

PORTWORKS

WORKING FOR THE COMMUNITY, CARING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, BUILDING THE ECONOMY



Dragon Boat Races

Rick Browne



Ridgefield waterfront comes alive!
Summer 2019

Big Paddle



Operation Salmon

Find more info about Operation Salmon in our Summer 2016 newsletter on our website.

Ralph Walker

FALL 2019
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VISITOR CENTER UPDATE

FROM THE COMMISSION

Scott Hughes
Commissioner



TEAMWORK
RULES IN
RIDGEFIELD

“There’s a lot going on in Ridgefield,” my fellow Port Commissioners and I hear a lot. And, it’s true. New people, new homes, new schools, a new grocery store about to open, new businesses – but as things change, I hope we hold onto the one thing that truly makes Ridgefield a standout – we’ve always been a community that comes together and

accomplishes great things. We know we can only solve problems by working together. And when we do, we make Ridgefield an even better place to live. Teamwork is the name of the game. Without teamwork, schools, colleges, rail overpasses, grocery stores, parks, baseball teams and dragon boat racing don’t happen. So, let’s continue to work together as a community and as a region to make our community the best it can be. Teamwork helped get the rail overpass project started and the environmental cleanup of the waterfront completed. Next up, the Port will collaborate with Clark College to bring Clark College Boschma Farms Campus to life. We’ll also be working to extend a high-speed, high-capacity

broadband network from our starting point at WSU-Vancouver through the Discovery Corridor. In the coming months and years, look for your Port to continue working with our partners, including the City of Ridgefield, the school district, Clark College and WSU-Vancouver to continue our efforts to make Ridgefield and the Discovery Corridor a productive, vibrant and fun place to live and work. Please join us at our twice-monthly commission meetings, connect with us in person, look for us at community events and follow us on social media. You do good work Ridgefield. I’m proud of us and all that we’ve accomplished together – as a team – as it should be.



A (BELATED) HAPPY 1ST BIRTHDAY
TO RIDGEFIELD CHAMBER!



The Ridgefield Chamber of Commerce recently celebrated its first birthday. John Rose, pictured, is the chamber’s current president.

Better late than never to say “Happy 1st birthday?” We think so, because there should be no “right time” to celebrate the good work of an organization that supports Ridgefield businesses. In June, the Ridgefield Chamber of Commerce officially celebrated its one-year anniversary as a member-based chamber – a transition from its status as the Ridgefield Business Association. John Rose, of Rose Real Estate in Ridgefield, is the chamber’s current president in the all-volunteer organization. Rose says the chamber came into being largely as a response to business community demand. “With more new businesses coming to Ridgefield, the RBA was getting calls from people wanting to know if there was a chamber in town,” he says. “So, we decided it was time to put the Ridgefield Business Association to rest and start a chamber of commerce.” Rose says that unlike the Ridgefield Main Street program, which isn’t a member organization and exists to help all downtown Ridgefield businesses succeed, the chamber’s efforts are placed squarely in the camp of member businesses. “The Ridgefield chamber’s focus is to keep and grow member businesses downtown as well as member businesses in other areas of Ridgefield,” Rose says. “Our efforts complement theirs, and

vice versa.” To foster member success, the chamber hosts regular luncheon networking opportunities, welcomes 30-40 new Ridgefield households per month by delivering a gift bag filled with member information, and holds quarterly motivational events called Elevate. Thus far they’ve included a Portland Trail Blazer and the owner of Lava Java. The next Elevate event will be held in November this year. When the chamber started last year, it counted 45 members; it’s doubled since then, with membership at around 100 and growing. Geography is not a defining criterion for a member business. “About 30% of our members are businesses outside Ridgefield from communities that also have chambers,” Rose says. “Networking opportunities throughout the county is one of the many benefits of belonging to ours and other chambers.” Annual membership in the Ridgefield Chamber of Commerce ranges from \$100 to \$250, depending on if a member business is a non-profit, and at what marketing level the business wishes to be. For more information or to become a chamber member, visit ridgefieldchamberofcommerce.com or contact John Rose by calling 360.903.3466 or email john@rosere.net.



NEW TO RIDGEFIELD?
4 THINGS TO DO!

- 1. REGISTER TO VOTE
- 2. BE LOCALLY-AWARE
Read PortWorks!
Read the City’s newsletter
Subscribe to the Reflector newspaper
- 3. BE SPUDDER-PROUD
- 4. GET INVOLVED VOLUNTEER!

ADVOCACY FOR REFUGE VISITOR CENTER
STILL NEEDED – NO FUNDING YET

With the recent award of \$5.252 million from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge will soon see construction of a new administration building in Phase 1 of a two-phase project. Phase II, not yet funded, will provide for the construction of a Community and Nature Center. These images show the development as it will appear when both phases are funded and completed. Renderings courtesy of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge and CTA architects.



Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge’s recent grant explained

With the October opening of the new trail along Carty Lake allowing residents and visitors to Ridgefield to safely walk, bike or push a stroller on a continuous loop between the City, the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge, and the Port or Ridgefield, the Port is fielding more questions about the Refuge and its associated coming attractions. With Birdfest recently wrapped up, and the fall bird viewing season at the Refuge underway, as a neighbor and community partner to the Refuge we thought it timely to bring Refuge information and project clarification to our readers. First, though, it’s important for readers to understand the significance of the Refuge to our community: it brings over 150,000 visitors per year who shop and dine in Ridgefield and recreate in the Refuge and on the Ridgefield waterfront. With a love of natural beauty and flora and fauna as draws, Refuge visitors are a much-appreciated economic generator, and part of a “destination tourism” strategy – an identified community marketing component. A visitor center, or Community Nature Center as it’s been named, is an important tool in enhancing the visitor experience for locals and out-of-towners alike. Here’s the scoop on the status of that center.

Big grant is big news

In May of this year, news spread far, wide and fast that the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge, a 5,300 acre refuge adjacent to the port’s waterfront property and near downtown Ridgefield, received a \$5.252 million grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the agency that oversees all of our nation’s wildlife refuge systems. There is, however, a bit of community confusion about what that will fund, and what it means to visitors to the Refuge. Of great importance to Ridgefield readers is that it does not yet fully fund a Community and Nature Center...but it’s on the horizon.

To help clarify what the grant will – and will not – fund, the Port recently spoke with Chris Lapp, complex project manager for the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge Complex. The Complex includes the Ridgefield refuge and Steigerwald Lake, Franz Lake and Pierce national wildlife refuges.

Background

In fiscal year 2019, congress provided Deferred Maintenance Construction funding above the agency’s budget request. Congress asked the Fish and Wildlife Service to prioritize its needs and submit projects for those additional funds. The agency did so, and the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge made the cut, receiving \$5.252 million toward a two-phase project labeled the Community Nature Center. Phase 1 of the CNC project consists only of replacing

the current office trailer with a new multi-purpose building with public access improvements. Phase 2 is a new Community and Nature Center building and new public-use amenities. Because the source of this round of funding is Deferred Maintenance, which is to replace structures that currently exist, most of the \$5.252 million will go to phase 1.

The new Community and Nature building falls under new construction, which is funded under a different source – Capital Improvement Construction.

What is a “multi-purpose building”?

While the new building at the Ridgefield Wildlife Refuge will have multiple functions, its primary use will be to house the administrative functions of its eight-member staff. It will also provide an expanded lobby area for visitors who seek information, and a meeting room that will be used for community events until the Community and Nature Center is constructed.

What about the Community and Nature Center?

Although the majority of \$5.252 million will go to phase 1, the grant included \$400,000 to be used for planning and design of the Community and Nature Center building. This design/planning work is anticipated to be completed in fiscal year 2020 and will qualify the Refuge to seek Capital Improvement funding.

Funding for the actual construction of the Community and Nature Center is currently scheduled for fiscal year 2024. Due to tireless efforts in Washington D.C. by the City of Ridgefield, Friends of the Refuge, and the state’s congressional leadership, however, Phase 1 funding was secured three years ahead of schedule. While there’s no way to know if continued support will yield similar results for Phase 2, the Community and Nature Center building, advocates are hopeful that by having construction-ready documents in hand the project may rise to the top of the funding pile and move forward ahead of the 2024 timeline.

Does the Community Have a Voice in Determining the Aesthetics and Function of a Community Nature Center?

While a qualified architectural engineering firm will do the design work for the future Community and Nature Center, community stakeholder input is being sought by refuge management. Representatives from the Friends of the Refuge, City of Ridgefield, Cowitz Tribe, Clark County Historical Society, and some Ridgefield citizens are currently involved in the planning process.

For more information, or to participate in the Community Nature Center design planning process, contact Christopher Lapp, Complex Project Manager at christopher_lapp@fws.gov.

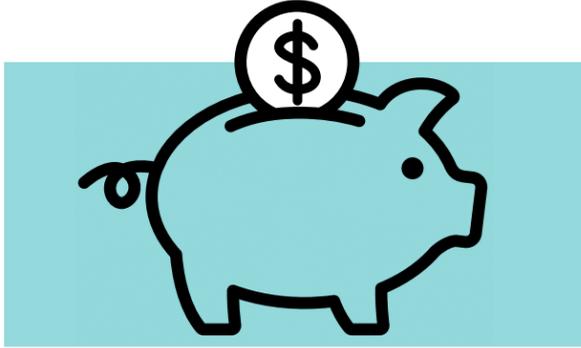
Port Perspective

“The Community & Nature Center at the Refuge has been shelved many times. While scheduled for 2024, our community must continue the advocacy drumbeat to keep it on track.”

