Text-to-911 - New technology for emergencies

Josephine County 911 is now accepting Text-to-911 messages in response to emergencies. Text-to-911 is the ability to send text messages to local 911 dispatch centers during an emergency. Text-to-911 coverage area currently includes all of Josephine and Jackson counties. Klamath 911 Emergency Communications District is in the testing process now and will be live with this capability in coming weeks.

Text-to-911 is a new and important service. It is intended to benefit people who may not be able to speak due to an emergency such as a home invasion, abusive partner, as well as individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities.

A few things you should know about how Text-to-911 works currently:

- Texting to 911 is intended to benefit people who may not be able to speak in an emergency. The key thing to remember is ‘Call if you can, text if you can’t.’

- When texting to 911 for an emergency, the first message should be the location of the emergency (including the city) and the type of emergency help that is needed (police, fire, ambulance).

- Keep text messages brief and concise; using full words.

- Stay with your phone. Be prepared to answer questions and follow instructions from the 911 operator.

- Photos, videos and emojis cannot be sent to 911 at this time. Trying to send these will corrupt the text message.

- You cannot include 911 in a group text or while roaming.

- You must have text messaging included on your wireless plan with a participating carrier to use Text-to-911.

Sample of what text to a 911 operator might look like:

9-1-1

Call if you can, text if you can’t.
Potential for a City Housing Advisory Committee

City Council to review needs for establishing a Housing Advisory Committee

On May 15, the City Council held a work session and discussed the formation of a Housing Advisory Committee to help work through complex housing issues, help coordinate community efforts, review new tools, and make recommendations to the City Council about options to help address housing needs. The City Council will consider a resolution on June 21, 2017 to form a Housing Advisory Committee.

Lack of housing supply for all income levels has reached epidemic proportions in the Rogue Valley in recent years, including Grants Pass and Josephine County. This includes both owner and rental housing opportunities. When people can find housing, it often exceeds a third of their income and in many cases, it exceeds half of their income. Nearly 30% of Josephine County homeowners spend more than 35% of their income on housing, and nearly 50% of Josephine County renters spend more than 35% of their income on housing. Currently, vacancy rates for rental housing of 1% essentially means there is no vacancy.

There are many contributing factors to the housing crisis. The issues are complex and many organizations in Grants Pass and Josephine County are working on, or have an interest in, some aspect of housing. The legislature has recently passed a number of bills which have been signed into law, providing new tools that can potentially help address housing issues.

While the City hasn’t had a formal housing program since the late 1980s, there are a number of reasons why having a City Housing Advisory Committee is important:

• It would bring parties with diverse knowledge and perspectives to the table to review and work through information and issues. It would provide recommendations that help inform Council at the City’s annual Strategic Planning process, as occurs with other City committees.

• The City has the unique role of being the only entity with authority to enact certain housing-related local laws authorized by state law if that should be desired.

• The City has authority over development-related issues, fees, and development standards.

• The City administers the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, which includes coordination with other organizations to address an affordable housing strategy.

• There would be great visibility, awareness, and opportunity for community participation.

• It would provide greater organizational and institutional stability to address issues over time with the formal organizational structure.

• There would be a consistent point of contact and forum for information sharing and exchange.

• Many communities have some form of a Housing Advisory Committee. Each one varies in terms of duties and responsibilities, representation, etc., and often relates to the nature of a city’s housing program. The draft resolution to be considered on June 21 will include proposed duties and responsibilities for the committee as well as recommended representation of the members.
The City of Grants Pass is now on Twitter

Social media marketing has become one of the most important platforms for outreach to those who may not otherwise be engaged. Facebook is the single largest social network on the web. Social networking is not only the most versatile way to communicate, it’s also free.

Embracing social media can be difficult for many. However, local governments have been finding its usage more and more advantageous. The City of Grants Pass uses Facebook, and now Twitter, to keep in contact with the community to alert users to situations that arise in the community as well as events and happenings. These platforms are where the people are and where we can engage them. It is the best way to get publicity in the right ways.

City leaders want to engage more with our community. We added Twitter to assist in doing just that. We are now providing more information than we have ever been able to before. People have come to expect information quickly on a global level. Reading the latest news from anywhere online, including the City of Grants Pass, is just another way we wish to stay in touch with you and to provide the information you need for your family and lifestyle. New legislation, road closures, press releases, accident information and incident command locations can be at your fingertips instead of waiting for other, slower methods of communication. If you would like to follow us on either of these informational platforms, you can find us on www.facebook.com/city of grants pass local government and on Twitter@CityGrantsPass.

