

## Astoria: 'A good start'

Continued from Page 1

Council members of their role in policy setting and implementation. The Council's only three employees are the city manager, city attorney and city judge, Henningsgaard explained. Once the final copy of the letter to Benoit is submitted, it is up to him to implement the policy.

The policy changes would include giving cases to Circuit Court that require the testimony of a Drug Recognition Expert (DRE), a felony DUII charge or a felony charge as part of the same act or transaction, or any citation issued to an individual who has been convicted of two or more DUIIs in the state of Oregon in the last 10 years.

In current policy, any case involving a felony injury accident goes to Circuit Court automatically.

"I found that one of the more revealing things that we learned in the executive session was the actual chain of command regarding the Astoria City Council, the city manager, the Astoria Municipal Court, the chief of police, and the whole ball of wax," said Councilman Peter Roscoe. "It turns out the City Council is not actually the driver of that bus."

Councilman War was not in favor of the letter, but said he would support it if his fellow councilors felt otherwise.

"I'm not in favor of just moving those DUIIs to Circuit Court in what I see as an attempt to appease Mr. Marquis without him giving us some assurances that this is what he wants us to do," he said. "To me, we're spending a substantial amount of time without a positive benefit. I hope I'm wrong and I support the Council's decision 100 percent."

### Others support letter

The other councilors supported the letter and although it has yet to be submitted, Henningsgaard has discussed the potential policy change with Marquis.

"I'm glad they're doing this. It is certainly a good start," Marquis said. "I applaud the city for doing it and I'm happy to take any DUII cases they are willing to give us."

But that doesn't mean Marquis is withdrawing his efforts to take over all DUIIs from Municipal Court.

"My concern remains the same," he said. "We don't get more staff, we don't get more money, we're simply trying to prevent people who are not being held accountable for the level of DUII that they should."

Marquis has a bill in the Oregon Legislature that would give a district attorney permission to take any cases he sees fit. Marquis gave testimony to that issue in front of the Governor's

nor's Advisory Committee on DUIIs Feb. 11 and gained their unanimous support.

The city of Astoria sending DRE-involved cases to Circuit Court is a step in the right direction, Marquis added. But handing over cases in which a person has been convicted of two DUIIs in 10 years is already Circuit Court domain.

The law does not just apply to only Oregon state, either, he said.

"The third one is a felony, anywhere. We have greater resources to check those records accurately," Marquis said. "If the city didn't send those cases to circuit court, they would be sabotaging a felony prosecution. I don't think they are doing that but they would be if they did not send it over."

### Willing to work with city

Marquis said he is willing to work with the city and would rather try to achieve consensus instead of pulling his authority. The bill in the Legislature would not give him more power than he has now, but would clarify his authority to take cases if need be.

In unrelated city news:

• The Council approved an agreement with the Clatsop County Historical Society (CCHS) to move the bicentennial trading post, formerly located at the 12th Street docks, to the former England Marine building on 15th. The location will be the office of Bicentennial Director Paulette McCoy, as well as the store for all bicentennial goods. In addition, to celebrate the bicentennial, Lum's Auto has donated a new van, decorated with historic photos, to serve as a rolling billboard for the bicentennial. McCoy and CCHS Director Mac Burns will be driving the van for one year before returning it to Lum's.

• The Astoria Development Commission — doubling as the City Council — approved a proposal from the Clatsop Community College historic preservation program for the deconstruction of the former Darigold buildings along the Riverwalk. The class has until April 15 to remove any materials they wish to preserve from the building. After that date, the project will go out for bid for the remainder of the demolition. Benoit said the school project will help to lower the cost of the project for the city because less material will need to be carted away.

The Denver Street Combined Sewer Overflow project is nearing completion, with approximately 90 percent of the project done. Finishing touches and work on the ballfield should be wrapped up by May, while the underground tank is already in use and has been since mid-January.

