

ROCKING DOWN THE HIGHWAY

Rocks headed to major construction project in Ilwaco

By CINDY YINGST
The Columbia Press

“There will always be rocks in the road ahead of us,” philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche once wrote.

If you’ve been driving around Warrenton lately, there’s a good chance they’ve been in front of you, too.

As many as 40 truckloads of rocks are making their way through town each day.

They’re headed to the North Jetty in Ilwaco, where the Army Corps of Engineers has begun a massive restabilization project.

But where have the rocks been?

“We started out hauling rocks from our brake quarry in Youngs River near the falls,” said Mike Sarin, president of Big River Construction.

In mid-July, the rocks began arriving at Warrenton Fiber/Nygaard Logging on Northwest 13th Street. They’re coming in by barge from the Bellingham, Wash., area.

Big River is working as a sub-contractor for J.E. McAmis, a heavy civil marine contractor from Chico, Calif., which won the jetty restabilization contract.

Eight to 10 Big River tractor-trailers are making four to five rock hauls a day from Warrenton to Ilwaco. The rocks weigh 6 to 30 tons each, which is why some trucks carry only one boulder and others may have up to four.

“It’s a good job,” Sarin said. “It’s a little bit outside of what we normally do as far as hauling for hire for someone else. But we are doing



Above: A Big River Excavating employee checks his load outside Nygaard Logging before heading to the highway.

Left: Four rocks rest on the back of a big rig making its way down Northwest Warrenton Drive.

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the same thing out of our quarries. It’s a good project for us.”

The 17-year-old Big River Construction is the largest excavating contractor in Clatsop County and has 50 employees.

The company also does heavy civil engineering work as well as commercial site work and excavating. Some of their projects include site/fill work and utilities for Astoria Ford, installing lines at the Wauna Mill and moving 150,000 yards of dirt for the Astoria Sports Complex.

Both North and South jetties were built between 1885 and 1939 to make passage safer for vessels entering the Columbia River from the ocean.

The North Jetty project is expected to be complete near the end of 2019.

Then South Jetty reconstruction will begin and go through 2023.

“The jetties are regularly pounded by Pacific Ocean waves between 10 and 20 feet high, with winter storms bringing extreme waves in excess of 30 feet,” the Army Corps wrote in its notes about the project. “Over the years, many areas of each jetty were severely damaged by these waves. Increased storm activity and the loss of the shoaling sand upon which the jetties are built have taken a toll on the structural integrity of the jetties.”

Should a major storm breach a critical section, sand could be deposited into the navigation channel, potentially shutting down commercial shipping, according to the agency.

This weekend

Company sponsors Strongman Challenge

Lifting Large, a Warrenton-based weightlifting supply company, is sponsoring the second annual Columbia River Strongman Challenge on Aug. 25.

Local men and women will compete in five weight classes at the company’s headquarters, 150 N.E. Fifth St. The contest starts at 9:30 a.m.

Events include a fat-bar deadlift for maximum weight, a farmer’s walk for time with weights up to 400 pounds, a weighted sled pull with 2-inch rope hand-over-hand.

The contest is open to anyone 16 and older.

For more information or to find an entry form, go online to liftinglarge.com/CRS.

Hammond basin soon will go to city

The Army Corps of Engineers seeks public comment on plans to transfer the Hammond Boat Basin to the city of Warrenton.

After the transfer, the city assumes full responsibility for operating and maintaining the channel and breakwater.

City officials, who support the idea and have been working on the transfer for several years, see it as an opportunity to increase business and recreation at the marina and to have better control over its management.

Those wanting to comment should review two documents, the environmental assessment and the finding of no significant impact statement.

Both can be found in the corps’ digital library on the website at nwp.usace.army.mil/notices/permit-application.

Submit comments to the corps by Sept. 6 by email to suzanne.hill@usace.army.mil or by mail to Suzanne Hill, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, P.O. Box 2946, Portland OR 97208.

Artsy intentions? Apply for Arts Council seat

Applications are being sought for three openings on the Clatsop County Arts Council.

The volunteer citizen committee’s mission is to support, promote and ad-

vocate for the arts in Clatsop County.

Membership is open to county residents or property owners, or those who own a business or rent studio space in the county.

Applications are available online at www.co.clatsop.or.us, at the Clatsop County Manager’s Office at 800 Exchange St., Suite 410, Astoria or by calling 503-325-1000. The appointment will be made by the Board of County Commissioners. Deadline is Sept. 7.