

PORT

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tract early this year with a new, shorter due diligence period. The new deadline is July 6, but the port could take action and buy the property before then, McElwee said.

The lower Hanel Mill is the last piece of the Hanel Family's mill land holdings in Hood River County. The rest has been sold off over the last two decades to light industrial businesses including Mt. Hood Forest Products and Cardinal Glass.

The final lot remains va-

cant except for a 20,000-square-foot building and a 50,000-square-foot building, previously used for storage and offices. Stray rubble and piles of wood litter the scene.

Because it was half-century-old mill with an unknown history of environmental practices, the Port took months to analyze the property, teaming up with environmental and utility specialists.

Anne Medenbach, Port Development and Property Manager, said the team found no hazardous material in the soil, just an abundance of sawdust.

"Now we're to the point where we can move forward with the property in a clean

state, once we're through with our final cleanup projects, and we can move forward with site development," said Medenbach.

The port will now need to install basic utilities and clean up the lot and grading and other groundwork before the land will be considered "saleable." They will also need to clarify the layout of each legal zone they are looking to parcel out for business purposes.

McElwee said the property is significant because light industrial businesses have limited options within the Hood River Port District.

"We're so tight here ... there's not a good place to do it on the waterfront or down-

town, so this is the next closest, best place," said McElwee.

If the sale closes, the Hanel property will become one of two properties the port owns in Odell. In 1990, the port developed John Weber Business Park, located on Eagle Loop, but the port now only owns one building, which is currently the site of operations for Wyeast Laboratories.

McElwee said the port has been in communication with businesses that are looking to possibly locate in their new property. However, the port has not yet publicly named any of the businesses.



Photo by Patrick Mulvihill

THE PORT OF HOOD RIVER is planning to purchase the former site of the lower Hanel Mill in Odell by July 6. The 9.3-acre property, visible from Highway 35 just before entering Odell, is zoned light industrial and is planned to be used by the port for economic development purposes.

MERKLEY

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NCLB practice of branding schools as failures if one or more testing sub-groups comes short of benchmarks.

"We'll see an elimination of high stakes testing," under forthcoming legislation being developed by Washington Sen. Patty Murray and Sen. Lamar Alexander of Tennessee, chair of the Health and Education Committee.

To applause, Merkley said, "We have heard from the northern, western, eastern and southern states, urban and rural, and the concerns have been similar: there needs to be a diminishment of high stakes testing."

Garcia, who was born in Oregon, asked what Merkley could do to help children of undocumented residents achieve accepted status to legally work and receive government college financial aid.

Merkley said that people such as Garcia "have known no other country than the U.S., and I want to see them thrive and to get rid of the shadow economy."

"It is important to reach out to your elected," Merkley said, especially those in the House, where immigration reform legislation he supported in 2010 went down

without a vote.

"Keep pushing to say this should be a top priority," he said.

Boonstra told Merkley that she and other members of the HRVHS Climate Change Club "are trying to raise a sense of urgency on this issue."

"We want to hear what you are going to do and what we as a community can do," said Boonstra, who is also a member of the Gorge Climate Change Action Network.

Merkley said climate change is affecting the health of forests, oceans, agriculture, and humans, pointing to the rise of pine beetle populations and increased evidence that ocean acidity caused by carbon dioxide is inhibiting baby oysters from developing shells.

"Baby oysters are our canary in the coal mine. If this is happening in our oceans, we have to ask what else is affected that we have not seen yet," he said.

He thanked Boonstra for speaking, and said, "Our young people are more and more aware of this problem, but we can't wait to act until they're holding office at age 40 or 50. We have to act now." He said he supports the EPA Clean Power Plan, designed to phase out coal-based power plants and replace them with those using alternative energy.



ABOUT 75 people filled cafeteria tables at Hood River Middle School Monday to hear Sen. Jeff Merkley. Criticizing the Citizens United decision by the Supreme Court and billion-dollar elections influence by the Koch brothers, Merkley said, "We are a nation of government 'of the people,' not 'of the titans.' I will do all I can to save our vision of 'of the people' pathways."

Saying "the fossil fuel industry has sunk its teeth deep into Capitol Hill," Merkley called for an end to fossil fuel subsidies, saying "we need to take the oil subsidies and convert them to subsidies for renewable energy sources."

Merkley met for a half-hour prior to the town hall with officials from the cities and ports of Hood River and Cascade Locks, Hood River County, Hood River County School District, and Colum-

bia Gorge Community College. Several citizens sat in, as the meeting was publicly-notified as a special meeting, given the likelihood of a quorum by several elected bodies.

In that session, Merkley praised local efforts to oppose rail transport of coal and oil, and said he feels it is likely Congress will pass a two-year extension of the Secure Schools legislation, aka "county payments," used for schools, public safety and

roads in timber-based counties.

"It's critical," County Commission president Ron Rivers told Merkley.

