

City of Monmouth

City Manager's Report

A Report on City of Monmouth News, Happenings, Successes and Other Items

October 24, 2012

Streetscape Update

I hope you've had the opportunity to watch the progress on our Downtown streetscape project. Significant portions of the concrete work have been completed. The contractor is now focusing their efforts on both ends of the project. They will demolish sidewalks, install conduits for electrical and irrigation between the intersections of Catron Street and Hwy 99W. They will then move to the north side of Main Street between Knox and Broad Streets and do the same. By the end of the week, they will pour concrete sidewalks back in these two locations. Also, the electrical sub-contractor will be installing the bases for the new decorative light poles for along Main Street. Behind the scenes, the landscaping contractor is in the wings, streetlights are being manufactured and new holiday banners have been ordered. The above discussion gives you only a glimmer of the complexity that goes into managing a construction project like this. Designing and developing projects is difficult. Gaining funding is difficult. And managing construction is very difficult. You may think that all you have to do is sign a construction contract and wait for the project to be done. This notion isn't remotely accurate. Managing construction projects like our streetscape project takes daily effort and a lot of time. We always work under tight budgets, so cost control is critical. We also have to stay on top of things so an uncorrectable error is not made. The Public Works department has done an excellent job this summer/fall managing way too many construction projects while maintaining core operations. Good job.

PERS

If you're not a member of PERS, PERS doesn't affect you, right? Wrong. PERS is the Oregon's Public Employee Retirement System. Most state, county, city and school employees are part of PERS. The City of Monmouth is a PERS member. It is an excellent retirement system that is funded better than many states. However, owing to losses in the stock market (like everyone else), it doesn't have enough money to cover its obligations. When this happens, employer contribution rates go up. This happened two years ago. We recently received word that we will be receiving a roughly 45% rate increase starting July 2013. So how does this affect you? It affects you because absorbing this expense will make it much more difficult to balance our next years' budget and those thereafter. If you have a budget gap, you typically raise revenue or cut expenses. Since our City's General Fund is limited on the revenue side, we will likely have to cut expenses to balance the 2013-14 Budget. This could lead to service reductions for our citizens. The total PERS rate increase impact to the City is about \$180,000, with the General Fund seeing an estimated impact of \$105,000. In addition to the impact to the City budget, Central School District will see a similar budget hit, as will Polk County and the State. PERS will affect the services you receive from all of these entities.

League of Oregon Cities Conference

The City of Monmouth recently helped sponsor the annual League of Oregon Cities Conference, which was held in Salem. The conference is attended by elected officials and staff from cities all across the state. We were recognized for our

efforts, provided promotional items to attendees, helped organize a tour of our area and hosted a hospitality suite with the City of Independence that allowed us to highlight two local wineries. The tour went through Downtown Independence, out to the Rogue Hopyard, through Monmouth and Western Oregon University and ended at Left Coast Cellars, who hosted a wine and food tasting that showcased several local businesses. City officials were impressed with the two towns, our area's natural beauty and our food and beverages.

New MINET Product

MINET also had a very nice presence at the League conference. They helped out with the tour and other promotional efforts. They also had a very nice booth in the conference's vendor area. So why would MINET be at a cities conference? Because MINET can provide certain services outside the boundaries of Monmouth and Independence. In an effort to leverage the capacity of our system and to diversify revenue, MINET is now offering an internet-based phone product to city governments around the state. This was the purpose of the booth in the vendor area. The booth was a success. Many people talked to MINET staff, requests to provide quotes for the phone product were gathered and we may even have our first customer! MINET is committed to providing excellent service and to stay successful in a competitive, rapidly changing environment. This latest effort shows that MINET will leave no stone unturned when seeking out new opportunities.

Economic Summit

I recently took part in an economic summit for Marion County. While I was one of the few Polk County people there, I went because Marion County is important to our economy and I figured I'd receive some valuable information. One item that was discussed by two speakers was the difficulty in getting development projects constructed due to Oregon's land use system. The key criticism presented was that projects that have community support and approval of the jurisdiction's governing body can still be stopped by one person that files an appeal. Many times, even if you win an appeal, the time delays can kill

a project. Legislation will be proposed this year to hopefully improve this element of our land use laws. The other interesting item noted was a figure that 40% of tourists to Oregon buy something from Oregon after they return home. An example would be someone going to a winery while vacationing here and then ordering wine from that winery post-vacation. So instead of tourism being a one-time infusion of dollars, it can be an ongoing source of income to Oregon businesses.

OMEU

The Oregon Municipal Electric Utilities Association (OMEU) represents eleven municipally owned and operated electric utilities in Oregon. OMEU supports the collective interests of its members and their customer owners at the State legislature, State agencies, various trade associations and the Bonneville Power Association. OMEU areas of interest include: utility operations; environmental regulation; economic development; public financing; public contracting; water use and regulation; and State activities affecting regional and Federal Utility Practices. Owing to a transition of OMEU to a new type of organization, I stayed on as the President of the association for two years. This likely one-time occurrence of a two-term President was recognized at the group's fall meeting.

If you have any questions about items in this report or anything related to the City, please call me at 503-751-0146 or e-mail me at smcclure@ci.monmouth.or.us.

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