



**First Impressions**  
by Michael McElwee

Assuming a new job is like taking the train to a new destination. You know the route but you're never sure what to expect until you get off at the station.

I reported for work on July 3, 2006 as the executive director at the Port of Hood River. As the new kid on the block, and one that is very pleased to be in this position, I would like to take this opportunity to offer my impressions of the Port.

Before I sought this position I was aware of the long history of the Port of Hood River. It is hard not to look around and recognize the significant efforts the Port has made and the successes achieved over the years. By any measure, the Port of Hood River should be considered one of the most successful in the Pacific Northwest. I feel it is important to recognize prior Commissioners and staff who have achieved so much.

My first real impression, starting work just before the 4th of July, was the sheer number and intensity of uses that the Port oversees on the waterfront during the summer season-- dog fights, fist fights, illegal swimming, the list is long. One day last month I witnessed a barge hit the Hood River bridge in the morning and a plane fly under it in the afternoon. By day's end I would not have been surprised to see the Queen Mary off-loading camels. The recreational waterfront is a remarkably busy place in the summer and I have been impressed by the ways in which the Port staff manages the intense and diverse uses.

*please see First Impressions continued on page 4*



## Maritime Services Corp. adds waterfront division

Maritime Services Corporation, a significant Hood River County employer over the last 20 years and a reputable name in the worldwide maritime industry, is expanding operations to include a division on the Hood River waterfront. "It's great to have a marine interest at the waterfront," expresses Port Marketing Manager Mike Doke. "The location perfectly suits this business."

Maritime Services Corp. (MSC) recently entered into a five-year lease agreement for Port-owned land on North 1st Street, bordering the former Nichols Boatworks property.

MSC's newest division, MSC Floating Structures, produces custom-engineered concrete floats for Oregon and Southern Washington as exclusive licensee for International Marine Floatation Systems, Inc.

International Marine Floatation Systems (IMF), of Vancouver, B.C., has applied expertise and proprietary technology to a variety of uses including floating homes, docks and marinas, yacht enclosures, wave attenuators, aquaculture, floating roads, and pathways.

Custom-engineered floats are built on-site using steel-reinforced concrete to encase a closed-cell polystyrene core.

"Our main intent is to build floating homes and structures for the Portland area's already established floating neighborhood market," explains Charlie

Capovilla of MSC. "There will be various uses for Oregon and Washington lakes as well."

The MSC Floating Structures concept came about with inquiries by developer Steve Tessmer of Gorge Associates. Tessmer joined the MSC Floating Structures team and is helping carry on MSC's history of continually diversifying for the market by adding floating homes and specialty floatation products.

"It's one more avenue we can use to keep our workforce busy. We have always done well adjusting to market needs," MSC co-owner George Selfridge remarks. "It's an advantage to be in Hood River because our workforce is here, and the river current works well for transportation." Trucking is also convenient, he adds.

A major benefit is the environmental soundness of IMF floatation systems. Concrete-encased styrene structures are environmentally inert, providing a "greener" option to treated wood. This product not only saves trees, the structures are permanent unlike many other docks.

MSC is well-known in the domestic and international maritime industry for providing planning, interior design,

*Maritime Services Corp. project manager Marty Bowe (left) and MSC co-owner Charlie Capovilla stand by as Honald Crane Service of The Dalles lowers the first floating concrete pier manufactured by the company into the Nichols boat basin on July 17th.*

engineering, construction and materials for building and refurbishment of cruise ships, work boats and other vessels.

Since 1986, MSC has twice made *Inc. Magazine's* list of the Top 500 fastest growing privately held businesses, and has been recognized as one of Oregon's Top 150 private companies by *Oregon Business Magazine*.

The company will be adding employees as needed for its Floating Structures division. Currently employing 150 people in various locations, employee count fluctuates in Hood River and elsewhere, depending on contracts. There are generally 65 employees within a 75-mile radius of the Hood River headquarters. Six are now assigned to the MSC Floating Structures division, with hopes those numbers will increase.

The founders of MSC, George Selfridge and Charlie Capovilla, have a long relationship with the Port of Hood River. Selfridge started Heritage Boatworks at the Port waterfront 10 years prior to starting MSC in 1986. The yacht building business transformed to MSC when the new partners recognized opportunities in outfitting commercial maritime vessels.

"Our business was originally fostered by the Port. We also had an offshoot called Marina Management that managed the Port Marina for two years. It's fitting that we have come full circle and can again work with the Port on its objectives of economic development," Selfridge muses.



*Concrete floats? MSC co-owner Charlie Capovilla looks on to make sure. The 42,000-pound pier will be used by the company to help build additional larger floats.*

# New system adds airport fuel service 24/7

**F**lightline Services, fixed base operator of the Ken Jernstedt Airfield in Hood River, recently added a new Card Lock Fuel System, extending hours that fuel is readily available to pilots.