## American Red Cross plans blood drives

The American Red Cross will hold three blood drives on the North Coast the first week in March: from 1 to 6 p.m. Tuesday at the Seaside Elks Lodge, 324 Avenue A in Seaside; from 1 to 6 p.m. March 2 at the Astoria Masonic Lodge, 1577 Franklin Ave.; and from 1 to 6 p.m. March 3 at the Cannon Beach Conference Center, 289 N. Spruce St. in Cannon Beach.

Many people assume that other people will donate and blood will always be there when it is needed. Unfortunately, less than 38 percent of the American population is eligible to give blood, and only a fraction of those people actually do.

To schedule an appointment, call Julie Flues at (503) 325-4721 or schedule online at [www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org)



ALEX PAJUNAS — The Daily Astorian  
Matt Van Ess, habitat restoration coordinator with the Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce, describes the transition of the freshwater wetlands fed by the Chinook River that will transition into a tidally influenced habitat.

## CREST: Total cost for the project was \$1.2 million

Continued from Page 1

CREST has the funding to monitor the site for the next two years, said Matt Van Ess, habitat restoration coordinator. The total cost for the project was \$1.2 million, he said.

Ammer hopes to wrap up the last of the work this week, weather permitting.

"People have been very encouraging," Ammer said. "We're working on a major roadway and it's inconvenient for them." But they're excited when they hear about the project, she said.

"This is going to help in so many ways," she said. Wetlands know what to do with water, cleaning, filtering and absorbing it, and can prevent flooding and improve overall water quality.

CREST is now looking into the possibility of doing similar projects at spots east of Fort Columbia, near Dismal Nitch and Hungry Harbor where Lewis and Clark spent a number of miserable days in 1805.

Those projects, which also involve the removal of an old, inadequate culvert with a larger culvert, are several years down the road, CREST Director Micah Russell said.

"These are expensive projects, big projects," Van Ess said, but there is the encouragement to do them from both the Washington Department of Transportation and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Organizations like CREST can usually get to the projects faster and at lower overall cost, Van Ess said.

The Lewis and Clark National Historical Park is looking at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. But that project would also be several years out, said Park Superintendent David Szymanski. The



Courtesy of David Wilson  
Sections of a 12-foot-wide culvert are installed beneath the U.S. Highway 101 roadbed near Chinook, Wash.

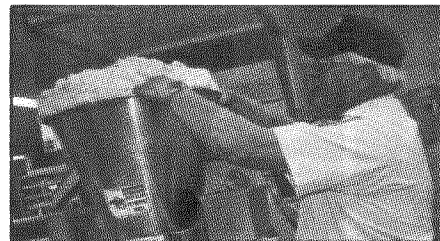
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The Lewis and Clark National Historical Park is looking at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. But that project would also be several years out, said Park Superintendent David Szymanski. The

park-owned land at Megler Creek, east down Highway 101, near Dismal Nitch.

But that project would also be several years out, said Park Superintendent David Szymanski. The

impact (in terms of amount of wetlands restored) would be less at that site than at the Fort Columbia site, Szymanski said, and currently the park does not have the funding for the project.



## Prison is rolling in the dough

OREGON • Page 5

## Hometown weddings

SPECIAL SECTION



# THE DAILY ASTORIAN

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## Astoria to look into DUII changes

City Council will send some cases to District Attorney Marquis, letter to address Municipal Court criticisms

By CHELSEA GORROW  
The Daily Astorian

The Astoria City Council has decided to hand over some drunk-driving cases to District Attorney Josh Marquis.

But not all of them and not right away. One City Council member, Russ War, said he sees this as an attempt to make peace with the District Attorney, who has been campaigning for the change in handling

of cases involving Driving Under the Influence of Intoxicants (DUII).

The City Council has agreed to submit a letter to City Manager Paul Benoit in favor of addressing the criticisms Astoria Municipal Court has faced in its prosecution of cases involving DUIIs.

"I'm very supportive of this step," said Councilwoman Karen Mellin, who campaigned for closer scrutiny of DUIIs when she was elected last fall. "Maybe it will

clarify, for us as well as the public, what does happen with DUIIs."

