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Bradwood halts LNG

NorthernStar suspends action on gas terminal; opponents jubilant

By CASSANDRA PROFITA
The Daily Astorian

al permits for Bradwood Landing and the difficult investment environment have forced us to suspend development."

Brownsmead resident Cheryl Johnson wept with joy.

For five years, the retired librarian has been the local face of the Bradwood project opposition.

For once, when asked for her opinion on LNG, she was speechless.

Later, she said the announcement justified the five years of her life – and an entire room in her house – that she's given up to

fight the development.

"This proves that all of the work and energy and time that people poured into this was worthwhile," she said, "and that ordinary everyday citizens when they work collectively and when they are committed can defeat huge projects that seem overwhelming."

The Bradwood project, proposed for a site 25 miles east of Astoria on the Columbia River, was designed to receive and reheat imported supercooled natural gas liquid from overseas and send it through

a 36-mile pipeline to an interstate gas line near Kelso, Wash. Another pipeline proposed by Northwest Natural and TransCanada Corp. would have cut through eastern Clatsop County to send gas from the Bradwood facility to a hub in Molalla.

NorthernStar declined to comment further on the project suspension, which leaves a lot of unanswered questions for Clatsop County residents.

For one thing, County Commissioner

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INSIDE

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- NorthernStar's announcement
- LNG timeline

ON THE WEB

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Engineers research Seaside highway flooding

Proposed solutions should be available by fall, but permanent fix is still down the road a ways

By NANCY McCARTHY
The Daily Astorian

SEASIDE — When the water starts rising above car bumpers on U.S. Highway 101 south of Seaside, everything stops.

Flooding on the highway, a problem that dates back at least 30 years, is gaining attention by an engineering firm that promises to study the problem and, maybe, reduce the flooding – eventually.

"We hope to come up with viable solutions to alleviate the flooding, but not totally eliminate it," said Vaughn Collins, senior engineer for Northwest Hydraulic Consultants, a Seattle-based firm.

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Ballot measures seek to lighten financial load on schools

By DEEDA SCHROEDER
The Daily Astorian

Two education-related measures will be on the May 18 ballot, aiming to lighten the financial burden on primary and secondary schools trying to maintain aging facilities and campus expansion.

The Oregon Legislature has referred two constitutional changes to voters and there is no organized opposition to either measure.

Measure 68 will help K-12 schools pay for new buildings and maintenance on current facilities and use borrowed money for teaching necessities.

See BALLOT, Page 2

Re-organized Public Health feels pulse of community

Agency moves forward with health care

By KATIE WILSON
The Daily Astorian

Start with one question: Why is Jason in the hospital?

He has an infection in his leg. And why is that? A cut on his leg became infected. Why? He was playing in the street outside his house and fell on some sharp, jagged glass. Why was he playing there? He lives in a poor neighborhood and there's no where else to play. Why does he live there? His parents can't afford to live anywhere else. Why? Because his dad is unemployed and his mom is always sick. Why is his dad unemployed? Because he doesn't have much education and can't find a job. Why? Because his family was poor and he dropped out of school.

But why?

And that – in brief – is public health, said Clatsop County Public Health Director Margo Lalich.

It's never about the individual patient alone, it's about the individual patient as he or she relates to an entire community and to an entire population.

This year, the Clatsop County Public Health Department was reorganized as a department. The department had grown beyond the ability of a single director to oversee. So the county commissioners went backwards in time to a model of what the department had been nearly 12 years ago. This model was more streamlined, aligning core existing programs instead of creating new programs.

Aligning prevention strategies and programs gives the whole department more stability, Lalich said, while the pruning of other programs (for example, the Commission on Children and Families transferred to the Juvenile Department) has strengthened the department's focus.

In a strange coincidence, these changes have put the department more on track



ALEX PAJUNAS — The Daily Astorian
Tory Sutherland, left, a Clatsop County Public Health nurse, hands Susan Pargeon, holding her 2-month-old son Glenn Etherton, a booklet called "Safe Sleep for your Baby," Tuesday at the Clatsop County Public Health Building. Sutherland, a Women, Infants and Children program certifier, was checking in with Pargeon about health, safety and nutrition while also taking measurements of Glenn's height and weight.

with how the state of Oregon is planning to restructure public health across the board.