Summer Projects to be Aware of

Summer construction season is upon us and a significant number of construction projects and street repairs are scheduled around the community. Here are some of the bigger projects to watch for:

• **5th Street Sewer Main Structural Repairs:** Extensive deterioration has been found to exist on the sewer line located between G and H streets from 6th Street to Gilbert Creek. Final design has been completed and the project will be built in early summer. Construction will occur mainly at night in an effort to minimize the impact to downtown businesses.

• **Willow Lane Reconstruction:** Survey crews will begin data collection for the reconstruction of Willow Lane from Redwood Avenue to Redwood Highway. Data collection will determine preliminary design parameters and project needs. The work is scheduled to begin in August.

• **Sidewalk installation:** This project will be a part of the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funding from the Federal Highway Administration. This project will install or repair sidewalks as part of an effort to make accessible routes to transit stops. Sidewalks will be added to lower sections of Beacon Drive as well as missing sections along Pine Street between G and M streets. Work is scheduled to be completed late this summer.

• **Grandview/Ramsey Pedestrian Improvements:** This project is in response to increased pedestrian traffic in the area around the hospital and is designed to make crossing this highly-traveled intersection safer for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists. The project will be constructed mid-summer.

Various small water, sewer, sidewalk and street repair/striping projects will occur throughout the City and Urban Growth Boundary over the course of the summer. Additionally, surveyors and design teams will be working on projects for future construction projects. Please drive safely in and around these construction sites as they occur. Call the City of Grants Pass Public Works Department at 541-450-6110 if you have any questions on any of these projects.
Is your 72-Hour Emergency Kit Ready?

In the event of an emergency, you will want to be as prepared as possible. Having a 72-hour emergency kit assembled in advance of an emergency is an advantage. Now is the best time to get prepared.

The City has identified hazards that pose higher risks in the Grants Pass area. Wildfire, severe weather and flooding are three of the hazards that pose higher vulnerability and probability of occurring. Other hazards such as earthquakes, landslides, drought and potential volcanic-related impacts also exist. Identifying likely disasters, gathering important information, and putting a plan together will help keep you and your family safe.

During an emergency event, you may need to survive on your own. This means having your own food, water and other supplies. Plan to have sufficient resources for at least 72-hours. Build a kit by assembling the resources you will need and package them in a way that you can easily move them. Some people use a storage container, duffel bag, or even luggage. Be sure to include food, water, prescription medications, cooking and eating utensils, supplies including basic tools, can opener, change of clothes, a radio or some means of receiving communications, a flashlight and batteries for any devices that need them.


COFFEE Talk

City Councilors are interested in your opinion. They would like you to join them at one of their sessions of Coffee Talk. Up to two City Councilors are available every Friday morning to answer questions or address concerns. Visit them at Rogue Roasters, 610 SW 6th Street, from 7:30 to 9:00 am.

Mayor Darin Fowler  541-450-6000
djfowler@grantspassoregon.gov
 Ward 1
Councilor Tyler Flaming  541-450-6000
tflaming@grantspassoregon.gov
Councilor Roy Lindsay  541-291-0346
rlindsay@grantspassoregon.gov
 Ward 2
Councilor Valerie Lovelace  541-479-0952
vlovelace@grantspassoregon.gov
Councilor Rick Riker  541-479-7333
rjriker@grantspassoregon.gov
 Ward 3
Council President Dennis Roler  541-479-4272
droller@grantspassoregon.gov
Councilor Jason Sharp  541-951-2282
jsharp@grantspassoregon.gov
 Ward 4
Councilor Barry Eames  541-218-1403
beames@grantspassoregon.gov
Councilor Jason Anderson  541-659-5957
janderson@grantspassoregon.gov

City Council Meetings
1st & 3rd Wednesdays at 6 pm
City Council Workshops
Mondays at 11:45 am
Holidays will alter schedule
City Council Chambers, 101 NW A Street

Meetings are televised on Charter Cable
Channel 183 and posted on our website at www.grantspassoregon.gov.

Listen live to City Councilors and staff discussing local issues on KAJO (1270 AM) the 1st and 2nd Tuesdays each month at 9:30 am

City of Grants Pass
Local Government
Twitter
@CityGrantsPass