

A 'Natural' fit with shoppers

Ice cream social lures residents on grocer's opening day

BY CINDY YINGST
The Columbia Press

The lure of ice cream, muffins and a chance to win free groceries brought hundreds of shoppers to Youngs Bay Plaza for Natural Grocers' two-day grand opening.

The all-organic GMO- and hormone-free food seller's 21,800-square-foot Warrenton store was much anticipated.

"It's a lovely store," said Sandy Van Meer of Astoria, who was sampling elk and black-bean sliders from the catered spread set up in the education center at the back of the store. "It's all delicious."

As more people opt for healthier lifestyles, choice is essential, Van Meer said. "I love the (Astoria) Co-op, but it's not as convenient for a lot of people who live out this way."

Jessica Harris drove in from Cannon Beach for the grand opening.

"I'm impressed with the selection and it's a beautiful set-up. And they have snacks, so that's great," Harris said as she searched through the health and beauty aisles. "They've got a good variety of price ranges – they've got products from \$6 to \$22 for face wash."

Lilly Bermudez of Seaside, who was shopping in the grocery aisles, has made trips to Portland in search of healthful prod-

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Above: A worker prepares to install the grocery store's sign last Friday.

Left: Shoppers comb the grocery aisles at the Tuesday night opening.

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Voters will be asked to keep police position

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Residents will be asked in May to continue paying for a Warrenton police officer position.

The funding would come from the extension of a property tax levy first passed in 1999.

Warrenton Police Department has seven officers and, should the levy fail, at least one officer position would be cut.

"There is not some magic pot of money," Mayor Henry Balensifer said at Tuesday night's City Commission meeting. "This will end in some real cuts if we don't have this levy."

Home owners currently pay 28 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value, or \$56 per year on a home valued at \$200,000. If approved, that would continue until 2024. The current levy ends in June 2019.

"We feel that continuing at 28 cents is reasonable," City Manager Linda Engbretson said. "And thought it best to go out (for the vote) in spring rather than try to compete with whatever is on the November ballot."

Two bond measures are expected to face voters in November.

Warrenton-Hammond School District is likely to approve placing a long-range

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City Commissioners Pam Ackley and Mark Baldwin review details of an apartment project appeal Tuesday night.

Tide changes in Eighth Street Dam controversy

The Columbia Press

State law precludes Warrenton from replacing the old tide gates removed from the Eighth Street Dam in 2015, the state's top fish passage expert told city leaders Tuesday.

"We have a long history in this state of fish-passage challenges," said Greg Apke, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's state-wide fish passage program leader.

Oregon's laws governing tide gates

date to 1859, when it became a state.

All older tide gates – and Oregon has more than 1,200 -- were grandfathered in. But anytime there is significant change, such as new construction or major maintenance, the state has the authority to require fish-friendly tide gates or their total removal, Apke told city commissioners.

"There's not a tide gate in Oregon that doesn't pose a problem for fish," he said. "I've yet in my 25 years seen a

tide gate that is fully compliant with fish passage."

And the gate connected to the Eighth Street Dam was among the worst, with top hinges that make fish passage nearly impossible, he said.

"Tide gates have a function, don't get me wrong," Apke said. "I might represent fish, but I'm also a farmer."

He recently worked with a farmer in Nehalem who had to replace a

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