The department changed its name from Health and Human Services to Public Health in January and in February, Lalich, after several months serving on an interim basis, was named director.

Now, two months later, with a plan of attack and a new director, things are beginning to shift into place.

"We feel very supported in our reorganization by the county commission," said Tory Sutherland, who works part time at

See HEALTH, Page 12



ALEX PAJUNAS — The Daily Astorian
ABOVE: Crystal Wright's daughter Christina DeMarco smiles while waving her arms around after finishing up with her six-month checkup.



RIGHT: Christie Larson, a Clatsop County Public Health nurse, labels and bags up bottles of tuberculosis medication.

COMING THURSDAY



Mother's Day
in COAST WEEKEND

LNG: FERC says company has not officially abandoned the project

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Dirk Rohne said, the company owes the county around \$200,000 in outstanding legal bills accrued over the course of the local land-use approval process.

The company has a corner office in downtown Astoria that has been staffed by at least two people, including the company's community liaison Pete Hackett, who sits on several local boards including the Columbia Memorial Hospital Foundation.

NorthernStar announced the Bradwood project in February 2005, amid a swarm of LNG proposals for the lower Columbia River. Over the past five years, the company has pulled ahead of the competition in the permitting process. In 2008, NorthernStar received conditional approvals from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and the Clatsop County Commission.

Even though those approvals were subsequently challenged in court, many still saw Bradwood as the frontrunner among the three LNG projects proposed for Oregon. The Jordan Cove LNG project in Coos Bay and the Oregon LNG project in Warrenton are still working to get their construction permits.

Tamara Young-Allen, spokeswoman for the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, said the license to build the Bradwood LNG facility is good for five years — until 2013.

If NorthernStar is not able to build the project within that time frame, she said, the company needs to notify federal energy regulators.

"We've said this project is in the public interest and they need to have it constructed within five years," said Young-Allen. "If they need more time to do that they must request it, or if they are going to abandon the

County candidates ready to turn to other issues

By KATIE WILSON
The Daily Astorian

How will the suspension of the Bradwood LNG project affect the race for the commission? The issue of the proposed LNG terminal has come up consistently at candidate forums across the county and the candidates' responses have been greeted with either hisses or applause.

Robert Mushen, the appointed incumbent for the District 5 South County seat, is just glad he can talk about the issue publicly now. "I'm happy to say I'm not in Bradwood's pocket," he said.

As a commissioner, while the issue was still before the county, he could not give his personal opinion about the project.

The suspension has also "eliminated one of the elements of contention" from the race, he

said. "I would just as soon that be off the table anyway," he said. "It was such a small part of county business. Important, but not as important as other things ... It was such a divisive issue, but now it's off the table and we can concentrate on other things."

He cautioned against premature celebration however.

"I'm worried that (Bradwood) just suddenly did this. It makes me a little bit suspicious," he said. "I think we have to be cautious. We still have the Oregon LNG project and it's still festering away."

"I really don't think the suspension is going to affect the county races at all," said John Dunzer, candidate for the District 5 seat. "I don't think it's all played out yet."

Debra Birkby, the third candidate in the

running for District 5, said she has always been opposed to the Bradwood LNG plan.

"While I share the concern about providing family wage jobs, economic development cannot come at any cost or undermine the values we hold dear. I have not heard a compelling case for the need or suitability of LNG facilities in our county, and I have serious concerns about the harm such facilities would cause to our environment," she said.

She doesn't see how it would affect the county race unless LNG was truly the only issue people cared about. There are more pressing issues, she said.

"I wouldn't take a guess on how it would affect the county races," said John Raichl, incumbent for the District 3 seat.

District 3 candidate Peter Huhtala doesn't think the suspension will affect the county

process directly, except that it might free up some time to focus on the county's fundamental issues.

