



# County urges Coast Guard to stay in Newport

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**The Clatsop County Commission unanimously approved a resolution Wednesday night opposing the planned closure of the U.S. Coast Guard helicopter air rescue facility in Newport.**

The Clatsop County Board of Commissioners unanimously approved a resolution Wednesday night opposing the planned closure of the U.S. Coast Guard helicopter air rescue facility in Newport.

The county joins other cities and counties in urging the Coast Guard to reconsider the recent decision. The Coast Guard is still planning to close the facility Dec. 15, after postponing an original closure date of Nov. 30 due to appeals from Oregon's Congressional delegation.

The Coast Guard said budget cuts were responsible for the closure.

Advocates, including Clatsop County, say closing the Newport facility could impact air rescue operations on the north and south coasts at the air stations in Astoria and North Bend.

The Newport aircraft would no longer be available for backup to the two air stations.

County Chairman Scott Lee and Commissioners Peter Huhtala, Sarah Nebeker, Dirk Rohne and Matt Samuelson all voted in favor of the resolution.

Huhtala said he does not believe the Coast Guard should close an already established base and potentially put people in danger.

"It's outrageous to be closing a valuable life-saving entity," Huhtala said.

The 3.5-acre site in Newport has a hangar and barracks used on a rotation basis by four-person crews stationed permanently at the Coast Guard air station in North Bend.

If the Coast Guard does not use the facility, a 1992 deed stipulates the site will go back to being owned by the city of Newport.

The county plans to send the signed resolution to the Port of Newport, and various state and federal lawmakers.

When he was 14 years old, Lee said, he remembers making a mayday call while out on the water and being assisted by the Coast Guard. Since then, Lee has learned the importance of having the Coast Guard in a community.

"Myself, in the fishing industry when I was younger, five minutes can save your life." Lee said.

In other business:

- The county amended its contract with Cowlitz County, Wash., for juvenile detention services from Dec. 31 of this year to Dec. 31, 2016. After the local detention facility closed in Warrenton, the county contracted with Cowlitz County in January. The current contract expires at the end of the year.

The amended contract is for an average of two beds per day or 730 bed days per year for \$94,900. Additional beds may also be purchased at this same rate of \$130 per bed day.

- The Board of Commissioners approved a contract with Helligso Construction Co. of Astoria to construct a kennel enclosure at the county's animal shelter for \$48,000, including a \$2,000 contingency. The commission said the shelter needs to provide an enclosure for animals dropped off by law enforcement during nonbusiness hours. The current practice requires animal shelter staff to respond 24 hours a day, seven days a week during times of inclement weather or when there are animals in medical distress to ensure the animals do not suffer.

- John D. Ciminello of Warrenton was unanimously appointed to the county's Human Services Advisory Council. Ciminello has worked in the Portland Public School System, as a group home manager, and most recently as a chief operations officer for a provider organization.

- Clatsop County was recently awarded a \$133,771 state Criminal Justice Commission Specially Court grant to continue supporting the Clatsop County Treatment Court. The county previously received federal funds for the treatment court since 2011, but the federal grant expired in August.

The grant will partially fund a parole and probation deputy, provide \$100,000 for treatment services, \$1,000 for incentives, \$1,000 for supplies, \$5,771 for urinalysis expenses and \$2,000 for bus tickets. The grant funds will be used through the end of 2014-15 fiscal year.

