City Receives Budget Award for 35th Year

The City of Grants Pass is pleased to announce the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) has presented the city with the GFOA Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for its budget document for the current fiscal year.

“Budget is a team effort and thank you to all citizens, city council members, city committees, and city staff who participate in the annual strategic planning and annual budget process,” said Finance Director Jay Meredith.

“The award represents a significant achievement by the city. It reflects the commitment of the Council and staff to meeting the highest principles of governmental budgeting,” said Meredith.

In order to receive the budget award, Grants Pass had to satisfy nationally-recognized guidelines for effective budget presentation. The award is considered the gold standard for government budgeting.

The City of Grants Pass has a long history of following best practices in budget reporting and the requirements of GFOA’s budget award program. This award represents 35 consecutive years of the City of Grants Pass earning the budget award. According to GFOA, only one other public agency in Oregon has a longer history of earning this award.

Flaming Elected President For Second Term

The Grants Pass City Council re-elected Councilor Tyler Flaming to a second term as council president at their meeting Wednesday, Jan. 15. Council members choose a president in January of each year to serve a one-year term.

Duties of the council president include assuming the duties of the mayor in the absence of the mayor, serving as a liaison between the city manager, mayor and council as needed, and assisting in setting the council agenda, among other duties.

Mayor Roy Lindsay explained the open nomination process of election before entertaining nominations from the council. Flaming was nominated by Councilor Rick Riker, and Councilor DJ Faszer was nominated by Councilor Barry Eames.

“I want to back DJ (Faszer).”

(See “FLAMING” page 12)

With more than a dozen major annual programs in action, regular volunteering for a variety of local service organizations and charity events, as well as new ideas and programs spawned on a regular basis, the student members of the Josephine County Youth Foundation (JCYF) are powerhouse organizations and charity events, as well as new ideas and programs.

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(See “FLAMING” page 12)
City Manager’s Message: Emergency Preparedness

In 2018, the city and county entered into an intergovernmental agreement for emergency management services. Since then, we have been working on developing a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP).

A COOP is a plan with a focus on city operations to ensure that Primary Mission Essential Functions continue to be performed during a wide range of potential emergencies, including localized acts of nature, accidents and technological, or attack-related emergencies.

There are four phases of a COOP: readiness and preparedness, activation and relocation, continuity of operations and response actions and the written plan.

Natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes, wildfires and tornadoes can cause severe disruptions to the local government organization and to the community for days, weeks and months, with an overall impact that can be felt for years.

The same is true for human-created crises such as mass shootings, violent protests, and industrial accidents.

Preparing through proper planning and practicing responses and actions is important to help build the necessary leadership skills required during an emergency. This exercise highlighted four areas for me.

The first is clear delineation of roles and responsibility between the policy makers/elected officials and staff. This is a key element of effective emergency planning.

In March, the city council and the county board of commissioners will receive further emergency management training regarding their roles as the policy boards in an emergency.

Participating in this exercise also highlighted the importance of community relationships in effectively managing a crisis.

Established relationships with local businesses, neighboring jurisdictions, nonprofits, service groups, faith-based organizations and professional associations is extremely important during a crisis.

My third take-away was the importance of having a plan for shift work and rotating personnel appropriately. Many co-workers and first responders will put their lives at risk during a crisis.

Many individuals will give their all, but this can be detrimental to themselves and others. Excessive work can cloud one’s judgment and put others at risk.

Finally, being aware of your own limits is important, too. Responding to emergency situations is taxing both physically and mentally.

First responders and those individuals responding to emergencies need to take care of themselves during a crisis. You don’t want to find yourself staying on the job until you have experienced a mental or physical breakdown.

You too should have an emergency preparedness plan for yourself and your family. The Josephine County Emergency Management office has a number of important and valuable resources available to help you develop a proper emergency plan.

For more emergency management tips or information please contact (541)474-5300, or visit: www.co.josephine.or.us.

