

Port of Newport Harbor News

Newport is “like a second home”

Get to know the new MOC-P commander at NOAA

Capt. Colin Little, a 20-year veteran of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Commissioned Officer Corps, took over command of the Marine Operations Center – Pacific in late August. But this wasn't the first time his career path brought him to Newport.

“This is my third billet in Newport,” he said, noting he was here from 2011-2014 and 2019 – 2022. “I was thinking the other day that this is the place where I have spent the most time in my career. We ping-pong around the country between sea duties, shore assignments, and inside the beltway and elsewhere, but I've been in Newport for a total of six years or so. It is like a second home.”

Little has completed five sea tours during his NOAA career and enjoys the camaraderie found aboard ship. Although he is stationed shoreside in this new role, Little has command over six vessels in the NOAA fleet, including the Bell M. Shimada and the Rainier, both homeported in Newport.

A native of Worcester, Mass, Little has degrees in

biology and is passionate about the work that happens on those vessels when they are far from port.

“When they are offshore, nobody can see them but there is a great scientific mission happening that might include fishery stock assessments, ocean bottom mapping, or other critical work,” he explained. “I am impressed by the professionalism of our folks out there. They spend a lot of time away from family in challenging conditions.”

Mindful of both the risks involved and the taxpayer expense incurred, the commander said efficiency and safety rule the day.

“We want to make sure we get every bit of data we can when we're out there,” he explained. “We want the most bang for the buck scientifically and that means getting all the data we can while being as safe as possible.”

Little is also keenly aware of how NOAA's work may inspire future scientists. On his previous billet, he served as the commanding officer of the ship Okeanos Explorer,



Capt. Little (standing, right) assumes command from Capt. Golden (standing, left) at the August ceremony. *Photo credit NOAA OMAO/Gin Chapman*

which conducted scientific operations all over the world. The vessel utilized a remotely operated vehicle (ROV) capable of deep dives that could be shared widely via the Internet.

“We would pipe that to the Internet and in real time, school groups would watch. You never know which little

kid will see a cool octopus or something and latch on to that. Everyone comes to their career through a different pathway but if one kid sees that and is later the one to solve the plastics problem, maybe we played some small part in that.”

When he is not at work in NOAA's MOC-P office on the Port of Newport campus, Little might be found hiking local trails, riding his bike to his Nye Beach home, or enjoying the Oregon coastline.

“I was looking forward to coming back here,” he said. “The job carries a lot of responsibility, but I have a great team. It was an honor to be selected for this and especially working with and for people I really respect.”

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POSTAL CUSTOMER

Connect Oregon grant awarded for Port Dock 7

On October 10, 2024, the Oregon Transportation Commission awarded the Port of Newport a Connect Oregon grant in the amount of \$9.5 million toward the reconstruction of Port Dock 7.

Of 35 grant applications, the Port's application ranked #6 in the department's competitive process. The top 19 applications were awarded by the OTC, totaling nearly \$48 million.

"We are thankful for the assistance of our state legislators, Senator Anderson and Representative Gomberg, as well as the local individuals and organizations that supplied letters of support for the project. The reconstruction of Port Dock 7 and our commercial marina is of vital importance to our port and our community," said Port Executive

Connect Oregon

Director Paula Miranda.

The total cost of rebuilding PD7 is estimated at \$34.5 million. The Connect Oregon grant would provide the necessary match dollars for any federal grants which are being actively pursued by the Port.

"We anticipate an opportunity to apply for a Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP) grant at the end of this year and we will make application," Miranda noted. "There is also a RAISE (Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and

Equity) grant opportunity in January that we will be pursuing. We expect the Connect Oregon grant will make us a much stronger applicant, since we have match money ready to go," she added.

With a deteriorating infrastructure and a configuration that no longer matches the modern-day commercial fishing fleet, PD7 is the Port's top priority for improvement. Although many of the preliminary steps have been taken to launch the project, obtaining funding is the biggest hurdle yet to be cleared before a new commercial marina becomes a certainty.

