

PENINSULA BURNING

‘Fire!’ exhibit highlights history, losses and evolving technology

BY REBECCA LEXA

Living along the Pacific coast, the destructive forces of nature people tend to think about most are storms and floods—and, of course, tsunamis. But fires have also been a constant presence in the Columbia-Pacific region, including lightning-strike wildfires, controlled vegetation burns by Indigenous people, and more recent conflagrations that destroyed entire homes, hotels and other buildings.

These structural fires are the focus of “Fire!,” the Columbia Pacific Heritage Museum’s latest exhibit, on view now.

In a span of a century, several significant fires tore through hotels, canneries and other businesses; the exhibit highlights thirteen of the most notable.

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‘Fire!’ exhibit

Open now through Feb. 26

Columbia Pacific Heritage Museum

115 Lake St. SE, Ilwaco

Open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday

www.columbiapacificheritagemuseum.org or 360-642-3446



Curator Betsy Millard speaks about the exhibit.

Rebecca Lexa



Members of the Ilwaco Fire Department in 1950.

Columbia Pacific Heritage Museum



The Sore Thumb Tavern after a fire in 1982.

Frank Lehn

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