Yours in service,
Aaron Cubic

Mayor and City Council
Mayor Roy Lindsay 541-450-6004
rlindsay@grantspassoregon.gov

Ward 1
Council President Tyler Flaming 541-450-6000
tflaming@grantspassoregon.gov
Councilor Clint Scherf 541-450-6000
cscherf@grantspassoregon.gov

Ward 2
Councilor Valerie Lovelace 541-479-0952
vlovelace@grantspassoregon.gov
Councilor Rick Riker 541-479-7333
rriker@grantspassoregon.gov

Ward 3
Councilor Dennis Roler 541-479-4272
droler@grantspassoregon.gov
Councilor Dwight Faszer, II 541-450-6000
dfaszer@grantspassoregon.gov

Ward 4
Councilor Barry Eames 541-218-1403
beames@grantspassoregon.gov
Councilor Joel King 541-761-7538
jking@grantspassoregon.gov

TYPO TALLY!
A wise old editor once said: “Typos are here for those who won’t be happy until they find one.”

Thousands of words composed of thousands of letters means we are bound to get a few out of place. Let us know when you find them!

Email us with how many you find. You could see your name in this box next month as the top Typo Tally Counter!

Annie Sabel claimed the title for February, discovering a missing “s” on page 4. Can you find any typos in this March issue?

Let us know, and we’ll thank you right here next month!
**Features**

**One-Stop Mail Shop**

**Old Town Mail House receives Chamber’s Business Excellence Award**

Jeff Javelona spent 15 years under the hot Las Vegas sun surrounded by the scream of high propulsion jet engines nearly every day. The Southern California native was an aircraft weapons specialist who spent most of his days loading bombs and missiles onto Air Force fighter planes until a visit to Grants Pass in 2008 changed his life forever.

“I didn’t want to hear planes anymore,” said Javelona.

Less than two years later, in August 2010, the single father of four moved himself and his two youngest children, Jason and Jordan, to a new life in Grants Pass.

“They weren’t crazy about leaving their friends, but they made new friends and their own way here,” Javelona said.

It wasn’t easy at first for any of them, said Javelona, who worked two jobs to make ends meet for nearly a year before Julie and Jeff Thomas brought him on full time to work for their company, Concierge Home and Business Watch.

“It was a great job working for great people that allowed me to juggle the responsibilities of being a single dad,” said Javelona.

Javelona purchased the Old Town Mail House in July 2015. The business located inside the historic First National Bank Building, 208 NW 6th St., at the corner of 6th and “F” streets, has been in operation since the middle 90s. When he first received the offer to buy the company, he was hesitant, he said.

“I told the owner, ‘Jeff would kill me if I left (Concierge),’” said Javelona.

Of course the Thomases were sad to see him go, but supportive of the choice, he said.

“They were not just bosses, but also friends, and they were happy for me,” said Javelona.

“I did it for my boys, so they would have something to work in and something to work for,” he said.

Since taking ownership of the Old Town Mail House, he said. Along with mail receiving and forwarding, services include packing and shipping, faxing and printing, legal forms and notary services, as well as gifts and gift wrapping. The lobby area displays historic photos of Grants Pass and serves as a showroom for local artists and crafters to display their work for sale.

“We support our local photographers, artists, and crafters. They have always brought beauty to our city that makes Grants Pass unique,” said Javelona.

Business has been booming with the increase in online shopping, Javelona said.

“When we first picked up the business, there wasn’t as much online shopping. Since online shopping, there have been no more than 10 (empty mailboxes) open,” she said.

People fear leaving their packages on porches and enjoy the added security of knowing their packages are safe at Old Town Mail House, he said. The business also serves as an access point for shipping through UPS, Fed-Ex, and the US Postal

(See “MAIL,” page 11)

**Ramsey and Nebraska: Potential Affordable Housing Site**

Grants Pass City Council has directed city staff to prepare a Request For Proposals on an expedited timeline in order to solicit proposed development from qualified developers for 1.89 acres of city-owned property at the corner of Ramsey and Nebraska. The hastened timeline is an effort to provide developers with time to meet August application deadlines for the Housing and Urban Development Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly Program.

