



## **Port Westward – Economic Development for Columbia County**

Port Westward is located in northern Columbia County. PGE holds a lease on a large portion of Port Westward and PGE's presence along with the site's unique characteristics and recent development has created the potential for an energy park for the region. This has become a key site for business and job creation in Columbia County and is included in an Enterprise Zone, as well as an Urban Renewal Area.

Two recent industrial additions that will be a catalyst for future development are Cascade Grain, the largest ethanol plant on the west coast and a new PGE generating plant. Port Westward is also under consideration for a coal gasification facility, bio-diesel and bulk cargo transfer activities. About 450 acres remain much of which can be developed. These two new plants employ over 100 new workers and one of the benefits from the developments in place and from those being recruited is that they are capital intensive and the jobs created are better than average "family-wage" jobs, and often are filled by local residents. Projects such as these do not happen by themselves and the combined efforts of ERT agencies has made these developments possible.

The NW ERT views Port Westward as a key economic development opportunity for the region with the overarching goal of creating family wage jobs in Columbia County. Due to on-site infrastructure issues, as well as transportation improvement needs, the site has been a significant ERT project. OECDD and ODOT have worked closely with companies at the site on issues relating to transportation access including needed rail improvements. DEQ, with approval from the Environmental Quality Commission (EQC), issued a wastewater discharge permit to the Port of St. Helens to accommodate Cascade Grain and other potential future development. DEQ has also worked closely with PGE on air and water permits for the new 400 MW power plant.

DSL worked to resolve wetland issues and issue permits. ODOT completed a traffic study for the City of Clatskanie regarding access to Hwy 30 for Port Westward. As a result of the study, a project was submitted for funding street improvements (including \$1.7 million for a left turn lane to Van Street).

OECDD signed a contract with Columbia County for transportation improvements at the site. Investments have included \$35,000 from ODOT for design of access improvements to Hwy 30,

\$2 million from ODOT Rail's federal funds for rail improvements, a SPWF loan from OECDD of \$4,153,000 for the road, a \$8,668,500 SPWF loan to the Port for a water intake, distribution and discharge system at Port Westward, a \$2 million grant from Connect Oregon for on-site rail improvements, and an EDA Grant for the road of \$1.3 million.

The County requested an increase in its existing road loan to \$5,900,000 to complete Phase 1b work, and a new SPWF loan in the amount of \$10,650,000 for expansion and extension of Hermo Road. The Port of St. Helens requested a \$3 million SPWF loan to help pay \$6 million in on-site rail improvements which have been partially funded by the Connect Oregon grant program.

This has been a multi-agency and multi-year project. The NW ERT continues to work closely with the City of Clatskanie, the Port of St. Helens and Columbia County to bring the site to full development as a top economic development priority for the region.

