

the Bridge

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AN INTRODUCTION TO NEWPORT'S NEW CITY MANAGER, ALLEN O'NEAL

After 15 years as county manager in the swampy flatlands of New Hannover County, North Carolina, Newport City Manager Allen O'Neal was looking for a coastal community in which to continue his career-long affinity for local government. "I have family in the region and that helped draw me to Newport," he says.

As he and department heads plan the city's 2006-2007 budget, O'Neal's first priority is the city's finances. "With the budget planning process in full swing, the timing is perfect for staff and council to get the city on a firm financial footing," he says. This includes reviewing city spending, revenue sources, and labor and technology efficiencies.

"We are currently at work on the budget and should present one to the city council in the next few weeks."

Another issue of importance for O'Neal is the city's aging infrastructure, including streets, sewers and public works facilities. "A community prospers only so far as it has the infrastructure to do so," says O'Neal. Although Newport has a state-of-the-art wastewater treatment plant, its water supply facility is showing its age, and ongoing maintenance is a necessary constant in our harsh coastal environment.

"There are some things that are clear to me and one is that this is a great place to be. City employees are hard working, fair minded and have a real desire to serve the citizens of this city. Secondly, the city council is excited about this place we call home and is willing to work hard to serve the citizens, and they continue to make this a good place to work and rear our families."

One of O'Neal's goals is to increase communication between the residents of Newport and City Hall. He has arranged for city staff to be guests on a call-in radio show the first Tuesday of each month. Tune in at 9:00 a.m. on April 4th and May 2nd when Allen O'Neal himself is the guest on the KNPT Hotline with Kiera Morgan.



New City Manager Allen O'Neal (r) describes issues facing the city to 'Bridge' writer Jeff Ingram.

PERSONNEL NEWS

'The Bridge' welcomes Officer **Jay Reynolds** to his new position with the Newport Police Department.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Public notice of all City of Newport meetings will be made by posting on bulletin boards at the following locations:

City Hall, 169 SW Coast Highway

Newport Public Library, 35 NW Nye Street

Newport Recreation Center, 225 SE Avery Street

Notice will also be posted online, on the City of Newport website, at www.thecityofnewport.net

Anyone interested in serving on a City Board may pick up an application at the City Manager's Office in City Hall.

NEW HANGARS, SHUTTLE SERVICE TO PORTLAND IN NEWPORT AIRPORT'S FUTURE



Airport Supervisor Dennis Reno with plans for new hangars at Newport Municipal Airport

Construction has begun on several nested "T" hangers at Newport's Municipal Airport. Funded by a federal airport improvement grant, the new hangers will provide rental space for at least ten aircraft with more hangers to come in phase II of the building project. "We currently have local aircraft owners who, because of a lack of space, must berth their planes in Willamette Valley airports like Corvallis, Albany and Salem," says Airport Supervisor Dennis Reno. Once the new buildings are finished, local aircraft owners as well as visiting pilots will be able to store their planes in secure, weather-tight facilities.

The prospect for air service is looking very good for Newport. There are currently two airlines interested in serving our market should the city be successful in securing monies through the Connect Oregon grant as established through Senate Bill 71. "We asked local business about their level of interest in restoring regular air service to and from Newport and we were overwhelmed by their response," says Reno. "Our discussions with Massachusetts-based Cape Air include locating their Northwest maintenance facility here

in Newport, which is an important incentive for long-term service as well as a source of additional well-paying jobs to the area." If all goes according to plan, Newport may have regularly scheduled flights to and from Portland by the end of the year. Newport currently has a letter of intent from one of the interested airlines.

NEWPORT'S TWICE-HAUNTED LIGHTHOUSE

The Yaquina Bay Lighthouse has long been the subject of ghost stories, both "real" and imagined. Because its time in operation was so short - it was built in 1871 and abandoned in 1874 - the structure has stood vacant, and until the 1970s, derelict, most of its life.

When Eugene writer Lischen Miller visited the coast before the turn of the last century, she would have seen the old building with windows broken and shutters banging in the ever-present coastal winds. In 1899 Miller published her now famous short story, "The Haunted Light at Newport by the Sea" in a literary magazine, 'The Pacific Monthly'. Her story told of one Muriel Trevenant, a mysterious young stranger who disembarks from a nameless coastal schooner to take temporary refuge in Newport from an uncomfortable sea voyage. After meeting up with a local boy, the pair spend an evening exploring the empty building. They stumble upon a metal door and force it open, but all they see is that a tunnel leads down into the darkness, seemingly forever. Frightened, they hurry out, only to discover that poor Muriel has forgotten her handkerchief. She returns to the building to retrieve it and is never seen again. To add to the mystery, the nameless schooner never returns as scheduled to pick her up. Over the years, this work of fiction evolved into myth with the help of local storytellers, including one Oregon State history professor who liked to retell the tale in his classroom.

Another local legend tells of the whaling ship *Moncton* and its sadistic captain, Evan MacClure. During a trip to Hawaii in 1874, MacClure bit off the ear of a crewman and nailed it to the wall of a tavern after a fight over a local beauty. He so terrorized his crew on the voyage home, the men mutinied and he was set adrift in a lifeboat off the coast of Oregon. One dark and stormy night, the little boat was found wrecked and empty on the beach at the foot of the lighthouse. Caretakers of the old lighthouse tell of seeing the hapless Captain MacClure wandering the building and its grounds whenever the wind starts to howl and the sea kicks up over the jetties.



The abandoned Yaquina Bay Lighthouse in a photograph circa 1901 -Courtesy Oregon Coast History Center