



A sign on the door at the Hammond post office.

Hammond post office temporarily closes due to structural problems

The Columbia Press

Hammond's post office has been closed since Dec. 20, when a part of the ceiling became unstable and ceiling tiles fell to the floor.

"It happened a few weeks ago on the 20th, the Friday before Christmas," said Lindsey Stark,

a U.S. Postal Service clerk in Hammond. "It was really stormy out and the ceiling came loose on the inside."

At least one construction person has been out to look at the damage, but employees there do not know when repairs will be scheduled.

In the meantime, "we'll tell people what we know when we know it, but we don't know a whole lot now," Stark said.



The U.S. Postal Service facility in Hammond.

Those with post office boxes in Hammond can pick up their mail at the Warrenton post office.

In 2011, the U.S. Postal Service announced plans to close 3,653 small post offices across the country and many feared the Hammond station would be one of those.

But Congress eventually stepped in, calling rural post offices an essential service in smaller communities.

City faces \$10,800 fine over alleged violations in fire agency

BY CINDY YINGST
The Columbia Press

See the city's entire response to the citation on Page 3.

The city of Warrenton should pay \$10,800 for alleged safety and health violations within the fire department, the state's Occupational Safety and Health Division decided.

The violation deemed most grievous – and the one that received the largest fine – dealt with the use of respirators in protecting firefighters.

"We have gone over the citation with a fine-tooth comb and many of the issues have been addressed," City Manager Linda Engbretson said in a statement issued Jan. 3. "We are confident the measures instituted will satisfy OSHA ..."

The city plans to appeal the proposed penalty.



Engbretson



Alsbury

The state received the anonymous complaint in August, which cited 11 instances when the fire department's administration didn't protect its workers or volunteers. OSHA conducted interviews and inspections between Aug. 16 and Nov. 11.

The biggest hit – with a proposed \$7,500 fine – was because the fire department didn't have a written respiratory protection program with worksite-specific procedures addressing how respirators are selected, when firefighters are medically evaluated, how they're trained and when and how the equipment is fit-tested.

The second largest fine, \$2,100, was for not ensuring em-

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Port backs Fort George incentives; plans in Warrenton undetermined

The Columbia Press

The Port of Astoria unanimously approved a tax-incentive plan Tuesday night for the owners of Fort George Brewery, who intend to build a tasting room and warehouse at the former Astoria Warehousing complex on Marine Drive.

"Right now the plan is to get into the distribution and manufacture of beer out of the warehouse and, at some point, we're interested in having a taproom there on the property as well," said Chris Nemlowill, co-owner of Fort George Brewery. "We estimate an opening and cans coming

out by the end of 2020."

Clatsop County, the city of Warrenton and the Port of Astoria established the local enterprise zone in 2015 in hopes of spurring economic development. The agreement is one of the first to take advantage of breaks allowed within the state-approved enterprise zone.

The agreement with Big Beams LLC, the construction arm of the brewpub's operations, still must be approved by the city of Warrenton and Clatsop County.

The agreement exempts the company from paying property taxes for

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