



Clatsop Tidings

A monthly review of County business

“Neighbor to neighbor, serving Clatsop County with integrity, honesty and respect”

June 2010

Stakeholders choose Westport funding recipients

Clatsop County is lending a hand to an effort to provide some long-term support to the community of Westport.

County officials have helped coordinate a series of meetings of local stakeholders to identify projects of lasting impact, projects which could tap into a pool of funds that can only be spent in or around the unincorporated town in the northeastern corner of the county.

Participants in the project have picked an internship program for local youth and a master development plan as their top choices to receive the remainder of almost \$500,000 awarded to the county in 2007.

The money is the result of a penalty levied by the State of Oregon against the Georgia-Pacific corporation for failing to create a minimum required number of new jobs for a new paper machine at its Wauna mill. The company had received tax breaks for the new machine through an Enterprise Zone property tax relief program in exchange for pledging to create a set amount of new positions.

State law allows the penalty money to be used for “the benefit of residents of the Enterprise Zone and for the development of jobs, skills and training for residents of the Enterprise Zone and immediate vicinity.”

Clatsop County received a total of about \$480,000 from the penalty. The county has already spent or dedicated some of the money for several local projects – repairs to the Westport sewer facilities, dredging of Plympton Creek, improvements to the Westport and Wauna water districts – leaving approximately \$241,000 available for further investment.

To help earmark the remaining funds, the county teamed with Clatsop Economic Development Resources as well as representatives from local businesses, utilities, schools and emergency service providers in a series of meetings to gather input on the community’s most pressing needs and identify projects that could be eligible for the G-P funds.

The group eventually developed a list



Tax penalty payments will fund more projects in the town of Westport.

of more than two-dozen projects ranging from road and highway improvements to picnic areas. The list was narrowed as projects eligible for other funding were weeded out, and eventually the group settled on two choices – an internship program for Westport students, and a corridor study of economic development opportunities.

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Clerk, staff recognized for Census work

The Clatsop County Board of Commissioners approved a proclamation May 28 honoring County Clerk Cathie Garber and her staff for the “extraordinary job” they performed leading the local outreach campaign for the 2010 U.S. Census.

Garber chaired the Complete Count Committee, which was tasked with urging local residents to complete and mail in their census forms. The committee represented local cities, chambers of commerce and the Lower Columbia Hispanic Council.



Garber in turn praised the dedication and hard work of the rest of the Complete Count group. She told the board of commissioners that with just \$2,300 in federal

funds, the committee purchased T-shirts, mugs and other give-away items to hand out at booths the group set up at local events like the Crab and Seafood Festival and Halloween Bash. The committee also arranged for “Shanghaiied in Astoria” actors to record public announcements for airing on local ra-

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Upcoming County Meetings

Planning Commission
Tuesday, June 8, 10 a.m.
Judge Boyington Building

Board of Commissioners
Wednesday, June 9, 10 a.m.
Judge Boyington Building

Board of Commissioners
Wednesday, June 23, 6 p.m.
Judge Boyington Building

Times subject to change

Westport: Boat launch, traffic study projects also pursued

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The internship program would be run in partnership with Clatsop Community College. Businesses that have already indicated interest in taking part include Georgia-Pacific itself and Wauna Federal Credit Union.

The corridor study would create a strategic development plan—similar to the document the county commissioned for its North Coast Business Park in Warrenton—that would identify business opportunities available through barging and rail access.

The stakeholders group has formed two subgroups to further refine the internship and study plans.

The county has been represented in the discussions by District 4 Commissioner Dirk Rohne, along with County Manager Duane Cole, Assistant County Manager Nicole Williams, Transportation and Development Services Director Ed Wegner and Natural Resources Manager Steve Meshke.

Earlier disbursements of the penalty proceeds included a county match of \$36,000 to fund flood-control work in Plympton Creek in 2008. The stream overflowed its banks and flooded many properties in Westport during the December 2007 storm, and the waterway was left choked with mud, gravel and debris, increasing the likelihood of future flooding. The project involved dredging the creek bed and stabilizing the banks.

The penalty proceeds also covered the local match for federally funded improvements to two local water districts that suffered damage in the 2007 storm.

Clatsop County continues to support



Funds from the Georgia-Pacific tax penalty have paid for a portion of the cost of flood-control work on Plympton Creek.

some of the other proposed projects that were identified in the brainstorming sessions but not tapped for funding through the Enterprise Zone money. They include a proposed new access route to the Wahkiakum Ferry landing, improvements to the landing area itself, and work on Highway 30 to improve pedestrian safety. The county is working with the Oregon Department of Transportation to support a traffic study that would investigate those projects as well as the impacts of potential industrial development on the waterfront.

The county is also working with the Clatsop Soil and Water Conservation

District on further potential work on Plympton Creek to reduce the problem of silt build-up at the ferry landing.

The county also has other projects in store for Westport. A plan is in the works for improvements at a popular boat launch site, including upgraded parking, restrooms and fish-cleaning facilities, in conjunction with the planned donation of 27 acres of adjacent waterfront property from Georgia-Pacific to the county parks department.

The boat launch project isn't on the Enterprise Zone funding list – it's due to be paid for by a grant from the Oregon State Marine Board and county funds.

County's Census participation rate jumps 16 percent from 2000

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dio.

Garber said Clatsop County's census form return rate went from 61 percent in the 2000 Census to 71 percent in this year's count, the biggest jump of all Oregon counties.

The more people who complete and mail in their census forms, the fewer people need to be contacted directly by census workers in the costly door-to-door interview process, she said.

The U.S. Census not only establishes population data for determining Congres-

sional and state legislative representation, it also has a bearing on the distribution of more than \$400 billion in federal funds over the next ten years, as well as influencing decisions on the siting of schools, hospitals, highways and other vital infrastructure.