River Road Reserve Decision Waits on Updated Appraisal

Action on the future of the city’s River Road Reserve property has been tabled until the Dec. 4 city council meeting. Council members voted Monday, Oct. 28, to also direct staff to obtain a new appraisal, as well as additional details about two proposals the city has received regarding the property.

More than 30 public meetings on the future of the property have been conducted at the council and committee level since 2016.

The concept of selling RRR originated at the December 2016 meeting of the city’s Parks Advisory Committee as a potential means of reallocating available resources to current city parks for maintenance and development. This year’s City Council Work Plan identified the top 10 objectives of 2019 to include determining the “highest and best use for River Road Reserve.” In order to determine interest in the potential sale or further lease of the land, the city issued a Request for Expressions of Interest.

City Manager Aaron Cubic said the city published the request as it does similar requests for proposals in the Daily Journal of Commerce, postings on the city’s website, and noticing to subscribers of the city’s email news alerts. The notice provided a standard 30-day window of opportunity for response. The city received two responses (See SIDEBAR).

Council discussion on the issue has included council member Valerie Lovelace discussing previous correspondence from Oregon state offices expressing concerns regarding the improper inclusion of proposed urban uses for the RRR property within the city’s Master Plan, as well as potential transportation impacts such uses could have on resulting roads and streets. The RRR land is technically outside city limits in the jurisdiction of Josephine County.

Lovelace expressed empathy for members of the Parks Advisory Committee, who she said had become frustrated over the years about restrictions on the use of the land, which is designated for Exclusive Farm Use, precluding the city with moving forward with proposed park use (See “RRR” page 4).

Full Holiday Event Schedule Announced

The Grants Pass trio of holiday happenings returns to downtown beginning with this year’s Shop, Dine, & Win promotion, which began Friday, Nov. 22, and continues through Saturday, Dec. 21. Local residents are encouraged to spend their money close to home this holiday season by shopping and dining at local merchants to receive Shop, Dine, & Win tickets. Shoppers can collect tickets to win instant prizes or entries for the big cash drawing. Instant win prizes include gift cards and certificates for use at participating businesses. Patrons receive double entries on Black Friday, Nov. 22, and Small Business Saturday, Nov. 30. For a complete list of participating merchants, visit: https://travelgrantspass.com/event-cal-endar/shop-dine-win/.

Annual Tree Lighting

The Annual Holiday Tree Lighting will occur 5:30 – 8:30 p.m. Friday, Nov. 29, featuring a live concert and holiday festivities in the Historic District along 5th Street, between “H” and “G” streets. Santa arrives and the tree is lit at 6 p.m. Concert featuring Rogue Suspects and Shae Celine continues until 8:30 p.m. (See “HOLIDAY” page 4)

GP Warming Station Could Open Soon

Building on a clear action plan created at a roundtable discussion facilitated at City Hall Oct. 24 by City Manager Aaron Cubic, the reality of a Grants Pass Warming Station to serve the homeless during inclement weather could be a reality in just a matter of weeks. Bringing interested parties and stakeholders together again to report on the status of plans created at the initial roundtable, Cubic facilitated a second meeting at City Hall Nov. 13 to call upon leaders in the effort to report the status of their accepted assignments.

Kelly Wessels, chief operating officer of United Community Action Network (UCAN), provided the initial report. Wessels’ organization agreed (See “WARMING” page 4)
Welcome to the new GP Now

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Many residents have grown accustomed to receiving GP Now in its previous format as a four-page newsletter enclosed in your monthly water bill.

Though that format was effective in many ways, the size and content restraints precluded us from providing residents with a more detailed record of city business, news, activities, and events.

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We will strive to fill the pages of GP Now with information that is relevant, timely, and useful to residents as a public record of details about how your city functions, and the services it provides to its citizens.

As always, we are receptive to input and feedback from our residents about city services, community needs, and ways we can further assist residents with obtaining the information and services they need. This is a part of our commitment to our citizens.

It’s been a great experience and privilege to be serving as the city manager of Grants Pass since 2012. I am optimistic and excited about our beautiful community.

The Mayor and City Council are a dedicated group of volunteers that have a true passion and see the potential and promise of the City of Grants Pass. GP Now will provide you with information that highlights our strengths, achievements and challenges.

Along with the leadership of the mayor and city council, we have a great group of staff that have a personal calling to make a positive impact in the community they serve.

One of the most important aspects of municipal government is public participation. Constructive participation of the business community and citizens are key to our success.

Future articles will highlight some important aspects of how local governments thrive through partnerships between the mayor, city council, community members, and city staff. This is a part of what makes our town such a terrific community to live and work in.

- Aaron Cubic, City Manager

City Committee Openings

Volunteer to help shape your community by serving on a city committee. The following committee positions are open:

- City Commission on Public Art: One vacancy and two terms expiring Jan. 1. Deadline to apply is Dec. 6.
- City Budget Committee: One vacancy and two terms expiring Dec. 31. Deadline to apply is Dec. 9.
- Historical Building and Sites Commission: One vacancy and one term expiring. Deadline to apply is Jan. 6.

For details on commission appointment requirements and how to apply visit www.grantspassoregon.gov/143/Applying-for-Committees.

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In December 2015, the newsletter was renamed, GP Now, and had another change in format to a full-color glossy. In June 2016, the banner of GP Now began to incorporate the city’s award-winning “Live Rogue” branding elements.

