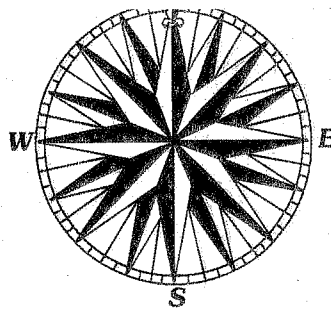


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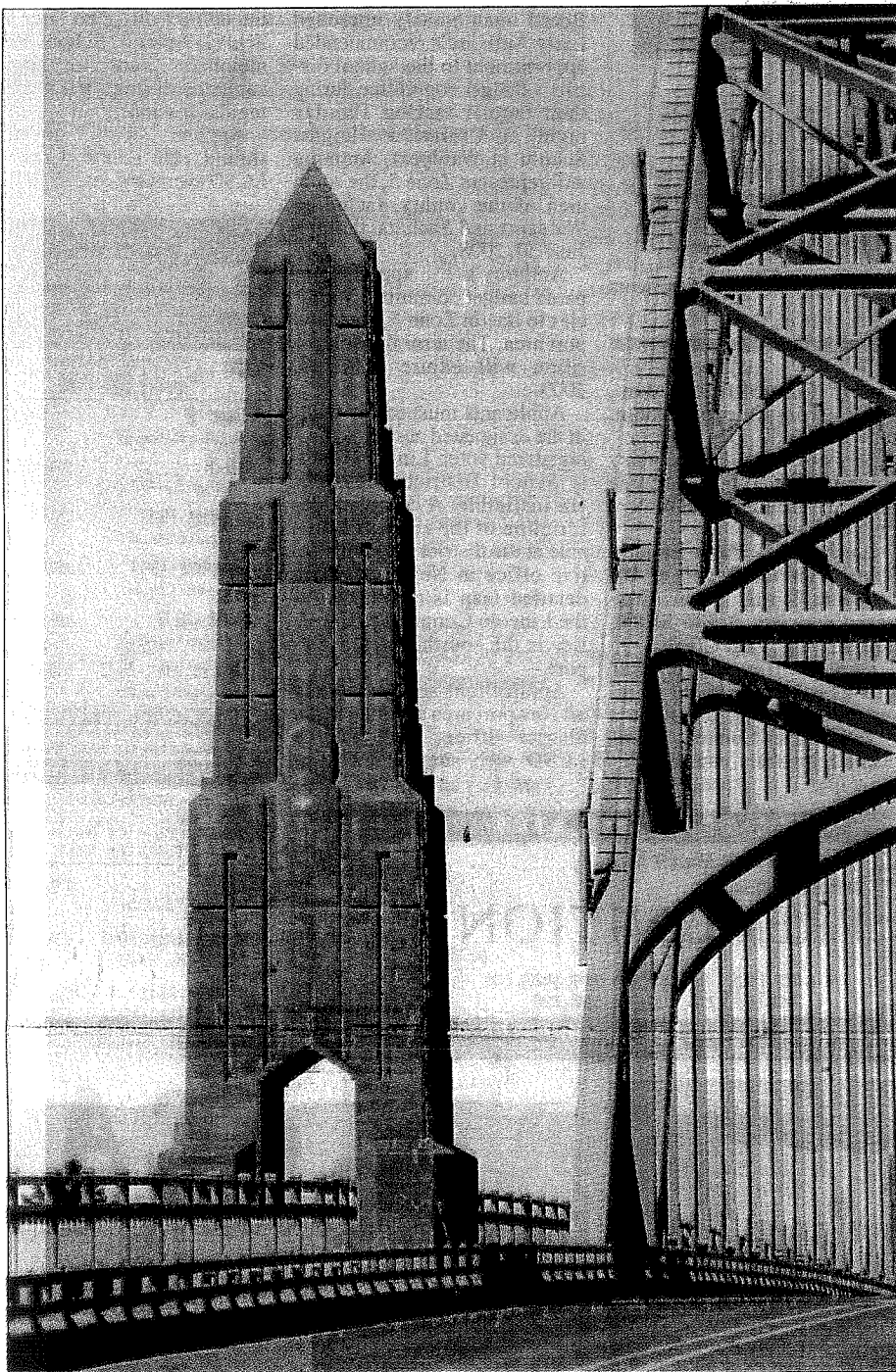
# NEWS



# TIME

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## Art deco district proposed for Newport



By Steve Card  
Of the News-Times

A vision for transforming Newport's city center area into an art deco district was shared recently with members of the Newport City Council.

