

## Sheriff: Jail bond could benefit Warrenton police

BY CINDY YINGST  
The Columbia Press

Warrenton Police Department could use some of the offices at Clatsop County's new jail facility should the \$20 million bond pass in November.

"We have some room out there that's not being used," Sheriff Tom Bergin told city commissioners Tuesday night. "There's a lot of ways we can work together and combine resources."

The county's current jail in downtown Astoria, built in the late '70s, holds 60 inmates. With 2,500 bookings per year, it has meant a continual release of those deemed less serious offenders and a revolving door in the local courts, said Lt. Matt Phillips, jail commander.

Often, arrestees are released early due to jail crowding with a requirement to appear at court, Phillips said. If they fail to appear, the court issues a warrant for their arrest. The subject eventually is arrested and taken to the jail, where he or she is released because of crowding.

Sometimes inmates are released before officers are finished with the

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Cindy Yingst/The Columbia Press

Sheriff Tom Bergin, left, and Lt. Matt Phillips, jail commander, talk to Warren-ton City Commissioners about the jail bond on Tuesday.



Cindy Yingst/The Columbia Press

Music teacher Mike McClure leads first-period band at Warrenton High School.

## Building a winning band. And choir.

BY CINDY YINGST  
The Columbia Press

Warrenton High School's band has placed first or second in its league in every statewide competition for 12 years running.

It's an accomplishment that takes drive and vigilance to maintain.

As the school year begins, music teacher Michael McClure will attempt to make champions of his charges, some of whom can't read music at the start of the year.

"To me, music isn't competitive. It's about sharing," McClure said. "Our job as musicians is to learn our craft and share it with people. To make the world a better place because of it."

"I want to turn out students who will play their whole lives or have a deep appreciation for the arts their whole lives."

He has 213 band/orchestra students in grades 5 through 12, 35 high school choir students and 20 students in jazz band, a dedicated group that meets at 7 a.m., before many students even roll out of bed. His wife, seventh-grade math teacher Amanda McClure, teaches choir at the grade school.

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## Sunset Empire transit drivers, mechanics unionize

The Columbia Press

Drivers and mechanics for the local transit agency have formed a union.

Sunset Empire Transportation District workers were certified by the Oregon Employment Relations Board through a card check process, which showed 65 percent of eligible workers had signed authorization cards to join Amalgamated Transit Union Local 757. All 19 Sunset Empire drivers and mechanics will now be represented.

"ATU Local 757 represents about 5,500 members — active and retired — across Oregon and Southern Washington, al-

most exclusively transit workers," said Andrew Riley, communications manager for the local.

The largest workplace represented is TriMet in Portland.

Bill Ray, a driver for Sunset Empire since 1999, serves as shop steward.

"This is not something done as a vendetta to get back at anybody," Ray said. "We just want to get organized and be appreciated for what we do."

Sunset Empire was one of the few non-union districts along the coast and Portland metro area, he said.

"We were missing out on a lot of ben-

efits union members have, better pensions, better salaries and better working conditions," Ray said. "It was just time to make a move."

Contract negotiations are expected to begin in November, according to Jeff Hazen, Sunset Empire's executive director.

Hazen has been a union member and has worked on the management side of unionized employees before.

"We've got great employees," Hazen said when asked if he foresees any issues. "Obviously, there are financial matters to consider, as we only have so many dollars in the coffer. ... I'm not overly concerned."