

NEWSLETTER

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Changing times challenge us to work smarter

By Chief Joe Henner

GP Department of Public Safety

For more than 25 years, the Grants Pass Department of Public Safety (GDPS) has used many innovative methods to meet our residents' needs in a fiscally responsible manner.

The most important innovation came in the 1980s with the merger of the Grants Pass Police Department and the Grants Pass Fire Department. The merger produced immediate and long-term savings.

'Public Safety' saves money

By combining police and fire services into one "Department of Public Safety," city taxpayers immediately saved the cost of having two separate chiefs (Police Chief and Fire Chief), and eliminated some supervisory and middle management positions.

The merger also introduced "cross-training." On the management level, all key managers have significant training in the "Incident Command System" for responding to police and fire/rescue emergencies.

In the field, firefighters are trained to help police search for missing persons and perform traffic control during police events. Some firefighters are trained as "Tactical Medics" and work with police during events with armed suspects. Patrol officers are trained to attach fire hoses to fire hydrants and help firefighters change breathing air bottles. Because major fires may involve crimes, a police detective responds with fire investigators to major fires.

Public Safety stations save money

A combined department is paying huge dividends in the construction of our new Public Safety stations. Approved by voters in November 2006, both stations provide fire and police facilities under one roof. This is unique, because in most communities police and fire stations are separate. If we



GDPS photo

Fire intern Travis Marsh receives training from GDPS firefighter Jeremy Nelson.

had to build separate police and fire stations, land-purchasing, construction and maintenance costs would double.

Single mobile command saves money

All communities are susceptible to large-scale emergencies that can overwhelm emergency responders. To manage such major emergencies, communities use "mobile command posts." It is common for communities to purchase separate mobile command posts for the fire and police departments. Because Grants Pass has a combined police and fire department, we purchased only one mobile command post, which is used during police and fire emergencies.

Reducing fuel costs

Our officers and firefighters respond to calls 24 hours a

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Saving money

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day, 365 days per year. We have a fleet of more than 40 vehicles that travel about 500,000 miles per year.

In 2006, well ahead of the current increase in gasoline costs, GPDPS began taking steps to reduce fuel costs. We acquired vehicles with smaller motors and better efficiency. We have no SUVs in our marked patrol fleet; only four-door sedans.

Last year, we acquired a 3-wheel electric vehicle to patrol the downtown and during parades – instead of purchasing a gas-operated sedan. We use foot and bike patrols when staffing and resources allow, particularly in our historic downtown.

Volunteer groups save money

GPDPS has been saving money through the use of volunteer groups. Concerned Fathers Against Crime (CFAC) assist us when we have specific crime problems in our community. The Citizen Emergency Response Team (CERT), Grants Pass Public Safety Auxiliary, and other volunteer groups assist with traffic control during Boatnik and Back to the '50s. Instead of having full-time police officers perform the majority of traffic control duties during these events, we have shifted virtually all of those duties to trained, volunteer groups. This saves thousands of dollars each year.

Intern program saves money

Today, GPDPS boasts one of the most popular Firefighter Intern programs in Oregon. The intern program is a partnership with Rogue Community College to train students enrolled in either the Fire Science or Emergency Medical Technology programs. This partnership allows the best students to receive real-life training in firefighting and emer-



GPDPS photo

Reserve Office Ed Burke (front) and Police Officer Joe Robles. The Reserve program allows Public Safety to dispatch two officers for the price of one.

gency medical services, while our residents receive the benefit of increased staffing for very little cost. In short, the department provides Fire Interns with equipment and reimburses them for tuition and books. In return, Fire Interns are assigned to a fire rescue shift where they work 10, 24-hour shifts per month with professional firefighters.

Police Reserve Program saves money

GPDPS recently began another partnership with RCC to train students interested in police work. In the Police Reserve Program, the department pays for tuition and equipment. In return, residents benefit by having trained Reserve Police officers working in conjunction with paid professional Police Officers. In essence, we can deploy two Police Officers for the price of one.

Auxiliary saves money

Lastly, our community benefits greatly from the efforts of our award-winning Auxiliary. These volunteers patrol special events (such as Boatnik, Back to the '50s, Concerts in the Park, First Friday Art Night, etc.), enforce handicap parking violations, conduct RADAR speed enforcement, and complete a huge variety of administrative duties. Last year alone, these selfless individuals volunteered more than 4,000 hours! Once again, these dedicated volunteers allow GPDPS to meet our residents needs at a very low cost.

GPDPS knows how to work smarter. With the help of forward-thinking individuals, we have maximized the use of paid personnel, equipment and volunteers for many years. In addition, we have several more cost-saving projects on the horizon, which will further increase savings to our residents.



GPDPS photo

As part of the volunteer Public Safety Auxiliary, Joe Cornelison and Cheri Rospond may write citations to enforce handicap parking laws.

