



Jeff Ter Har

Seaside Civic and Convention Center General Manager Russ Vandenberg cuts the ribbon celebrating the official reopening after a renovation and expansion

Remodel: Convention center celebrates

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Renovations and upgrades to ballrooms, offices, the lobby, lighting, storage and more are among the major changes unveiled, as the facility grew from 46,000 square feet to 55,000 square feet, an increase of nearly 19 percent.

Vandenberg offered credit for the on-time, under budget project to convention center staff and commissioners, contractors, management team and city partners.

Throughout construction, the center remained active and booked: Of 420 construction days, the center was occupied for 290. "To keep your staff working with 300 or 400 bridge players who don't even like to hear someone sneeze is a very difficult task," he quipped.

The renovation and expansion is to be paid for

BY THE NUMBERS

- Construction budget \$15 million
- Expansion increase 46,000 square feet to 55,000 square feet
- Total increase in meeting space 21%
- Complete interior renovation 100%
- Work completed local contractors 70%
- Construction days 420
- Event usage days 290
- New events contracted 10
- Economic impact 2018 \$36.3 million
- Transient room tax to fund project 2%

by an increase in the city's transient room tax, from 8 percent to 10 percent, which went into effect last summer.

The center has already booked 10 new events because of the expanded space, Vandenberg added.

"In 1970 the council and the commission brought this plan together to build a convention center," Mayor

Jay Barber said at the event. "A lot of people said, 'A convention center in Seaside? Who would come to a convention in Seaside?' And here it is all these years later, two other renovations and this \$15 million one. This is the facility in our community that drives the city's economic engine."

Rentals: permit moratorium is sought

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Planning Commission Chairman Chris Hoth said the commission had discussed a possible moratorium at previous meetings, but on the advice of the city attorney Dan Van Thiel determined that "doing what we'd like to do isn't necessarily what we can do."

"We're not entirely free to say, 'It's a big problem, let's cut the whole damn thing off until we fix it,'" Hoth said. "We might like to do that ... but will it stick?"

A cap on total numbers for homes currently and historically sitting empty is "counterproductive to fostering economic growth," property manager Mark Tolan said during the meeting's public comment



Todd Van Horne seeks a moratorium on vacation rental dwelling permits.

period. "The current system works, but lacks teeth when property managers are not local and invested in the well-being of the neighborhood above all else."

In continuing this item

until the commission's October meeting, planning commissioners sought to have participation from applicants, and will hear the matter on Oct. 1.

"We can all see that there are problems and we're attempting to deal with it," Hoth told the Van Hornes. "What you're saying is helpful to us in learning to deal with things. At the same time, it's a complex issue."

A Planning Commission work session on vacation rental dwellings is scheduled for Sept. 17, and a joint City Council and Planning Commission workshop planned for Monday, Sept. 30.

"It's front of mind — it's what we're talking about right now," Planning Commissioner David Posalski added.

Lewis and Clark: Expedition returns

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by Lyle Gleason, Sid Stofels, John Orthmann and DeWayne Pritchett.

"We have to rebuild the salt cairn every year," Fedje said. The city is gracious enough to provide some heavy equipment. to do that."

Building the cairn means digging a pit, restacking the rocks and flattening the area "as we can. we also have to build the shelter, which is always interesting. They said build a comfortable structure but didn't give us any more explanation other than that."



R.J. Marx

"More of a wigwam than a teepee" is how historians described this.

The historians were propping up a shelter as we spoke, with a squarish shape more of a "wigwam than a teepee," Fedje said.

The historians travel with a crew of seven, plus two interpreters guiding visitors.

Members come from all over the United States, Fedje said. "I happen to come from Utah. these guys are from Washington. The lady right there is from Oregon."

Clouds hung over the scene on the beach near U Street early Friday afternoon — perfect Lewis and Clark weather.

"They spent a little over three months here, closer to five, probably, it didn't rain 12 days and they saw the sun six days," Fedje said. "This would be perfect if it would stay this way."



Seaside Police

'Viable' explosive device found on beach

By R.J. MARX
Seaside Signal

Downtown Seaside reopened to traffic after an incendiary device found at the beach led to the closure of Avenue A between South Columbia and South Edgewood midday Thursday, Sept. 5.

Seaside Police say the object, described as plastic tubing capped at both ends with duct tape, was a viable device filled with black powder substitute. The fuse appears to have burned out before initiating the powder.

After finding the item on the beach Thursday morning, an individual called police to turn it over for disposal.

When an officer arrived on scene, the item was placed on the ground by the person who found it, the area was secured, and the Oregon State Police Explosives Unit was requested. Avenue A and neighboring streets were closed to protect the public and first responders.



Gretchen Darnell
Seaside, Oregon

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