“This will add a major convenience for local air travel,” according to Anne Yannotti of Flightline Services. “Previously we charged a \$25 call-out fee to pump gas after hours. This offers self-serve during all hours at no extra cost.” During normal operating hours, staff continues to assist customers with fueling, while other services are not curtailed in any way. Since many pilots take off or land in the early morning or evening hours, it’s important to have fuel available during those times. Most small airports these days offer self-serve fuel options.

“I think of it as more of a safety issue than anything,” expresses Port Commissioner Hoby Streich, also a local pilot. “As the ceiling (cloud cover) lowers, we are on the route of the lowest pass across the Cascades. We get a lot of air traffic on days like that, and the Card Lock Service allows Hood River to better serve those pilots. Personally, I like flying on the top half of a tank, not the bottom half,” he says with a smile.

When Portland is socked in, Gorge airports see increased usage. Often pilots “wait it out” at various airports for weather to improve. “Weather can change so quickly in the Gorge and surrounding areas that pilots need



options,” explains Yannotti. “Often planes land here for safety, or they don’t realize how strong the headwinds might be, and how fast the gas gauge goes down in these winds.”

Yannotti says the area is seeing higher activity levels at the Ken Jernstedt Airfield, not only as a result of population and tourism increases, but also as newer generation aircraft technology allows larger planes to land on shorter runways.

In addition to serving local and regional pilots, Port of Hood River airport serves as a base of Search and Rescue operations for Stevenson, Klickitat, Wasco and Hood River

counties. It’s also from where local forest fire crews are staged, or other emergency aircraft might land. Yannotti estimates about a third of airport traffic is business-related, citing especially the fruit industry. Flightline Services, owned by Yannotti and Denny Kindig, has operated at the airport since 1992.

For further information contact Flightline Services at 541-386-1133, or email [flightline@gorge.net](mailto:flightline@gorge.net). Hours are 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. in summer, and 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. in winter. Of course, fuel is now available round-the-clock.

*Port commissioner Hoby*

*Streich checks out the new Cardlock Fuel*

*System with Flightline*

*Services co-owner Anne*

*Yannotti, while*

*employee Sam Mart fills*

*Flightline’s Cessna.*

## PORT DIRECTORY

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*The Ken Jernstedt Airfield was integral in recent Mt. Hood firefighting efforts. Pictured is a Sikorsky CH54B Helitanker, owned by Helicopter Transport Services, Inc., based in Corvallis. The helicopter can pull 2,400 gallons of water from a lake in 45 seconds to aid fire suppression.*

**PORT MEETINGS** Regular Port Commission meetings are held on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month in the Expo Center Conference Room. The Port welcomes your questions, comments and suggestions.

## Prigel purchases John Weber Business Park parcel

The Port of Hood River's Timber Incubator Building is launching another company out on its own. Brian Prigel of Prigel Machine and Fabrication recently purchased property at the John Weber Business Park in Odell, and plans to construct a new building within two years.

The one-acre parcel sits next to Prigel's current space at the Timber Incubator Building. "It will certainly be convenient to oversee construction, and the move could not be easier," Prigel comments. Prigel Machine and Fabrication has been a tenant at the Incubator Building since December, 2002. The company's specialty is machining precision parts. It also offers some welding and light fabrication. Prigel Machine and Fabrication currently employs two full-time workers, with plans for moderate growth.

"Our products are typically metal parts that clients can't buy off the shelf," Prigel explains. Custom prototype parts or short run production parts made of aluminum, steel, stainless steel, titanium, brass or plastic are generally intended to



*Brian Prigel of Prigel Machine and Fabrication set to build at John Weber Business Park.*

replace or repair parts for industrial process equipment. The company's client-base consists of numerous local manufacturers and engineering companies.

The Timber Incubator Building at John Weber Business Park was built by the Port of Hood River in 1997. The Port's intention for the building was to provide optimum light industrial space to nurture young companies in hopes of creating jobs for displaced timber industry workers (hence, the name).

Currently, 5,000 square feet of space is available at the Timber Incubator Building. Spaces are configured as 2,500 square foot units (including a 200 square foot office space), each with its own loading entry doors, plus a shared loading dock and pad.

The seeds of the John Weber Business Park were planted in 1978, when 29 acres of property were purchased by the Port of Hood River. Initial attempts to change zoning from agricultural to light industrial were met with resistance. The zone change succeeded in the late 1980s, and in 1990, the Port subdivided the property into 15 parcels. The project was named John Weber Business Park after a hard-working, visionary Port Commissioner who passed away in 1995. Prigel's land-purchase represents the next-to-last parcel available.