Today it is a 12-page tabloid on newsprint.

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(541)450-6000

Publisher
Karen Frerk,
City Recorder

Managing Editor
Steven Sabel,
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Members of the City Council host weekly sessions of “Coffee Talk,” 8 to 9:30 a.m. Fridays at Bluestone Bakery, 412 NW 6th St.

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City of Grants Pass Awarded Best of the Best Safety Committee

The City of Grants Pass Safety Committee came home with two prestigious awards from the Southern Oregon Occupational Safety & Health Conference held in Ashland Oct. 17. The city was one of 22 municipal organizations and private companies to be recognized for their excellence at the conference with the Frank J. Bertak Award, and Grants Pass also received the annual Best of the Best Safety Committee Award.

“After we got up in front of 200-plus safety champions, we were called back up to receive the Best of the Best Award,” said Fleet Services Superintendent Grant Cory. “It was a great feeling knowing that our Safety Committee is performing at a high level, keeping our employees and citizens safe.”

Multiple members of the committee attended the conference for training in various safety and health topics, and to receive the two awards.

“Our 19 members have worked diligently during the 2019 fiscal year to ensure the safety of all department employees throughout the City of Grants Pass,” Cory said.

The committee established nine targeted goals to be the focus during the July 2018 through June 2019 period. “Progress was made in all targeted areas, with complete attainment of eight out of the nine goals,” said Cory.

Achieved goals included monthly job hazard analyses, development of a safety recognition program, reduction in job related injuries, collaboration with Club Northwest and Oregon OSHA to provide additional training, additional outreach education, increased training and awareness, thorough site inspections, and an update of city safety manuals.

“In addition to addressing all goals established for the year, committee members exceeded expectations in a variety of ways,” said Cory.

First, OSHA consultation services were requested to assist the city in identifying possible hazards. In addition, committee members published safety information in the city-wide employee newsletter. City employees also disposed of more than 1,200 pounds of surplus chemicals and hazardous waste through Clean Harbors Environmental Services.

“We are very proud of our accomplishments during the past year and, more importantly, the resulting safety improvements for the employees and residents of the City of Grants Pass,” Cory said.

Did You Know?
The City of Grants Pass has more than 230 employees who staff more than 20 different departments and divisions working more than 9,000 hours per week to bring you city services!
**City Welcomes New Information Coordinator**

GRANTS PASS – Information Coordinator Steven Sabel joined the administration department of the City of Grants Pass in September. Sabel, a former community journalist and marketing professional, is responsible for assisting the coordination of information between city departments, disseminating city information to local media outlets, managing the publication of the city’s monthly newsletter, and managing the city’s social media platforms. Sabel’s duties also include the generation of regular press releases regarding city services, council actions, staff reports, and relevant city news.

“I’m happy to be a new Grants Pass resident, while serving the community in this important capacity as the city’s new information coordinator,” Sabel said.

Sabel comes to Grants Pass from Southern California with an extensive history in community journalism and professional marketing. He served 12 years as a newspaper editor, garnering multiple awards from the California Newspaper Publishers Association and the Society of Professional Journalists for his writing, editing, and section design. He has also served as a marketing consultant and professional public relations representative for a variety of clients in several prominent industries.

“I learned the newspaper business from an old-school publisher who taught me the importance of ethical journalism; the difference between editorial commentary and objective reporting; and the value of comprehensive information to the success of a thriving community,” said Sabel.

Sabel works under the direct guidance of City Recorder Karen Frerck as part of the city’s administration department. Frerck said that some of the immediate goals of the relatively new position include the continual generation of relevant and timely content for the city’s various social media outlets and the expansion of the city’s monthly newsletter.

“Steven (Sabel) brings a wealth of knowledge and experience with him to this position,” said Frerck.

As a young journalist, Sabel was what he calls a “crusader” who exposed corruption at the local government level of the small city where he served as the managing editor of the local newspaper.

“Twenty years ago, I was embroiled in an immense struggle against a corrupt government that was bought and paid for by giant housing developers. Despite their efforts to squelch our coverage of the misdeedings, we exposed various campaign finance violations, illegal deals, and the gross mismanagement of the city’s sewer and water systems,” Sabel said.

That experience served like a graduate course in both journalism and public administration, said Sabel.

“In the end, though we suffered every attack they could wage against us, we were extremely proud of the award-winning journalism we were producing, and the remedies we forced the city to fulfill through our reporting and legal injunctions were able to win in court,” he said. “I’m extremely proud of what I accomplished for the residents of that community back in those days.”

(See “NEW GUY” page 10)

**Warming...** (from page 1)

Roderick (“Rick”) Riker expressed a similar motivation, including concerns the pool would have to be closed if it could not be repaired.

“We have a job here to balance the budget and make sure the city is financially sound,” said Riker.

Lovelace also mentioned the Caveman Pool and list of needs at existing parks as a priority.

“Parks is always something that motivates people,” he said.

Council member Barry Eames provided another voice in favor of using potential proceeds to renovate the Caveman Pool.

“I swam in that pool as a kid,” said Eames. “In my mind this is what’s best for Grants Pass,” he said in favor of selling the RRR property.

Council member Joel King said he had been polling residents he encounters within the city. Many of them have encouraged him to vote for selling the propery, he said.

