

City of Monmouth

City Manager's Report

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

August 27, 2013

Main St. Park Fountain

For those that haven't ventured into Downtown recently, you've missed out on our outstanding new feature – the new fountain and splash play area at Main St. Park. In addition to providing a quality place for children to play, the new feature is visually impressive and provides a great draw to Downtown. We hoped that the fountain and splash play area would be well-received. We already know that it has. People are flocking to the park to play in the water and nearby businesses have seen bumps in sales. While water is the main attraction, the fountain features a beautiful piece of artwork on top and lights that will help make it a year round asset. The fountain/splash play project is part of a comprehensive effort by the City to improve the Downtown and the climate for our businesses. This project, coupled with the streetscape project, hosting better events in the park and private building improvements supported by the City's façade program have worked wonders. Great things happen when your local government and the business community are going the same direction.

Amphitheater Survey

And in case you thought we were done with Downtown, our next project is development of an amphitheater in the NE corner of the park. We are taking comments on two proposed designs through August 31. Vote for your favorite by going to the City's website.

MINET News

MINET, your locally owned and operated telecomm system, has made great strides recently to improve its overall performance. First, staff and the MINET budget committee did a great job this year identifying a wide variety of savings and efficiencies. Second, a management review, or turnaround plan, was prepared by a respected consultant that provides a great pathway for continued success. And lastly, the MINET Board hired a very experienced new General Manager, Don Patten, who will be tasked with implementing the plan.

Interesting Things I've Done on the Job

As I reflect on my 24-year career in City Management, I've gotten to do a lot of things that are very different from my normal day to day activities. I've been in a dunk tank for a City picnic; sold corn on the commodities market that was produced on a City owned farm; served as the Building Inspector; bought animals at the County Fair; analyzed whether, post 9/11, our mosquito fogger could be turned into a terrorist device; purchased and reopened a historic movie theater; crawled into a house with flames as low as three feet from the floor during a controlled burn exercise and scooped horse poop from the street. My latest new, interesting thing was serving as a judge at the Polk County Fair. I was joined by the City Managers of Dallas and Independence this year to judge chickens, guinea pigs and rabbits that wore costumes, did tricks and raced. Like many of the preceding items, there just isn't a manual for this type of activity.

Music in the Park - Yowza

Monmouth Music in the Park is the place to be on a summer Wednesday night. The event has been revamped over the past few years, with an emphasis on showcasing talented and diverse bands. The changes have worked. We are now getting around 300 people a night out for these concerts. Great bands, great food and a great setting make for a great evening. Our last concert of the year is this Wednesday.

Chamber Happenings

I noted in the last issue that the Chamber is proactively offering a variety of new programs and activities. The latest successful event was "The Crawl", which allowed 28 folks to tour and sample food and beverage items from Monmouth and Independence restaurants. The event was a great success. In addition to finding out what our local eateries have to offer, the event provided a new opportunity for people to meet new people. On another note, the Chamber of Commerce will be moving to a new location this week. The Chamber will now be housed in the Walt's Print and Copy building located at 355 Pacific Ave. N., Suite A.

City Issued New Bond Rating

As part of the process to acquire bond funding for the Police Station project, the City recently was issued a bond rating by Standard and Poor's. This is very similar to a credit rating for individuals. We are happy to announce that the City was given a very high rating of "A+". We very nearly made it to an even higher rating. Reasons cited by the analysts for our rating were the overall stability of the Monmouth area economy, our sound management practices and excellent financial condition. This high rating will definitely help keep down our financing costs.

WOU/City/Business Cooperation

Periodically, people ask about how well the City of Monmouth and local businesses cooperate with Western Oregon University. We do quite well, as a matter of fact. Most of the cooperation is ongoing, so you can lose track of it. After a

comprehensive look, we identified that the City, our local businesses and WOU cooperate at many levels. A few examples include: meetings with the University President and our Mayor; WOU participation in City goal-setting sessions; monthly meetings between campus Public Safety staff and the Police Department; joint Police Department/Student Affairs Fall walk throughs of student heavy neighborhoods; monthly meetings between WOU Facilities staff and Public Works and Power and Light staff; joint WOU/City maintenance and facility projects; WOU Theater and Dance Department participation in the Main Street Park amphitheater planning; WOU/City/Business community educational series'; joint work on the Warren St. Development Project; WOU/City/Monmouth Businesses Association (MBA) coordination of Homecoming, New Student Week and Holiday Tree Lighting activities; WOU work study/practicum students serving at the Senior Center and Library; City purchase of WOU Student Art Show pieces; City participation in WOU Policy Analysis classes and WOU events posted on the City website and included in City utility newsletters. And that's not even all of the cooperation items.

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

