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To: Jessica Wallenfels

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The Columbian BUSINESS TODAY

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Editor's note

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Tuesday, Dec. 11

Gas prices drop 5 cents a gallon in Clark County this week

Clark County motorists are saving about five cents on every gallon of gas they purchase today, compared to last week, according to AAA Oregon/Idaho. The average price of a gallon of gas is \$3.15 here, down from last week's \$3.20, but still 47 cents higher than one year ago when gas here was selling for about \$2.68 a gallon. Clark County's average gas prices were \$3.22 per gallon one month ago, according to AAA, which expects oil prices to remain stable during the holidays, barring significant world events and major storms.

Utility's power rates unchanged in next year's budget

Water and electric rates should hold steady in the coming year under the Clark Public Utilities 2008 budget, approved this morning. Of the \$342.6 million electric system operating budget, about 70 percent will go toward power costs. The water system portion of the budget is \$10 million, up slightly from 2007. The utility's budget also includes \$34.7 million for capital improvements to the electrical system around Clark County, including \$5.6 million to build a 13,000-square-foot addition to the Ed Fischer Operations Center on 117th Avenue. The water system's \$10.2 million construction budget will include development of wells to provide future water supply for Clark Public Utilities customers. Read more in Wednesday's paper.



Six-year plan

Tourism locals call for state support

Washington tourism officials voiced frustration Monday with the way the state supports their industry. There were complaints about a lack of funding, lack of personnel, lack of promotion and a need for advocacy at a meeting held in Vancouver hosted by the Washington Department of Community Trade and Economic Development. The meeting was among several throughout the state intended to gather input for a six-year statewide tourism plan. Mitch Nichols, above, is helping to prepare the report. In Vancouver, representatives got an earful. Read more about what tourism professionals believe the state needs to do, as well as what the state has planned, in Wednesday's Columbian.

Today's markets at the close

Dow Jones	13,432.77, down 294.26
Nasdaq	2,652.35, down 66.60
S&P 500	1,477.65, down 38.34

Local stocks of interest

Hewlett-Packard	\$50.78, down \$1.19
Nautilus	\$5.93, down 81 cents
TSM	\$9.92, down 21 cents
Riverview	\$12.30, down 55 cents

When Your
Business Is
Ready

Manpower hiring outlook positive for Vancouver-Portland

Employers in the Vancouver-Portland metropolitan area are more positive about hiring new workers than those in elsewhere, according to a report today from Manpower Inc. From January through March, 33 percent of companies interviewed in the region said they expect to hire more employees. That's stronger than a nationwide survey of 14,000 U.S. employers showing 22 percent expect to add to their payrolls, said Manpower. For more see Wednesday's Columbian.

Boeing	\$88.70, down \$3.94
Microsoft	\$34.10, down 61 cents
Intel	\$26.93, down 85 cents
Yum	\$38.87, down 55 cents
Nike	\$64.20, down \$1.66
WaMu	\$17.59, down \$2.29
Nordstrom	\$37.19, down \$1.35

Stocks & Markets

Port of Vancouver buys waterfront land to create jobs

Port of Vancouver commissioners Tuesday approved a \$48 million deal to buy 208 acres of waterfront property that holds the promise of hundreds of jobs. The sale of the two properties that make up the total acreage is expected to close around March 31. The agreement requires property owners Alcoa and Evergreen Aluminum LLC to meet state standards in cleaning toxic chemicals from the land. Port Commissioner Brian Wolfe said the sales contract is as close to a bullet-proof agreement as they could get. The port has two potential tenants for the redeveloped land, an international auto shipper and an ethanol plant.

People

Garret Harper, right, a broker with the Vancouver office of Norris Beggs & Simpson Co., has helped his client, **Bob Bennett**, set up the donation of a 20,000 square-foot warehouse to the Salvation Army for storing and distributing its charitable collections during this year's holiday season. The warehouse, donated temporarily by the Bennett Family Trust II, is being used to store dry goods to be handed out to more than 1,200 families in the area, said **Steve Rusk**, the Salvation Army's business administrator. Rusk said the donated facility would house the nonprofit's Giving Tree and Adopt-a-Family programs, which are annually supported by the employees of Norris Beggs and Simpson.



If you missed it

[College reports ID theft exposure](#)

Clark College students' personal information was found in off-campus trash. The school has warned that an undisclosed number of students about a possible identity threat issue [Read More](#)

Boring but important

[Pipeline study seeks regional benefits](#)

Southwest Washington gasoline prices would be more stable if the Legislature made it easier to improve and expand fuel-related infrastructure, but other policy changes could have more immediate effects, a state report says. [Read More](#)

Quote of the Day

"The miracle, or the power, that elevates the few is to be found in their perseverance under the promptings of a brave, determined spirit."

- Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens), (1809-1894) American journalist and author.

Tonight

[An orphan's adventures](#)

Fantasy movie, "The Golden Compass" heads into its second week with screenings tonight beginning at 5:30 p.m. at Cinetopia, 11700 S.E. Seventh St. in east Vancouver. The movie follows the adventures of an orphan girl who falls into a parallel world of witches, flying machines and talking polars bears. Other showings are at 7:10, 8:20 and 10 p.m.

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