“It’s not a lack of caring when we deal with a conflict. It’s because we all care. That we have different views is not a surprise,” King said.

Council member DJ Faszer said he “never supported the acquisition of the property in the first place,” when it was purchased years ago before he joined the council.

**Holiday...** (from page 1)

Christmas Parade

This year’s annual Christmas Parade theme is “Jingle Bells.” Beginning at 6 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 7, businesses and local groups from all over town will display bright and creative entries to show their community pride and festive spirit. The parade will feature tractors, corvettes, river racing boats, motorcycles, horses, floats, costumes, music, and more. The parade begins at 6th and “K” streets, and travels north on 6th to “G” Street.

**RRR...** (from page 1)

as outlined in the Master Plan.

“It will never be done at that level,” said Lovelace.

In order to obtain further input from community members, the council conducted a special meeting and public comment session following its regular session Oct. 28. City Attorney Mark Bartholomew said that the potential sale of city property is an “extremely rare” occurrence, which is why the city has provided additional steps to the process “beyond what is required by statute and public law.”

Members of the council further expressed their appreciation for the process and the amount of public input that has been received on the matter.

“We’re all just trying to do what is best for our community as a whole,” said council member Dennis Roler.

Roler suggested that proceeds from the potential sale of the RRR property could be used to fill a backlog of required maintenance and renovations to existing city parks, and much-needed repairs to the city’s Caveman Pool (See SIDEBAR). Council member

Rick Riker expressed a similar motivation, including concerns the pool would have to be closed if it could not be repaired.

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**Contentious Purchase**

The city paid approximately $2.7 million for the property in 2006. Controversy over the purchase of the property included public claims that the city council at the time was speculating on real estate growth, engaging in “sweetheart deals,” and flirting with financial disaster waiting to happen due to disclosed contamination issues on the property. Longtime residents recounted rumors about extensive contamination at the site, including claims of creosote...
‘Fatbergs!’

City waste water lift stations commonly have issues with nasty clogs. Substances such as Fats, Oils, and Grease – known as FOG – combine with inorganic materials that should not be flushed to create giant “fatbergs.” In order to remove these stoppages, city crews have to pull the pumps, manually clear the fatberg, and replace the pump back into service.

Bridge Street station is likely the worst, and one of the worst culprits in creating fatbergs is so-called “flushable wipes” which don’t actually break down, but instead combine with the FOG, wrappers, hygiene products, bed pads, diapers, clothing, and other inorganic material that doesn’t belong down your toilet!

“All of the aforementioned wreak havoc with our stations. These items are a constant issue and cost the rate payers thousands of dollars annually in maintenance and labor costs. Not to mention creating a nasty and hazardous task for staff,” said Water Restoration Plant Superintendent Gary Brelinski.

Fall Leaves

The Fall Leaf Collection Program in Grants Pass will be conducted through Dec. 13 by subscription with residents’ local refuse haulers. Refuse subscribers needing to bag extra leaves or requiring extra green waste cans should contact their trash provider. Nonsubscribers will need to haul their leaves to a transfer station location.

Customers may download a free mobile app to receive service day reminders from both providers. For more information contact Republic Services: (541)479-3371, or Southern Oregon Sanitation: (541)479-5335.

City Seeks Input on SDCs

The City of Grants Pass Public Works Department is seeking additional input from residents regarding proposed increases to city utility System Development Charges.

An additional public forum on the topic will be conducted at City Hall 6 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 4. Those wishing to submit written comments can mail them to City Hall, 101 NW “A” St., Grants Pass, OR, 97526, or email them directly to Public Works Director Jason Canady: jcanady@grantspassoregon.gov.

All written comments must be received by 4 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 3.

Details about a recent SDC study conducted by city staff can be accessed from the city’s website at: https://www.grantspassoregon.gov/319/Utility-System-Development-Charge-Rate-S

SDCs are a one-time charge to new or redeveloping properties. The SDC is a share of the cost of the city's utility, transportation and parks systems proportional to the impact each property will have on each system. Properties which are already developed do not pay SDCs unless they “redevelop” and consume additional capacity.

The fees are paid at the time of development and are intended to recover a fair share of the cost of existing and planned facilities that provide capacity to serve future growth.

The goal of setting SDC rates is to recognize the need to invest in critical infrastructure projects while not detrimentally affecting the building and business communities.

Give Your Feedback

The City of Grants Pass Public Works Department is seeking valuable feedback from residents regarding the city’s new Transportation System Plan.

“We use our roads and bridges every day as we move throughout our city, and we are planning for the future,” said Jason Canady, director of Public Works.

Canady said he wants to know how residents travel through town, and details about the areas they feel are the most difficult. In order to help obtain that information, his department has set up an online “Open House” where residents can answer questions about possible transportation improvements and provide feedback.

The online forum presents background on the project and its goals, information about key problem areas that have been identified, and details about recommended improvements to the transportation system.

“Resident insight is valuable, and we appreciate any feedback they can give us,” Canady said.

To participate in the online forum, residents can visit the city’s website or use the following link: http://openhouse.jla.us.com/grants-pass-tsp-2

New Stop Signs

The intersection at NE “A” Street and NE Beacon Drive is now a four-way stop. At least 13 accidents have occurred at that location in the past five years, most of which resulted in injury or death.

