

After review, convention center set to raise rates

By **R.J. MARX**
Seaside Signal

Groups booking the Seaside Civic and Convention Center will be paying a little bit more, but they'll still be getting a good value, Russ Vandenberg, the center's general manager, said at Monday's City Council meeting.

Vandenberg sought a facility rate hike at the center, presenting a fee schedule to adjust valuation of newly expanded and renovated meeting rooms including additional cost of labor, supplies, utilities and maintenance expenses.

The cost to rent the center is about \$1,500 per day, Vandenberg said.

Groups pay \$600 per day and after the increase will pay about \$800. The remaining portion of the cost of operations is paid by a percentage of the city's transient occupancy tax.

With new, larger rooms after the expansion, rate increase is warranted, he said.

"I hear it from our clients, our associates in the field that our rates are most reasonably priced of all the centers throughout the state," Vandenberg said. "They appreciate the fact that they can bring an event to Seaside and they



The northwest corner of the Seaside Civic and Convention Center, under renovation.

can reduce the cost of their delegates to attend these functions. In turn, they get larger attendance when they come to Seaside, not only because of the location, but because of the affordability of our convention center."

Organizations booking rooms now may lock in the lower rate through 2025. Groups registered as 501(c)3s receive a 25 percent discount.

"I feel this rate is pro-

portionally correct," Vandenberg said. "I've had it reviewed by my commission members, and I've asked staff to do this and they agree that it's the right time and appropriate."

Construction on the northwest portion of the convention center is anticipated to be completed by April 17. When that area is available as an entry point from the parking lot, crews will renovate the remainder of the main lobby.

The final phase of the project will be the mezzanine and the administration office, those two areas are scheduled for mid-July or August.

The expansion will bring an increase from 22,000 net square feet to 28,000 square feet of usable rental space. The building's total square footage is 45,000, but lobby areas, storage and offices, among other areas, are not figured in the net square footage.

Signal to host park and rec district candidate forum

Seaside Signal

The Seaside Signal and Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District will host a board candidate forum on Thursday, May 2, from 7 to 8 p.m.

The event takes place at the Bob Chisholm Community Center, 1225 Avenue A, in Seaside. The event will be introduced by Rec District executive director and moderated by Signal editor R.J. Marx.

"It's really exciting to see so much interest in the two positions," Rec District executive director Skyler Archibald said April 5. "The board has a lot of responsibility making fiduciary decisions for the district and the directions we go."

Signal publisher Kari Borgen said the forum will heighten civic awareness. "It's our belief that the role of a community newspaper includes providing for a well-informed public to keep our communities strong," Borgen said. "Working with local groups to sponsor voters forums accomplishes just that: it gives the public an opportunity to learn about the candidates and positions they represent to make an informed decision in an election."

Seven candidates are on the ballot for two board seats in the May 21 Sunset

Empire Park and Recreation District board election.

Three candidates will vie for the Position 5 seat, held by Rodney Roberts, appointed earlier this year after district board president Alan Evans stepped down.

Roberts seeks to return to the board for a full four-year term.

Also filing for the Position 5 seat are Patrick Duhachek and Lindsey Morrison.

The Position 4 seat comes vacant after current board member Edward Hassan announced plans to move outside the district.

John Chapman, Katharine Parker, Marti Wajc and Shirley Yates have filed to fill that seat.

Veronica Russell, Jeremy Mills and Michael Hinton fill the other three board seats. Each of their terms expire in 2021.

The special district election will take place May 21.

The last day to register for voters will be April 30. Registration cards postmarked by this date or submitted online no later than 11:59 are valid.

"I think it's a great opportunity for the community to hear what their interests are in running, what they want to see for SEPRD moving forward and how they would change things if they were going to be re-elected," Archibald said.



Brenna Visser/The Daily Astorian
Donations have helped save the Cannon Beach Academy.

Donations keep Cannon Beach Academy open

By **BRENNA VISSER**
The Daily Astorian

Cannon Beach Academy, which faced possible closure before the end of the school year due to financial woes, will continue to operate thanks to a major donation and several pledges.

Concerns about whether the public charter school could remain open past April arose three months ago after board members identified a \$75,000 shortfall in their budget.

The financial situation was due to lower-than-expected enrollment and unpaid pledges.

After news of the potential closure broke, the academy received "a surge of support," said Amy Fredrickson, the school's executive director. The school began receiving many of the missing pledges — including a \$33,000 pledge that originally was not going to be paid until the end of the school year.

A surprise \$20,000 donation from Tim and Rhonda Snider, who recently moved to Cannon Beach, also helped, Fredrickson said. The family has also pledged to match up to \$20,000 in additional

donations until June.

The donations have helped the academy come "very, very close" to addressing the shortfall, Fredrickson said.

"I'm never surprised by the support of the community," she said. "We've talked about overcoming hurdles over and over again, and I think that's just going to be our thing, I think."

Consistent fundraising will continue to be critical to make the charter school financially sustainable.

With the last of the pledges from previous years being paid out this year, the academy's top focuses will be on boosting enrollment and organizing more ways to fundraise throughout the year.

"Those are the two things that will keep us here," Fredrickson said.

More fundraising will be critical as the academy, which has 31 students, hopes to expand to 50 next year. It will be the first year the school will offer kindergarten through fifth grade.

The school opened in 2017.

"We are so grateful that (the community) sees this as an investment in the community and in the kids' future," Fredrickson said.

Academy staff visit state legislators in Salem

By **KATHERINE LACAZE**
For Seaside Signal

Third-graders from Cannon Beach Academy got a taste of state politics with a trip to Salem on Monday, March 18, to visit with local legislators.

"We wanted to get the children involved in advocating for their own education," academy director Amy Fredrickson said.

The charter school partnered with the Oregon Coalition of Community Charter Schools for the trip, and participated with nearly 20 other schools and dozens of students, board member Kelye Dewey said during the academy's regular board of director meeting March 14.

Leading up to the trip, the academy's third-graders drafted letters to their representatives — including State House Rep. Tiffany Mitchell, of District 32, and state Sen. Betsy Johnson, representing District 16 — defining issues affecting charter schools and offering solutions. The in-person meetings at the state capitol were also to talk about "the lack of equal access that charter schools are met with," Fredrickson said.

For example, she said, charter schools don't have access to the state's School Improvement Fund.

"We spoke to our legislators about how vital that funding would be to our school in terms of improving the current building and when opening a new school in the long term," Fredrickson said. "We also advocated for eliminating the proposed budget cuts, which will additionally impact our school, as well."



Katherine Lacaze
Cannon Beach Academy teacher Ryan Hull, director Amy Fredrickson, Rep. Tiffany Mitchell and third-grade students in Salem.

In other news:

The academy will participate in the city of Cannon Beach-sponsored 12 Days of Earth Day. Board member Barb Knop said the city approved for the academy kids to select two locations on campus where they can plant trees, and monitor them as they grow. On April 12, the students also will walk to the south end of Cannon Beach near the Tree City USA sign, where adult volunteers will plant trees and the kids can observe for educational purposes, Knop said.

The board discussed details for its PTO fundraiser, which will take place from 6 to 9 p.m. May 18 at the Cannon Beach American Legion Post 168.

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