

Views from the Rock

# ASPIRE, job fair nurture homegrown expertise

In years past, the role of public works director might have been taken by the guy driving the front loader. Now, it requires two degrees.

Cannon Beach's City Manager Brant Kucera has experience around the country. He was recruited from a long-time career in Pennsylvania.

The new fire chief, Matt Benedict, was recruited from across the state.

The county manager, Cameron Moore, crossed the country from Mahomet, Illinois.

Other industries in Clatsop County — from hospitality to our hospitals — recruit candidates on national job boards.

The same holds true in the newspaper business. I wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for an ad on a national journalism job posting site. The Daily Astorian includes staff with backgrounds from coast to coast. In December, we had an opening in Cannon Beach for a reporter. Our newest hire will be moving here to cover Cannon Beach news in late March from Bellingham, Washington.

When Kucera was asked at the City Council's January goal-setting retreat at Tolovana Hall if he was going to advertise locally to fill the public works director position, a councilor asked if that would include ads in local outlets. Kucera shook his head, no.

The days of moving through the ranks, apparently, may be over.

Two degrees as director Dan Grassick possesses are not necessarily required but would be a plus. "The expectation is you come here with experience," Kucera said.

## Did cuts reduce talent pool?

The same day as Grassick's departure was announced, so were Oregon graduation rates.

Although Seaside High School grad rates have climbed more than 5 percent in the last five years, in 2015-16 the percentage dipped a point to 74.4, slightly below the state average of 74.8 percent. The nation's top states typically graduate more than 90 percent of their students.

Measure 5 was an initiative passed in November 1990 to rein in rising property taxes. Proponents argued the measure wouldn't harm public schools and could even help struggling rural schools by forcing the state to spread out income tax collected from wealthier parts of Oregon.

According to the October 2006 issue of Oregon Business, the first 16 years of Measure 5 and Measure 50 reduced local revenues by \$41 billion.

"If there's one lesson Oregonians, and the nation, can learn from the passage of Measure 5, it's this: you can't improve school funding with a tax cut," NPR wrote in their 2016 reporting series "School Money."

According to the October 2006 issue of Oregon Business, the first 16 years of Measure 5 and Measure 50 reduced local revenues by \$41 billion.

The results could be interpreted in the state's graduation rates, as higher education's share of the state's general fund declined from 14 to 7 percent by 2001, NPR reported.

Cuts locally as well as statewide impact our talent pool down the road.

Residents recall that the closing of Cannon Beach Elementary School in 2013 was not so much a result of the tsunami fears, but because costs of running the elementary school to its smaller school population were not being met. The tsunami risk was almost an after-thought in the rationale.

A budget shortfall of \$1.55 million prompted the closing, as costs for Cannon Beach's 80 students were higher than other elementary schools. Cannon Beach's costs stood at \$8,900 per student, with costs at Seaside Heights and Gearhart ranging from \$6,100 to \$6,300.

The elementary school closing immediately prompted residents to pursue alternate options — largely through donations and grassroots support — to provide an elementary school education for Cannon Beach students.

These are only now coming to fruition, as the Cannon Beach Academy plans to open in the fall for students in kindergarten through second-grade classes.