City crews installed two “Stop” signs and two “Stop Ahead” thermoplastic pavement stencils. As an added precaution, two “Traffic Control Change Ahead” signs were also placed on NE “A” Street.

In addition to the signs, new crosswalk lines were installed across NE “A” Street, and refreshed across NE Beacon Drive to help boost awareness of the new four-way stop. New, large temporary “Stop” signs and variable message sign boards were also placed on NE “A” Street to help grab the attention of drivers.
New Equipment at Reinhart Volunteer Park

New playground equipment recently installed at Reinhart Volunteer Park is designed to promote connective play for children and parents. Donated to the city by Playcraft Systems (formerly Krauss Craft), the new equipment includes a Hex Net Hub, large shade sail covering, 72” slide component, and a Playshare swing.

“We are excited to add these features to Reinhart Volunteer Park, and as soon as the construction fencing went down, the kids clamored to get on them,” said Wendy Giordano, superintendent of Parks and Property Management.

The Hex Net Hub is a structure composed of metal posts and ropes designed to create a three-dimensional spatial net structure that is aimed at more engaging and physically challenging play than older, more traditional playground equipment.

“The complexity of net structures offers children endless options to climb through the ropes. Rope is flexible, and enables a child to connect with the equipment, as every action is followed by a reaction,” Giordano said.

The Playshare swing is made from roto-molded, high-density polyethylene. The design allows adults to sit in the swing with their child, facing each other, to provide an opportunity for interactive bonding experiences.

“This swing provides attunement play, which is when people make a connection through the act of play. For instance, a mother and child exchanging smiles or communicating – making a meaningful connection on a deep level without words,” said Giordano.

Matching Grant to Rehab Lawnridge Park

The playground at Lawnridge Park is going to get a much-needed makeover thanks to a matching grant awarded to the City of Grants Pass by the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department.

“Congratulations on your successful application for grant funds,” wrote program coordinator Mark Cowan in his letter awarding the grant to the city.

Grants Pass was awarded $50,624 to apply toward removal and replacement of existing playground equipment, and to add a poured-in-place rubberized fall surface at the park. The grant is supplied through the state’s local government small grant program, which is funded by state lottery revenue.

The city will match the total awarded with funds from project LB6189 Existing Park Sports Facility Rehab, said Wendy Giordano, superintendent of Parks and Property Management for the city.

“The funds available for the match in the project are mostly from Lodging Tax, but also some General Fund and Parks Development System Development Charges,” Giordano said.

Lawnridge Park is a multi-use park consisting of 1.42 acres of land in the northwestern portion of the city. The park consists of green open space, picnic areas, tennis court, basketball court, restroom facility, and children’s playground. The site was acquired from Josephine County in 1944 and was initially developed as the first and only city playground in the 1950s.

The current existing playground equipment is followed by a reaction,” Giordano said.
Question of the Month

Each issue of GP Now will include a Question of the Month and answers from local area residents and visitors to Grants Pass. This month’s question: What is your favorite part and least favorite part of Thanksgiving?

“Family, cooking, and baking.”
- Mark Jacklin
“Cleaning.”
- Alana Goldstein
“Family.”
- Corey Pickard
“People who go out to restaurants for Thanksgiving.”
- Hannah Treadwell
“Watching the Cowboys lose.”
- Joseph Jacklin
“Spending time with my stepmother’s family.”
- Joseph Jacklin

Oh, Baby!

Taking over a retail space and reinventing the business within is no simple task, but having a clear vision of what you want to do is a major help in getting it done, said Delani Cervantes, owner of Rainbow Baby + Mama Boutique.

“When I came in, I knew what I wanted to do different,” said Cervantes who took over the space at 131 SW “G” St., last November.

In addition to redesigning the space, moving the checkout counter, and creating all new displays, Cervantes set about the task of stocking the shelves with new brands and products she wanted to make available to local parents and their children.

“I had to reach out to each company separately. It was very time consuming,” Cervantes said.

“Even still, the store was open in a matter of weeks, and soon customers could find unique toys, clothing, books, and activities from companies such as Ecopiggy, Plantoys, and Mudpuppy available at Rainbow Baby.

The name of the store is something very personal to Cervantes. Traditionally, the term, “rainbow baby” refers to a baby born subsequent to a miscarriage, stillbirth, or the death of an infant from natural causes. “The child after the loss,” said Cervantes.

“I considered becoming a wedding planner for a time, but I’m glad I didn’t do that,” said Cervantes.

Nonetheless, the 25-year-old Southern Oregon native and graduate of the Fashion Institute...
New GP Fire Engine in Service Soon

The City’s new Pierce Ultimate Configuration (PUC) fire apparatus has arrived and was commissioned into service at the Hillcrest Station as unit #7307 Friday, Nov. 22. The previous unit carrying that number will be placed as a reserve unit, and unit #7317 will be retired from service. The new unit is the result of nearly two years of effort by city staff to replace aging apparatus.

“It is a generally accepted fact that fire apparatus, like all types of mechanical devices, have a finite life,” said Grant Cory, superintendent of Fleet Services.

Cory first presented a proposed timeline for fire apparatus replacement in 2017. This helped identify the need to research suitable replacement options. As a result, an Apparatus Specification Committee was formed in early 2018. The committee consisted of firefighters, engineers, battalion chiefs, and fleet staff who presented their recommendations for city council approval.

