

NEWSLETTER

Issue 172 * April - May 2009

Public Safety Center is open for business

The new Parkway Public Safety Center became operational March 20 when Grants Pass Public Safety Department police officers and firefighters began responding from the facility, located at 800 E. Park St.

The center was funded with a 2006 voter-approved bond measure, which also included construction of a station in the Redwood area, purchase of three pumpers, and replacement of a condemned training tower at Hillcrest Fire Station.

The Redwood Public Safety Station, at 3071 Leonard Road, opened Oct. 10. Since then, firefighters have responded to more than 250 calls for service in that district. Response from police working from the Redwood Station also has improved.

The Parkway Public Safety Center will be the primary deployment point for about half of the City's police officers assigned to uniformed patrol. The center is a key response location for firefighters to east and south Grants Pass, as well as the commercial and business area. The Fire Prevention Office also will be located there.

Final construction on the center will continue through April. An open house is planned for early summer.

The bond project remains under budget. Once all expenses have been paid, any remaining funds will be



Although the Parkway Public Safety Center wasn't quite finished, firefighters and police officers starting moving in on March 20.

reported to the Grants Pass City Council. Oregon law is very specific about the use of bond revenue: proceeds must be spent on the projects identified in the bond measure and any remaining funds must be used to retire the debt.

Council invests stimulus funds in major street maintenance projects

The City of Grants Pass will receive \$690,000 of stimulus funds for street projects. The Council is proposing to invest these funds on street maintenance projects.

The Council wants the funds to be invested in local jobs as soon as possible to get our residents back to work as soon as possible. The major maintenance projects can be designed, bid and constructed this summer.

The Council wants the funds to be used for necessary work that will benefit everyone. The maintenance of these

main streets is critical. The project will repair the road and then provide a new layer of asphalt. It will extend the life of these streets by 10 to 15 years. The streets that will receive this major maintenance work include:

- ❖ Hillcrest Avenue from Hawthorne Avenue to 9th Street.
- ❖ "J" Street from Pine Street to 4th Street.
- ❖ "A" Street from Gilbert Creek to Dimmick Street.
- ❖ Agness Avenue from "F" Street to "N" Street.
- ❖ Parkdale Drive from East Park Street to Fruitdale Avenue.

911 Dispatcher helps deliver baby over the phone

Dispatchers are trained to assist 911 callers with many emergencies, including childbirth. However, actually getting a call for a birth in progress only happens once in a dispatcher's career. Even rarer is helping a woman who didn't know she was pregnant.

Shortly after 7 a.m. on March 23, the Public Safety Communications Center received a 911 call from Cheryl Sheppard, who said her sister, Bonita Ewen, was having a baby.

Cheryl told 911 Dispatcher Marci Haack the baby's head was out, but the baby was not breathing and was purple. Referring to her emergency medical dispatch cards, Haack told Cheryl how to clean the baby's airway. The baby started crying and delivered quickly. Cheryl announced, "It's a boy."

Public Safety Deputy Chief Laura Zeliff listened to a tape of the call. "It's amazing how calm Marci's voice remained and how that calmness transferred to the sister," Zeliff said. Haack has been a dispatcher since 2003, and was a Public Safety Community Service Officer for two years prior.

Haack instructed Cheryl how to wrap the baby, protect the umbilical cord, and put the baby on the mother's chest to keep the baby warm.

Within minutes of the delivery, Grants Pass firefighter/paramedics



Left to right, Bonita Ewen holds son Chance, 911 Dispatcher Marci Haack, and Cheryl Sheppard, Bonita's sister, who delivered Chance in her apartment.

Jeremy Nelson and Ed Goodboe arrived. Goodboe cut the umbilical cord and an American Medical Response (AMR) ambulance took the mother and infant to Three Rivers Community Hospital. During the ride, AMR Medic Heather Lynch asked Bonita the baby's name. Surprised that she was a mother again at 38, Bonita asked for suggestions.

Ten days later, Dispatcher Haack

got to meet Cheryl and Bonita and to hold Chance Joseph Ewen.

Bonita had had a positive pregnancy test months before. However, early menopause runs in her family and menopause can cause false-positive pregnancy tests. Follow-up pregnancy tests were negative, so Bonita thought she had a stomach problem.

"I'm glad it was Chance and not a stomach problem," Bonita smiled.

Grants Pass proves its serious about trees

Grants Pass has been designated a "Tree City USA" community for the 21st year in a row. The program is sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation, the National Association of State Foresters and the U.S. Forest Service. To become a Tree City USA, a community must have a tree board and a tree-care ordinance, provide a comprehensive community forestry program, and observe Arbor Day.

This year, about 100 students from Redwood Elementary School helped

observe Arbor Day with singing and a tree planting at the new Redwood Public Safety Station.

Trees provide environmental and economic benefits, by:

- Promoting healthier communities by filtering the air;
- Increasing property values,
- Moderating the climate, conserving water and providing habitat for wildlife; and
- Reducing the heat island effect caused by pavement and buildings



City Manager David Frasher looks on as Mayor Mike Murphy displays a "Tree City USA" sign and certificate.



Volunteers building 'River Vista' for park

Cement contractor Michael Stromme (left), John Reinhart (center) and Hank Geiske (in backhoe) work on the foundation of a pergola, which will be the entryway to the River Vista. The field behind them will feature a garden and a gazebo.

The last undeveloped parcel of the 58-acre Reinhart Volunteer Park is now being transformed into a location for outdoor celebrations. When it is completed this summer, the "River Vista" will accommodate up to 250 people.

River Vista will feature trees, shrubs, lawns, walkways, picnic tables and a portable gazebo, which will be moved out of the floodway during winter months. Landscape designer Julia Jones plans a theme with white blooms to contrast the green foliage. Dogwood, ponderosa pine, oak, sequoia, redbud and flowering plum and cherry trees will be planted, along with white-blooming rhododendron.

