

City of Battle Ground gets USDA loan to remove lagoon

The City of Battle Ground has been selected to receive financing through a \$7 million low-interest loan, from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and the US Department of Agriculture, to improve the City's wastewater treatment system.

City Council has been working on this funding tool in order to decommission the City's sewer lagoon and will consider acceptance of the USDA low-interest loan at the July 20 City Council Meeting. City manager **Dennis Osborn** stated: "We are very pleased to have been selected to use this option of a low-interest loan. We would like to thank Sen. **Patty Murray**, Sen. **Maria Cantwell** and Rep. **Brian Baird** for their efforts on behalf of the city."

The Lagoon Replacement Project includes several components required for decommissioning of the lagoon. Work will include solids dredging, a pump station upgrade, complete removal of the lagoon, flow equalization, the addition of flow measurement facilities and site improvements to meet stormwater and erosion requirements.

Washington's average annual wage, unemployment benefits rise

Despite the slower economy in 2008, the average annual wage in Washington increased by 3.4 percent last year, to \$46,256, according to Employment Security Department spokesman **Mark Varadian**.

In dollar figures, the increase amounted to \$1,535. In 2007, the average grew by 5 percent compared to 2006.

Among other things, the average annual wage is used to compute unemployment-insurance benefits for jobless workers. Because of the increased average wage last year, the minimum and maximum unemployment benefits will go up for new claims beginning next month.

The minimum weekly unemployment benefit, calculated at 15 percent of the average weekly wage of \$889, will increase to \$133 for new claims starting July 5. The maximum weekly benefit, calculated at 63 percent of the average weekly wage of \$890, will increase to \$560.

State awards \$62 million for affordable housing

Clark County is one of 17 Washington counties that will participate in the state Trade and Economic Development funding from a \$62 million economic grant from the state Housing Trust Fund to build 35 multi-family affordable housing projects across the state in the coming year.

"In these tough economic times, these funds will provide housing opportunities that can make a life-changing difference for some of our most vulnerable citizens," Gov **Chris Gregoire** said.

\$34 million Ridgefield interchange package to be presented by the state

Representatives from three state transportation agencies will be available at an open house to answer questions and receive public feedback about the \$34 million Ridgefield- I-5 Junction interchange between 5 and 7 p.m. Wednesday, June 24.

The project is financed by a \$10 million gasoline tax from the 2005 gas tax package, \$3 million in pre-existing gas tax funds and \$11 million in grants and other local agency funds. Earlier this year the project received \$10 million from the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Groundbreaking is scheduled for this fall.

Charter review committee says city should consider ward system

The Vancouver Charter Review Committee has recommended creation of a task force or advisory committee to review the creation of a ward system for electing members of the Vancouver City Council.

Members of the Charter Review Commission say the matter has come up throughout the past 25 years of charter review committee meetings.

The committee feels that the creation of a ward or district system for electing council members should be reviewed, but that the current Charter Review Committee does not have sufficient time to conduct such a review.

Calendar

The Vancouver Fire Department annual awards ceremony is at 6:30 p.m. today, in the Northwest Regional Training Center, 11606 NE 66th Circle. 4p.m CVTV. <> The Future of Newspapers In our area is being discussed this evening at 7 p.m. by the Forum at the Library, Vancouver public Library, 1007 E Evergreen Boulevard. Presenters are **Scott Campbell**, publisher, *The Columbian*, **Marvin Case**, publisher, the *Reflector*, and **Peter Bahatia**, executive editor, the *Oregonian*. The forum will be moderated by **Bob Moser**. There is no charge.

Thursday on the air

Get Ready for Aging Boom (5/14) p.m. 4 p.m. CVTV
Building Aging Friendly Communities (5/14)—5:30 p.m. CVTV
Clark County Planning Commission (live)—6:30 p.m. CVTV
Portland Beavers at Las Vegas (live)—7 p.m. KKAD
Clark County Board of Health (5/27)—11:30 p. m. CVTV

Town Tabloids and the Weather

Tom Boyer, City of Vancouver engineering department, and **Rex Gunderson**, and **Wally Stefan**, both of the Vancouver Police Department, are each celebrating 30 years with the city. <> **Ken Cole** staying mum. <> **Devona Cooke** having fun. <> **Thursday**, partly cloudy, 55-78. **Friday**, showers, 52-67. **Saturday**, mostly cloudy, 54-68.