Marquis has led a campaign to take all DUII cases from Astoria Municipal Court, where, he contends, there is a different standard of justice from the state-run Circuit Court where he prosecutes.

At Tuesday's City Council meeting, after a lengthy executive session, the City Council drafted a letter, which will be brought back to them in final form by City

Attorney Blair Henningsgaard at the next meeting.

The letter does not direct Benoit to hand DUII cases over to Clatsop County Circuit Court, the City Council does not have any say on what cases go to Municipal or Circuit Court. Rather, the letter asks the city manager to discuss potential policy changes with Police Chief Pete Curzon and report back to the City Council. Benoit was present for the discussion.

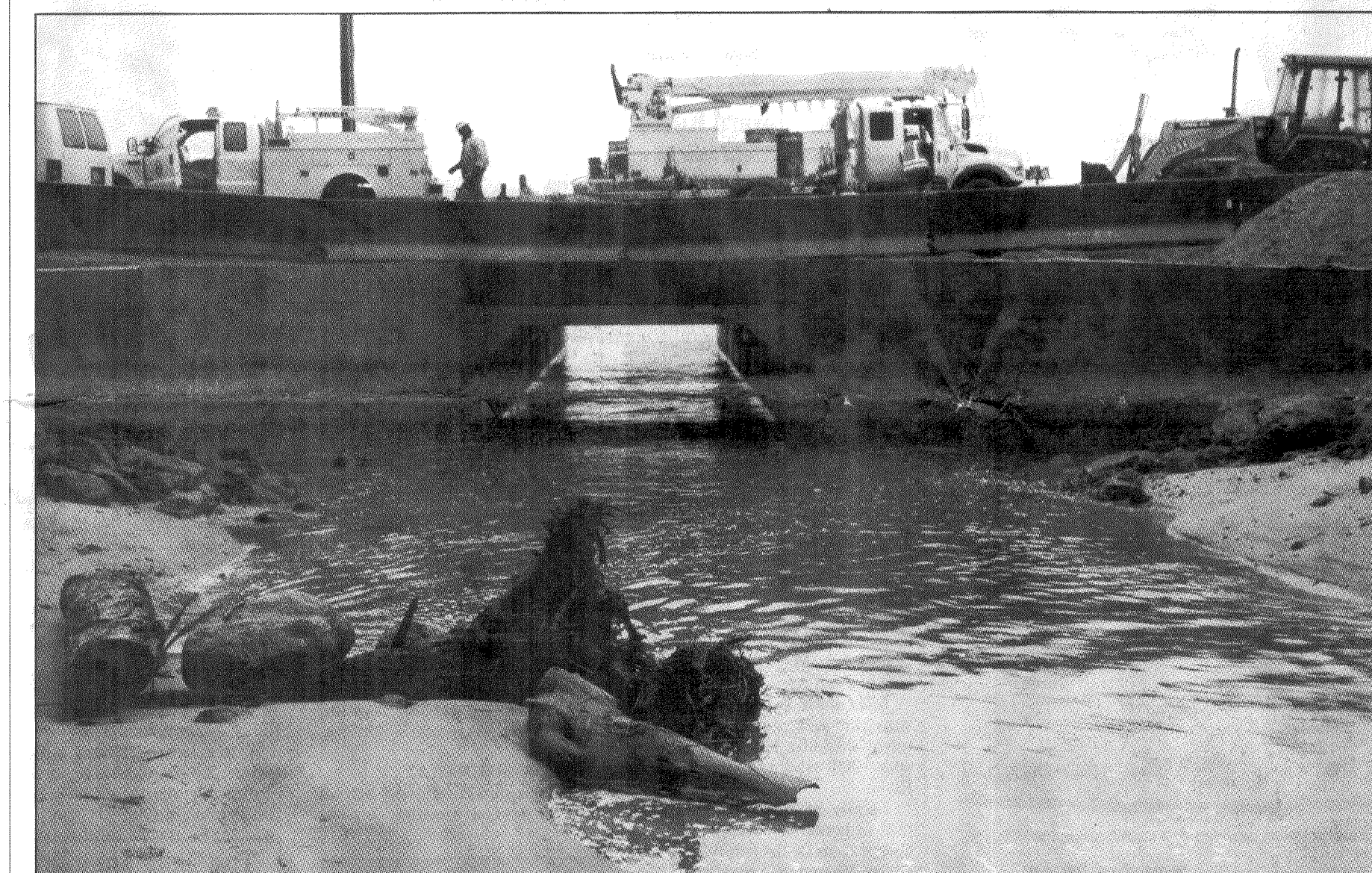
"We're in the arrest business. We're not in the prosecution business," Curzon said. "However I'm directed by the city manager is fine with me. We're only interested in timely and aggressive prosecution."