"It is now abundantly clear that the county has been wasting time and money on pipe dreams. Now we need to focus on supporting small business and nonprofits, on creating medical, educational, and green jobs, he said. "Voters can seize this opportunity to change the course of Clatsop County."

Scott Lee, candidate for the District 1 seat, doesn't really think the suspension will affect the county races. District 1 incumbent Jeff Hazen agrees.

"In deciding to suspend it, (NorthernStar) had had a lot of hurdles to jump over, permitting and such. It got to be too much for investors," he added. "You've got to stop the bleeding somewhere."

project they need to let us know."

Young-Allen said the company has not filed a request to abandon the project, as far as she can tell. In fact, she said, FERC did not even receive the news release NorthernStar sent to the media on Tuesday.

If another company assumes control of NorthernStar, Young-Allen said, the new entity could resume the Bradwood LNG development.

But if NorthernStar wants to transfer the FERC license to build the facility to another company, FERC would have to grant approval first.

LNG market changed

NorthernStar had financial backing from New York investment firm Matlin Patterson, and secured \$100 million in private financing in 2007.

The company had been developing a second LNG terminal off the coast of California, called Clearwa-

ter Port, but in March that project was shelved.

The Bradwood project followed a nationwide spike in LNG proposals that started in 2003 with a declaration of need by former Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan. By 2005, there were 55 terminals proposed across the country.

Since then, new technology for extracting natural gas from shale has boosted estimates of the U.S. domestic gas supply — particularly in the Rocky Mountain region — decreasing the need for imported LNG. U.S. natural gas prices are about half of what they were two years ago.

FERC recently approved the El Paso Corp.'s Ruby Pipeline to deliver natural gas from Wyoming to southern Oregon and northern California.

Meanwhile, NorthernStar has faced numerous regulatory road-

blocks.

In addition to the appeal of its FERC license by the state of Oregon and LNG opponent group Columbia Riverkeeper, NorthernStar has also faced major delays in its Oregon Department of Environmental Quality permits and its Clatsop County land development permit.

The National Marine Fisheries Service biological opinion of the project's impacts to threatened and endangered species of salmon is also outstanding.

Last month, the Oregon Land Use Board of Appeals rejected the 2008 Clatsop County permit approval for the second time, sending it back for further consideration of whether the proposed facility is too big for the Bradwood site and whether it will adequately protect salmon and traditional fishing grounds. Research shows the Bradwood site is a popu-

lar place for juvenile salmon to feed as they migrate out of the Columbia River to the ocean.

NorthernStar had launched a \$59 million voluntary, yet "legally binding," Salmon Enhancement Initiative in conjunction with the project.

Permits stalled

In Tuesday's news release, Soanes said "the challenging regulatory environment gives investors pause."

He said the project would have created hundreds of jobs and provided a new source of energy that would have stabilized costs for thousands of businesses in the region.

"While we're disappointed, we are truly grateful for the tremendous support the project received from citizens in Clatsop County and Oregon's business and labor communities," Soanes said.

Brett VandenHeuvel, executive

director for Columbia Riverkeeper, said the suspension is long overdue.

"This is a huge victory for Oregonians," he said. "There's been incredible statewide opposition for years. ... This project just does not make sense. It never did."

VandenHeuvel said even if the company passes the project onto another developer, "they face insurmountable odds to place a destructive LNG terminal in a critical salmon nursery when Oregon doesn't need LNG."

Lori Durheim, an Astoria resident and LNG opponent, said her war isn't over yet as long as Jordan Cove and Oregon LNG are still viable projects. But she was emboldened by the news of Bradwood's suspension.

"I have something to say to (Oregon LNG CEO) Peter Hansen," she said. "Oregon LNG, you're next."

Health: Staff must work on planning while dealing with all the daily crises

Continued from Page 1

the county's WIC (Women, Infants and Children) program with Yami Garcia. The program stands on its own but is also a part of public health.

What WIC in particular has gained in the reorganization is leadership, Sutherland said.

"(Lalich) has worked in so many of these programs," she said. "And she really knows this program inside and out, but she doesn't micro-manage. She trusts us in the work we do ... She has long-term goals and a long-term scope and that's given us some direction."

