

City banking on a 'lot' downtown

Plans are part of a revitalized core

BY CINDY YINGST
The Columbia Press

An unpaved parking lot in the heart of downtown Warrenton is the focus of current revitalization efforts.

The lot, just south of City Hall, will benefit from some new decorative lighting going in at the bench in front of the fire station and in the adjacent City Hall parking lot.

Warrenton's Urban Renewal Agency approved a \$43,791 contract with Columbia Electric Supply of Longview, Wash., for Holophane lights and materials. A second contract, for \$30,800, was awarded to Bogh Electric of Warrenton to install the six pre-cast concrete bases, light poles and fixtures, all to be controlled by photo cells.

Community Development Director Kevin Cronin is working on a design for more direct improvements to the lot. Paving is at the top of the list, but other additions include electrical hookups, a covered seating area, public picnic tables and a gray-water



The Tres Bro's food truck is the lone occupant of a gravel lot that's become a linchpin in Warrenton's efforts to improve downtown's economic viability. The future location of Arnie's Cafe is nearing completion on the right.



Engbretson

City Manager Linda Engbretson said of

disposal site for future food-pod tenants.

Lack of an electrical hookup discouraged Sasquatch Sandwich from locating a food truck next to Tres Bro's earlier this year.

"We've talked about this project for years and years and years,"

the lot improvements. "It was in the original urban renewal plan."

But nearly all the tax money raised the first decade in the urban renewal district, which includes downtown and properties south almost to the high school, went to fund an expensive overhaul of Warrenton Marina. The urban renewal agency is now well into its second decade.

"Since we have to put lights in this

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Man dies after arrest involving stun gun

BY CINDY YINGST
The Columbia Press

A Warrenton man arrested after creating a disturbance downtown died while in custody.

Alexander Jimenez, 34, of Warrenton was pronounced dead at Columbia Memorial Hospital later that night.

Officers had used a stun gun on the uncooperative man.

"He'd been running around in the road and somebody had to do something," District Attorney Ron Brown said. "We're trying not to put people in jail for lesser offenses, but there was not a lot the cops could do other than get him out of the road."

Police were called to the disturbance at 5:03 p.m. April 17 at Main Avenue and Southwest First Street, near the post office.

A few minutes later, dispatchers asked medics to respond when he began experiencing some medical issues from the stun gun.

Toxicology tests were sent to the

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Marina's bench teeters on the edge, resident warns

The Columbia Press

The city has cordoned off a section of eroding beach near Hammond Marina.

The picturesque site on a small bluff includes hiking trails and a bench for gazing at the Columbia River and boat traffic.

The bench is teetering at the erosion line and the city needs to do more to prevent those tempted to use it from getting hurt, a nearby resident contends.

Kathleen Hudson and her hus-

band regularly walk to the marina and have enjoyed the bench and its views many times.

"Today we noticed how much the beach has washed into the sand bank," Hudson said. She asked the city to take action.

The bench and its installation behind St. Francis de Sales Catholic Church was donated to the city many years ago by the nonprofit Northwest Coast Trails Coalition.

"One of the problems for that area is the erosion caused by off-road

vehicle use that really should end," Tessa Scheller, chair of the coalition, wrote to Hudson and city officials in an email. "It is a dedicated trail, not a roadway, as detailed in the 1994 and 2008 city waterfront and trail plans."

City Manager Linda Engbretson, Police Chief Matt Workman and Harbormaster Jane Sweet assessed the problem on the strip of land where the bench is located.

There have been drug problems in

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A large bench perched at the edge of a bluff overlooks a rainy Columbia River on Wednesday.