Merkley, who credited U.S. Rep. Greg Walden (R-2nd District) of Hood River with reviving the Secure Schools legislation, said, "I'm optimistic but (the funding) is only part of the story; the other point is sustainable forest management," a point he later reiterated during the town hall.

In both the special meeting and town hall sessions he also repeated criticism of the currently proposed federal budget, in that it contains no funding for transportation, and includes cuts to Medicare, Head Start, STIP (food stamps) and college Pell grants.

"In terms of a foundation for supporting low-income families and the struggling middle class, I give (the budget) an 'F,'" Merkley said.

BLOSSOM

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The 22nd annual Parkdale Fire Department Casino Night starts April 18 at 5:30 p.m. This is a 21-and-over event; admission is \$20 and includes dinner and \$50 in chips, and admission to the beer and wine garden. Local rides home are provided.

Valuable prizes are given to the top players and there are also a couple of separate raffles and a general raffle (included in the price of admission) at the end of the evening. This long-standing Blossom tradition is the department's only fund raiser of the year.

Prizes include: an iPad, one night stay at the Cooper Spur Inn, \$250 gift certificate at McClass's store, \$425 gift certificate for automotive service at Green Tree Auto, and other gift certificates and prizes, both large and small.

Also happening April 18-19 are several other traditional Blossom Time events: West Side Fire Department All You Can Eat Pancake Breakfast, Parkdale Grange Blossom Dinner, Asbury United Methodist-Our Redeemer Church bazaar, and Apple Valley BBQ dessert party.

Details on these events, and many more, will be found in this weekend's Panorama special section.

As part of Blossom Time, On April 15 at 7 p.m. photographer Peter Marbach and author Janet Cook will do a book signing for their new book "Columbia River Gorge" as part of a public presentation, "Wild at Heart in The Columbia River Gorge", at Columbia Center for the Arts, 213 Cascade Ave.

The full-color book was printed in Hood River by Columbia Gorge Press. Doors open 6:30, presentation starts at 7 p.m.

The book will be pre-viewed April 10, 11, and 12 during Gorge Artists Open Studio Tour, with Marbach

hosting a stop for the first time, at his Eliot Drive studio.

Marbach and Cook, who is The Gorge magazine editor, collaborated on a book for the 25th anniversary of the Scenic Act four years ago, but publisher Beautiful America has since gone out of business.

"It was unfortunate because it was a labor of love, and we were looking at ways to revive it," Marbach said. This is their fourth collaboration over the past 10 years.

Marbach did a 2015 calendar with Columbia Gorge Press (for sale locally including Hood River News), which helped lead to the new book.

"When that turned out so well, I approached Tony Methvin (CG Press manager) and we were able to do the book together, too," Marbach said.

"For me it was really important to do this again and to keep the legacy alive that Janet worked so hard," Marbach said.

Leos collect shoes for 'Soles4Souls' campaign

Hood River Valley High School Leos Club has launched a drive to help Soles4Souls reach its goal of collecting one million pairs of shoes in the Pair It Forward campaign.

The campaign is aimed at diverting used shoes away from landfills and toward creating a source of revenue for micro-entrepreneurs in developing nations.

Used and new shoes can be dropped off at select locations listed below anytime between April 1 and April 14:

Westside and May Street elementary, Wy'east and Hood River middle schools, Mosier Community School, Bright Beginnings, HRVHS, Doug's, Columbia River Insurance, Shortt Supply, and The Next Door.

HARD PRESSED CIDER FEST BASICS

When: Saturday, April 11

Where: 3315 Stadelman Drive, Odell

Hours: Noon-7 p.m.

Cost: Entry tickets: \$5 (ages 14 and under are free); Branded cider glass and 4 drink tokens: \$5

Tickets: www.brownpaper tickets.com/event/1337580

This is the updated list of cideries expected at the festival, as of April 6.

Atlas Hard Cider (Bend)
Bull Run Cider (Forest Grove)
Carlton Cyderworks (Carlton)

Cider Riot! (Portland)
Fox-Tail Cider (Hood River)
Gorge Cyder House (Hood River)

Hood Valley Hard Cider Co. (Parkdale)
HR Ciderworks (Hood River)
Jester and Judge Ciderworks (Stevenson)

Neigel Vintners Cider (East Wenatchee, Wash.)
Portland Cider Co. (Oregon City)

Rack & Cloth (Mosier)
Reverend Nat's Hard Cider (Portland)
Rivercider (Hood River)
Rogue Cider (Newport)

Schilling Cider (Auburn, Wash.)
Seattle Cider Company (Seattle, Wash.)

The Gorge White House (Hood River)
Tieton Cider Works (Yakima, Wash.)

2 Towns Ciderhouse (Corvallis)
Wandering Aengus (Salem)

Cider Fest signs will be placed at Exit 64 for directions. Visit www.hoodriver.org for more details.

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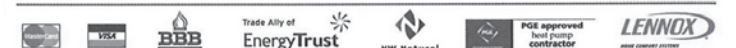
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