

City of Monmouth

City Manager's Report

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

January 10, 2014

Amphitheater Design Process



The City has been working very hard to develop the right design for the planned amphitheater in Main Street Park. Thanks to public comments and the efforts of the Project Oversight Team and the Parks and Recreation Board, the core design has been completed and now just a few details need to be worked out.

Above is a conceptual picture of the stage and seating areas. For those that haven't followed the project, it will be located in the NE corner of the park, diagonal from the police station. We will soon have detailed cost estimates for the project. A final step is having the City Council approve the design. After that, fundraising will be initiated.

Credit/Debit Cards

We have added new payment options for services purchased at City Hall. Starting in December, credit and debit can be used for paying your utility bill, paying for a dog license or for planning and building permit fees. This can be done in person or over the phone. These transactions are subject to a provider-imposed

convenience fee. This fee is being passed on to users to lessen the impact on our ratepayers. An online payment option will be available in the near future.

Ash Creek Arts Center

The Ash Creek Arts Center is a newly formed organization created to provide opportunities for people to enjoy and participate in the arts. They will be offering classes and workshops, exhibitions and other projects in the visual, literary and performing arts. The Art Center is located at 311 Monmouth St. in Independence (the old public library building). Classes are posted on the City's Facebook page. To become a member or to gain more information on the center, please call 503-838-1811.

Senior Center Expansion

After good planning and excellent fundraising efforts were not matched by grant awards, senior center expansion advocates stepped back and reassessed the project. Following careful consideration, the expansion plan was modified. A huge benefit of the rethink was to greatly reduce the cost of the expansion. With 2/3rds of the project budget now in hand, we will be hitting the streets with grant requests to cover the final 1/3. The expansion project has been a true team effort. The Friends of the Senior Center have done an amazing job with fundraising. The Friends and the Senior Advisory Board have actively determined uses and layout. City staff from the Senior Center and Community Development and Building Departments are assisting with project management, assessing technical issues and grant-writing.

SEDCOR Presentation



SEDCOR (Strategic Economic Development Corporation) is one of the main economic development agencies in the region. They focus primarily on supporting local industries and recruitment. SEDCOR recently decided to highlight the smaller cities in their service territory. Dallas, Monmouth and Independence presented on December 11, 2013. Because we have accomplished so much, it was easy to present a very positive picture of Monmouth. Mayor Oberst did a great job with the presentation, even noting that with the proper picture, even sewer lagoons can look attractive. Some of the key points from our presentation were that we have upgraded all of our utility systems, maintained services and financial stability, radically improved the downtown area and completed several key parks projects. The fact that we did this during a recession makes these accomplishments even more notable. The presentation can be viewed on the City's website at:

<http://www.ci.monmouth.or.us/docview.aspx?docid=13874>

New Employees

We welcome a new employee - Kristi Preston as the Power & Light and Public Works Secretary. Kristi comes to us with over 20 years as an employee of the State of Oregon with an extensive customer service and IT background. When not supporting the staff at the City Yard, Kristi (a Monmouth resident for over 10 years) enjoys hiking and photography.

Also, welcome Martin Warner, who is our new Public Works Operations Manager. He has been a resident of rural Monmouth for the past 21

years. His employment history includes 30 years design and operations working as an engineer for CH2M Hill and Hewlett Packard. Marty has a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from Washington State University, and a Master of Science in Sanitary Engineering from Oregon State University.

Affordable Care Act

The Affordable Care Act (ACA), otherwise known as Obamacare, has been getting a lot of press lately. While a focus of media coverage has been on individuals trying to sign up for coverage, employers have many decisions to make in this new era of health care coverage. This includes public employers like us. Like other employers, we now have requirements for the type of coverage provided, its pricing, how "affordable" it is for employees and how employee cost-sharing is managed. This, year, we will have to set up a system that tracks employee work hours to determine if we are a large or small employer. These categories have different obligations. New taxes will immediately affect our rates. We soon will be subject to penalties if not enough of our employees take our coverage. We have also been informed because plans are being modified to meet ACA requirements, our current plan will likely be eliminated. In the future, we will be subject to penalties if our plans are deemed "too good". Just when you think you had enough to do.....

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.

Scott McClure
City Manager

