

Grant to finance wayfinding signs for emergency evacuation routes

Where to go when the Big One hits

By Brenna Visser
Cannon Beach Gazette

When it comes to surviving a tsunami on the North Coast, there are a number of signs that tell you where it is safe and where it is an inundation zone.

But what about the signs that help you get there?

"We've got a sign that tells you that you're in danger, and a sign to tell you that you are safe, but we don't have enough signs telling you how to get there if you don't know where you are going," Clatsop County Emergency Manager Tiffany Brown said.

Providing more wayfinding signs to guide people in the right direction while they are on an evacuation route is one problem Brown hopes to solve with a recently secured \$30,000 state homeland security grant.

The grant, which should be available by October, will fund what Brown calls the "Tsunami Evacuation Sign System Assessment" project, and will focus on adding more signs as well as creat-



BRENNA VISSER/CANNON BEACH GAZETTE

An evacuation route sign at the end of Pacific Way in Gearhart.

ing a geographic information systems database to track where evacuation route signs are placed throughout the county.

"A wayfinding sign would help in a situation where you aren't from around here, and it's the middle of the night and you are at an intersection trying to remember where to go," Brown said.

The evacuation routes and high-ground locations in Clatsop County were previ-

ously identified by way of a community planning project led by the state Department of Geology and Mineral Industries in 2012, Brown said.

A limited number of signs were installed to reflect the newly established inundation levels and evacuation routes designed in 2013, however, and the stakeholder group tasked with defining where signs were needed found many of the routes had inadequate signing because they

were stolen, damaged or out of date, Brown said.

"It's about getting an inventory about signs we have, filling in gaps of where we still need them and then creating this GIS database so we can maintain all of them," Brown said. "Right now it's hard to determine what is missing because we don't have a baseline."

The county does not have clear records of how many signs exist and where they are placed along the 90 established evacuation routes. Part of the grant will include hiring a planning consultant who will work with 15 stakeholder groups from school districts, homeowner associations and representatives from five cities to perform an initial assessment of route signage to identify wayfinding gaps.

The consultant will then make final recommendations and create a database for sign types and locations intended to make future system maintenance and additions easier, Brown said.

"If you live here, you are aware of the hazards in the place you've chosen to live," Brown said. "If you are vacationing here, that reality is not something you necessarily understand. It may be our only shot at saving their lives."

Community weighs in at public forum

City from Page 1A

The draft of the job description, which will be voted on at the Aug. 1 city council meeting, said the city prefers a candidate with at least five years of city management experience and an advanced degree in public administration.

The new city manager will be expected to facilitate policy priorities like keeping community character by limiting expansion, developing the South Wind property, affordable housing and addressing emergency management and aging infrastructure needs.

Changes and expectations

While many of the job qualifications remained the same, some items, such as community forums and compensation, have been adjusted. When Kucera was hired in 2014, the community informally interviewed him in a reception for a meet-and-greet.

Some community members said the format made it

difficult for multiple people to have access to the candidate, so this time around the city has decided to hold a community forum in the fall where people can submit questions in a more formalized way.

"I think people will feel their voices are heard this way," city councilor George Vetter said at the work session.

City councilors also decided to raise the salary from \$110,000 a year — what Kucera was paid and interim city manager Jason Schermerhorn is earning — to a salary range of \$115,000 to \$130,000 a year, as well as add a housing allowance as a benefit.

Jensen suggested raising the salary range to stay competitive with other similarly-sized, tourism-drive towns, which he said pay their city managers between \$110,000 to \$153,000 a year.

He also suggested the housing allowance as way to help achieve the community's goal of having the city manag-

er live in town with premium home prices.

"Compared to other tourism cities, you are sitting low," Jensen said.

Community input

When Jensen and Jeff Aprati from Jensen Strategies opened the floor the comments at a community forum earlier this month, there was one clear, resounding opinion that echoed across the room: The city manager should live in Cannon Beach and understand Cannon Beach.

"I don't want you to choose someone we have to sell Cannon Beach to," Cannon Beach resident Marty Schwab Harris said. "If you're not here in the community to see how the town operates, how can you address issues in this town?"

The next city manager should be visible and engaged in the community, participants said.

"It would be really nice to have someone who has digested this topic and could come

in with some background," Vetter said.

While there are many issues facing the city, citizens at the forum didn't necessarily seek someone who could solve particular problems, but rather someone who respected the culture of citizen involvement and volunteer committees.

"We may be called the city of Cannon Beach, but we're really between a village and a town, and we like it like that," Schwab Harris said.

After city councilors vote whether or not to approve the description Aug. 1, Jensen and Aprati will advertise the position and present finalists for city councilors to interview. Once finalists are chosen, they will be interviewed by a panel of local government administrators from other jurisdictions, a panel made up of community members currently serving on committees and the city council. According to the city charter, a new manager must be hired by November.

Pot shop seeks permit for second location

Pot from Page 1A

potential buyers interested in his store. Two of the parties he said are interested in buying the lease with the intent to keep running it as Purple Moon Boutique. The third is Oregrown Industries, a Bend-based marijuana dispensary.

The Design Review Board approved the company's request modifications for the site Thursday evening, including modifications to signage, door color and window display restrictions.

City Planner Mark Barnes said he has not received permit requests from anyone else for this location.

Atwi said he and the owner of the building, Gene Cope, are communicating with all interested buyers and will

jointly make a decision on who is awarded the space. If the dispensary is awarded the lease, the owners will still need approval from the Oregon Liquor Control Commission and a city business license to open their doors.

Oregrown Industries is one of three dispensaries that have submitted land use applications to the City of Cannon Beach since the town voted to approve retail marijuana within city limits last November. The Portland-based, recreational dispensary Five Zero Trees has plans to move into the former location of the home goods store Fruffels at 140 S. Hemlock St. within the next couple of months, and one application will be heard by the Design Review Board

in August about plans to open a marijuana dispensary at 3115 S. Hemlock St.

Co-owners Kevin Hogan and Hunter Neubauer said they wanted to expand their business to Cannon Beach because of its natural beauty, which fits in with the company's Oregon outdoors, lifestyle brand.

"Cannon Beach is such an iconic Oregon destination," Neubauer said.

The two started their flagship store in Bend three and a half years ago. Hogan said their number one priority is

to go through all proper channels and to make sure if the store is approved it will fit in with the aesthetic and the culture of the town.

"We like to do things the right way," Hogan said. "That's what made us successful."

Until the decision is made, Atwi said to expect business as usual.

"We're still Purple Moon until otherwise," Atwi said. "I'm not opening another Purple Moon for sure, but I haven't decided what my new venture will be."

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