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## **EDA awards Port \$1.2 million for pier project**

(NEWPORT,OR) The main artery that connects many of Newport's fishing businesses to the shore will get a much-needed overhaul, thanks to a \$1.2 million grant from the Economic Development Administration (EDA) of the U.S. Department of Commerce. Earlier this week, federal elected officials notified the Port that the EDA grant was approved.

The pier at Port Dock 5 carries power and potable water needed to service the approximately 80 fishing vessels that utilize that particular dock, as well as fuel lines to supply the floating fuel facility. The 1960s-era pier is supported by wooden pilings that have deteriorated, requiring restrictions on pier traffic and fears of further failure.

Port of Newport officials say the EDA contribution will cover 50 percent of construction costs for the \$2.4 million project, providing the necessary financial lift to start construction in November. The balance of the project will be funded by the Port.

"We are thankful for the work of our legislators and others who were instrumental in helping the Port obtain this funding," said General Manager Paula Miranda. "The pier plays a critical role in Newport's commercial fishing industry and investment in maintaining and upgrading these facilities is a benefit for the entire community."

Plans outline a replacement structure with fewer pilings made of steel and topped with pre-form concrete slabs, complete with a stormwater collection system. Driving access will be permitted all the way to the Port Dock 5 ramp, creating a well-designed backbone for the future of Port Dock 5.

Officials have been awaiting confirmation of EDA funds to begin the project. It is anticipated that construction will begin in November, after contracts are awarded and during the window when the State of Oregon allows in-water work to occur. Guidelines meant to minimize impacts on fish, wildlife and habitat dictate when projects of this nature can take place. Yaquina Bay's in-water work period is November 1 – February 15.

Aaron Bretz, Director of Operations, who has shepherded the Port Dock 5 Pier replacement project through the grant process, said many pre-construction steps, including design, have already been completed.

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“The Port has already invested in planning for the replacement and is in possession of the necessary permits and plans to complete the project,” he explained. “We were just awaiting assistance with actual construction costs and, thanks to the EDA grant, we are now ready to proceed.”

Miranda said completion of the project will have a positive impact on the existing fishing businesses, as well as the Port’s potential for growth.

“In recent years, the Port has had to turn away new businesses in the commercial marina due to failing infrastructure. With this project, we have the opportunity to set a new course, but it’s just one of several improvements outlined in our Strategic Business Plan. We will work with our partners at the local, state, and federal level to move the Port of Newport in a positive direction,” the general manager said.

Pier replacement is sure to be a complicated project, but one for which Bretz has prepared contingency plans.

“A temporary structure will be built to maintain access, utilities, and fuel throughout the work on the new pier. Access to Port Dock 5 will look differently during construction, but in function it will remain as similar as possible while we perform this critical work,” the operations director explained.

The end result will be a pier that is more environmentally friendly, has fewer pilings, is capable of handling road traffic, and has improved electrical conduit for larger amperage on the docks.

“The Port Dock 5 Pier replacement is a gateway project to the marina of the future that has the potential to add more businesses and jobs to the region,” Bretz noted.

Obtaining the grant adds another layer to what was a complex year at the Port of Newport. While staff worked to provide the necessary materials to the EDA, Port leaders were reassuring legislators that the organization was best managed under the control of a locally-elected commission. The awarding of a grant after this challenging period underscores the acknowledgement at the local, state and federal levels that investment in the Port of Newport is sound choice for the regional economy.

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