Riverside West All Sports Park Inc., the nonprofit group that developed Reinhart Volunteer Park (formerly Riverside West All Sports Park), purchased the 1.14-acre parcel on the Rogue River in September 2006. The volun-

teer group has now donated the property to the City.

Purchase and development of the riverfront land just west of the pedestrian bridge will total about \$672,000.

Riverside West has contributed funds and obtained a grant from the Ford Family Foundation. The City contributed some park system development charges, which are paid by developers, and obtained a grant from the state Parks Department. Home Valley Bank helped with a no-interest loan and Pacific Power gave the group a grant.

The group needs to raise another \$100,000 for landscaping and building materials. Tax-deductible donations may be sent to River Vista Project, P.O. Box 443, Grants Pass, OR 97528.

For more information on how you can help with the project, please contact John Reinhart at 479-0935.

Spring a good time for bicyclists and motorists to review safety rules

By Darcy Englen

City Bikeways & Walkways Committee

As spring brings out bicyclists, bicyclists and motorists alike should review the basic rules of the road.



- **Be Seen:** Bicyclists are required by law to have lights on your bike front and back when riding at night or dusk. Avoid dark-colored jackets and wear bright colors. This makes a big difference in being seen in full light and at night.

- **Be Right (Ride on the Right).** Sometimes, due to car doors and debris, bikes may be further "left" than

Myth: Bicyclists should ride facing traffic



This myth causes about 25 percent of car/bike crashes. At intersections, few drivers look for traffic coming the wrong way. Ride on the right where drivers can expect to see you!

Source: Active Living Resource Center

a car driver would like, but bikes can only ride as far right as is SAFE. Motorists need to understand this.

- **Be Safe:** Wear a helmet. This is more

than a law: your life could depend on it!

- **Watch intersections and obey traffic signs:** Darting out in traffic and ignoring stop signs has caused at least one death this year. Please respect traffic signs. When it comes to a bicyclist and a 2,000-pound car, the bicyclist will be the loser.

- **Motorists:** Allow a safe distance (at least three feet) when passing a bicyclist. Anticipate the unpredictability and inexperience of bike riders – you could save a life!

Copies of the brochure: "Share the Road More Cooperatively for Safety and Courtesy," are available at local bike shops and the City of Grants Pass.

New Public Records Policy passed by unanimous vote

By Rob Pell

Councilor, Northwest Ward

Your City Council recently approved by a unanimous vote a new Public Records Policy. Feedback from citizens who watched the Council meeting on TV or heard about the new policy have been fantastic.

In the past few years there had been instances when members of Council-appointed committees or private citizens had been really frustrated because they felt the old policy had prevented them from receiving public records in a timely fashion without jumping through hoops or paying astronomical fees. The City had even been threatened with lawsuits. Citizens most often want to view records, resolutions or ordinances that pertain to their homes, neighborhoods or business properties.

During the City Council's annual goal-setting session on March 6-7, a common theme was the desire by Council members to improve the free flow of information. All that changed for the better in a move that was sup-



ported by the staff and was passed unanimously by the City Council.

Here is a comparison of the new policy contrasted with the old:

- Citizens will now receive one hour free assistance per year from staff in retrieving public records and information. This compares with 15 minutes for the old ordinance.
- The rate charged for staff assistance after using up the free hour was set at \$40 per hour. Old fees ranged from \$36-\$135 per hour, which were among the highest in the state.
- Any member of an appointed committee, commission or advisory group may have unlimited free staff assistance pulling records or information that pertain to the work of their committee. Formerly, only the chairperson or a committee majority

was granted unlimited free staff assistance. The new policy helps protect the rights of minority interests.

There appears to be sufficient and realistic safeguards in place to prevent abuses by the overzealous. In some cases, state law dictates the required course of action, but if a department director or the City Manager feel a citizen or committee member is abusing these privileges, they can bring the issue before the City Council. There, it would only require a super minority of three Councilors to approve the record request. This would once again respect the rights of a minority view.

The 2009 City Council also hopes the new Public Records Policy will help achieve two other goals the Council set: greater transparency and increased citizen involvement.



Your City Government

Mayor		Phone
Mike Murphy		474-6360
City Councilors	Ward	Phone
Bill Kangas	NE	474-2531
<i>Council President</i>		
Mark Townes	NE	476-3832
Tim Cummings	SE	471-8231
Richard Michelon	SE	476-8676
Ward Warren	SW	660-1164
Lisa Berger	SW	955-7270
Rob Pell	NW	474-5044
Del Renfro	NW	476-1262

City Council meetings begin at 7 p.m. on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month at the Council Chambers, 101 NW "A" St. The meetings are televised live on Cable Channel 14 and repeated on Thursdays, Saturdays and Tuesdays. Council agendas and minutes, and City ordinances are posted online at: www.grantspassoregon.gov

The *City of Grants Pass Newsletter* is published bimonthly to inform citizens about City programs and services. Please send comments to: City Administration, 101 NW "A" St., Grants Pass, OR 97526; or call 474-6360.

Briefly

Utility bills may be paid online

Grants Pass water and sewer customers now may pay their utility bill online with their VISA or MasterCard credit or debit card.

The online bill payment service gives utility customers greater convenience in paying their bill. The service is available at the City Web site: www.grantspassoregon.gov. Customers need to know their account number to access the payment system. Payments made using this service take two business days to post to the customer account.

Recreation office located downtown

The City Recreation Program is located in the Visitor Center, the small white building at the corner of 6th and "G" streets, not at the Municipal building. The Recreation Office is open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The phone number is 471-6435.