

The Daily Insider

Southern Washington Edition

With nearly all impediments to construction of city hotel-conference center settled, work toward getting construction underway begins

Subcontractors working for FaulknerUSA, the company which will build the downtown Vancouver hotel and conference center, are expected to begin the process of preparing buildings for demolition at the 6th and Columbia Streets site south of Esther Short Park today or tomorrow.

The preparatory work beginning this week will lead to demolition of existing buildings at the site and then to pouring concrete footings before the Dec. 31 deadline for actual construction to begin so that the city can qualify for the state sales tax rebates, pivotal to the financing package.

Last week, the final legal challenge facing the Vancouver project, as well as similar projects across the state, was eliminated by a Thurston County Superior Court judge.

While hotel operator Hilton has not signed on the dotted line to manage the 226-room, seven story, four-star hotel and convention center, it is expected to do so later this week.

The Clark County Public Facilities District, meeting tonight, is expected to agree to a \$800,000-a-year contribution to the project, to go along with the city Public Facilities District's \$2.1 annual contribution.

Both sums are rebates of sales taxes collected by the state and designated for these kinds of municipal projects.

"We're now 98 percent certain of being able to go ahead," mayor **Royce Pollard** says.

Christmas tree receipts going to the dogs

Every penny spent on \$20-to-\$40, 4-25-foot Douglas fir Christmas trees at Ace's Place will go to the benefit of orphaned or abused animals at the Humane Society for Southwest Washington.

The Christmas tree sale and fund raiser is 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 6 and 7, at the **Bridget Schwarz** home site, 2110 NW 179th Street, one and a half miles west of the Clark County fairgrounds.

"It's U-choose, U-cut, U-help," says Schwarz. She says wreaths and swags are available, too.

Ace's Place is the name Schwarz has given the family homestead, honoring her Labrador retriever, Ace, who helps govern the place.

There are thousands of trees from which to choose, according to Schwarz.

City Council expected to approve raises for non-union city workers and management

The Vancouver City Council is expected to approve cost-of-living pay increases of 1.7 percent for management employees and 3 percent, equal that of employees with labor contracts, for employees not represented by a union, effective Jan. 1, at its 7 p.m. meeting tonight in City Hall.

All employees are also slated to receive annual but reduced merit or step-increase raises. These increases are being reduced from 5 percent to 3.5 percent.

Over time the reduction in merit increases will result in

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savings by reducing the escalation rate of personnel costs, according to city manager **Pat McDonnell**.

The council has a full agenda tonight. It is also expected to approve two annexations: an 80-acre annexation request by Columbia Tech Center, located in Vancouver's Urban Growth Boundary south of First Street and east of NE 192nd Avenue, and a 218-acre annexation request by Bircher Business Center, located between NE 137th and 152nd Avenues, south of SR-500 (Fourth Plain Boulevard) and north of Burnt Bridge Creek

The council will also decide how to divvy up tourism grants. The City/County Lodging Tax Advisory Committee recommends \$11,509 to Discovery Walks, \$6,000 for Uptown Village Association, \$21,896 for Bravo! Vancouver, \$10,895 for the Vancouver Tennis Center, \$7,500 for Columbia Springs Environmental Education Center, \$10,000 for the Vancouver National Historic Reserve Trust, and \$10,000 for the Fort Vancouver National Historic Site.

News briefs

The Clark County Public Facilities District, meeting at 5 p.m. today in the Public Service Center, will review the Vancouver Conference Center project and the county fairgrounds improvement project. ~~ZZZ~~ The Vancouver City Council meets at 5 p.m. today in a joint session with the Vancouver Housing Authority. ~~ZZZ~~ The Vancouver City Council meets in regular session at 7 p.m. tonight. ~~ZZZ~~ Clark Public Utilities' commissioners meet in workshop session at 9 a.m. Tuesday, Dec. 2. ~~ZZZ~~ Clark County commissioners meet in regular session at 10 a.m. Tuesday, Dec. 2. ~~ZZZ~~ The Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council meets at 4 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 2, in the Public Service Center.

Monday on the Air

Vancouver City Council, VHA meeting (live)—5 p.m. CVTV
Vancouver City Council (live)—7 p.m. CVTV

Stocks of local interest at 4 p.m. EST Monday, Dec. 1, 2003

Alaska Air Group	29.05	+29	Linear Technolog	43.15	-.04
Alcoa	33.93	+1.12	Microsoft	25.84	+1.13
Amazon.com	54.65	+68	Nautilus	14.19	-.04
Bank of America	76.35	+92	Nike	67.85	+60
Bank of Clark County	15.00	unch	Nordstrom	34.42	unch
Bemis	46.48	+98	PepsiCo	48.71	+59
Boeing	38.02	-.37	Precision Cast	40.77	+25
Boise Cascade	30.78	+1.27	RLRN	23.75	+55
CenturyTel	33.05	+35	Starbucks	32.43	+26
Costco	36.60	+78	TSM	11.08	+21
Expeditors Intl.	39.43	+33	Tektronix	27.79	+24
Georgia Pacific	27.76	+47	US Bancorp	27.84	+13
HPQ	21.84	+10	Wash. Mutual	45.37	-.44
Intel	34.04	+50	W. Coast Bancorp	21.75	+25
Kyocera	61.40	+1.06	Weyerhaeuser	59.05	+2.05

DOW: 9899.05 +116.59 NASDAQ: 1989.82 +29.56 S&P: 1070.12 +11.92

Town Tabloids and The Weather

Kay and Al Angelo getting Christmas-light prize in early spectacular category. ~~ZZZ~~ **Sharon Crouch** touched by royalty. ~~ZZZ~~ **Ray Fife** adding another candle to his cake. ~~ZZZ~~ **Margaret Pollard** pushing walker. ~~ZZZ~~ **Monday**, drenching morning rain, then sunbreaks, 52. **Tuesday**, continued rain, 56. **Wednesday**, mostly gray but some sun, too, 47.

Acapulco	93/75
Athens	59/49
Chicago	38/20
Dallas	60/45
Hong Kong	74/62
Los Angeles	70/52
London	50/45
New Orleans	67/48
New York	48/30
Orlando	74/50
Paris	47/35
Phoenix	78/50
Rome	58/47
Seattle	48/42
Sydney	86/59
Tokyo	58/45
Washington	54/32