



R.J. MARX

View from the new campus site in early July.

# Permit delay leads to schedule change

**Campus** from Page 1A

Jeffrey Henon, a spokesman for the Army Corps, said the agency is actively reviewing the permit application to determine the type and amount of “compensatory mitigation necessary” to offset environmental losses.

Henry said the permit delay has the school district’s construction team “scrambling on a lot of fronts.”

The delay has stalled construction of an access road from Heights Elementary School to the new campus site, Henry said. “Ideally, we’d be working from the bottom up,” he said. “We have to go

through the back door another month than we wanted.”

Henry said crews will continue to access the site via Beerman Creek Road and Mainline logging road until the Army Corps signs off on the permit application.

“Once we have convinced the Corps of Engineers we have appropriate mitigation, the next day we’ll be impacting the areas we plan to impact on the mitigation plan,” Henry said. “There have been optimistic trends the past week, but we haven’t received final approval. We’re at the point where we think we’re really close.”

# Pageant focuses on character, family

**Pageant** from Page 1A

As a pageant mom, Berginc knew she had good insight on what worked in the pageant world, and put her heart and soul into establishing the Regal Majesty organization.

“I had two daughters who competed in pageants and I felt there was a lack of pageants in the northwest, especially pageants that focused on the girls’ true beauty, personality, community service and family,” Berginc said.

What’s different about Regal Majesty is that it is a pageant for all ages, and it focuses on each contestant’s character and connection to the community.

**‘It’s not all about pretty dresses and make-up. These contestants must be able to have a conversation with eye contact and learn public speaking skills and learn to carry themselves regally, which all of these things are so important today.’**

**Monica Berginc,**  
director of Regal Majesty’s  
Washington, Oregon,  
northern California and  
Internationals divisions

It consists of four categories: Introductions, interview, formal wear and fun fashion. Each contestant is given a crown, sash, trophy and a gift because Berginc believes each contestant should not go away empty handed.

Like other pageantry, there are judges. The judges are chosen for their experience in pageantry or in the arts. Judges look for a contestant who has a lot of personality, confidence and, more importantly, eye contact.

“It’s not all about pretty dresses and make-up. These contestants must be able to have a conversation with eye contact and learn public speaking skills and learn to carry themselves regally, which all of these things are so important today,” Berginc added.

Berginc explained that anyone can qualify. There are preliminary pageants that offer a fun day for beginners; there are state pageants and

the national pageant where all of the contestants compete for the national title.

The organization’s website promotes a natural pageant. The word natural, as Berginc said, normally means it is without the glitz, indicating that glitz pageants are the type shown on Toddlers and Tiaras. “Many times, I have held a small preliminary pageant and you have people walking by saying, ‘Oh, look, “Toddlers and Tiaras”’ just because they see a pageant going on.” Berginc and staff are quick to explain the differences between the two pageants.

Though there are many differences, some involve the look of the contestant. “We don’t allow flippers and big fake hair pieces, or big cupcake-style short dresses, which are the kind you see in toddlers and tiaras. The modeling is different, too. Glitz modeling looks like a choreographed, over-animated, dance routine that sometimes is very sultry and flirty,” Berginc said. “We also don’t allow swim suits. I have no personal issue with swim suits in Miss or Ms. type pageants, but I did not feel it was a good fit for Regal Majesty.”

A big part of the organization is to promote family events and community service. They encourage everyone to do community service events and appearances, regardless of winning or not winning the crown. “We need to give of ourselves and help wherever we can,” Berginc said.

For contestants in some glitz-style pageants, there are no other expectations or requirements after winning the crown or sash. “Regal is not like that, we expect the girls to be a part of the sisters of the sash and attend fun family events, and group or individual community service,” Berginc said.

“I support other systems like the Miss America organization, the Miss Outstanding Teen organization, and the USA or Teen USA. I feel that pageant, like mine, is a great stepping stone to continue with their pageant dreams. I have a few title holders who have gone on and competed at the local and national Miss Teen USA and Miss Outstanding Teen levels.”

One of many takeaways from interviewing Berginc: “Some people believe there is only one winner and only one should win the crown, but I feel that each contestant practiced and gave it their all so they should have a crown and sash — not as big as the queen’s — but it’s a reminder of their time and hopefully good memories they had at the pageant.”

# Visitor volume dips on the Coast

## Tourism spending at an all-time high

**By Brenna Visser**  
Seaside Signal

At the height of summer, it is easy to believe every Oregonian has found their way to the Oregon Coast.

But while figures from the 2018 Oregon Travel Impact report show tourism spending has increased, the number of visitors staying in hotels and rentals dipped slightly on the Oregon Coast, dropping about 1.3 percent between 2016 and 2017. The decline on the North Coast was 1.7 percent.