For more information about the Timber Incubator Building or John Weber Business Park, contact Mike Doke at the Port of Hood River, 541-386-1645 or email [mdoke@portofhoodriver.com](mailto:mdoke@portofhoodriver.com).

## Toll plaza construction begins this fall

Bids for the Port's Interstate Bridge Toll Plaza Improvement Project will be opened in September, with construction anticipated to begin in early November. The project will bring toll plaza capacity to four lanes by May, 2007, allowing for two lanes of manual toll collection, and two lanes of electronic toll collection.

The plan calls for initial construction of two new automated toll lanes on the outsides of existing lanes. Temporary tollbooths will then be installed at the new lanes while construction of the new toll house and roadways occurs. The Port anticipates traffic interruption entering and exiting the bridge will be minimal.

This increased capacity should reduce traffic back ups at the bridge toll plaza and contiguous roads and highways. At its worst, traffic congestion in this area results in Interstate-84 back ups, when vehicles on Exit 64 off ramps spill back onto I-84, creating dangers of rear-end collisions.

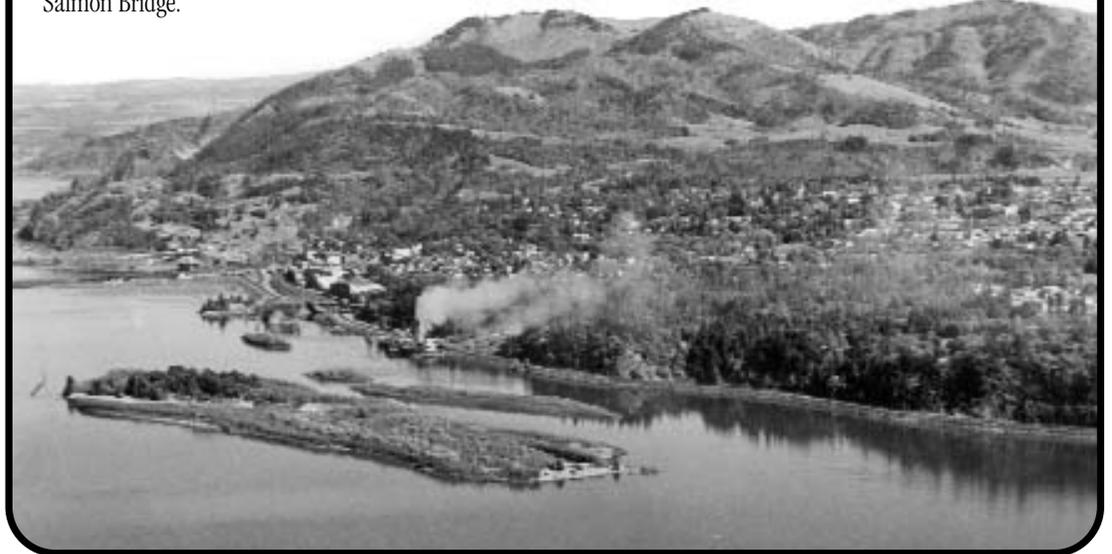
The electronic tolling system will utilize reader cards mounted on vehicle dashboards that identify enrollees in the program.

Drivers can deposit funds in their accounts, which are automatically deducted at each pass through the toll plaza. Drivers using this system can cross the bridge without stopping, or even opening a window.

**Construction Updates to be available**

## Blast from the Past

Hood River's waterfront in the 1950s was a good bit more narrow than today's waterfront. With the completion of Bonneville Dam in 1938, the water level rose to between 72 and 88 feet. This historic photo prominently shows Wells Island and a shoreline which follows the railroad tracks. During the 1950s, the Port of Hood River completed a series of property acquisitions along the Columbia River to prepare for future fill of the area. The first fill project began in 1959 at the site of the existing Best Western Hood River Inn, east of the Hood River-White Salmon Bridge.



The Port of Hood River will resurrect its **bridge construction notification list and call line** during the Toll Plaza Improvement project. Bridge users can subscribe to the Port's email notification list for updates on bridge construction and any unexpected delays. Log on to the Port's web site — [www.portofhoodriver.com](http://www.portofhoodriver.com) — to subscribe. For further details, contact the Port of Hood River at **541-386-1645**.

