

It’s time to build a new tsunami-safe school campus

Anyone considering voting *no* on Resolution 4-185 — to build a new earthquake- and tsunami-safe school campus serving the children of Seaside, Cannon Beach and Gearhart — must not have seen the photo I saw, in the aftermath of the 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan, of a drift line of colorful children’s backpacks in Hello Kitty and Superman themes, sparkling with seawater. They were left on the hillside in a curving line after the tsunami that killed those children receded. At Ookawa Elementary School, the children had drilled many times about what to do in an earthquake, but when 10 of the school’s 13 teachers were killed in the quake, it’s no wonder the kids didn’t have the leadership to make it to high enough ground before the tsunami that killed them struck.

We now know that it’s only a matter of time before a quake and tsunami of similar magnitude strikes the Oregon Coast. The geological evidence, first discovered only 30 years ago and a surprise to all of us, is now very clear. This will not be a tsunami of the size some coastal residents remember from 1964, caused by a quake more than 1,000 miles away in Alaska. This will be a tsunami gen-

GUEST COLUMN
BONNIE HENDERSON

erated by an earthquake along a fault line just off the Oregon. It will flatten buildings all over Oregon — on the coast in particular — including aging schools throughout the state. Minutes later, what’s left of the houses and schools in towns like Seaside and Gearhart will be washed away by a tsunami equivalent to the one that killed thousands of people in Japan in 2011.

We don’t know if the next such quake will strike the Oregon coast in the next few years or in a few hundred years. But geologists tell us there is a high likelihood of it happening within the next 50 years. We know we are in the window. It is time to get ready.

The Seaside School District is one of the last two districts on the Oregon Coast with schools still in the tsunami inundation zone. Lincoln City has moved all its schools to high ground. Waldport has relocated its high school from the mouth of the river to a nearby ridgetop. Neahkahnie High School

is in the tsunami zone, but unlike Seaside High School, Neahkahnie High School has a solid rock hillside right outside the building where students can evacuate.

The challenges for the Seaside School District are unique. No other school district in Oregon — in fact, in the entire country — has three schools located in the tsunami inundation zone. Relocating the schools here is an expensive proposition — and there’s no getting around it.

The need to relocate the schools in the Seaside School District cannot be disputed. It has to happen, and the sooner the better. The sticking point, naturally, is the cost, which is not insignificant. To be clear, I do not own property in the Seaside School District; I will not be affected by a property tax increase. But I want to point out some important facts to those who do.

The district has brought the price down about as low as it can go. After the first attempt at a school relocation levy failed in 2013, the district managed to get the land for the campus donated by Weyerhaeuser. They made a plan to hold off building an auditorium and other “extras” until the existing school properties

sell. In the process, they brought the price down by more than one-third. They’ve also put the District in line to receive \$4 million in state funding if the levy passes. It is a solid plan, about as good as it’s going to get, and it’s time to approve it and start building.

In an ideal world, the Seaside School District would get more funding from the federal and state government, but it’s clear that’s not going to happen. The District has left no stone unturned looking for financial help outside the District itself over the past decade, and it’s just not forthcoming. Federal emergency response dollars will one day pour into this region after what will be the country’s biggest-ever natural disaster; you would think that some of that money might be provided in advance, to help prepare and to save lives rather than to compensate the region for its losses after the fact. But that’s not how government works. It’s not going to happen.

It’s a lot of money — \$99 million — but if you break it down, it’s doable. For someone who owns a \$250,000 house, that’s less than \$1 a day. Is there not something you could give up in exchange for such peace

of mind, knowing that the children of Arch Cape and Cannon Beach, Seaside, and Gearhart will be in the safest possible spot should the quake strike during a school day, and knowing that all of us will have a solid, safe place to shelter in the days and weeks after the quake? Could it be done more cheaply? Maybe a few details could be downgraded here or there. But it’s time to stop quibbling over whether the cost should be 90 cents a day or 88 cents and put shovels in the ground.

The location of the schools in the Seaside School District is one of the key factors that makes this perhaps the most vulnerable community on the Oregon Coast, in terms of quake and tsunami risk. Moving the schools is not the only pressing need. Seaside, in particular, must start rebuilding some of its bridges to ensure that citizens fleeing the tsunami will be able to reach high ground. But these are not competing priorities. They both need to be done. Right now, the proposal on the table is to relocate the schools. I urge you to vote yes on Resolution 4-185.

Bonnie Henderson is the author of “The Next Tsunami: Living on a Restless Coast.”

LETTERS

Vote for Horning

I have worked with Tom Horning for many years on various projects where he demonstrated his considerable knowledge of geology and engineering, as well as the risk posed by the Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake and tsunami. Few in the area are better equipped to plan for the mortal hazard posed by the “big one”. His recommendations about bridge reconstruction should be a priority for any future council and the Cascadia region as a whole. Tom has also devoted countless hours to Seaside Parks, the North Coast Land Conservancy, and Seaside schools. I urge Seaside residents to vote for Tom.

Mike Morgan
Former mayor
City of Cannon Beach

Replace outdated Gearhart fire station

A Gearhart grassroots citizens’ committee has been meeting monthly since September 2015. This committee was organized at the request of the Gearhart City Council. One of the council’s goals is to replace the outdated Gearhart Fire Station. The committee was charged with the task of assessing whether the existing fire station and city hall facilities are adequately meeting the needs of the community.

After months of research, which included a strong emphasis on resiliency in terms of natural disasters, the day-to-day operations of the fire

department, and the training and retention of volunteers, the Firehall Committee agreed that an investigation into a cost effective plan was the next logical step in their research.