BRUCE WISEMAN,
PORT
COMMISSIONER

THE PORT'S BUDGET PROCESS – A PRIMER

By Matt Rosenberger, Accounting Manager



For many readers, municipal budgets are a mystery. My aim here is to help people better understand how the Port establishes and manages its budget.

SEPTEMBER – Preliminary Plan

The Port's Operations and Capital Budget process starts in late September for the following year. At that time, we have a good handle on the cost of our operations for the next year. We also have a preliminary plan on the Capital Projects we hope to accomplish.

Then, we start to fill in the Operations Budget as we know it. We add a minor increase of 2% for all expenses due to inflation. We also look for anything that we see as extraordinary (nonrecurring) and either subtract or add it to the budget to ensure preciseness in tracking progress. Depreciation is also added to the budget, as well as any depreciation from capital projects to be constructed the following year.

NOVEMBER – Tax Levy \$'s

In early November, the Clark County Assessor's Office helps the Port determine our Tax Levy for the following year. This is an important piece of the budget process puzzle, because without it our many services to the Ridgefield District would be reduced.

The Operations and Capital budgets and the Tax Levy are then presented to the Commission for approval at the Port Commission's first meeting in November. Once approved, the Port has the authority to implement the budgets for the upcoming year; they are then posted on our website for public access.

JANUARY – Budget Tracking Starts

With the start of each new year, we follow the budget in detail. Financials are completed comparing the Budget figures to the Actual

figures and provided to the commissioners each month. For the public's understanding, at the second Port Commission meeting of every month, a financial review of the prior month is presented. The Budget vs Actual financials are posted on a quarterly basis to our website under the "About – Finance – Quarterly Reports" section.

THROUGHOUT THE YEAR – Review & Reporting

When reviewing the Budget vs Actual report, labels at the top of the page indicate the reporting period. As of this newsletter printing, the most recent reporting period found on our website is January through June 2019. The report notes that six-month period includes 50% of the budget. This is important because it provides a look at what percentage of the budget has been used by the report's date.

Although the port's financial goal is to be right on budget, it's optimal to be over budget on revenue items and under budget on expense items. If any line items are contrary to this, we examine them to understand if it's simply an expense payment or revenue receipt timing issue, or an exception for which the port didn't budget.

For the first two quarters of 2019, the Port is doing better than budgeted for ordinary, day to day operations.

CAPITAL EXPENSES

The Other Income/Expenses section deals mostly with our capital projects – things that aren't part of the ordinary course of operations. For example, this year the Port budgeted for Environmental Cleanup and for the Pioneer Street Rail Overpass.

When budgeting for the Rail Overpass completion, the Port assumed all the powers-that-be would have signed-off on the project, and we would have started construction earlier this year. Unforeseen circumstances, however, have postponed the project. As we're currently scheduled to go out to bid in late fall, most of the revenue and expenses associated with that project will shift into 2020.

But that's the risk an organization takes when completing a budget. While well-intentioned, some things are not in the Port's control. So, we just adjust – and ensure normal operation are going as planned.

FROM THE CEO

Brent Grening
CEO



ADVANCED MANUFACTURING CENTER WILL GROW, PROTECT JOBS

When it comes to economic development, recent years have been good. Ridgefield and SW Washington have prospered, yet business and economic cycles ebb and flow. For the Port, a healthy economic time is the right time to ensure our economic structure is sound. It's always a good idea to put something away for leaner times, because the work we do is bringing good jobs to north county that are in diverse, growth-oriented sectors.

As we invest in our community, we pay attention to business and economic trends, opportunities and threats – in the short-term we look at things

from an economic standpoint; in the longer term we look more structurally. In our view, long-term economic health is based on good infrastructure, talented people, a healthy livable environment and the x-factor: our ability to adapt to change.

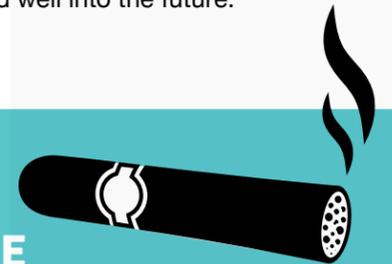
To adapt to a changing economic environment, it's necessary to have strong community leadership, clear vision and great partners. Automation, advanced manufacturing, machine learning and advanced materials promise to profoundly disrupt the workplace in the medium to long-terms. To prepare for that inevitability, our port is working with Clark College to jump-start its new Boschma Farms campus – where the goal is to create a skills training center around advanced manufacturing. Together the College and the Port want to begin preparing our local employee talent for new technologies so they remain relevant in a changing economic landscape and are well-employed through lean times that may come our way.

The Port's support of education, broadband con-

nectivity and economic opportunity is designed to build a more resilient economy and community. We can't stop the ebb and flow of the economy at-large, but we can and do work to create economic stability – so that the people in our port district can thrive now and well into the future.

CLOSE BUT NO CIGAR

Pioneer Street Rail Overpass project is inches away from launch. Watch Facebook for the latest.



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