

New flagpole makes best of a bad situation

The Columbia Press

Five city employees were honored this week for their foresight in saving a piece of history and, well, turning it into something cool.

They came up with a plan last July after Western Skies, a fishing boat that had been abandoned at Warrenton Marina, sunk in its mooring slip. They did an emergency vessel seizure, pulled the boat out of the water, sal-

vaged what they could and demolished what was left.

The mast was turned into a flagpole, which was installed next to the marina offices earlier this month.

Mayor Henry Balensifer presented certificates of appreciation Tuesday to Harbormaster Jane Sweet and marina employees Mike Olson, Kim Davis, Anthony Wirt and Jessica McDonald.



Photos courtesy city of Warrenton



Home prices up as region struggles to meet demand

BY CINDY YINGST
The Columbia Press

Home sales rose 22 percent countywide during the past year, although sales in Warrenton and Hammond were down, according to the Clatsop Association of Realtors' multiple listing service.

Some areas of the county, such as Arch Cape and Surf Pines, saw huge increases during the past year. Other areas, including Warrenton and Hammond, show future promise.

Home prices rose 16 and 15 percent in Warrenton and Hammond, respectively.

"Supply and demand is totally askew," said Pam Ackley, a real estate broker and member of the Warrenton City Commission. "Demand is so much higher than supply. We can't keep up."

She gave a report this week to the city commission linking a lack of affordable housing to plans for the Northwest Kinder Ready Preschool Collaborative, which aims to provide free preschool for children from low-income households.

Walmart, in the process of hiring 300 em-

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Oregon's invasive tree could be boon for wood products market

BY NICK HOUTMAN
Oregon State University

An invasive tree that has spread widely across parts of Oregon could become a lucrative wood product commodity, according to scientists at Oregon State University in Corvallis.

They conducted tests on western juniper lumber and the results were accepted in February by the American Lumber Standards Committee, a nonprofit organization whose accreditation program forms the basis for the sale of most softwood lumber

in North America. Acceptance means that, for the first time, western juniper will be listed in the National Design Specification for Wood Construction, the handbook used by engineers and buyers to select wood for applications from sign posts to houses.

Increased use of western juniper could lead to new markets for the trees that are being cut to restore sagebrush and rangelands in the West.

"I've gotten calls from people in transportation departments who wanted to use western juniper for



Photo courtesy OSU

A western juniper tree is silhouetted against the setting sun near Madras. "signposts or guardrail blocks," said

Scott Leavengood, director of the Oregon Wood Innovation Center at Oregon State. "But when they checked the design specification book, they'd discover that western juniper isn't even mentioned, so they couldn't use it."

But now the testing has been done and it's listed.

Western juniper occupied about 1.5 million acres in Oregon in 1900 but has expanded to nearly 10 million acres today, said Dylan Kruse of Sustainable Northwest, a nonprofit orga-

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