The city’s Housing Advisory Committee (HAC) have recommended the property be marketed to a discount sale or deep discount lease. The process for the property will remain on a separate track and separate timeline compared to other properties recommended for surplus by the PAVE Committee.

The city had an appraisal conducted of the property in 2013, when appraiser Evan Archerd valued the property at $455,000. The current assessed value and/or retail market value is projected at $1,095,790, said Meredith.

A public hearing related to the sale will be held, once there is a tentative negotiated deal.

**Recycling in the Grants Pass Area**

**Republic Services**: (541)479-3371
Josephine County Recycle and Transfer Station, 1749 Merlin Road, Grants Pass

**Southern Oregon Sanitation**: (541)479-5335
Recycling Depot, 1381 Redwood Ave., Grants Pass
Transfer Station, 905 Kerby Mainline Road, Kerby

**Non-Recyclable Materials**: Take non-recyclable materials to the transfer stations.

**Toxic and Hazardous Waste**: Collection events for commercial and residential toxic and hazardous waste are held twice per year.

**Yard Waste**: Recycle yard waste in your curbside yard waste cart, or take it to a transfer station for a fee.
One Gallery, Many Artists

It is called Gallery One, but the eclectic mix of art on its walls and in its showroom represents the work of more than 55 local artists who all share in the work required to run a successful art gallery. Though the gallery is not a co-op, and artists rent the wall space they fill with their creations, each gallery artist is required to commit at least four hours per month to assist in gallery operations.

“It gives them a sense of what it’s like to operate a gallery,” said artist and gallery manager Cindy Kahoun.

Kahoun is “just one of many who have been here since the beginning,” she said. The secret to the gallery’s success, she said, is in the quality of the work that is displayed and available for purchase.

“We keep the quality up. That’s how we keep the good art coming in,” said Kahoun.

Artists seeking to display their work at Gallery One must submit an application and work samples for review. Approval of selections is primarily based on quality of the art and the type of medium used by the artist.

“Some artists haven’t grown enough yet to display their art here,” Kahoun said.
The gallery also seeks to limit a saturation of art too similar to art that is already on display in the gallery, she said.

On occasion, art is declined due to content or subject matter, but rarely, said Kahoun.

“We’re pretty open here,” and there have been times when a piece of art on display at the gallery has offended some of the customers who come in, she said.

“We like nudes in here,” but the gallery draws the line at anything “toxic” or violent, said Kahoun.

Currently, there are 34 artists hanging their art in rented wall space, and another 20 or more “gift artists” displaying sculptures, jewelry, pottery, woodwork, leather creations, and hand-made greeting cards throughout the gallery.

Wall artists pay an average of $50 per month and 15 percent of their sales to the gallery. Gift artists do not pay rent, but pay a 20 percent commission to the gallery on anything they sell.

Most of the artists represented are women, who outnumber the male artists by almost 4 to 1, said Kahoun.

“We are always looking for more male artists to display their work,” she said.

It is no secret that the hardest part of selling art is selling art, and Kahoun says the cyclical nature of foot traffic to the gallery is a significant aspect of that struggle for Gallery One.

“We won’t have a customer for hours, and then someone will come in and buy three pieces at once,” she said.

Monthly First Friday events bring the most foot traffic to the gallery. On those nights, the gallery hosts a live art demonstration, and sometimes sees as many as 400 or more people coming through in a single day, said Kahoun.

Tourists visiting from areas such as San Francisco and Seattle, locations known for their collection of art galleries, are often impressed by Gallery One for its eclectic mix of art, high (See “GALLERY” page 12)

Urban Area Planning Commission Meets Twice Every Month

The Grants Pass Urban Area Planning Commission (UAPC) meets twice per month. This month’s meetings are 6 p.m. Wednesdays, March 11 and March 25, in City Council Chambers, 101 NW “A” St.