“A fire apparatus is an emergency vehicle that must be relied on to transport firefighters safely to and from an incident, and to operate reliably and properly to support the mission of the fire department,” Cory said.

The city’s three primary engines were purchased in 2008. The retiring reserve unit was purchased in 1997. Generally, pump truck apparatus have a lifespan of 20 years, said Cory.

“Given all considered factors, the recommended replacement schedule generally entails a 20-year lifespan for pumper (10 years as primary and 10 years reserve), and 30 years for an aerial (ladder truck),” he said.

The city’s next oldest truck, reserve unit #7319, dates back to 2002, and will need to be replaced in 2022.

“An old, worn out fire apparatus has no role in providing emergency services to a community,” said Cory.

The new PUC fire engine is a state-of-the-art apparatus with a unique Power Take Off (PTO) driven fire pump that allows for easier service because it isn’t connected to a transfer case behind the transmission. With the cab of the truck tilted forward, most of the fire pump is exposed, rather than having to access it from underneath the chassis. It also provides the apparatus with the ability to “pump and roll,” with water continuing to flow while the engine moves.

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Coffee With A Cop Dec. 12

Have a cup o’ Joe with one of Grants Pass Police Department’s finest during Coffee with a Cop, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m., Thursday, Dec. 12 at Rogue Roasters, 610 SW 6th St. Officers will be available to discuss public safety with local residents.

The 411 on 911

Perhaps one of the most important facets of public safety operations is 911 emergency dispatch. The first 911 call completed in the US was made by Senator Rankin Fite of Haleyville, AL, Feb. 16, 1968. Since that day, for more than 50 years, Americans across the country have relied on 911 to contact emergency services. Today, approximately 96 percent of the geographic US is covered by some type of 911 service.

In Grants Pass, the 911 contract and Primary Safety Answering Point (PSAP) is facilitated by Grants Pass Public Safety. In addition to handling dispatch for local police and emergency ambulance services, our local 911 also serves as the dispatcher for Grants Pass Fire, Rural Metro, Williams Fire, Wolf Creek Fire, Illinois Valley Fire, and the after-hours line for Oregon Department of Forestry.

Eighteen dispatcher positions serve to staff the PSAP with at least three fulltime dispatchers around the clock 24 hours per day, seven days per week, 365 days per year. Depending on the nature of the 911 calls they receive, a dispatcher can be required to spend several minutes on the line with a caller until assistance arrives to the scene of the emergency. While one dispatcher is handling one call, others are there to field additional calls when they come in.

During a major emergency such as a large fire, the PSAP can be required to handle thousands of calls, said Lt. Dennis Ward.

Ward has been assisting with the development of the new Grants Pass Public Safety Building and making logistical plans for the transfer of the PSAP from its existing location in the Justice Building to the new location once construction and installation are complete.

“It’s more complicated than it seems on the outside,” said Ward.

Each dispatcher station requires three different computers and multiple monitors in order to support the dispatcher’s duties and demands.

“There’s a tremendous amount of electronics that have to go into each station,” said Ward.

The current facility contains five crowded stations in approximately 1,000 square feet of a back corner of the Justice Building to facilitate the three regular working stations, and two extra stations for training purposes or use in case of a major emergency. Computer servers and electronic components supporting the operations are contained in a small closet to one side of the room that regularly suffers water leaks from the restrooms in the courthouse facilities above, said Ward.

The new PSAP will encompass approximately 4,000 square feet, containing eight stations, with a separate secured and centralized information technology room to house the major servers and electronic components. Special independent cooling systems in the IT room will maintain a safe temperature for the systems to operate properly. Large monitors on the walls of the new PSAP will receive feed from various cameras positioned throughout the city so that dispatchers can have a visual to report to responding units in those public areas.

“Dispatchers are the eyes and ears for first responders until they can arrive to the scene of an emergency,” said Ward.

Transferring such a compli-
Thrive at The Hivve

The inception of the idea to create a coworking space in downtown Grants Pass came about when Zeal software development company outgrew its space in nearby Medford. That’s when Zeal’s founder, Trever Yarrish, decided to create The Hivve; a coworking space where Zeal is the anchor tenant and others can make use of available desk space, office space, meeting rooms, and even a special event venue.

“Really the point of it is, I wanted to create a space that people wanted to come into to work,” said Yarrish.

Like many jobs in the tech industry, much of the work of a software development company can be completed by its employees remotely. Regular business hours have little bearing on getting the job done and delivering the product to the client. Many tech companies do not require their employees to report to a place of business or operations on a regular basis. The Hivve is designed to appeal to employers and employees who seek a vibrant creative space to work in, Yarrish said.

“I figured if it’s a place I’d like to be at every day, then other people would want to come in to work too,” he said.

Located at 164 SE “G” St., The Hivve has all the amenities of the combined work space and event venue that it seeks to be. A kitchen space in one corner of the common area also provides coffee service. The lounge area is filled with oversized comfy sofas and chairs. Meeting rooms and office spaces are decorated with art and surrounded by tastes of culture.

In the evenings and on weekends it isn’t unusual to see The Hivve host live music, art shows, poetry readings, and special events, such as wedding receptions and private parties. The stage area is equipped with a state-of-the-art sound system for live performances, and Yarrish wants the location to help supplement the art and culture available in the community.

