Longview School Bond Proposal to Replace Three Elementary Schools and Provide Security Enhancements

by Joelle Wilson

The Cowlitz Economic Development Council voted at its August Board Meeting to support the Longview Public School District’s Bond Proposal, which goes before voters this Fall.

The $121.6 million bond will enable the district to:

- Provide up-to-date schools to give its youngest students a strong start.
- Replace Mint Valley Elementary.
- Replace Northlake Elementary.
- Replace Olympic Elementary.
- Serve students without the use of portable classrooms.
- Renovate the Broadway Preschool Learning Center.
- Focus spending on buildings that will last.
- Protect students across the district with modern safety and security features.
- Help make Longview Public Schools a district of choice in SW Washington.

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Dr. Dan Zorn, Superintendent of the Longview School District, said it has been a 2-1/2 year process of information gathering and planning to determine what priorities to address as the district deals with aging buildings.

“This comes with the understanding that we visit the needs of the high schools next,” he said. “This plan addresses our most urgent needs and does not by any means meet all the facility needs in the district.”

It has been 16 years since the district’s last bond, and 21 years since bond work on its elementary schools. The district currently invests $1.46 million annually on maintenance, and that is not enough to keep up with all that needs done, Zorn said.

Under the new bond, the owner of a $200,000 home would pay $16 per month to help replace three schools, address safety and security across the district and renovate Broadway Learning Center, Zorn said, or 96 cents per $1000 of assessed property value.

Ballots will arrive in the mail on October 25 and must be postmarked and returned by November 7. The proposal will require a 60% plus one vote to pass. Low income senior citizens and disabled adults may qualify for tax exemptions. Additional information may be obtained at www.longviewschools.com

On the heels of a record-setting 2016, the Port of Longview continues to demonstrate its cargo-handling expertise with another strong performance for the first half of 2017. The Port’s mid-year cargo volumes of 5.2 million metric tons are up nearly 51 percent above last year’s volumes from the same time period.

As of June 2017, the Port has seen significant increases in bulk agriculture exports, bulk minerals and logs. Upwards of 300,000 metric tons of bulk minerals have been exported, a 146 percent increase. Additionally, more than 300,000 board feet of logs have been exported to Asian markets, an uptick of about 52 percent from 2016 mid-year reports.

EGT, the Port’s export grain terminal, has shipped out over 4 million metric tons of bulk agriculture products to date, an increase of 58 percent over this time in 2016. These increases can be credited to...
Rehab of Columbia River Jetty Celebrated

Pacific Northwest Waterways Association (PNWA) and the Portland District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers were proud to host Senator Patty Murray at a ribbon cutting ceremony at the Columbia River Jetties on August 8th. The event was held at U.S. Coast Guard Station Cape Disappointment, and was attended by over fifty community members, agency staff, and regional stakeholders. As the keynote speaker, Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) highlighted the role of the jetties in protecting deep draft shipping on the lower Columbia River, which moves exports from the Northwest and the nation.

Senator Murray also noted the importance of the jetties for the safety of our commercial and recreational fishing interests in this part of the river. Mark Wilson from the Port of Kalama also spoke at the event, and Capt. Dan Jordan of the Columbia River Bar Pilots led the Senator on a brief boat tour of the area.

This ribbon cutting marked the successful completion of the rehab of Jetty A. The rock work at Jetty A is the first part of the major rehabilitation of the entire jetty system. Years of wave action at the jetties have worn the jetties down, and annual repairs were no longer sufficient to keep up with the damage. Thanks to the support of Senator Murray and our Northwest Congressional delegation, this project has received $46.5M in funding over the past four years and is proposed to receive $22M in FY2018 to continue work on the North Jetty.

To learn more about the Columbia River Jetties, check out PNWA’s fact sheet at http://www.pnwa.net/factsheets/MCR-Jetties.pdf or head to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ webpage devoted to this project: http://www.nwp.usace.army.mil/navigation/jetties/
State of Education
Quarterly Luncheon

Kelso Elks Lodge
900 Ash St.— Kelso
Wednesday, September 27, 2017
11:45 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
$25 advance/$35 at door

Kelso Schools Superintendent
Glenn Gelbrich
Lower Columbia College President
Chris Bailey
Longview Schools Superintendent
Dan Zorn

The State Legislature has come up with a new way of funding basic education, how are our school leaders applying this change and how will it affect their ability to hire teachers, provide basic education and more career and technical learning skills.

Register at: www.kelsolongviewchamber.org