



A landing craft air cushion vehicle comes in to Sunset Beach, in a practice for landing after a Cascadia Subduction Zone event.

Help: Landing mission shows strength of rescue operation

Continued from Page A1

The landing vehicles, like big hovercraft, landed with propellers roaring, kicking up sand on the beach as hundreds of onlookers watched the boats make their landing.

“We can land pretty much anything,” Executive Officer Lt. Commander Christopher McCurry said aboard the U.S.S. Anchorage, where the two LCACs are stowed.

The craft have far more mobility than World War II style boats limited to steep grades, needed to enable the vessels to drop a ramp before sending troops.

An LCAC has the ability to reach 78% of the world’s coastlines, he said, with far more mobility than the type of craft used in World War II.

Travelers aboard the LCAC from shore were supplied with earplugs to help withstand the propeller and engine noise, transported from Sunset Beach onto the USS Anchorage, a ship designed for landing craft air cushions like those deployed in Monday’s practice.

Two LCACs, “packed in tight,” can be stowed aboard, McCurry said.

The USS Anchorage stretches 634 feet long, with 500 acres of deck space, operates in foreign and hostile areas or humanitarian aid during emergencies.

The ship carries 400 crew; when in deployment, an additional 500 Marines may be aboard. The ship can carry Hueys, Super Cobra attack helicopters, 57-ton trucks, RQ-21 drones along with amphibious watercraft.

The Anchorage is one of about 11 ships of its class nationwide; about half of those are stationed on the West Coast.

While the U.S.S. Anchorage, commissioned in 2011, has yet to respond to a natu-



R.J. Marx

Executive Officer Lt. Commander Christopher McCurry with Ron Brown, Kerry Smith and Chad Sweet aboard the USS Anchorage.

ral disaster, other readiness groups supported Hurricane Katrina response, the tsunami in Indonesia, and the hurricane in Puerto Rico, McCurry added.

The Anchorage, based in San Diego, recently conducted an eight-month deployment in the Mediterranean, near Spain, he said. Any one of the ships can get underway within 96 hours after local authorities ask for federal assistance, he said. “We might be able to get on faster depending on what we’re bringing.”

For humanitarian missions, the Anchorage may carry “anything that is on a vehicle or a conex box — water purification systems, water tanks, mobile hospitals, along with the surgical or medical personnel associated,” McCurry said.

Aircraft aboard can operate as search and rescue.

“Our purpose relies in ship-to-shore, either in combat, or humanitarian forces and assistance to the beach anywhere in the world,” he said. “What we focus on is the logistics of the ship-to-shore movement.”

Teams may set up operations on the beach that operate as a “MASH,” he said, a mobile hospital that can be delivered to the beach with an LCAC.

Those in need of additional medical assistance can be transported to the ship, where a medical facility on board can perform needed tasks.

Local officials, first responders and members of the media were invited to watch the simulation, was designed as a joint exercise to determine how food, supplies and health care will be delivered in the days after a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake and subsequent tsunami.

Pot parlors: New legislation is in the works

Continued from Page A1

“The reason that’s important in this city is I have people every day streaming down I-84, they come from Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, and they get to Seaside and they buy some pot and then they say, ‘Where can I go and smoke it?’ Well, you can’t smoke it in your hotel room. You can’t smoke it outside. You can’t smoke it in your car. And they look at us like, what kind of crazy stuff is this?”

Consumers of cannabis products can smoke legally unless at home or at somebody else’s house.

Geiger said the state is considering a change that will allow events, tents at special events, tours of some of the facilities, as well as a tasting room or a smoking lounge.

Geiger said he has the facilities to run a cannabis lounge. “I think (Police) Chief (Dave) Ham would agree that having one place or a single place people could go to consume their legal marijuana would be advantageous, and I think most of the hotel owners around here would agree as well.”



Steve Geiger, owner of Highway 420 in Seaside.

SENATE BILL 639

Summary: Provides for regulation by Oregon Liquor Control Commission of consumption and sale of marijuana items at temporary events, including licensure of premises on which temporary events are held.

