



What's next for convention center?

Expansion committee examines possibilities

Consulting group to research alternative funding options in wake of community's overwhelmingly negative response to sales tax, lodging tax increase

By Katherine Lacaze
Seaside Signal

A recent survey of Seaside Downtown District Association and Chamber of Commerce members regarding the potential Seaside Civic and Convention Center expansion as proposed raised concerns, not only as to how it will be funded, but also issues that exist external of the project, such as downtown parking. Finding a viable funding resource has been identified

as a crucial prerequisite to the proposed expansion, but parking is even more important and must be addressed at some point, regardless if the project is halted, said Jeff Kilday, chair of the Convention Center Commission and a member of the sub-committee on the expansion. The proposed expansion, which is estimated to cost \$25 million, would increase the facility's space by about 40,000-square-feet. Several studies on the

expansion have recommended constructing a new 12,000-square-foot exhibit hall; converting the Pacific Hall and Necanicum Room into a multi-purpose ballroom or banquet space; adding an additional 8,830 square feet of meeting and break-out space; along with storage space and restrooms. There is space to host a large group of people for their meeting or to feed them, but not to do both seamlessly, and it's costing the center customers,



Seaside Convention Center

Kilday said. Additionally, there aren't adequate facilities in the nearby downtown area to feed 400 plus people within an hour, which is usually what groups allot for lunch.

"It's about logistics," Kilday added. Since the expansion would remove at least 40 parking spaces to the west of the center, a \$6 million multi-story parking structure

is being considered, as well. It will cost the city about \$200,000 per month for 30 years to pay off the debt from both endeavors, Seaside Civic and Convention Center General Manager Russ Vandenberg has said. The latest study, a financial feasibility study conducted by C.H. Johnson Consulting, suggested three funding options to cover the \$31 million: a 6 percent increase in Seaside's lodging taxes; a joint agreement between Seaside, Astoria and Cannon Beach to raise lodging taxes by

See Expansion, Page 12A

First Saturday Art Walk opening downtown on May 2

Celebrating 11 years in 2015, Seaside First Saturday Art Walk gets underway May 2. Held on the first Saturday evening of each month, from 5 to 7 p.m., visitors meet artists, sip wine or snag appetizers by favorite restaurants or personal chefs, view artist demonstrations and, often times enjoy live music. The events are staged in local businesses, shops, boutiques and dining establishments located between Holladay and Broadway in the historic Gilbert District of downtown Seaside. Complimentary parking is to be found on the corner of Holladay and Ocean Way. And, so it is, on its 11th year, 11 spots to see and be seen on May 2:

- T. Anjuli's Gallery, 5 N. Holladay Drive - Featuring well-known artist and gallery owner Billy Lutz, whose specialty is mural painting.
- Seaside Coffee House, 3 N. Holladay Drive - Features the pen and ink artwork of Morgan Stoller.
- Seaside Antique Mall, 726 Broadway - Featuring Oregon coast photographer Linda Fenton-Mendenhall.
- SeaSoles Shoe Boutique, 12 N. Holladay - Where famous Seaside artist Jorjett Strumme work is displayed.
- Fly the Coop, 10 N. Holladay Drive - Featuring Melodie Kozol, owner/artist, whose shop is full of curiosities and art.

See Artwalk, Page 12A

Students learn to return

SHES fifth-graders release steelhead into China Creek

By Katherine Lacaze
Seaside Signal

"To freedom!" That was the rallying cry bellowed repeatedly by Seaside Heights Elementary School fifth-graders as they enthusiastically released about 500 steelhead trout into the wild at China Creek April 15. To start the activity, fifth-grade teacher John Meyer led his class on a short hike to the creek. From two locations, each student got to scoop a cup of the baby fish from a communal bucket, make a toast to their impending liberation and then carefully pour the creatures into their new habitat, which was ripe with the promise of shade, clean water and the minimal presence of predators.

