



»INSIDE

# Astorian

149TH YEAR, NO. 125

DailyAstorian.com // TUESDAY, APRIL 19, 2022

\$1.50

## Timber baron jumps into Oregon politics

A \$200,000 donation to Johnson

By GARY WARNER  
Oregon Capital Bureau

A California timber baron who is the nation's largest landowner has jumped into Oregon politics with big contributions to campaigns seeking to wrest control of state government from Democrats.

Sierra Pacific Industries contributed \$200,000 in April to Betsy Johnson, the former Democratic state senator from Scappoose, who is running as an unaffiliated candidate for governor. It's the third largest single contribution that makes up the more than \$6.2 million Johnson has raised so far.

The company also gave \$250,000 in February to Bring Balance to Salem, a political action committee formed late last year that has raised \$1.6 million. The contributions have come primarily in large sums given by timber, construction and other companies.

Sierra Pacific is one of the four largest single givers, along with Oregon-based wood products companies The Swanson Group, Roseburg Forest Products, and Murphy Co. The PAC has hired former congressman Greg Walden, a Hood River Republican, as a consultant.

Oregon is one of five states that has no limits on the amount of contributions from individuals, companies, unions, groups or other entities. An exception: contributions to congressional campaigns are controlled by the Federal Election Commission.

Sierra Pacific Industries is owned by Archie Aldis "Red" Emmerson, 93, who lives in Redding, California. The company's total land holdings are 2.3 million acres in California, Washington state and Oregon, according to The Land Report, a Dallas-based magazine covering property ownership.

See Timber baron, Page A6



Lydia Ely/The Astorian

The Gearhart firehouse on Pacific Way.

## Voters in Gearhart to decide on new firehouse

A \$14.5 million bond measure on the May ballot

By R.J. MARX  
The Astorian

**G**EARHART — Voters in the May election could finally settle the question of whether the city should build a new firehouse.

Measure 4-213 would authorize \$14.5 million in bond financing for a fire and police station on 2 acres off Highlands Lane along U.S. Highway 101. The new station would replace the aging firehouse on Pacific Way.

The city must receive approval from the state Department of Land Conservation and Development to bring the land into the city's urban growth boundary. As part of a land transfer with the city, developers of The Cottages at Gearhart LLC would transfer two lots for a firehouse and park and benefit from the rezoning of a planned residential subdivision at a higher density.

If the bond measure is approved,

the money would be used for capital construction costs to build, equip and furnish the 13,000-square-foot station. While financing scenarios have not been decided, the city estimates the bonds would cost property owners \$1.213 per \$1,000 assessed value per year for up to 20 years. On a home with an assessed value of \$100,000, the levy for the fire and police station would be \$121 a per year. On a property with an assessed value of \$388,000, the levy would be \$470 per year; with an assessed value of \$500,000, slightly more than \$600 per year.

City Councilor Brent Warren said he is confident the majority of residents appreciate the dedication of emergency responders and their families. "We cannot afford any further delays in providing them with a modern and safe fire/police station," he said. "The longer we delay, the more it is going to cost all of us."

Opponents say the location is wrong, the site is oversized and, in any case, would fail to protect against the largest tsunamis.

Joy Sigler, a resident and business

owner, asked residents to prioritize community needs.

"Voting 'no' will alert this council and city manager that they are squandering an excellent opportunity to be a self-sufficient city," she said. "They must do better for its citizens and we must be deliberate in educating them to have a vision that creates community for both sides of the highway while enabling the Gearhart Volunteer Fire Department to perform efficiently."

The city's fire department has two full-time employees, one intern and 27 volunteer firefighters. The firehouse on Pacific Way, constructed in 1958 and expanded in 1966, is considered at risk in a significant earthquake and tsunami. The new station, which would be on land considered more resilient in a tsunami, would include storage, a day room, kitchen, restrooms, showers and an office for the police department.

The vote will come after a protracted debate in the community.

Voters rejected a measure to fund a new firehouse and City Hall in 2006. Since then, city staff, firefighters and residents have continued to recognize the urgency.

See Firehouse, Page A6



## Brownsmead woman launches collective action group

Donations will go to local nonprofits

By NICOLE BALES  
The Astorian

**W**hen Jan Johnson heard of 100 Women Who Care, she knew she wanted to bring the idea to Clatsop County.

The collective action group has chapters throughout the world. Earlier this year, Johnson, an author and former teacher from Brownsmead, launched a local chapter.

The group will meet four times a year to listen to presentations from three local nonprofits nominated by members. One nonprofit will be selected each quarter, and members will each donate \$100 to the cause.

Johnson said the key question for people interested in joining the group is: "Do you feel like what you are giving is not enough to really help that



Jan Johnson

**EVERYDAY**  
people

organization?"

Johnson has experience fundraising for local nonprofits. She and her husband, Ed, helped found the Knappa School Foundation. She thinks the group has an opportunity to make a big impact.

"I'd like to be able to

facilitate \$40,000 a year to local nonprofits and to build a community," Johnson said. "I think when you live a life of giving, you feel good. It makes you happy."

Johnson said there will be a theme each quarter, starting with arts and culture. Other themes will include the environment, women and children and homelessness and mental health.

Members will be able to nominate organizations, and then there will be a vote to narrow them down to three. A steering committee will vet the nonprofits.

Johnson said that each nonprofit will be invited to give a presentation. Afterward, members will vote for one that will receive donations directly at the meeting.

See Johnson, Page A6

**Coast River BUSINESS JOURNAL**

»INSIDE

Lydia Ely/The Astorian

As the pandemic has shifted the attention on local businesses and the baby boomer generation retires, many businesses have begun the succession process. Coast River Business Journal spoke with business across the coast, including Van Dusen Beverages in Astoria. Winnie Van Dusen, 3, seen here, hits the gas pedal on her new toy car, a present from her grandfather, Willis Van Dusen, left, at Van Dusen Beverages.

Real Estate • Equipment • Working Capital  
All Types of Commercial and Business Financing  
New Bank • Call us today  
360.642.1887 503.891.8555

**SUCCESSION**

»INSIDE

Lydia Ely/The Astorian

As the pandemic has shifted the attention on local businesses and the baby boomer generation retires, many businesses have begun the succession process. Coast River Business Journal spoke with business across the coast, including Van Dusen Beverages in Astoria. Winnie Van Dusen, 3, seen here, hits the gas pedal on her new toy car, a present from her grandfather, Willis Van Dusen, left, at Van Dusen Beverages.