“There is a gap in the music scene here,” he said, adding that he wants the space to be regularly used for acoustical style, “unplugged” types of performance that are different from that of a concert hall or “bar scene.” Plans are in the works to soon present a Storytellers Concert Series featuring various singer-songwriters in performance.

“I want to continue to add to the common area of The Hivve offers a small kitchen, coffee service, lounge and stage.

Tourism Growth Continues

Tourism continues to be a strong economic driver in the City of Grants Pass and Josephine County as a whole, says a recent report from Jon Bowen of Experience Grants Pass. Bowen has been the city’s contracted tourism director for five years during a time of record continued growth in the industry.

“It has been a pleasure to work with and serve the community as we have built this successful program, and adapted through the years to accommodate growing needs,” said Bowen.

Bowen operates the city’s Welcome Center, provides tourism administration, and helps conduct the organization and promotion of major Grants Pass events, such as Art Along The Rogue, Back to the Fifties Weekend, and the annual Christmas Parade, among others.

In 2018, tourism accounted for more than $1.5 million in tax revenue for the City of Grants Pass. Compared to revenue totals of less than $1.1 million dollars in 2013, tourism tax revenue to the city has increased by nearly $100,000 each year over the past five years at an average growth rate of 8.2 percent.

According to the State of Oregon Travel Barometer prepared by Dean Runyan Associates, growth rates across the state have experienced a leveling trend over the past 12 months, but Grants Pass and Josephine County as a whole continue to experience moderate positive gains.

“After a slow down last year, Grants Pass is still holding strong, and has positive indicators,” Bowen said.

Local hotel revenues continue to climb to record levels, highlighted by a 15.6 percent increase in the second quarter of this year. Room demand in Grants Pass is twice as strong as numbers across the state, and room revenue is as much as six times higher than the Southern Oregon average.

Visitor spending in Josephine County totaled more than $120 million in 2018, accounting for more than $50 million in industry earnings, and more than 1,800 jobs. Grants Pass is helping to continue to drive those numbers.

“As we take on new events and projects for the City, we will continue to follow our strategic plan of building a strong foundation for the tourism industry in Grants Pass,” said Bowen.
Car Seat Inspections

Parents and caregivers can participate in a free inspection of their existing car seats and child restraints, and/or obtain new low-cost safety seats at an inspection and distribution event 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 17, at Hillcrest Station, 199 NW Hillcrest Dr., Grants Pass.

The event is conducted by the Josephine County Child Car Safety Seat Coalition program. Grants Pass Fire/Rescue (GPFR) is the lead agency in administering the program.

Qualifying for Reduced Cost Safety Seats

Individuals on OHP, or families working with WIC qualify for reduced cost seats. The coalition provides convertible and combination seats for $30 each, and booster seats for $10. Additional discounts are available for some individuals.

Distribution and check-up events occur every other month at the Hillcrest Station. In addition, the coalition hosts multiple community seat check events throughout the year. Call (541)450-6200 for information on the next distribution or seat check event.

Distribution events are on a first come, first serve basis and they may reach capacity quickly. Arrive early to ensure that we can help and be prepared to wait if there is already a line. Expect to spend at least 30 minutes working with a technician to learn safe child restraint use.

Members of the public are encouraged to attend an inspection event, or to call for an appointment for a free seat check with a Child Passenger Safety Technician (CPST).

To schedule an appointment with a certified technician at a local fire station, call Travis Marsh at (541)450-6200.

911... (from page 8)

Located operation from one location to another without even one second of interrupted service is a major component of the eventual move to the new facility. Continuous and regular testing of equipment and components is essential to the process, including phone lines and equipment, computer systems, radio components, monitor feeds, connections to mapping systems, and more.

“It is by far the most complicated part of the whole thing,” said Ward.

For that reason, the goal is to complete this part of the move first, if possible. “But for that reason, it could also be last,” said Ward.

“The important thing is to get it right. What you don’t want is to be calling 911 and get a busy signal,” he said.

Once all the equipment and components have been installed and thoroughly tested, the PSAP will move to the back-up Safety Answering Point at a secured location. That location exists to provide emergency back up in case of a major emergency.

“It is important to have enough answering points to handle a major emergency as well as independent emergency calls from throughout the city,” said Ward.

While dispatchers operate out of the back up location, transfer teams can retrieve the final components from the old location for installation at the new Public Safety Building. Once those final components are installed the entire system can undergo final testing, and operations can begin in the new PSAP.

“Of course the goal is to complete the transfer without the general public even noticing, and without missing one second of 911 emergency coverage,” Ward said.

The city’s dedicated team of dispatchers looks forward to serving the public’s needs in the new facility very soon.

Hivve... (from page 9)

the growing scenes in our community, such as art, food, music, and more that are developing here,” said Yarrish.

The Hivve is also set to become a place for business development and professional training. Yarrish plans to host a series of workshops and presentations focused on professional coaching, marketing strategies, employee training, and other topics of benefit to the business community. Hivve members will receive free access to these opportunities, and other business entities will be able to pay a nominal fee to participate.

The unique venture opened its doors Oct. 1, 2018. Having recently celebrated a one-year anniversary, expansion of the space is already underway with new office space planned for an adjacent area that used be a hair salon.

