

Vancouver council OKs vision for downtown

The Vancouver City Council, by a 6-1 vote, approved a "vision" for downtown Vancouver that enlarges the scope of the original 30-block Esther Short-area program that started in 1998 and thus far has seen nearly \$240 million invested in the core area.

The new vision is expanded to 130 blocks and includes the Uptown Village area of upper Main Street, between Fourth Plain and McLoughlin Boulevards.

Revitalization of Esther Short Park was the focus of the first vision. The focus of this vision is a pedestrian bridge connecting Vancouver Barracks and downtown in the vicinity of 7th or 8th Streets.

The pedestrian bridge across Interstate 5 should provide the city with an "Oh-wow factor," according to **Ginger Metcalf**, executive director of Identity Clark County, the chief proponent of growth and development for downtown.

The bridge, clearly visible from I-5 in both directions, could become a more recognizable landmark than the former Lucky Lager sign, according to **Tauf Charneski**, another proponent of downtown prosperity.

Clark Public Utilities connects 345 new families in January

Clark Public Utilities recorded 345 new residential hookups during January, compared to 213 new hookups during January 2004, for an annual growth rate of 2.65 percent.

Average residential consumption of electric energy, as well as the average residential electric bills, were down, however. A year ago in January, residential customers used an average of 1,882 kilowatts-hours of power and paid an average \$144.76 monthly bill. This year, the average residential use was 1,639 kilowatt-hours. The average residential bill was \$126.83.

The utility residential customer base, which grew by just over 3 percent in 2004, currently has 156,198 residential customers.

TeenTalk gets national recognition

Clark County's TeenTalk program, which emerged from a county initiative to prevent teenage suicides, has won recognition by the national Excellence in Community Communications and Outreach Program.

TeenTalk, staffed by teenage volunteers, provides web-based and telephone communications for troubled teenagers. The young volunteers receive 32 hours of training and work a three-hour shift once a week.

TeenTalk can be reached by calling **397-2428**, or by going to www.ccteentalk.clark.wa.gov.

More than 1,000 locals and hundreds more will walk Vancouver in April

Hundreds of walkers from North America, Europe and Asia will join more than 1,000 local walkers during the 9th annual International Discovery Walk Festival in Vancouver Friday, April 22, through Sunday, April 24.

Events, which are open to all ages, range from family and fun walks of less than 4 miles to a shin-splinting 42 kilometer walk, which walkers are supposed to complete in less than 6 hours. In addition to walking, there are swimming and bicycling events.

The Discovery Walk Festival is the only International Marching League event in the United States and is sanctioned by the American Volkssport Association.

Headquarters for the three-day festival is the Red Lion Hotel at the Quay. For further information and registration, call (887) 269-2009, or go to www.discoverywalk.org.

News brief

The Evergreen Public Schools board will interview candidate for superintendent **Donald Barnes** in a public meeting at 5 p.m. today in the student center of Cascade Middle School, 13900 NE 18th Street.

[Thursday headlines from at home and around the world:](#)

[First by balloon, now by plane, Steve Fossett is once again an around-the-world record holder--USA TODAY, AP, John Milburn](#)

[\(Separate VIDEO\)](#)

[Cowlitz Tribe makes pitch for NASCAR track in Cowlitz County--Columbian, Margaret Ellis](#)

[County Exposition Hall at fairgrounds to open this month--Columbian, **Erin Middlewood**](#)
[Saturday's Powwow has power to inspire--Columbian, **Amy McFall Prince**](#)
[All faiths called to Saturday meeting--Columbian, **Kelly Adams**](#)
[Greg Kimsey favors an early primary election--Columbian](#)
[Northwest senators block Bush plan to boost Northwest power rates--Seattle Times, **Christopher Schwarzen**](#)
[Crude oil prices hover at \\$53 a barrel, OPEC says it could go to \\$80 a barrel--USA TODAY, MarketWatch, **Steve Goldstein and Lisa Sanders**](#)

Thursday on the air

Clark County Focus—5 p.m. CVTV
Clark County Close Up—5:30 p.m. CVTV
City Minutes—6 p.m. CVTV
Clark County Land Use Hearings (live)—7 p.m. CVTV
Oregon at USC (live)—7:30 p.m. KXL
Oregon State at UCLA (live)—7:30 p.m. KEX
Washington at California (live)—7:30 p.m. FSN

Town Tabloids and the weather

Candice Goucher making world-class presentation. ☼ **Bill Woodard** making life easy. ☼ **Glenda Stamps** retiring to sunny skies. ☼ **Analese Forster** curating. ☼ **Gerald Baugh** just snacking. ☼ **Bill Barron** smoothing. ☼ **Thursday**, mostly sunny, 60. **Friday**, possible showers, some sunbreaks, 59. **Saturday**, can't keep out of the yard day, 64.