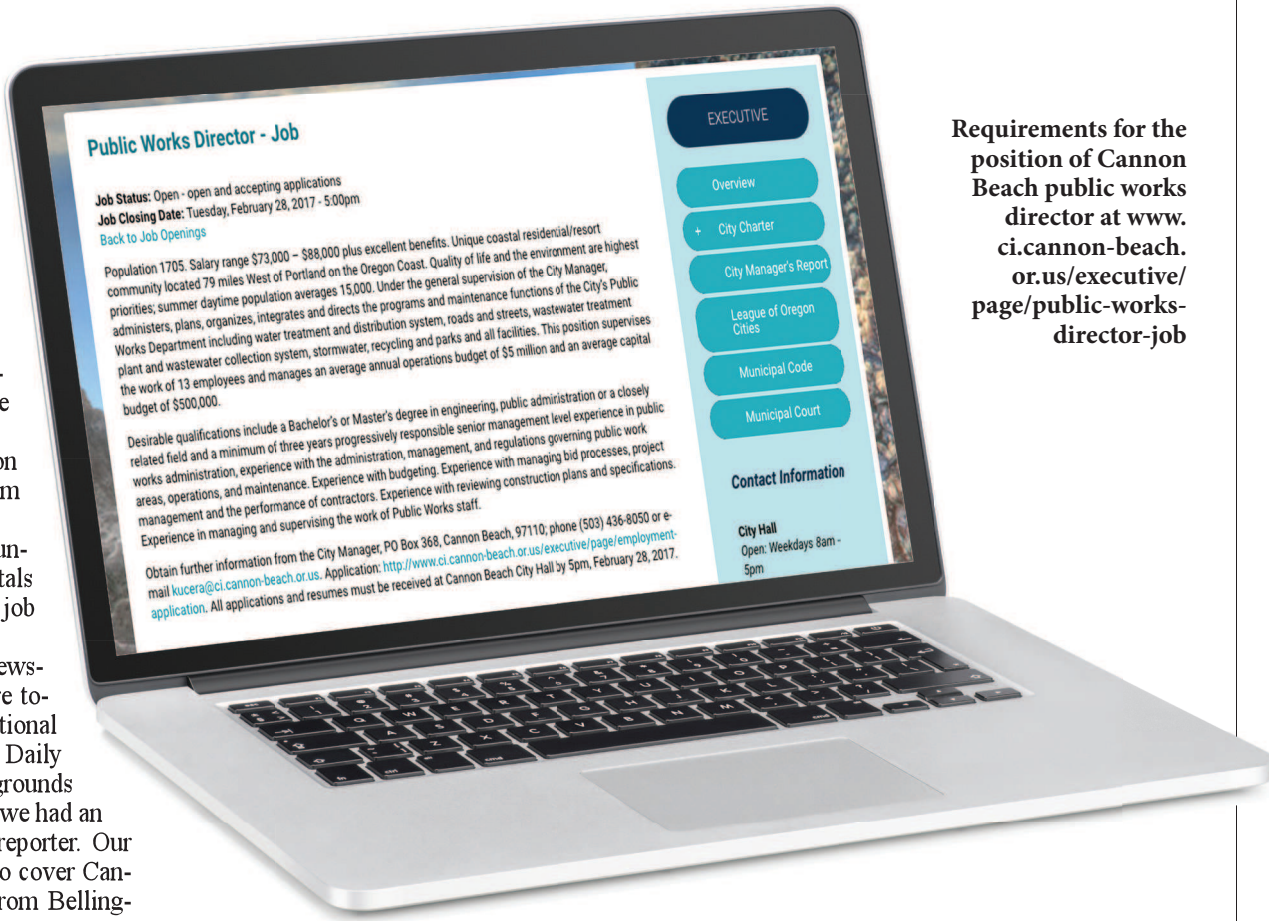
## Meeting the need

In Clatsop County, "Clatsop Vision: 2030," a community profile developed in 2014, leaders asked the following questions:

How can Clatsop County increase its overall high school graduate rates?

- How can the county increase its emphasis on post-secondary education as the economy continues to move beyond traditional natural resource and blue collar jobs?

- How can the county increase participation in



Requirements for the position of Cannon Beach public works director at [www.ci.cannon-beach.or.us/executive/page/public-works-director-job](http://www.ci.cannon-beach.or.us/executive/page/public-works-director-job)

# Urban wineries bring a new vibe to the wine scene

UNCORKED RAMBLINGS

STEVEN SINKLER



Suddenly, Portland has become one of the hottest wine regions in Oregon. While Portland is technically inside the Willamette Valley, the wineries located there don't have their tasting room surrounded by acres of beautifully manicured vineyards to add to the experience. Instead, these "urban wineries" typically work out of cinder block buildings with roll-up garage doors opening to their industrial looking tasting room. The vibe can range from energetic to frenetic, but it's always fun.

Two of my favorite urban wineries, Angel Vine and D'Anu, make their precious beverages at Urban Crush, located in Portland at 2025 SE 7th Ave. Winemakers Ed Fus (Angel Vine) and Joe Williams (D'Anu) have worked together for years to make wines which complement each other. Angel Vine is the only Pacific Northwest focusing on zinfandel. Ed Fus sources his fruit from some of the most well-known vineyards in the Columbia Valley, including Stonetree and LeCollines vineyards. I really enjoy Angel Vine "The Hellion" Red Blend, which is a delicious blend of primitivo, petit sirah and zinfandel.

Named after one of his daughters, the Hellion is big, bold and unapologetic. If you're grilling a ribeye, you might find The Hellion a wonderful companion. The D'Anu lineup offers more classic Oregon selections such as pinot gris, chardonnay and pinot noir, with wines that hail more from Washington, such as sangiovese and cabernet sauvignon. D'Anu 2014 Chardonnay earned double gold medal recognition from judges at the Savor Northwest 2016 wine competition, held here in Cannon Beach. This food friendly chardonnay delivers tropical fruit flavors with a soft mouthfeel and would be a wonderful pairing with Dungeness crab.

Another of the hottest Portland urban wineries is the Teutonic Wine Company, located at 3303 20th Ave. SE. Teutonic is known for their crisp Mosel-style white wines, but they also offer a selection of Burgundian influenced pinots. My current favorite of theirs is Teutonic Battle of the Cracker Pinot Noir, which is a delicate fruit forward pinot. This wine would be a perfect companion with grilled salmon or portobello.

If you haven't visited an urban winery yet, you should definitely do so. I've had people tell me it's not the same as going to a winery with vineyards. While that is true, don't hold that against them. If you're a beer drinker, when was the last time you went to a brewery surround by acres of hops? For those of you who drink gin, rum or tequila, does your favorite distillery have sugar cane or agave growing out back? Probably not. So, don't hold urban wineries to a different standard. These downtown producers of liquid nirvana just might knock your socks off.

If you'd like to taste some of these urban wines, stop by the Wine Shack Tasting Room on Saturday, Feb. 18, from 1 to 5 p.m. and try them for yourself. See you at the Shack.