Pete McKeeman, owner of Scanners Digital Solutions in Newport, gave a PowerPoint presentation to the city council. McKeeman is the current president of the City Center Newport Association, which is a non-profit organization consisting of business and property owners working toward the revitalization of the city center area.

For the last 70 years, McKeeman said, Newport's city center has been defined by U.S. Highway 101. "Today, most people consider this part of Newport as just a place you have to go through to get to somewhere else." But regardless of their final destination, he added, "Many people form a lasting image of Newport right here." And those first impressions can influence the decision to stay for a while or just keep driving down the road.

The question the City Center Newport Association is attempting to answer, said McKeeman, is, "How do we make this a place people want to go to, not just through?"

To address that issue, City Center was evaluated to see what sets it apart from other areas in Newport, such as Nye Beach or the Bayfront, which have fairly well established identities. McKeeman gave the council a brief history lesson of the area, showing how the face of Newport has changed over the years. The

completion of the Yaquina Bay Bridge in 1936 created a major change, shifting the traffic pattern through the city. And once Newport joined the "modern age of highway transportation," the city center business district began developing along the Coast Highway.

It was the Yaquina Bay Bridge that gave the City Center Newport Association the inspiration for its new image. In addition to funneling northbound traffic directly into the heart of the city center district, the bridge is Newport's most recognizable feature. "Built in the modern style of the early 30s we now call 'art deco,' the bridge has made Newport world famous," McKeeman said.

Symbolic of progress, deco design "expressed all the optimism of the 20s and the 'New Deal' idealism of the 30s. Everything from architecture to fashion to appliances included deco design," said McKeeman. And as the new city center business district grew, many building adopted the same deco design as the bridge. A number of those buildings still have deco features. Some, such as The Ark, have gone to great efforts to preserve these architectural features. On other buildings, the deco features "just need a little love" to bring them out, McKeeman said.

"City Center may not be as old as the Bayfront ... but it has its own historical era," said McKeeman. "And, City Center's era has a distinct style."

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The distinct design elements of the Yaquina Bay Bridge in Newport provided the inspiration for creating a new identify for Newport's city center area. The City Center Newport Association recently presented the Newport City Council with a vision for developing an art deco district. (Photo by Steve Card)

## ART DECO

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The hope is that City Center can cultivate an art deco image, creating a place people will want to come to and experience. But why art deco? McKeeman said it is "unique, dramatic and upbeat." It is also affordable, and it "connects with people." He described the style as an "undated feel -

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*I really think the deco district is a concept that will get peoples' attention.*

- Pete McKeeman

also hopes to garner city, state and private endorsements of the concept; to tap into worldwide deco information resources; and to establish design standard and review guidelines.

Near future goals include advising, assisting and encouraging property owners to "think deco" on renovations; painting, preserving, restoring and converting buildings in the area; formalizing a deco design review commission; and developing natural tie-ins with exist-

man told the city council. "I don't think it's being done anywhere on the West Coast.

Newport City Manager Allen O'Neal said if the city council is interested in moving in this direction, "some things need to occur, such as designating the district, (and) deciding whether this should be a statutory or non-statutory approach." A statutory approach would involve adoption of enforceable design standards and guidelines, while a non-statutory approach would be more

skas made a motion to have the City Center Newport Association design a sign that would help define that area as a deco district. The motion included authorizing city staff to work with the association to help "set a direction," for future activity. The motion was passed unanimously.

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