The UAPC is the advisory commission to the City Council for land use procedures as set forth in Article 7.045 of the City of Grants Pass Development Code.

The UAPC consists of eight members. Four members are appointed by the City Council and confirmed by the Board of County Commissioners, and four members are appointed by the Board of County Commissioners, and confirmed by the City Council.

The members must reside or own property within the Urban Growth Boundary and be residents of Josephine County, and shall generally represent the four wards of the City of Grants Pass and their future expansion north of the Rogue River, and the three geographic areas south of the Rogue River: Fruitdale, Harbeck and Redwood.

Responsibilities

The Urban Area Planning Commission has the authority to make a final decision on all land use matters requiring a Type III procedure; to make recommendations to the City Council or Board of County Commissioners on all land use matters requiring a Type IV procedure; and when requested by the board and council, to make recommendations to the City Council and Board of County Commissioners on land use matters of joint deliberation requiring a Type V procedure.

Current members include Chair Jim Coulter (county), Vice Chair Blair McIntire (county), Loree Arthur (city), David Kellenbeck (city), Jennifer Aviles (city), and Eric Heesacker (city).

There are currently two county vacancies. Grants Pass Director of Parks and Community Development Lora Glover serves as staff liaison.

Help Finalize Manual on Stormwater Management

The City of Grants Pass is pleased to introduce its draft Stormwater Management Manual (SWMM). This SWMM will alter how our developing community reduces, controls and treats stormwater runoff.

The manual is in the draft stage and the city is requesting public feedback through an online open-house found at the following link: https://openhouse.jla.us.com/grants-pass-swmm

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All Hands on Deck!
Pump Station Flood Could Have Been Disaster

It was all hands on deck at the city’s Hefley Pump Station, when crews from four different city departments came together to avert what could have been a costly disaster caused by flooding at the station. The important station pumps water to a nearby reservoir used to supply the northeast corner of the city.

An employee making his regular inspection rounds discovered more than two feet of standing water inside the bunker-like underground structure, and made the emergency call, said Water Treatment Plant Superintendent Larry Smith.

With most of his crew out in the field on other assignments, Smith went into action and immediately called Water Distribution Superintendent Craig Kuhnert.

“Larry (Smith) said the pump station was completely flooded out. It’s a bunker, and it can fill up with water really bad,” said Kuhnert.

“Distribution is so dependent on what we do in those pump stations,” said Smith.

Kuhnert, who was home sick that day, jumped out of bed, called his crew, and headed to the station. Smith collected hoses and pumps for draining the water. Three out of four pumps in the station were completely submerged, and the water level was threatening a 480-volt electrical panel that powers the pumps.

One newer pump, the primary pump, was saved from the water because it rests at a higher level up off the ground, said Kuhnert.

“When the time I got there, Craig (Kuhnert) and his crew were already removing the water,” said Smith.

All power had to be shut down to the flooded facility, and the water pumped out before crews could enter and assess the full situation.

“That pump station feeds a small reservoir, so that pump station needs to turn on. If that station doesn’t turn on, we run out of water in that part of town,” said Kuhnert.

Staff determined that a hose failure caused the flooding, but a secondary issue of the water failing to drain meant a clogging issue existed somewhere in the lines. That’s when Smith called a plumber to come snake the system.

“Michael’s Plumbing responded to the scene, and snaked 75 feet into the primary drain, and found nothing,” said Smith.

The drainage issue had to wait. Top priority was getting the pump station back online.

“We had the pump station back in single pump operation in four-and-a-half hours,” said Kuhnert.

Hefley Pump Station supplies Reservoir 13, an approximately 60,000-gallon reservoir that is kept filled by the station to a level of approximately 8.5 feet. As residents in the area use water in their homes, the reservoir is depleted.

“When the water levels drop to a certain level below that, the pump engages to refill the reservoir,” said Kuhnert.

With the pump station shut down, the reservoir could empty.

“The fear was that if there was a fire event, the only pump in service was the primary pump. The fire department would need to drain the reservoir to fight a fire,” Kuhnert said.