Stations built efficiently, to last long time

Two new Public Safety police/fire stations were designed to meet the city's needs now and well into the future.

The Parkway Public Safety Center will be home to 30 police officers and firefighters. It also has a training room and will house the department's 75-foot ladder fire engine to ensure a quick response time to emergencies at the hospital and the commercial and industrial areas in east Grants Pass.

The Redwood Public Safety Substation can house up to 12 firefighters. It also has a police office and interview room for officers to take crime reports and complete paperwork.

To save on construction costs, the garages at both stations are pre-fabricated metal buildings. At the Parkway Center, the rest of the building is constructed mostly of gray cinder block.

The construction and location of both buildings were designed to serve Grants Pass for the next 50 years.

Both buildings were designed to meet stringent, state-mandated seismic standards. (Police and firefighters can't respond to earthquake-related emergencies if their stations collapse upon them.)

The sites for both buildings were carefully chosen to complement the Hillcrest Fire Station in the northwest part of town, and the police station located downtown. The small fire station at Baker Park will be vacated and the existing fire equipment moved to the new Parkway Center. The old structure, built in 1924, was renovated and put into service in 1994 as a "temporary" fire station.

When the new stations are completed this fall, all of Grants Pass will be within quick reach police officers and firefighters. The stations are being funded through a bond measure passed by voters in November 2006.



To reduce costs, the garages that will house the fire engines are prefabricated metal buildings. The Parkway Public Safety Center (above) can hold up to six engines; the Redwood Substation (left) can house four fire engines.



The Redwood Substation is designed to blend into the residential neighborhood.

City awarded grant to buy less-polluting vehicles

In August, the City was awarded a grant to purchase vehicles that will generate less air pollution.

The \$498,035 grant is from the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, under the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program. Grants Pass is eligible to receive these funds because it is classified by the Environmental Protection Agency as a maintenance area for particulate pollution.

The City applied for the grant as a

way to reduce air-polluting emissions generated while conducting City operations. These vehicles have the added benefit of helping to reduce the City's fuel expenses as well.

The grant will allow several City departments to purchase low-emission or all-electric vehicles. Most of the new vehicles will replace older, less fuel-efficient, higher pollution-generating cars.

The vehicles being purchased are:

- ❖ Public Safety: 3 Toyota Highlander Hybrids; one Toyota Prius; one

Toyota Camry Hybrid; and one T3 Mobility Device.

- ❖ Code Enforcement: 2 Toyota Prius.
- ❖ Buildings and Safety Division: 4 Ford Escape Hybrids.
- ❖ Public Works/Water Restoration Plant: one Ford Escape Hybrid.
- ❖ Buildings & Property Management: one Ford Escape Hybrid.
- ❖ City Fleet: 2 Toyota Camry Hybrids and 2 Toyota Prius.
- ❖ Parks & Recreation: one Toyota Prius and one Gem eLDX all-electric.

Downtown hosts free street painting, music festival in October

The sixth annual "Art Along the Rogue Street Painting and Music Festival" is set for Oct. 4-5. The event is provided free by sponsoring businesses.

The festival takes place on "H" Street between 5th and 6th streets from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

This year's featured artists are Tracy Stum, Jane Durand and Cathy Gallatin.

Stum has participated in dozens of street festivals in China, Japan, Mexico and the U.S., including the 2004 and 2005 Rogue festivals.

Durand is a classically-trained artist who has participated in the Santa Barbara street festival since it began in 1991. She also drew "Pandora's Box" at the 2007 Rogue festival.




Gallatin has an art studio in Medford and has participated in the Rogue festival since its inception.

The pros will be joined by dozens of regional artists. For \$5, Art Along the Rogue will give you chalk and a two-foot square of street to paint.

The music festival starts at 11 a.m. on Saturday and 10 a.m. on Sunday.

The performers are: Jon Galfano, Runtendo Marimba Band, Back Porch, One Horse Shy, AnnieMac Band, Voixcapella, The Oregon Little Band, Mr. J, The Mixers, and Mambo Rico.

For more information about the festival, please call 476-5510, or visit www.grantspassoregon.gov, click on "Visiting" and "Area Festivals."



Your City Government

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Council meetings begin at 7 p.m. on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays at the Council Chambers, 101 NW "A" St.

Please send comments about this newsletter to: City Administration, 101 NW "A" St., Grants Pass, OR 97526; or call 474-6360.

Web site: www.grantspassoregon.gov

Celebration free, family-oriented

The 9th annual Take a Walk on the Rogue takes place Sept. 20 at Reinhart Volunteer Park.

Free activities for the entire family are scheduled from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Highlights include a free pancake breakfast, ice cream social, Pedestrian Bridge Art Show, and local bands, including Broadway Phil and the Shouters. For details, go to www.grantspassoregon.gov and look under "About Grants Pass."

