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THE DAILY ASTORIAN

131st YEAR, No. 21

TUESDAY, JULY 29, 2003

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Port of Portland severs lower river link

Astoria Port commissioners are shocked by choices

By BENJAMIN ROMANO
The Daily Astorian

Gov. Ted Kulongoski named two new commissioners to the Port of Portland Board of Commissioners last week, but neither one is from the Lower Columbia River.

The new commissioners, who began their terms Friday, are Steve Corey, a Pendleton sheep rancher and attorney and Thomas Imeson, a Portland business consultant. Also, Jay Waldron, the commission's president, was reappointed.

The news shocked one Port of Astoria commissioner, who described the benefits gained during the past two years, when Bob

Eaton represented the lower river on the Port of Portland board.

"It helped us because we've begun to develop a relationship with the Port of Portland that we really haven't had in the past," said Glenn Taggart, a Port of Astoria commissioner for 10 years. He said that relationship is especially important now as the Columbia River channel deepening project moves forward.

Eaton, who was appointed in 2001 by Gov. John Kitzhaber, was the first Port of Portland commissioner from outside the Portland Metropolitan Area. His term was meant to be a four-year experiment, but it ended May 8 when he stepped down to take a job at the head of Multnomah County Drainage District No. 1.

"I'm hoping that Governor Kulongoski, with one of his appointments, will see fit to

continue that experiment because I think it's a real important one," Eaton said.

Taggart said Eaton acted as an ambassador between the two ports. He helped keep the smaller port apprised of happenings up the river, he communicated concerns from the lower river to the Port of Portland and he facilitated projects both ports were working on together, Taggart said.

"So that's where it's going to hurt. We've lost that liaison," he said. "I hope that our relationship doesn't deteriorate with the upper river ports because of that."

Port of Portland spokeswoman Elisa Dozono said that the relationship between the two ports would remain intact.

"I don't think it changes any of the Port of Portland's approach to our partnerships with the lower river communities," Dozono

said.

She said the port has encouraged the governor's office to think about the port's statewide reach. That's why he reached out to Eastern Oregon, which has never had representation on the Port of Portland before, she said.

The governor's spokeswoman could not be reached for comment this morning.

In a press release announcing the new appointments last week, Kulongoski said he was pleased to have Corey on the board because of the port's "strong connection with rural Oregon and its abundant agricultural exports."

The release went on to provide background information on Corey and Imeson.

Corey attended Yale University and earned a J.D. from Stanford Law School. He has been chairman of the Oregon Tourism

Commission and the Oregon Trail Advisory Commission, and he was president of the Oregon Historical Society until 1998. He served on the Oregon Transportation Commission until June 30. He serves on the Oregon Community Foundation and the Pendleton Round-Up Association and is president of the Pendleton Rotary Club and Pendleton and Umatilla County United Way.

Imeson attended George Washington University and Johns Hopkins University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in social sciences. He has been chairperson of the PacifiCorp foundation, chief of staff for Gov. Neil Goldschmidt, and leader of the transition teams of both Kitzhaber and Kulongoski. He is a principal of Goldschmidt Imeson Carter, a public policy and business consulting firm.