Discussion of the issue reminded City

See ASTORIA, Page 12

City highlights goals Page 3

## Big culvert opens new era for Chinook River wetland



ALEX PAJUNAS — The Daily Astorian  
Crews work to restring power lines along U.S. Highway 101 Friday above the new fish-passable culvert built as part of the Fort Columbia Tidal Reconnection Project near Chinook, Wash. The culvert will connect the Columbia River to a freshwater wetland fed by the Chinook River.

## CREST takes the lead in habitat restoration projects

By KATIE WILSON  
The Daily Astorian

CHINOOK, Wash. — Where a 24-inch culvert once let in a trickle of water and the occasional confused, claustrophobic fish, a huge 12-foot-by-12-foot culvert is now installed under U.S. Highway 101 in Washington.

Water is again flowing through what was historically a wetland area.

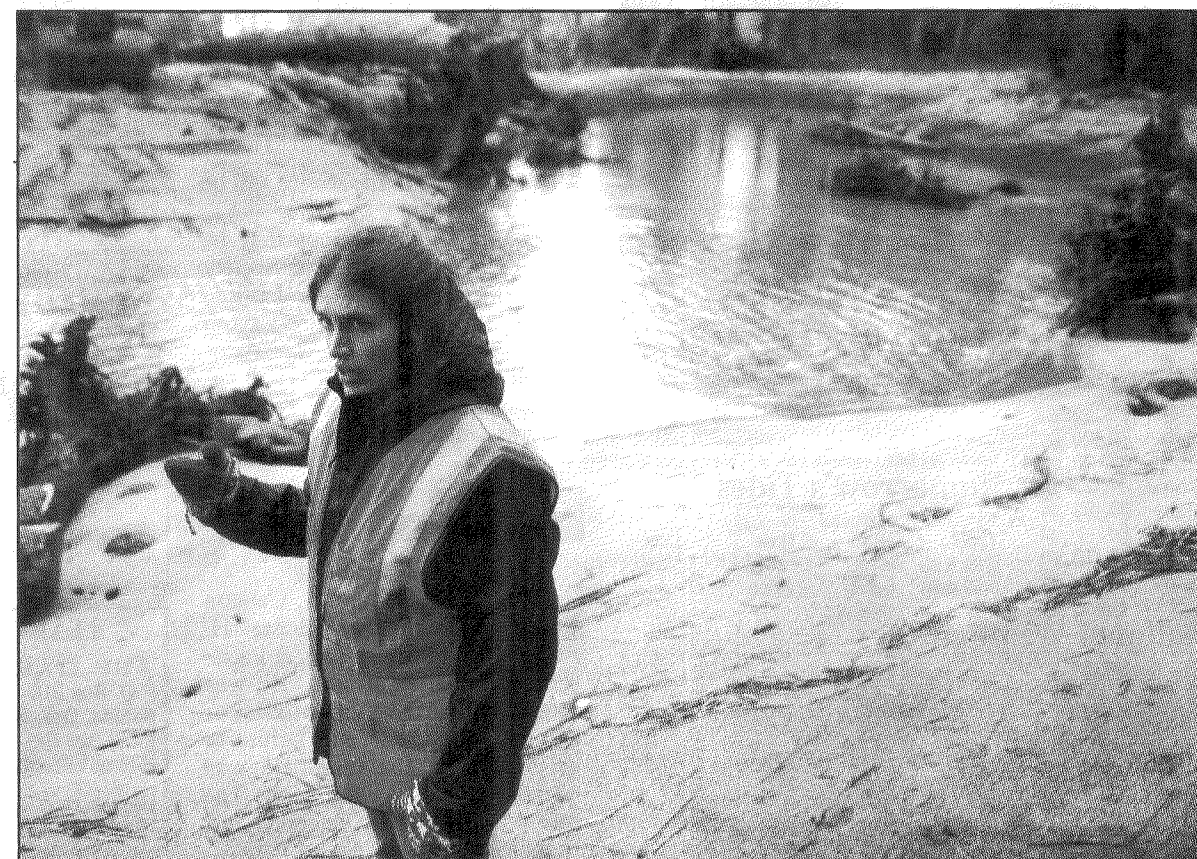
Funded by an array of sources and combining the organization and permitting powers of a variety of agencies, the project is nearing completion.