For updates on this project and others, follow the Port of Newport on its Facebook page.

Newport Fishermen's Appreciation Day 2024

Commercial fishing crew members and their families turned up in big numbers at Fishermen's Appreciation Day, organized by Newport Fishermen's Wives on Nov. 7, 2024. Under a surprisingly blue sky, more than 200 hamburgers, 75 hot dogs, gallons of clam chowder, and other delicious extras were consumed. As a brief pause from their preparations for the Dungeness Crab season, this annual celebration was a good chance to catch up with friends. The Port of Newport wishes all fishermen a safe and bountiful season.



Miranda to serve as president of PNWA

The Pacific Northwest Waterways Association (PNWA) has named Port of Newport Executive Director Paula Miranda as President of its executive board, beginning in October of 2024. She will serve in the post for a two-year term, during which time she will work alongside the organization's staff to promote the work of PNWA.

Celebrating its 90th anniversary this year, PNWA is a collaboration of more than 150 ports, businesses and public agencies who work together in support of efficient, reliable, and environmentally sustainable waterways. The organization plays an important role in economic development throughout the Pacific Northwest.

"In this position, I will be the person to work alongside the organization's CEO to promote the work of PNWA, lobbying on behalf of navigational interests, infrastructure funding, and infrastructure policy, all of which is important to the membership," Miranda explained. "It will mean a lot of direct

meetings with legislators and federal agencies, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, NOAA Fisheries, and other policy makers at the federal level."

Fostering stronger relationships with federal legislators means Miranda will also have the opportunity to highlight the work of Port of Newport. It will also give her a platform for raising issues of concern.

"One of our goals is to address those policies that tend to hurt ports. For example, the cost of environmental permits keeps going up and it is to the point that it is difficult to build infrastructure in the water. A lot of our policy requests will be to ease some of that burden on ports," she said.

Miranda is an advocate for PNWA in part because she has seen the results that come from the collaborative approach.

"PNWA is a big promoter of funding through MARAD (Maritime Administration) and RAISE (a grant program through the U.S. Department of



Paula Miranda

Transportation) that we have received in Newport. The lobbying from PNWA is a part of why we received those funds," she said.

Port employees with something to celebrate!

Gloria Tucker, the administrative assistant at the Port of Newport, was recently selected for the second time as the Oregon Association of Municipal Records (OAMR) Region III director. She has served on the board since 2022 and has been a member of OAMR since 2017. Region III encompasses cities and special districts in Lincoln, Benton, Linn, Marion, and Polk counties.

"I'm honored that they like having me as their director," Tucker said. "This is my second term, so the fact that they wanted me to continue is very nice."

Tucker's appointment is a benefit to the Port of Newport as well. OAMR offers education and training in records management, new legislation, and best practices. It also offers her the chance to network with clerks not only in Oregon,

but around the world.

"I'm incredibly thankful for the support of the port to invest in this kind of training and education," she said. Tucker has been a member of the Port's administrative team since July of 2021.

Aaron Bretz has been named Deputy Director at the Port of Newport. Bretz was hired by the Port in 2017 as the Director of Operations. In that post he has guided many of the Port's major projects and day-to-day operations. Prior to his hiring at the port, he served 21 years in the U.S. Coast Guard.

Even as Deputy Director, Bretz will continue with his duties as Director of Operations. The new title means he will officially serve as director whenever the executive director is on vacation or ill.

Bretz will be the first Deputy Director

ever designated by the Port. The position was a new one, requiring a change in bylaws, which was approved by the Port Commission in June.

"Aaron has done amazing work during his time at the port and I know that in his role as my deputy, he will continue to serve the port and community well," said Executive Director Paula Miranda.

Andrew Meats was recently honored for his five year employment anniversary at the Port of Newport. Meats began as a member of the maintenance crew on the South Beach campus. He now works as part of the team maintaining the NOAA facility. "We appreciate Andrew's hard work and dedication to his job. I congratulate him on his anniversary with the Port," said Miranda.



