

Huntington chooses pier contractor

Oregon builder wins the job with \$8.6 million bid

By Scott Thomsen

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HUNTINGTON BEACH — Moving one step closer to construction of a new city pier, the City Council on Monday unanimously approved an \$8.6 million bid from Riedel International Inc. of Portland, Ore.

Riedel's bid was about \$2.7 million lower than the next-lowest bid because the company plans to pre-cast the pier's concrete walkway

and place it in sections rather than pour concrete onsite.

"I think it is very innovative for someone to come in with new ideas," Councilman Don MacAllister said. "It keeps the cost of government down."

Mayor Tom Mays was absent from Monday's meeting.

The council also agreed to build an artificial reef with material from the demolished pier at a cost of \$68,000 and to pay \$230,000 for round pier piles, which will resemble those of the old pier.

A group of fishing enthusiasts and the Gill Net Watch Committee have announced plans to raise money for the reef, which is designed to promote fish breeding

and help the city meet state recycling requirements by using the old pier material.

While the council and staff were pleased with the Riedel bid, a competing company cried foul.

Scott McKeller, vice president of Long Beach-based General Construction Co., the second-lowest bidder at \$11.3 million, said the city's request for bids described casting the walkways onsite.

"Riedel didn't play by the rules," McKeller said.

He said that with precasting, his company could have submitted a lower bid.

Robert Eichblatt, assistant city director of public works, said the bid process does not specify how a

project is to be built but what is to be built.

"We were convinced (Riedel) had honored the plans and specifications," he said.

For General Construction to complain now is "sour grapes," MacAllister said.

Demolition of the pier is scheduled for the first week in September. Completion of the new pier is expected in spring 1992.

But City Administrator Michael T. Uberuaga said the city is far from having the money needed to fund the entire project. The city has raised about \$4.5 million for the pier.

"We're still (more than) \$4 million short," he said.