The Fort Columbia Tidal Reconnection Project headed by the Astoria-based Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce (CREST) seeks to reconnect the Columbia River estuary with a distributary of the Chinook River that flows through a wetland east of Highway 101.

"The culvert is oversized for the amount of water we're counting on in the next two years," said Amy Ammer, habitat restoration specialist with CREST and project manager for the recent undertaking. "This is better for 50 year-type of growth." But Ammer says the whole point is to look at the long term.

"This whole area will open up," she said. Before the construction of the highway, the area was a wetland where waters washed back and forth with the tides, creating a tidal slough, prime rearing habitat for juvenile salmonids.

The building of the highway cut off communication between the wetlands and the estuary, and the wetland ceased to function effectively as a wetland.



ALEX PAJUNAS — The Daily Astorian  
Amy Ammer, a habitat restoration specialist with Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce, discusses the benefits of the new culvert and starter channel built as part of the Fort Columbia Tidal Reconnection Project. The restoration project will attempt to reverse past construction that led to wetland habitat disconnection.

Now, as waters flow along the current channel and dig back into old channels and establish paths through the land, bringing in nutrients and sweeping out toxins, Ammer is confident the wetland will begin to flourish again.

In the first two years, CREST hopes to see major changes in roughly 12 acres of the 96-acre cut of land. Salty or brackish water will flow in with the tides and

See CREST, Page 12

## Wu admits to taking donor's pain pills

Lawmaker insists he's fit to serve

The Associated Press  
and The Oregonian  
An AP Member Exchange

U.S. Rep. David Wu says that he accepted prescription drugs from a campaign contributor last October, around the time when members of his staff complained of his erratic behavior.

Wu, who represents the North Coast, told The Oregonian that he had left another kind of painkiller — one prescribed by his doctor for neck pain — in Washington. He said the donor offered him an alternative, and he took two tablets.

"This was the only time that this has ever happened," Wu wrote to the newspaper. "I recognize that my action showed poor judgment at the time, and I sincerely regret having put my staff in a difficult position."

Earlier Tuesday, Wu said on ABC's "Good Morning America" that it was "unprofessional and inappropriate" for him to send pictures of himself wearing a tiger costume to staff members (see photo Page 11).

See WU, Page 11

## Changes in store for Cannon Beach recycle depot

By NANCY MCCARTHY  
The Daily Astorian

CANNON BEACH — The old recycle depot on East Second Street isn't what it used to be. And that could be a good thing, depending on your perspective.

If it has always been bothersome that yard debris could only be deposited on Friday afternoons and weekends, then there's good news: Collection of residential yard debris will be open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. seven days a week.

However, if it has always been convenient to take all those wine bottles stacking up in the garage to the recycling depot at midnight because it was open around the clock, you're out of luck.

The depot will be fenced and locked at night, open only from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily.

But, like a good game of dominoes, changes at the recycling depot will be made a little at a time, as new buildings are constructed and old buildings are torn down.

See DEPOT, Page 11

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