Creates local option for cities and counties. Provides for regulation by commission of consumption and sale of marijuana items at cannabis lounges, including licensure of premises where cannabis lounges are located. Creates local option for cities and counties. Allows for delivery of marijuana items to consumers at specified permanent and temporary residences. Allows marijuana producers and marijuana processors to offer tours of licensed premises to members of public who are 21 years of age or older.

School: Name change considered at The Heights as schools prepare to merge

Continued from Page A1

According to the proposed timeline for the process, in September and October, the committee will begin accepting suggestions from students, parents, staff, and community members. Forms will be made available at the Seaside Farmer’s Market, fall conferences, registration, and online. The committee — with the inclusion of a community member and board member — will narrow down the suggestions to two choices.

In November, the students will vote on Election Day, tying in a “learning opportunity” about the voting process, Mahoney said. The board will approve the vote before it is announced during assemblies at the various elementary schools. Throughout December 2019 and June 2020, the committee will work to develop branding and new T-shirts for the students.

At the meeting, the board approved the proposed name change process for the elementary school as presented by the committee. Board member Lori Lum thanked the team for their work developing the proposal.



In spring 2020, students from Gearhart Elementary School will join students at The Heights.

“It’s exciting what the future holds,” she said.

In other news:
— The school board approved a list of

about 110 high school seniors who likely will be part of the Class of 2019 and eligible to graduate this school year. The board members will take part in the graduation

ceremony June 10. They can request to distribute diplomas to particular students with whom they are familiar or share a bond, Superintendent Sheila Roley said. According to board chair Mark Truax, getting to hand a diploma to a family member or friend is one of the best things “we get to do as a board member.”

— The board approved an Inter-District Transfer policy for the 2019-20 school year, which allows up to 20 students from neighboring communities to voluntarily attend Seaside High School. According to Roley, “Astoria, Warrenton and Seaside have a lot of courtesy enrollments across the county.” The district accepts requests through June 30.

— The board approved a new superintendent evaluation process that adheres to national industry standards and reflects the model provided by the Oregon School Boards Association. Roley, who developed the process for the district, will be evaluated using the new tool before her tenure ends. This will allow the board to experiment and identify areas for improvement before evaluating the new superintendent in the future.

Lawmakers want more resources for fire season

By AUBREY WIEBER
Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — Saturday marked the official start of Oregon’s wildfire season, but without new resources, the state is only incrementally more prepared to combat fire this summer than in past years.

Over consecutive summers, fire ripped through iconic landscapes, endangered communities and choked towns with blankets of smoke. The state has already seen more than 1,000 acres burn this year.

In a winter where priorities abound, wildfire preparedness has not come out a winner.

“In this biennium, we need a lifeline for our communities,” said state Rep. Pam Marsh, R-Ashland. Marsh’s district was ablaze through much of the summer,

with fire coming dangerously close to structures.

In addition to putting the community in danger, wildfires had massive economic impacts. The famous Oregon Shakespeare Festival had to cancel events, costing an estimated \$2 million.

Firefighters checked the wildfires, Marsh said, but the scorched town of Paradise, California, is a reminder that Ashland may not always be so lucky.

Marsh said that’s why Gov. Kate Brown’s proposed budget “set off” her constituents. It included resources to staff a wildfire council, which Brown created through executive action this winter, but that council won’t have any impact until the fall at the earliest. Then, funding would still need to be acquired to carry out recommendations.

Brown proposed no additional funding to bolster the

state’s response to this summer’s fires.

“It didn’t have any immediate relief for the community,” Marsh said. “What it had was a wildfire council. People were upset that there seemed to be long-term thinking but nothing to provide something for this season.”

Despite a strong snowpack, a state analysis predicts another above-average fire season. It’s what’s referred to as “the new normal.”

That’s why Marsh is working to get \$6.8 million for wildfire mitigation and suppression before the 2019 legislative session ends. The package would give the Oregon Department of Forestry more resources to fight fires, help communities implement smoke shelters to shield vulnerable people when heavy smoke billows into town and provide more resources to the front lines to stop fires from growing.

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