"(Public health) never stays the same. It's always evolving to meet the needs of the local community," Lalich said. "Funding changes, policy changes, policy makers change, needs change: all of these change. We have to be prepared to adapt."

The challenge of public health is that while staff is busy reacting to whatever is going on in the county (food recalls, H1N1, information, referrals), they also have to maintain a vision for the future: What will programs look like in two years? In five years?

With the new Health Care Bill, business at public health will change

again, but no one is ready to predict exactly how these changes will manifest themselves.

Meanwhile, the Public Health Department at 820 Exchange St. in Astoria is a busy place and the seven nurses have their hands full, but they're always ready to open them a little farther.

In one part of the warren-like bottom floor of the county building, Public Health Nurse Christie Larson put together tuberculosis medications. In the WIC area, 6-month-old Christina DeMarco came out grinning from her six month check-up with Garcia.

Sutherland said WIC had 200 clients when she first started working there 20 years ago. Now there are 1,300.

"We still haven't met our maximum," she said. "The idea is don't work harder, work smarter." And they already do work hard enough.

Lalich is proud of her staff. They've weathered a lot of changes and taken on diverse responsibilities, she said.

Some of them, like Sutherland and Belinda Kruger, women's health-care nurse practitioner, have been with the county for years.

Kruger has been a part of the department for 33 years and is now

helping the grown children of women she saw in the past.

She remembers the more streamlined public health department of 12 years ago and the day it changed, ballooning into what was known for a long time as Health and Human Services. "It rose — like yeast," she said. "It seemed like it was kind of an overwhelming structure." Now she has seen it come back again, full circle.

"It's really nice to have someone like Margo in charge, with her energy and forward thinking," she said. "We're looking at things, saying, 'Okay, in ten years where do you want to be and how do we want to get there?'"

All of the nurses oversee at least one program. Others, like Patsy Lee Horecny — who does everything from house calls across the county to helping high-risk pregnant women — oversee three.

Part of the role of public health is to make sure services are provided to the community, whether those services include information about birth control or vaccines for the flu.

"Ideally, everyone has a medical home," Lalich said. For some people, it's easier to first approach the Public Health department where staff can either take care of the problem or refer them to someone who can.



ALEX PAJUNAS — The Daily Astorian
Margo Lalich, second from right, Clatsop County's Public Health director, huddles with Public Health nurses, from left, Tory Sutherland, Belinda Kruger, Patsy Lee Horecny, Christie Larson, and Sheri Salber during their daily "stand up" Tuesday morning. It is a time for them to check in and discuss any needs and concerns with their work.

More details emerge of Foster's departure from state attorney general's office

The Oregonian
An AP Member Exchange

SALEM — When a judge allowed state and federal agents to search Hood River Juice in October, handcuff and cart off owner David B. Ryan and file criminal charges, a big piece of incriminating evidence was a water sample from a puddle near the plant that showed extraordinarily high pollution levels.

Turns out, there were two problems with that evidence, new court records indicate: The sample collection, including unsterile bottles and no custody seal, was flawed.

And the person who took the sample actually wasn't water-quality specialist Rachael Pecore of Columbia Riverkeeper, as asserted in an affidavit justifying the search. It was Brent Foster, then one of Attorney General John Kroger's top aides at Oregon's Department of

Justice.

Foster resigned as Kroger's special counsel for environmental matters on April 20, with Kroger saying in a terse statement that Foster had "misrepresented his involvement" in the ongoing Hood River Juice case. Precisely why he resigned wasn't clear.

But David Angeli, Ryan's attorney, said Tuesday that new DOJ memos sent to him say that Foster took the sample because Pecore didn't want to and that Foster

resigned because he wasn't "honest with the attorney general regarding the fact that he took the samples."

The fallout from Foster's resignation includes an ongoing grand jury investigation of Foster in Marion County, big headaches for prosecutors in the Hood River case and a black eye for Kroger, whose hiring of one of Oregon's top environmental activists in December 2008 underscored his campaign vow to crack down on polluters.

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