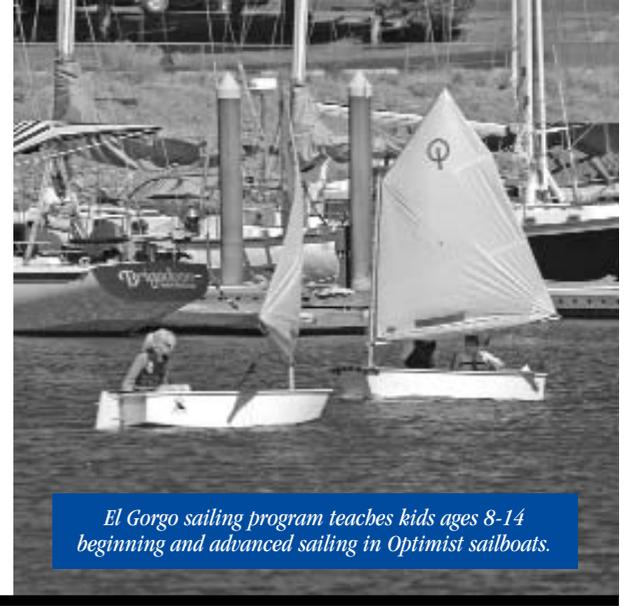
# Kids learn to sail at Port Marina

The El Gorgo Sailing Program at the Hood River Marina expanded significantly in its second year. "This program has been amazing," reports Community Education Director Mike Schend. "Last year when we offered one camp the interest level went through the roof. This year, with the help of the Port and program founders Jaime and Andy Mack, the program was able to grow. A new float was built for the sailboat fleet. We offered eight week-long camps and they filled immediately.

In fact we have had just as many kids on waiting lists as we've had in the camps. There has been a tremendous response from the community." Schend says Laurie Borton, Marina Manager for the Port, has been extra helpful in making this program a success.

This summer's camps are taught by Seattle high school teacher Dan Falk, who races Lasers as a hobby. Falk says to assure the success and sustainability of programs like this requires numerous volunteers, so no one carries an excessive load. Schend and Falk both credit the Macks for their dedication in getting the program off the ground.

"It's also great to have the Port of Hood River's support for this community sailing program. This is an excellent, protected facility for teaching kids," Falk said. For further information, contact Hood River County School District Community Education at 541-386-2055.



*El Gorgo sailing program teaches kids ages 8-14 beginning and advanced sailing in Optimist sailboats.*

## PORT OF HOOD RIVER

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The Hood River bridge definitely plays a prominent role along the waterfront. Like others, I have been both impressed and puzzled by it. The bridge is a source of irritation — the travel lanes are uncomfortably narrow and there is the 75-cent toll — but it also serves as a critical interstate artery for business and recreational travel. The Port (with the assistance of ODOT) recently completed an improvement project that replaced all the steel decking on the bridge and actually widened each travel lane by three inches. That isn't much when a semi is approaching but it was the maximum that could be obtained due to structural constraints.

I have noticed the serious traffic congestion at Exit 64. This appears to be a worsening problem and there are now backups so serious that eastbound traffic is literally stopped in the travel lanes of I-84. The Port Commission recently approved giving toll bridge personnel discretion to waive tolls when congestion occurs. This will ensure that the toll plaza never becomes the cause of the backup. Unfortunately, this action may only have a modest benefit — traffic congestion stems primarily from the I-84 underpass at Exit 64 and the four-way stop at Port Marina Drive.

The people I have met show a vigorous commitment and devotion to addressing the issues that motivate them. I have noticed a wide diversity of viewpoints and differing approaches to finding solutions. Yet most people acknowledge the need to consider larger community interests and long-term goals.

I am struck by how little development has occurred on the waterfront over the recent years. I have an aerial photo in my office from 1987. Except for the Event Site and the demolition of three buildings, the area looked almost identical to today. However, like others, I am impressed by the significant opportunity this presents if consensus can be reached on how to proceed on key development objectives.

I am impressed by the leadership, collaboration and problem solving ability of the Port of Hood River Commission. The Port has a mandate to fulfill both a quality of life and an economic development agenda and I am looking forward to working with them over the months and years ahead.

My wife Kathryn and I have two boys, Christopher, age 6, and Connor, age 4. We will be adding on to our small home in Parkdale. Our family is truly excited to be here and be a part of this community.

## Lacrosse Club takes advantage of Marina field

The Port of Hood River Marina Green became home field for Hood River Youth Lacrosse Club last spring. An arrangement between the club, Hood River County School District Community Education, and the Port of Hood River enabled 140 local athletes, ages 6 to 14, to hone their developing lacrosse skills.

Debi Gallagher, president of the club, said the teams were extremely grateful to the Port for providing the facility. "Hood River lacks sports fields for the numerous team sports going on in the area," Gallagher relays. "This field worked out so well for us, and its location by the interstate even drew some spectators off the highway." Weekly practices occurred for the club's four teams, while 11 games hosted teams from the Portland metro area.

The Port Commission set a policy endorsing youth sports on the Marina Green in 2004.



*A Saturday morning lacrosse game in May.*