“IT’s fun to see the creativity that people have in using the space,” said Yarrish.

Plans are underway to obtain a specialized event liquor license for the location to better service special event needs.

Hivve... (from page 9)

One of Yarrish’s goals is to lure some larger names to the space for performances. The location is becoming known as an artist’s venue with solid acoustics and even recording capabilities.

Its location in Grants Pass along the I-5 corridor between major cities, makes the space attractive as a byway stop for performers on tour, he said.

“They like the uniqueness of the space,” said Yarrish, who remains secretive about the well-known artists he is in communication with about coming to perform someday.

“I want to provide that opportunity for our community, and maybe spark some other people to do something similar,” he said.

The secret to the success of The Hivve has been through partnership; beginning with the property owner, continuing through to the other tenants in the building, and onto the businesses and artists who work out of the space, he said.

“It’s more than just a space. It’s more than just an office. It’s a culture,” said Yarrish.
Let the City Help Pay for Your Business Facelift

More than $30,000 remains available to assist downtown building owners with giving their structures a face lift. The Grants Pass Building Facade Matching Grant Fund encourages owners of commercial buildings to restore the exterior facades of their buildings to the original design and character. Funds are available for a wide variety of activities that can improve the historic appeal of the properties within the designated boundaries.

The purpose of the facade improvement grants is to provide for the restoration and renovation of these buildings and others in designated areas within the city to increase the overall appearance as well as the potential usability and aesthetic of those structures. Eligible buildings include commercial structures within the Central Business District, as well as those along 6th and 7th streets between the I-5 interchange and the Rogue River.

Eligible projects include professional design services, exterior restoration, cleaning and painting, masonry repair and maintenance, repairing or replacing doors, windows, porches, awnings, cornices, traditional signs, and other decorative details. Funds are limited to a one-time maximum matching grant of up to $5,000 per applicant/building.

Ineligible projects include working capital, inventory, acquisition, financing, landscaping, interior renovations, and modern signage. Grant-funded projects must be feasible and have a reasonable prospect of imminent building use upon completion. Properties with existing code violations are prohibited from participation unless the proposed project will address and correct the existing issues.

All exterior improvements located within the city’s Historic District are to be approved by the Historical Buildings and Sites Commission, in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation Guidelines.

Applicants must submit a completed application and required detailed information with particulars on the feasibility of the project. All applications will be reviewed on a quarterly basis. Applications are due by the final day of each calendar quarter. Grant awards will be made before the end of the immediately following calendar quarter, and monies will be issued based on compliance with established criteria. No awards will be made prior to the application deadline and the program will continue each quarter until monies are exhausted.

Priority for the grants will be awarded to projects showing significant improvements to the property that will lead to prospective and likely reuse.

Applications and Guidelines for the program are available at Grants Pass City Hall, Administrative Department, 101 Northwest “A” St.

Did You Know?
Grants Pass has 196 acres of developed park land, 15 tennis courts, and four dog parks.
Reinhart Volunteer Park is our largest park.
We have held our Tree City USA designation for 31 years.

Merchant Meeting Welcomes Important Updates

The quarterly Grants Pass Merchants Meeting covered a full agenda of guest speakers and important updates on city topics pertinent to local business. The meeting was conducted by Jon Bowen of Experience Grants Pass at City Council Chambers Tuesday, Oct. 1.

Bowen introduced a variety of guest speakers to the gathered assembly of business owners and community partners. Tamra Martin, Josephine County Fairgrounds and Event Manager, introduced herself, and expressed her willingness to meet with local merchants to discuss ways the fairgrounds could work with local merchants.

Landscape architect James Love spoke about working with Parks and Community Development to further beautify downtown through proper landscaping and additional public art. Love said that unique and beautiful locations promote visitors to create and engage in social media, which also helps promote tourism.

City of Grants Pass Information Coordinator Steven Sabel introduced himself and explained some details about his duties, including maintaining open channels of communication with community partners, and providing important details about city services to the public.

Sue Densmore of the Friends of the Oregon Caves shared some information about the restoration and renovation of the Oregon Caves and Chateau, including an extensive project aimed at the restoration and preservation of more than 400 pieces of Monterey furniture in the chateau’s collection.

Public Safety Chief Warren Hensman provided an update on crime and safety. Hensman said the area recently received federal designation as a High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA), which will open up additional federal resources to assist with drug enforcement. He provided an update on the progress of the new Public Safety Building, and said he hoped to occupy the building in time for Christmas.

“Some things can always happen along the way in construction, but we are trying to be good stewards of the city’s resources and stay within budget,” said Hensman.

Hensman also provided an update on the hiring of three new police cadets. He said they were all now in the training process and would be ready to begin foot patrols of the downtown area in the next couple of weeks. With regards to a general crime report, he said property crimes have reduced, and violent crimes remain at a consistent level. Sobering and mental health lodgings have increased, he said.

Parks and Community Development Director Lora Glover said now was the time for merchant partners to start thinking about contributing to the city’s strategic planning process. Glover said the city’s urban renewal dollars for second story building renovations are running low. City staff and council members are seeking input from the community about considerations for renewing the program.

Glover also provided an update on the city’s Downtown Parking Taskforce, including information about the application process for obtaining a grant from Pacific Power to install new vehicle charging stations in downtown.