Gloria Tucker



Aaron Bretz



Andrew Meats

Reflections from the Port Commission President

By Gil Sylvia

I have been a commissioner for the Port of Newport for four years and President of the Commission for more than a year. I have learned a great deal about how Ports operate and the myriads of responsibilities and challenges confronting the Port in achieving its mission to support regional economic development. Managing property, building and maintaining critical infrastructure, working with stakeholders, and coordinating with the larger community are major activities.

Today, the Port has more than fifty projects that are being planned, initiated or in the final stages of completion. Responsibly designing these projects so they are cost effective and meet future needs is a critical responsibility for the commissioners and staff. Budgeting and financing is particularly challenging given the juggling act required to align



funding sources and meet regulatory requirements.

My experience suggests that the words “marine” or “in-water” imply long planning horizons and financial costs twice as high as comparable

“land based” projects. These costs are magnified by state and federal requirements to protect aquatic and estuarine resources. Unfortunately, it is difficult if not impossible to plan for all the regulatory costs. Unknown and unanticipated costs can occur in the middle of a project costing the port upwards of a \$1 million or more and draining reserves and budgets. For many projects, the Port is required to conduct mitigation to address habitat impacts.

Although the Port owns more than 500 acres of intertidal land, efforts to use this land for mitigation purposes has proven difficult. The Port is now conducting meetings with government officials to better coordinate projects while finding reasonable and creative approaches for reducing regulatory costs, protecting the environment, and meeting our economic development mission.

A helping hand from the Central Coast Food Web

Since August of 2023, the Central Coast Food Web has been providing fishermen with the expertise and equipment needed to add value to the seafood they harvest. Located in the Yaquina Lab on Yaquina Bay Road, CCFW is “providing services and support to small, independent food producers and making it easier for all people to eat local food,” according to their mission statement. But what exactly does that mean?

“We give fishers an alternative to



Kiara Caruso (front) is joined by CCFW staffer Sarah Howard as they test a dehydration process to turn fish skins into dog treats.

processors, which allows them to be self-determinant. We have created a space where they can process their own fish,” explains CCFW Executive Director Jim King.

Additionally, clients can take steps to add value to their catch using large scale dehydrators, blast freezers, large-scale vacuum packing equipment, or a commercial-grade smoker.

“The most common value-added processing that happens here currently is when fishers turn whole fish into frozen, vacuum-packed filets,” said Kiara Caruso, Blue Foods Coordinator for CCFW. “We like to see them get more value out of smaller amounts of fish as part of our overarching goal to help local people eat local food,” she added.

The facility is also home to a seawater system that serves a live crab holding tank, allowing for the storage of crab as needed.

More than just equipment, CCFW is staffed by trained professionals who can help producers navigate the licensing and food safety steps, think through the development process, and position their products for success in direct-to-consumer sales. Those sales may happen on CCFW’s online marketplace, at a local farmer’s market, or through the producer’s own website.

Aiding in the creation of new products is also a passion for Caruso, who studied food science at Cornell University.

“A big project this season has been running a lot of dehydration trials with the skins of different species of fish to come up with a crunchy, crispy product that could be marketed as a pet treat,” she explained. “We are trying to encourage people to focus on product development that could utilize more of the fish beyond filets. We want to turn what is currently thought of as waste into a value-added product that brings more money back to the fisher while also introducing the consumer to more ways to utilize fish.”

Whether it is fisher or farmer, those selling food products will find a helping hand at CCFW. Training events are being scheduled to provide extra assistance, including one in February that will teach participants how to get their products into institutional markets, like hospitals or schools.

Only in its first year, CCFW has accomplished much, including introducing seafood butchery classes to students in six schools and providing thousands of fish meals to Food Share of Lincoln County.

To learn more about CCFW, visit their website at centralcoastfoodweb.org.