Meyer has worked with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife for four years to give students this opportunity, which he's incorporated into the science unit about life cycles. The topic is one of many, including ecosystems, adaptation and watersheds, addressed by state goals for science. As part of the department's classroom egg incubation project, an aspect of the Salmon Trout Enhancement Program, the school receives approximately 500 fish eggs from a hatchery. The eggs are kept in tanks at the school as they hatch and enter their alevin stage. The alevin stay hidden among the gravel and are nourished by their own yolk sacs. Once the yolk sacs are absorbed, the young fish need a new food source, so it's at that stage - classified as fry - the students must release them into the wild.

The activity, said Meyer, has been "hugely successful on an educational level." The batch released in April was the second this year. In January, Meyer and his class released 500 steelhead trout in Coho Creek. Necanicum Watershed Council Coordinator Melyssa Graeper, who often will accompany the students on their trips, said it's too early to tell if releasing the fish is having any positive effect. "It really can't hurt," she said.

Crossing the culvert

After the fish were successfully delivered to their new home, the class continued on the path until they reached the Coho Creek culvert



Fifth-grader Everst Sibony, right, raises a plastic cup containing some steelhead trout to toast their freedom before releasing them into China Creek with the help of Seaside Heights Elementary School fifth-grade teacher John Meyer, who took his class on a short hike April 15 to China Creek so they could release the fish. Meyer does the activity as part of the science unit on life cycles, the ecosystem and adaptation.

that runs beneath Spruce Loop Road near the school.

The Necanicum Watershed Counsel partnered with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife about three years ago to replace the old culvert with a new one, which allows for easier fish passage.

For several years before the replacement, Graeper said, "we weren't seeing fish above the culvert," because they couldn't handle numerous obstacles to migrate upstream, such as a two-foot perch at the downstream outlet, water velocities and insufficient water depths in areas. In addition, the road was beginning to

See Steelhead, Page 9A



A group of Seaside Heights Elementary School fifth-graders peer into China Creek from atop a bridge after releasing a few hundred steelhead trout into the water.

Archibald tapped as new head of recreation district

Local hire looks forward to serving communities, residents he cares about

By Katherine Lacaze
Seaside Signal

Skyler Archibald, of Gearhart, has been hired as the new executive director of the Sunset Empire Park & Recreation District.

At a meeting April 24, the recreation district's board of directors voted to offer the position to Archibald, and he has accepted. Details of his employment are still being worked out, but he expects to start in July. Mary Blake, a former general manager of the district, is serving as interim executive director and



KATHERINE LACAZE PHOTO

Skyler Archibald, right, speaks with Ryan Stanley, recreation coordinator, left, and Grace Smith, fitness and special events coordinator, during a meet-and-greet with executive director candidates on April 23.

will continue to do so until Archibald, who currently works as director of recreation at Pacific University in Forest Grove, begins.

The recreation district finished its hiring process last week. Three finalists - from an original pool of six primary candidates and

three alternates - met with technical and community panels April 23. Two finalists, Archibald and SEPRD IT and Marketing Manager Darren Gooch, participated in a public meet-and-greet later that evening. They interviewed with the board of directors April 24, after which the board made its decision in a 3-2 vote.

They offered him the position on the understanding he must meet the requirements of a clear background check, references and drug test as per district policies, Blake said. The salary is being negotiated. The Special Districts Association of Oregon, which has helped the district through the recruitment process, will finalize the hire.

Archibald has a long-standing connection to the

community. His family moved to the North Coast when he was 8. He grew up in the area and attended Broadway Middle School and Seaside High School. He has a bachelor of arts degree in speech communication and writing from Portland State University and a master's degree in sport management from Washington State University.

Through various experiences, Archibald "discovered recreation as a career path," he said. He formerly worked at Washington State University in its recreation department and oversaw sport leagues and clubs, youth programming and special events.

See Archibald, Page 9A

