

News Release

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Three Peregrine Falcon Chicks Hatch at Port of Olympia

Three peregrine falcon chicks – two females and one male – have hatched at the Port of Olympia and appear to be thriving. This is the sixth year a pair of peregrine falcons and their offspring have nested atop the Port’s 175-foot high gantry crane.

Falcon experts on contract with the Washington State Department of Fish & Wildlife, were at the Port last week to band the chicks’ legs for easier identification. The chicks were born in April and usually begin to fly when they are about 45 days old.

In 2004, the Port and the state Department of Fish and Wildlife installed plywood nesting boxes on the two marine terminal cranes. Falcons have nested on the southernmost crane every year since, hatching live young four of the last five years. The adult birds are one of three known pairs in Thurston County. While encouraged by the chicks’ progress, experts caution that there is a high mortality rate for young falcons during their first year.

“We’re pleased the falcons continue to return to the Port,” said Commissioner Bill McGregor. “Falcons have been known to nest in urban areas, including bridges and high-rise building ledges. These birds appear to have adapted well to Budd Inlet waterfront activities.”

Peregrine falcons are the world’s swiftest birds, flying at speeds of 30-60 mph. They feed almost exclusively on other birds they usually take in mid-flight. They were on the edge of extinction in the 1970s from exposure to pesticides but have since been removed from the endangered species list. The state currently monitors about 150 pairs.

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About the Port of Olympia

The southernmost deepwater port on Puget Sound, the Port of Olympia is Thurston County’s partner in economic opportunity. The Port owns and operates a diversified international shipping terminal, an established niche facility that handles a range of breakbulk and project cargoes. The Port also owns and operates a strategically located regional airport, a vibrant 656-slip recreational marina and boat haulout/repair facility, and a thriving real estate division. A community port, it generates an estimated 2,600 jobs in Thurston County and indirectly over 5,000 jobs in Washington State.