“We want to bring those people into downtown so they can enjoy our restaurants and shops while they charge their vehicle,” she said.

Additional parking updates included results of an informal survey of downtown businesses regarding the recommendation to maintain 3-hour parking restrictions on downtown streets during the holiday season. That recommendation will soon go to the city council for a vote.

Shop, Dine, Win returns to Grants Pass Nov. 22 through Dec. 21. The annual Tree Lighting ceremony will take place Friday, Nov. 29, featuring a 40’ tree selected for the event, said Bowen. The Christmas Parade will be held Saturday, Dec. 7. Commercial float entries are $40. Civic groups, churches, and schools can enter a float at a discounted rate. For additional information contact Travel Grants Pass, (541)476-7574.

Baby...(from page 7)

of Design and Merchandising, says that maintaining her confidence and “remembering every day that I’ve got this,” can be one of her greatest challenges.

“I’ve come this far. I’ve made it a place. Now the key is in nurturing it, and along the way nurturing myself,” she said.

Rainbow Baby + Mama Boutique will celebrate it’s one-year anniversary Saturday, Nov. 30. Cervantes has teamed up with Holm Coffee Company to plan an open house for customers that day to celebrate the event. Holiday features will include a visit from the Grinch Who Stole Christmas for story time and photo opportunities. Future plans include expanding available merchandise to include products for new moms.

“I’ve got this!” Cervantes said.
pits, buried chemicals and car bodies, and underground storage tanks.

All appropriate inquiries and inspections at the site did not substantiate those claims beyond previously disclosed contamination issues, but the claims of further contamination and public protests persisted. Vocal opposition from residents arose at nearly every public hearing relating to the site or the project.

**A Working Farm**

In 2010, the Park and Recreation Master Plan identified a desire to use a portion of the property for a working farm. The city wanted to find innovative ways to use the land to benefit the community.

In 2011, the city received assistance from the US Environmental Protection Agency to remediate the disclosed contamination issues. Shortly thereafter, the city was awarded $1.5 million in Community Development Block Grant funds to facilitate a collaborative project to build a food bank and working farm at the site.

The city took the lead in a collaboration to build a 10,000 square foot food storehouse and adjacent Raptor Creek Farm to enable a sizable increase in food distribution for the Josephine County Foodbank.

Due to the new building and farm, the Foodbank went from serving 6,000 people per month to serving now more than 11,000 people per month. They now distribute more than 4,800 monthly food boxes, totaling nearly two million meals per year, doubling their food distribution from delivering 1.4 million pounds of food, to now delivering 2.8 million pounds of food per year.

In 2014, the city submitted the details of the success of the project to the EPA, and the project was recognized with the Phoenix Award for outstanding achievement of excellence in redevelopment.

This portion of the property is not included in the potential sale.

**Financial Value Analysis**

Finance Director Jay Meredith provided a financial value analysis of the two proposals. The current lease of the property was structured to pay approximately $210,000 to the city over the 10-year lease term, said Meredith.

That value was credited back to the lessee for the costs of cleanup work they completed on the property, resulting in no financial gain to the city.

A continuation of the lease, even if the city increased the lease rate by approximately one percent per year, would net approximately $1,316,000, after 100 years - far less than half of the projected value of the property.

The approximate sale price of $3.3 million could deliver a profitable yield on the property of approximately $600,000 over the original purchase price, plus the continued benefit of the food bank and farm not included in the sale.

**Dollar Mountain**

In May of this year, the city council authorized an interfund loan of $1,050,000 from the Equipment Replacement Fund to purchase Dollar Mountain as an alternate location for increasing the city’s usable park land.

The resolution authorizing the sale included a provision for the timely repayment of the interfund loan by earmarking the first portion of any proceeds generated from sales of surplus properties to that purpose.

The sale of the River Road Reserve would repay the loan and generate approximately $2.2 million dollars for General Fund use.

In line with staff recommendations regarding immediate needs, members of the council have expressed interest in potentially earmarking those additional proceeds toward a backlog of approximately $700,000 in park maintenance, an estimated $1.3 million to $2.3 million in renovations to the city’s Caveman Pool, and a yet to be determined amount needed to improve the city’s existing sports fields.

**Fire... (from page 8)**

Engine is driving at slow speeds.

The new apparatus also features newer safety features, lower fuel emissions, electronic stability control, anti-lock brake system, diesel exhaust fluid, automatic traction control, side roll protection, frontal impact protection, LED emergency lighting, and on-board electronic system diagnostics.

**Park Maintenance and Caveman Pool Renovations**

The city has identified approximately $700,000 in deferred park repairs and improvements (plus a to-be-determined amount of money for sports field improvements) -

- $282,000 in new play structures (playground equipment, swings and slides, etc.)
- $68,000 in recreational park structures (benches, pergolas, gazebos, etc.)
- $69,000 in basketball and tennis court improvements
- $27,000 in restroom improvements
- $99,500 in sidewalk, trail, and walkway repairs
- $134,000 in parking lot repairs
- $15,000 for skate park improvements

Proposed renovations to the city’s Caveman Pool are estimated to cost approximately $1.3 million to $2.2 million –

- Patching/repair of pool vessel $100,000 – $125,000
- Renovation of pool vessel $650,000 - $750,000
- Upgrades and total renovation of pool mechanical equipment $350,000 - $500,000