The pattern contrasts with the state overall, where visitor volume increased by 2.2 percent, according to the study by Dean Runyan Associates.

Flattening visitor volume should not be seen as an issue for the tourism industry, said Leon Aliski, the company’s project manager. Total destination spending grew 2.2 percent to nearly \$2 billion on the Oregon Coast in 2017. On the North Coast alone, visitor spending on accommodations increased from \$190 million to \$197 million in one year.

Many local lodging operators have yet to feel any impacts from fewer visitors, with many reporting 2017 as an exceptional year.

So how does spending continue to grow when the number of people booking rooms is stagnant?

Aliski said it indicates higher room rates and more expensive transportation costs. In the last year, room rates increased by 4.4 percent.

“If they are spending more because a room costs more



COLIN MURPHEY

Tony Street, far right, and Mike Parks perform for tourists walking along the Prom.

and gas costs more, and maybe they are spending more on restaurants, then you can have more spending without actually having more people there,” Aliski said.

Ideally, the industry would seek higher occupancy and growth in room rates simultaneously, Aliski said, but seasonal dips on the coast make this a challenge. With high demand, it is often easier to increase room rates during the peak season than to entice visitors to travel during the off-season when occupancy rates are lower — even with lower room rates, he said.

Higher rates for hotel rooms could be having a discouraging effect for some visitors, said Marcus Hinz, of the Oregon Coast Visitors Association. But part of the stagnation may just be a sign new lodging is not being built to match growth, with many small towns, like Cannon Beach, already built out.

“When you look at the coast’s rate compared with

the rate of growth in Portland, one might think we’re not doing well,” Hinz said. “But Portland is building new hotels left and right; they have more rooms online to be booked, which would add to a rate of growth. On the Oregon Coast, I can only name one new property to come online in the last year.”

Hinz also noted that day-trippers contribute to general tourism growth but are not accounted for when looking at room nights.

Linea Gagliano, communications director for Travel Oregon, said the dynamic could also point to a different type of traveler. The growth in spending suggests the visitors who are here are destination travelers, who often travel in large groups, for longer periods of time and spend more on accommodations and local businesses during their stays. The coast has also seen international visitors increase by 5.9 percent in recent years — another group which tends to

stay longer and spend more.

“What matters to us is that businesses are getting visitor spending, and we are seeing that,” Gagliano said.

Whatever the factors may be, the numbers could be pointing to the region reaching a certain capacity during peak summer months, Aliski said. “If they are running at a high occupancy at peak season, then the opportunity for growth is not going to be during the time period when most people are choosing to be (on the Oregon Coast),” Aliski said. “There’s plenty of capacity to grow the industry, but maybe just not in the peak time of the year.”

This view is in line with efforts already in motion by Travel Oregon and the Oregon Coast Visitors Association to focus marketing dollars on encouraging travelers to visit — and pay for a room — in the off-season.

“Any substantial growth is going to come from the off-season,” Hinz said.

# Council approves Chisholm renovation

**Chisholm** from Page 1A

In December, the city received three bids, the highest nearing \$390,000, the lowest at \$257,000, significantly higher than original cost estimates of \$170,000 to \$190,000 quoted by architects in July 2017.

On Monday, Mayor Jay Barber urged councilors to accept the latest — and only — bid, presented by Helligso Construction Co. of Astoria.

“I have no hesitancy at all,” Barber said. “I think we should accept this bid and move forward because I don’t believe we’ll see any reduction in construction costs in the next two years. If we put it out to bid then, it could be \$340,000 and we’d be in the same place.

I think we should cut our losses at this point and spend the additional (money).”

About \$52,000 toward the cost of the project has been raised through donations, Community Center Commission member Lou Neubecker said.

Fundraising will continue, with a Fascination tournament scheduled in September.

The renovation will highlight the center’s beams and tongue-and-groove ceiling, while providing much-needed improvements to the room’s acoustics and energy efficiency, according to Community Center commissioners in a 2017 presentation.

Project specifications detailed in the June 15 bid request consisted of demolition

and updating wall coverings in the main hall, new window treatments, replacement of electrical fixtures and lighting upgrades.

To pay for the higher costs, funds may come from capital improvement funds designated for remodeling the city’s restrooms, City Manager Mark Winstanley

said. “They are an important asset to our community,” he said. “So we don’t want them neglected either.”

Barber and councilors Wright, Seth Morrissey, Tom Horning and Randy unanimously voted to accept the bid proposal. Councilors Tita Montero and Dana Phillips were absent.

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