

## **Carmen Villarma named chair of chamber public affairs committee**

**Carmen Villarma**, president and owner of The Management Group Inc., and member of the board of directors of First Independent, has been appointed chair of the Greater Vancouver Chamber of Commerce Public Affairs Committee.

Villarma, also chair-elect of the Vancouver chamber, last year was appointed by Gov. **Chris Gregoire** to the state Economic Development Finance Authority. The authority is an independent state agency created by the legislature to help small and medium-sized businesses meet their capital needs.

Villarma succeeds **Scot Walstra** on the chamber committee.

## **Columbia River panel holding final meeting before selecting alternatives**

An extended public comment period will be opened by the Columbia River Crossing Task Force at its 4-to-8 p.m. meeting Tuesday, Feb. 27, in the Oregon Department of Transportation Region One headquarters, 123 NW Flanders Street, Portland.

Public comments will be taken before the task force considers the staff recommendations for I-5 river crossing and transit options being prepared for submission for further analysis in a draft Environmental Impact Statement process.

The proposed new bridge would replace the existing Interstate Bridge and carry all cars, trucks, bicycles and pedestrians over the Columbia River. The new bridge would be high enough to eliminate the need for a lift span and low enough to avoid the airspace of Pearson Air Park. The two proposed transit options, Bus Rapid Transit and Light Rail Transit, would operate on the new bridge to provide High Capacity Transit options to commuters traveling between Clark County and Portland.

A report summarizing public comment received during four open house events, 49 community meetings, and in correspondence to the project will be presented to the Task Force at the meeting. A preliminary report is available on the project website.

The 39-member Columbia River Crossing Task Force includes leaders from Oregon and Washington's community, business, civic, neighborhood, freight, commuter and environmental agencies and groups. The Washington and Oregon departments of transportation (WSDOT and ODOT) formed the Task Force in 2005 to provide input on a variety of issues including congestion, freight movement, high capacity transit, environmental protection, and funding in the project area.

The task force is not considering as an alternative any additional bridges across the Columbia River. Although the City of Vancouver and Clark County have representation on the task force, each entity has its own individual concerns over proposed alternatives

The Columbia River Crossing project area is the five-mile stretch of Interstate 5 from State Route 500 in Vancouver to Columbia Boulevard in Portland including the Interstate Bridge. Without some kind of remediation on this corridor, some of which in Oregon is confined to two southbound traffic lanes, congestion in this area of I-5 is expected to grow to 16 hours per day by 2030 from the current 4-6 hours per day.

For further information go to the project website at [www.columbiarivercrossing.org](http://www.columbiarivercrossing.org).

## **Sustainability Workshop gets another mention**

Because the *Insider* failed to correctly identify the telephone extension to use in securing reservations for the Sustainability Workshop sponsored by Clark County, the City of Vancouver and the Greater Vancouver Chamber of Commerce, this newsletter is mentioning it again, this time with the correct extension number.

The workshop headlined by **Michelle Long** of Sustainable Connections, a coalition of business and community leaders working toward better sustainable practices, including "green building" projects, is free and is from 2 to 4 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 28, in the Hilton Vancouver Washington.

Seating is limited, according to Clark County's **Geoff Knapp**. For reservations and further information, call **Teresa Guise, 397-2375**, extension **4177**. Reservations can also be made by sending an email to



**Carmen Villarma**

[teresa.guise@clark.wa.gov](mailto:teresa.guise@clark.wa.gov).

### Calendar

Arts Equity Onstage presents *Hot 'n' Throbbing*, an adult play, is at 7:30 p.m. this evening and Saturday evening, Feb. 24, in the Main Street Theatre, 606 Main Street. For further information, call **695-3770**. ⚡ Doors open on the fifth annual Evergreen School District auction at 5 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 24, in the Heathman Lodge. Auction begins at 6 p.m. Tickets are \$50 and can be bought by calling **Stephanie Taylor, 604-4022**. ⚡ Hough Foundation's second annual Mardi Gras Ball is at 6 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 24, in the Red Lion Hotel at the Quay. Dinner is at 7 p.m. Dancing to the **Linda Hornbuckle Band** begins at 8:30 p.m. Masters of Ceremonies are **Steve Dunn**, KATU-TV, and **Scott Miller**, Riverview Community Bank. Admission is \$75. For reservations, call **906-0151**.

### Friday on the air

GOP Lincoln Day Dinner (2/10)—5:30 p.m. CVTV  
**Memphis at Portland Blazers (live)—7 p.m. KXL**  
Animal Control Hearings (1/24)—7 p.m. CVTV  
Clark County Land Use Hearings (2/22)—8 p.m. CVTV  
Portland Lumberjax at Edmonton (taped)—10 p.m. KPDX

### Town Tabloids and the Weather

**PJ Fisher's** double-or-nothing crimson and gray plan comes to unfortunate conclusion. ⚡ **Terri Lunde** lending helping hand. ⚡ **Alex Meinig** branching out. ⚡ **Katie Foehl** working on the art of the deal. ⚡ **Dan Tonkovich** making the most of his time. ⚡ **Jo Harris** collecting inaugural bathrobe. ⚡ **Cami Joner** reporting from the epicenter. ⚡ **Friday**, partly cloudy, sunbreaks, chance of rain, 45. **Saturday**, still a chance of rain, 46. **Sunday**, possible showers, 46.