

Port's Terminal 5 taking on cargo

It has been less than a month since the Port of Vancouver USA took ownership of the properties formerly known as the Alcoa/Evergreen Aluminum properties, but the port's new Terminal 5 is already accepting cargo.

Crews from International Longshore & Warehouse Union Local 4 began moving wind energy cargo on to the new terminal, unloading Vestas tower sections from the vessel Makiri Green at Terminal 3 and moving them across Terminal 4, through the TriStar Transload leasehold and onto Terminal 5, where they will be stored until delivery to the wind farm development takes place.

By Thursday, a total of 72 Vestas tower sections will have been discharged from the ship and moved to Terminal 5.

March jobless rate was double that of a year ago

Clark County's jobless rate hit 12.5 percent in March, double that of a year ago, reports **Scott Bailey**, regional economist for the State Department of Employment Security.

An estimated 27,420 county residents were jobless and looking for work. The number of continued unemployment claimants rose by 11 percent over the month—when it usually drops—and was 158 percent higher than a year ago (that's two and a half times), more than the state average of 124 percent. The occupational groups that were hardest hit were production workers, construction workers, and clerical workers. The largest percentage increase was for architectural and engineering occupations, claims from which quintupled.

Clark County nonfarm employment rose by 1,000 jobs in March, due in large part to the callback of workers that had been on temporary layoff. On a seasonally-adjusted basis, the county has lost 800 jobs since January. The total of 133,900 jobs was 900 less than a year ago (-0.7 percent).

Outside of the rehires, public education had the only substantial change over the month, adding 300 jobs.

Bailey declared: "Taxable retail sales numbers are in for the fourth quarter of 2008, and they are ugly. After adjustment for inflation, total sales were 15 percent lower than [in the] fourth quarter of 2007. That marked the ninth consecutive over-the-year decline, and by far the largest. Sales at retail stores were off 13 percent, weighed down by the slump in car sales (-41 percent) and building materials (-25 percent). Sales at hotels/motels dove by 9 percent, and restaurant revenues dropped by 6 percent."

Collectively, unemployment in our three-county (Clark, Cowlitz and Wahkiakum) region was 12.9 percent, double that of a year ago. The number of unemployed, at 34,550 residents, has also doubled. The number of residents filing unemployment claims usually drops in March, but this time out, it climbed by 11 percent, and now tops 12,000 (and more residents have filed claims over in Oregon)."

Celebrate Earth Day with free pancakes

A can of food per person is your ticket into Vancouver-Clark Parks & Recreation's Earth Day activities this Saturday, April 18, at Marshall Community Center, 1009 E McLoughlin Blvd. Things get started with a free pancake breakfast at 10 a.m.

Throughout the day, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., there are free Earth-friendly crafts, games and demonstrations available, as well as a range of informative workshops, among them ones pertaining to gardening, growing food in small spaces, cleaning, recycling, even bicycle maintenance.

The event is being hosted by Clark County, The *Columbian*, Vancouver Watershed Council, Project Service Leadership, Urban Farm School, City of Vancouver Urban Forestry, C-TRAN, Columbia Springs, and Waste Connections.

Free technological training available throughout state

Yesterday, Gov. **Christine Gregoire** and Microsoft senior vice president **Brad Smith**, helped launch its State of Washington component at the WorkSource facility in downtown Seattle.

Partnered with the state's Employment Security Department and the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County, Microsoft will provide 30,625 vouchers during the next 90 days for workers to receive technological training at WorkSource centers throughout the state.

"This is an example of what we need to emerge stronger from this recession," Gregoire said.

“When this downturn ends, we will need more skilled workers ready to enter the job market. Microsoft’s generosity will provide thousands of men and women the skills they need to work with the software that runs our businesses. This will help strengthen our economy and increase our state’s global competitiveness.”

Vouchers are available at WorkSource career centers across Washington. Office locations and additional information about obtaining the vouchers are posted online at www.go2worksource.com.

To learn more about the Elevate America program, visit www.microsoft.com/elevateamerica.

Calendar

C-TRAN Board of Directors meet at 5:30 p.m. this evening. <> The Vancouver Charter Review Committee meets at 6 p.m. this evening in the Firstenburg Community Center, 700 NE 136th Street <> The Vancouver Planning Commission meets at 7 p.m. this evening. <> Clark County commissioners meet in an informal session at 1:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 15, in conference room B in the Public Service Center.

Tuesday on the air

L.A. Angels at Seattle Mariners (live)—3:40 p.m. FSN, KTRO

Vancouver Arbor Day (4/8)—4:03 p.m. CVTV

Clark County Land Use Hearings (4/9)—4:30 p.m. CVTV

Battle Ground State of the City (3/25)—5 p.m. CVTV

Vancouver City Council Workshop (4/13)—6:30 p.m. CVTV

Vancouver City Council (4/6)—9 p.m. CVTV

Optimist Club Oratorical Contest (3/28)—11:15 p.m. CVTV

Town Tabloids and the Weather

Sarah Prince surviving Mondayness. <> **Andy Shokry**’s good work showing. <> **Ralph Stevens** gearing up for job seekers. <> **John Caton** chairing a review. <> **Heather Allmain** back in stride. <>. **Tuesday**, more April showers, 38-55. **Wednesday**, dry, partly cloudy, 40-62. **Thursday**, mostly cloudy, 50-64.