Please don't drink and drive.

## CANNON SHOTS

R.J. MARX



**'This isn't about funneling students into roles they're not inclined to do — it's about providing them the confidence to pursue options, whatever their career goals may be.'**

post-secondary education in some parts of the community, including the Hispanic community?

- What are the prospects for establishing a four-year higher educational institution presence or extension in the county?

Administrators and top officials are well aware of the need to produce homegrown, self-sustaining educational opportunities that can lead to the filling of top jobs.

Among the leaders, Clatsop Economic Development Resources is at the fore. The organization's director Kevin Leahy is a crusader for kids and education and a co-sponsor of the Feb. 22 Clatsop County Career and Job Fair.

The event aims to find and retain good employees from small businesses to the largest employers in the county and region.

The fair focuses on three areas for employers: hiring now for immediate positions or for summer jobs; looking for committee and skilled employees to fill career technical, trades, vocational and apprenticeship positions.

More than 700 students and adult job-seekers are expected to attend the event at the Clatsop County Fairgrounds.

Along with giving young people the opportunity to meet employers, the program offers resume critiquing and mock interviews with real-world questions: "Why should we hire you?" and "Where do you see yourself in five years?"

At the high school level, ASPIRE coordinator Matt Bisek in Seaside is a familiar face on the county's civic breakfast circuit. Bisek is dedicated to advocating for young people and introducing them to careers and options they might never have considered.

A confessed under-achiever when he was in a large high school in Minnesota, Bisek blossomed at a small college in Joliet, Illinois, where he learned business and leadership degrees.

"I felt like nobody cared in high school, then I went to a really small college and was really motivated by how a personal touch can motivate a person's life," Bisek said at a recent meeting of the Seaside Downtown Development Association. "I got sick of where making money was the point of the job, and got my master's in educational leadership to get a job like this, where I feel like I'm making a difference."

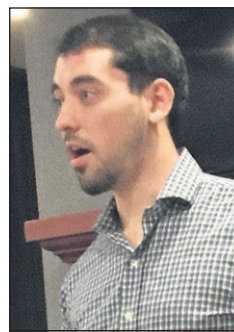
ASPIRE is a mentoring program that matches trained and supportive adult volunteer mentors with students to develop a plan to meet education goals beyond high school.

Funded by the state, ASPIRE is designed to help kids transition from high school to whatever they want to do after, whether it's been designed to help kid go to college, get a job or go into a trade, Bisek said.



FILE PHOTO

Students at the 2015 Clatsop County Job Fair.



R.J. MARX/CANNON BEACH GAZETTE

**Matt Bisek invites volunteers to mentor area students.**



FILE PHOTO

**Kevin Leahy, executive director of Clatsop Economic Development Resources.**

The program is director to high school seniors, but "we're trying to get enough volunteers to start earlier, junior or sophomore," Bisek said. "You work with a small number of students throughout the year and assist them in the process of whatever they want to do — making dreams come true, to put it in a sunny light."

At Seaside High School, he said, there are only two counselors for 450 students. "That's where ASPIRE comes in," Bisek said.

The program pairs students and volunteers by interest, or have experience in the field they're interested in. Bisek invited mentors to contact him to volunteer on a weekly, monthly or flexible basis. "Every single mentor we bring in is an incredible asset," he said.

As we look to develop the next generation of leaders, the good news is that ASPIRE and CEDR are not alone among resources. WorkSource Oregon provides "quality information and informed choices" for local job-seekers. And employers themselves, frustrated by the expense and risk of bringing in candidates from long distances to fill vacancies, are enthusiastically recruiting along the coast.

This isn't about funneling students into roles they're not inclined to do — it's about providing them the confidence to pursue options, whatever their career goals may be.



*The Clatsop County Career and Job Fair takes place Wednesday, Feb. 22, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Clatsop County Fairgrounds. To register as an employer to participate in the career and job fair, call Linda Wyss at WorkSource Northwest Oregon office at 503-325-4821, ext. 234, or email [linda.l.wyss@oregon.gov](mailto:linda.l.wyss@oregon.gov), or visit [clatsopjobfair.com](http://clatsopjobfair.com).*

*For more about the ASPIRE program, visit [www.oregonstudentaid.gov/aspire-volunteer-mentors.aspx](http://www.oregonstudentaid.gov/aspire-volunteer-mentors.aspx). For more information about getting your child connected with the ASPIRE program, or for information about becoming an ASPIRE volunteer at Seaside High School, contact Matt Bisek at [mbisek@seaside.k12.or.us](mailto:mbisek@seaside.k12.or.us); 982-200-7106.*

## LETTERS

### More tourism?

I live on what shall remain a nameless street in the heart of Cannon Beach. There is one other family living full time on my street, and the rest of the housing in my "neighborhood" is taken up with vacation rentals and absentee ownership. I am very well aware of the housing crunch, and the lack of affordable housing here on the North Oregon Coast.

My hometown is Astoria. In the spirit of nativism, and as my I see my home town increasingly caught

See Letters, Page 5A