In April 2016, the committee asked the Gearhart City Council for \$10,000 from the building reserve fund to begin the next phase of research. The City Council unanimously voted to release the funds to the committee. The advisory committee has ongoing, monthly meetings to continue the process of exploring the many possibilities for constructing a public safety building which will provide staff and volunteers the tools to better protect our community for now and well into the future.

Sue Lorain
Gearhart

AAUW supports Seaside school bond

I write today urging everyone in our Seaside School District to vote YES for the bond issue for our local schools. As a retired senior citizen, I have not had a child in these schools for many years. My grandchildren have all been educated in other places where others have paid the taxes to educate them. I know it is my turn to step up to the plate and carry forward what the members of our community did for my generation and me in the 1950s.

Yes, I attended Broadway Middle School in the early 50s when it was new and in good condition. This is no longer the case. I recently visited Broadway Middle School as

well as Gearhart Elementary School and the high school, and was astounded at the deteriorating walls, roofing and heating issues. And, I learned that nearly \$500,000 a year is being spent beyond the normal maintenance budget to patch up the most pressing problems. What a waste to spend this kind of money and still have unsafe facilities that no longer meet the needs of education in the 21st century.

We are fortunate to be in a position where the land for the new buildings have been donated by Weyerhaeuser and when we can take advantage of some of the lowest interest rates we have ever known. The State of Oregon will also contribute \$4 million as a one-time contribution if the bond passes this November. In addition, Seaside has three of the four schools in the state that are in the tsunami zone. And although it is uncertain when that could be an issue here, the probability is very high in the next 50 years.

These are some of the reasons that Seaside American Association of University Women has chosen to support this measure this year. Our children are our investment in the future. Our organization is one that values and supports education as a means to a better future. It is our time to step forward and insure that our children receive the education they need to be successful. They deserve it. Please give them your support.

Carol Brenneman
Seaside

LOCAL HAPPENINGS

ID Protection Day in Seaside

An ID protection day featuring free document shredding takes place Saturday, Oct. 15, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Seaside High School, 1901 N. Holladay Drive.

Feed the needy by bringing canned food or donations to benefit the Clatsop

Community Action Regional Food Bank, which provides food for all county pantries.

Radio operator training offered

Seaside Tsunami Amateur Radio Society is looking for new members. Training for the technician class FCC li-

cense will be given free of charge on Friday, Oct. 21, from 4:30 to 9 p.m., and Saturday, Oct. 22, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The exam will be given at 4:30 p.m. at the end of class on Saturday. Exam cost is \$14.


The society meets each month on the second Saturday of every month at the Seaside campus of Clatsop Community College.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

- Tuesday, Oct. 18**
Sunset Empire Parks and Rec District, 4 p.m., 1225 Ave. A, Seaside.
- Seaside Planning Commission**, work session, 7 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.
- Wednesday, Oct. 19**
Seaside Tourism Advisory Committee, 3 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.
- Thursday, Oct. 20**
Seaside Transportation Advisory Commission, 6 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.
- Monday, Oct. 24**
Seaside City Council, 7 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.
- Tuesday, Nov. 1**
Seaside Community Center Commission, 10 a.m., 1225 Avenue A.
- Seaside Planning Commission**, 7 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.
- Wednesday, Nov. 2**
Seaside Improvement Commission, 6:30 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

- Gearhart City Council**, 7 p.m., City Hall, 698 Pacific Way.
- Thursday, Nov. 10**
Seaside Convention Center Commission, 10 a.m., 1225 Avenue A.
- Gearhart Planning Commission**, 6 p.m., City Hall, 698 Pacific Way.
- Monday, Nov. 14**
Seaside City Council, 7 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.
- Tuesday, Nov. 15**
Sunset Empire Parks and Rec District, 4 p.m., 1225 Ave. A, Seaside.
- Thursday, Nov. 17**
Seaside Tree Board, 4 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.
- Seaside Transportation Advisory Commission**, 6 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.
- Tuesday, Nov. 22**
Seaside Airport Advisory Committee, 6 p.m., at the Seaside Airport.
- Monday, Nov. 28**
Seaside City Council, 7 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

- Tuesday, Dec. 6**
Seaside Community Center Commission, 10 a.m., 1225 Avenue A.
- Seaside Planning Commission**, 7 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.
- Wednesday, Dec. 7**
Seaside Improvement Commission, 7 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.
- Gearhart City Council**, 7 p.m., City Hall, 698 Pacific Way.
- Thursday, Dec. 8**
Seaside Convention Center Commission, 10 a.m., 1225 Avenue A.
- Gearhart Planning Commission**, 6 p.m., City Hall, 698 Pacific Way.
- Monday, Dec. 12**
Seaside City Council, 7 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.
- Thursday, Dec. 15**
Seaside Transportation Advisory Commission, 6 p.m., City



Re-elect Deborah BOONE

State Representative HD 32, Democrat

Native Oregonian
Rural homeowner in HD 32 since 1974

I have represented the citizens of House District 32 in the Oregon House of Representatives since 2004. During that time I have consistently supported job growth, business opportunities and workforce training, while protecting the resources that make Oregon and our coastal communities a place we’re proud to call home.

As your state representative, I will continue to support emergency preparedness programs in the event of natural disasters, as well as pursue business, job and educational opportunities in renewable energy fields.

I have been a tireless advocate for seniors, veterans, children and families. Working for quality education, health care accessibility for Oregonians, and programs that protect our most vulnerable citizens are my top priorities.

It is an honor to represent you. I ask for your vote so we can continue the important work of advancing legislation that benefits all Oregonians today and in the years ahead.

— Rep. Deborah Boone

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ENTRY DEADLINE Nov. 2ND 5PM

VOTING OPENS Nov. 3RD AT?

VOTING CLOSES Nov. 6TH

WINNERS ANNOUNCED Nov. 9TH

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