rates that once ran \$400 to \$500 per container are now as high as \$2,000 to \$2,500.

While that added cost can be tacked onto the prices of most consumer goods, farmers are largely price-takers, meaning they cannot pass along higher costs.

Peter Friedmann, the executive director of the Agriculture Transportation Coalition, a trade group in Washington, D.C., that represents U.S. agricultural exporters, said he has heard from at least one member — a hay grower in Washington — who did not bother cutting hay for the first time because he could not get his product through the ports.

Delayed and canceled shipments hurt

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## A ruby holds a message of hope

After her brother's death, Fairless hopes to raise awareness

By R.J. MARX  
*The Astorian*

**A**ruby is helping Angela Fairless make sense of grief.

After two tours of military duty and struggling with his war-related injuries, as well as the difficulty of reentering civilian life, her brother, Curtis Fairless, took his own life on Dec. 16, 2018.

Angela Fairless and Lutheran Community Services Northwest will use proceeds from the sale of a ruby her brother purchased at an

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people

Afghan market to drive awareness to Afghan refugees seeking to settle in this country. Lutheran Community Services Northwest has been asked to resettle an estimated 550 emergency evacuees. The group launched a \$2.5 million campaign to help refugees find stability in the northwest.

Fairless hopes her brother's memory will draw attention to the impacts of war, not only on civilians, but on the soldiers on the battlefield.

"We don't hear the cries of the children dying of war," she said. "Curtis was struggling with his

part in that. We see this with veterans of all wars. They start to recognize that they have more in common with the pawns on the other side than the generals on their own side."

**Military hero, yet struggling**

Curtis Fairless was two years older and one grade higher than his sister, a good student and athlete who graduated before he was 18. He went directly into the U.S. Marine Corps after graduation from Seaside High School. After 9/11, he served on the front lines of the Iraq invasion as a mortarman in the infantry.

When a rocket-propelled grenade hit the Humvee he was driving, he took shrapnel to the head and was transported to Kuwait. Since he was at the end of his



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Angela Fairless and her brother, Curtis.

