

It May Say Wide Load, But It's Really Just Very Long

Local News

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Aberdeen ‐ Drivers on Interstate 5 between Olympia and Bellingham will see an unusual truck load heading north on Thursday. A 114-foot, tall ship's mast—the length of 10 average passenger cars—will be heading from Aberdeen to Bellingham for installation in the historic schooner Zodiac. The mast was turned from a single 117-foot log over two weeks in January at the Spar Shop, a business unit of the Grays Harbor Historical Seaport Authority. Photographers are invited to watch for the mast as it travels north. Radio stations are encouraged to alert drivers during traffic reports. A schedule is included below. The mast will be loaded onto a stretch flatbed trailer and towed by a semi-truck from Aberdeen to Bellingham. Trucking services will be provided by KCPK Trucking of Everson, Wash. The mast will be loaded onto the trailer Thursday between 7 a.m. and 9 a.m. at the Spar Shop facility, 712 Hagara St., Aberdeen. The mast is scheduled to depart the Spar Shop at 9 a.m. The approximate arrival times at key points are: Olympia (I-5 milepost 104): 10 a.m. Tacoma (milepost 132 / I-705 interchange): 10:30 a.m. Seattle (milepost 164 / I-90 interchange): 11 a.m. Everett (milepost 194 / US 2 interchange): 11:30 a.m. Bellingham (Fairhaven Cruise Terminal): 1 p.m.

The Spar Shop turned the new mast for the 1924 schooner Zodiac, which lost its old mast and boom in an incident September 25, 2010 near Lummi Island on Puget Sound. After the incident, the vessel owners contacted the Spar Shop to discuss replacements for the damaged spars. Douglass-fir trees in Oregon were felled last fall and the logs shipped to the Spar Shop. One of two logs was turned on the shop's tracer lathe, which can turn material up to 122 feet in length and up to 40 inches in diameter. The Spar Shop's tracer lathe, (formerly the McFarland Cascade tracer lathe) is believed to be the largest of its type in North America. Built for the heirs to the Johnson & Johnson pharmaceutical company's family, the Zodiac was designed by William H. Hand, Jr., to epitomize the best features of the American fishing schooner. From the early 1930s through 1972, Zodiac worked as a pilot schooner operating out of San Francisco Bay. In the 1970s, Zodiac was purchased by the Vessel Zodiac Corporation and restored. Now listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the schooner conducts educational programs on Puget Sound. More information on Zodiac is available at www.schoonerzodiac.com.