City code requires minimum
(See “FLOOD” page 8)

Keeping GP Out of the FOG

Lance Baker celebrates 20 years of service with Grants Pass Public Works.

Wastewater Collections Superintendent Lance Baker celebrated 20 years of employment with the City of Grants Pass in November. Baker started as an entry level utility worker, and has spent the last two decades cleaning, maintaining, and servicing the city’s sewer system.

“We have almost 190 miles of collection pipes and growing every day,” said Baker.

More than maintaining the system with a high-pressure jetter truck, Baker and his crew also operate the city’s robotic camera and closed-circuit television truck to inspect the pipes, pipe conditions, laterals pipe materials, root problems, inflow and infiltration (I&I), said Baker.

“Inflow and infiltration is when ground water and storm runoff enter the sewer system through broken pipes, degrading pipe materials, and defective pipe joints. That water can dilute the efficiency of sewage treatment and create volumes outside the range of capacity. “It can easily double and triple with rain,” said Baker. “It’s a never-ending battle.”

The job also includes a constant fight against FOG and fats, Baker said. Fats, oil, and grease (FOG) mix with inorganic matter such as bathroom wipes and diapers improperly flushed through the system to create blockages known as fatsbergs which can back up the system and clog up pumping stations.

Baker said he once dealt with a manhole stoppage that caused a back-up of sewage into a home while the residents were on vacation, flooding the entire first floor of the house.

“It was nasty,” said Baker.

Another time, his crew responded to a manhole with “so much grease inside, you could walk on it,” he said.

Restaurants are some of the worst contributors to FOG in
(See “BAKER” page 8)
Welcome New Officers

The City of Grants Pass Department of Public Safety welcomed two new officers to the police force in February. Chief Warren Hensman conducted the swearing-in ceremony for Shelby Biencourt and Drake Brennan.

Biencourt and Brennan both served in the department prior to being hired as police officers. Biencourt was a reserve officer, and Brennan was one of the department’s first police cadets.

“I want to work for the department because I truly believe we are a cutting-edge department that isn’t afraid to change the way things may have been done in the past to create a better future,” said Brennan.

“I also have strong ties to this community, and I want to help keep it a safe place that people can come together to enjoy,” he said.

Biencourt and Brennan will now move onto academy training before accepting their assignments.

“Coffee With A Cop

The next Coffee with a Cop will be held 9-11 a.m. Thursday, March 19, at Dutch Bros Coffee House, 332 NW Sixth St.

Patrol officers and other members of the Grants Pass Department of Public Safety will be in attendance to talk with residents about law enforcement and related public safety issues.

“These are fun events with a vastly overwhelming positive interaction,” said Sgt. Mike Miner.

Another Coffee with a Cop will be held at a local Starbucks in April.

“If it wasn’t for the coffee, I’d have no identifiable personality whatsoever.”

- David Letterman

GP Officers Take the Polar Plunge

It was a cold dip in an icy pool for multiple members of the Grants Pass Department of Public Safety when officers from the department and two supporters took the Polar Plunge Feb. 15 to help raise money for Special Olympics Oregon. Joining team captain Deputy Chief Jim Hamilton, were Lt. Todd Moran, Sgt. Jeff Waite, Sgt. Mike Miner, Officer Ken Frownfelter, new Officers Drake Brennan and Shelby Biencourt, and Cadet James Loper.

“The mission of St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital is to find cures for children with cancer and other deadly diseases through global research and treatment. St. Jude remains dedicated to the belief of its founder, philanthropist and actor Danny Thomas that “no child should die in the dawn of life.”

This is the first time our agency has participated, our involvement was working the phone bank answering phones and taking pledges,” said Lt. Misty English, who helped coordinate the DPS volunteers.

English was joined by Dennis Ward, Ryan Brown, Jennifer Brown, Sarah Stewart, and Sabi Magallon.

