



PHOTOS BY COLIN MURPHEY/THE DAILY ASTORIAN
The North Coast Youth Correctional Facility sits vacant in Warrenton.

BOND BUNDLE

County voters will have four bonds to choose from in November

By Jack Heffernan
The Daily Astorian

During a meeting earlier this month, Clatsop County Commissioner Sarah Nebeker argued that a November bond measure to relocate and expand the county jail needs to pass. But she recognized that voters may be leery of the tax burden. “It’s the cheapest bond out there, though,” Sheriff Tom Bergin said.

Bergin was referring to three other bonds — for the Astoria and Warrenton school districts and the Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District — that will be on the ballot. Local governments are trying to address several long-standing needs while the economy continues to boom, betting that voters will not have bond overload.

“The bond passage rate the last three to five years has really been on an upswing statewide,” said Mark Jeffery, the superintendent of the Warrenton-Hammond School District. “It’s pretty incredible for a county this size. And not just small projects.”

Officials have not coordinated the timing of the bonds and say they do not feel a sense of competition. But the number of tax hikes has been a topic of slight concern.

“Obviously bond fatigue, I guess, is a concern, but I think that we started this over a year ago and we can’t, you know, we don’t have a crystal ball to know what other cities are going to do,” said Scott Lee, the chairman of the county Board of Commissioners.

Lee and Bergin are correct.

The county’s efforts to move the 60-bed jail from Astoria to the shuttered North Coast Youth Correctional Facility in Warrenton began last spring. The \$20 million bond would be the least expensive in terms of its impact on property taxes — an estimated 21 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value. County and law enforcement leaders hope a new jail will solve persistent overcrowding.

Turnout may be a positive for some bonds and a negative for others.

“I really want to see folks that don’t own property and that haven’t been here for a long time to get involved and register to vote,” Lee said.

On the other hand, young voters may be pivotal to the \$20 million Sunset Empire bond to expand its Seaside recreation center — at 70 cents per \$1,000. The recreation district hopes the new facility will generate additional revenue following a decrease last year.

Some have speculated that younger voters would be more likely to utilize the upgraded facility and, therefore, more willing to pay for it.

But, “I would hope that all of our residents — both young and old — can see the benefit of this,” said Skyler Archibald, the executive director of the recreation district.

Seaside School District voters overwhelmingly passed a \$99.7 million bond in 2016 to relocate schools out of the tsunami inundation zone. Though it’s for a different purpose, the recreation district hopes for similar support.

“I guess I’d be lying to say we weren’t motivated by the voters’ approval of the school bond,” Archibald said.

While the entire county will vote on the jail bond, only voters within the recreation district will decide on the Sunset Empire plan. Although the bonds would come at an identical price, more

taxpayers would share the burden of the new jail than the recreation facility.

“The jail bond affects all of the county obviously, so it’s not going to be as easy for us to market it,” Archibald said. “We do have to be a little bit insightful with how we message it.”

School bonds

Seaside-area voters will not, however, be asked to pitch in as much as those who live in the Warrenton-Hammond or Astoria school districts. The \$70 million Astoria bond to modernize the school district’s five campuses would cost taxpayers \$2.83 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. Those in Warrenton-Hammond would need to pay \$2.49 per \$1,000 to buy a master campus and build a new middle school outside the tsunami inundation zone.

At a smaller price but with a similar goal of moving outside the tsunami zone, Warrenton-Hammond officials hope their \$32.4 million bond will have as much success as the 2016 one in Seaside. The school district did not specifically move forward with the bond because of the Seaside example, but it did compare the upcoming bond to the past one, Jeffery said.

In Astoria, the motivations are largely about timing. A bond from 2000 is set to expire, and the school district hopes to modernize its campuses. Voters in both school districts will also decide on the jail bond. While maintaining that the bonds are not competing, Bergin made a case for the relative importance of the new jail.

But will voters choose one bond over another after doing the tax math?

“I think the voters are smarter than that and, kind of, can understand what’s going on here,” Lee said. “It’s a coincidence, but I don’t think it’s a deal breaker to pass these.”



Max Price performs a trick at the skate park in the Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District in Seaside. A bond to expand the recreation center will be on the ballot in November.

Lori Nicole Visser

Fort Pierce, Florida

June 10, 1978 — July 14, 2018

Lori Nicole Visser, 40, died July 14, 2018, in Fort Pierce, Florida, from an undiagnosed medical condition.

Born June 10, 1978, in Corvallis, Lori was a Gearhart native, perpetually proud of her roots as a Gearhart Elementary School Eagle.

She graduated from Seaside High School in 1996, where she was known as an accomplished swimmer and for her gregarious spirit. She then went to Oregon State University, where she picked up her lifelong and unflappable allegiance to the Beavers, until transferring to Oregon Health & Science University to receive her bachelor’s of science degree in nursing in 2000.

Lori worked as a nurse at Denton Regional Medical Center in Texas for 15 years, serving as a career mentor and close friend to many. Always a lover of football, this is where Lori became dedicated and lifelong Dallas Cowboys fan — even convincing the rest of her family to join her.

She received her master’s degree in nursing at University of Texas Arlington in 2012.

For the past four years, Lori split her time between Herndon, Virginia and Bellingham, Washington, at various hospitals as nurse director. Lori had just moved to Fort Pierce a month prior with her fiancé to establish their

future winter home.

Lori is remembered for her bubbly, outgoing and charismatic spirit, accompanied by a smile and witch-like cackle that would make anyone in her vicinity grin, too. She loved laughing, the movie “Grease,” bike rides and getting competitive playing any and all games with her sisters.

She was kind, but also revered for her straightforward nature and ability “to tell you how it is.” Anyone close to Lori would know to be on their toes, as she was known to be a notorious prankster.

No matter where she lived, Lori was always proud of her North Coast roots. She loved Fultano’s pizza, and would have family members bring her a slice even when she lived as far away as Texas.

She was the type of person who could create a community no matter where she landed, creating friendships and memories all across the country. She brought light and love into any room she entered, and will be dearly missed by many.

Lori is survived by her parents, Dan and Sharon Visser of Warrenton; and by two sisters, Julie Visser of Gearhart, and Jennifer Visser Harper of Seaside. She is also survived by her fiancé, Tracy Amos, of Fort Pierce, Florida.

There are no plans for a service at this time.



Keno winner Tony Beck of Kennewick, Washington.

Winner winner — from Dundee’s dinner

Seaside Signal

An Oregon coast vacation is going to be memorable for both Oregon Lottery player and Neil Dundas of Dundee’s Bar and Grill, the retailer that sold the \$76,000 winning ticket.

Beck wasn’t even sure how to

play, he said.

Dundas said he the ticket was the largest payoff the bar and grill had sold since their opening in 2002.

Beck said that he was going to spend his \$76,000 on his family. “With kids and college and diapers, it will get soaked up.”



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