Members of the Grants Pass Department of Public Safety volunteered to answer phones for the recent 17th Annual Country Cares For St. Jude Kids Radiothon to benefit St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital.

The event was held 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. Feb. 20 and 21, to raise awareness and support for St. Jude’s while collecting donations.

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GP Receives Three Urban Forest Honors

The City of Grants Pass received its 32nd annual recognition as a Tree City USA.

To achieve this, the city had to meet the program’s four core standards of sound urban forestry management: maintain a tree board or department; maintain a community tree ordinance; spend at least $2 per capita on urban forestry; and conduct an Arbor Day celebration.

Tree City USA Growth Award

Grants Pass also received its ninth Tree City USA Growth Award. This was awarded by the Arbor Day Foundation to recognize the city’s higher levels of tree care. The foundation highlights “innovative programs and projects as well as increased commitment of resources for urban forestry.”

If the city receives a tenth Growth Award, Grants Pass will be recognized as a Sterling Community, which are regarded as “leaders in community forestry and are often looked upon as innovators,” according to the foundation.

2020 Oregon Arbor Week Booster Grant by Oregon Community Trees

The third honor the city received this year is the 2020 Oregon Arbor Week Booster Grant from Oregon Community Trees. This year’s grant application process received a record-breaking number of submissions and Grants Pass was one of 10 winners.

“Through this grant, we will be able to hand out evergreen saplings to students and attendees of our Arbor Day, which is on Monday, April 6, at Croxtown Memorial Park,” said Grants Pass Urban Forester Tony Mecum.

“We will also purchase several Arbor Day celebration materials, including reusable water bottles, tree stickers, and our very own Arbor Day flag. Many thanks to Oregon Community Trees for sponsoring Grants Pass’s Arbor Day 2020,” Mecum said.

Info: grantspassoregon.gov/tree

Beacon Hill Park Moving Forward

Plans to build a new park in the northeast area of Grants Pass will move forward this year as city staff incorporates details based on feedback from residents of the area. Land originally purchased by the city in 2001 as the Hillcrest Park Reserve will become known as Beacon Hill Park, said Director of Parks and Community Development Lora Glover at a city council workshop Feb. 3.

The new name for the park resulted from a request from nearby business, Hillcrest Memorial Park, to avoid confusion, said Glover.

Glover conducted a survey of area residents regarding potential park features and design elements for Beacon Hill Park, with more than 50 residents responding, she said.

“Most of the folks were pretty excited about it,” said Glover.

Proposed elements garnering the most favor with residents include pathways, trees, a nature playground area, open space, and picnic areas. Additional proposed elements include a potential dog park area, bicycle pump tracks, and an arboretum.

“We could develop this park in phases,” Glover said.

Estimates for installing a pump track will be forthcoming and could be part of a later phase of development at the park, she said.

The approximately 9.13 acres of land is currently a part of the city’s Parks Master Plan, but the development will still need to go through the Urban Area Planning Commission approval process, with a tentative hearing date set for April 22.

Planning for frontage improvements such as sewer, water, and street improvements are already underway with the Department of Public Works, said Glover.

Construction of the park could begin as early as June 17, she said.

Concerns about the park’s proximity to I-5, and potential “attractive nuisances” created by the park were also addressed at the workshop. Glover said the space is “fairly open” and visible to residents in the area.

“I think neighbors will be able to see and report any issues,” she said. “You can’t prevent everything, but we’ll certainly have our eyes and ears open.”

Glover said the city traditionally installs fencing along park boundaries to separate parks from residential properties, and that trees would be selected in conjunction with the city’s urban forester to create attractive spaces and serve as visual buffers.

“It’s a great project to start from scratch and have a great urban forest up there,” Glover said.

Ideas for play areas for children include traditional play structures or a nature-based recreation space incorporating large boulders, logs, and other natural elements for children to explore.

The current estimate for completing Beacon Hill Park is approximately $495,000 as outlined in the city’s budget. Those estimates could be “upgraded” as estimates come in for additional elements such as the pump track, said Glover.

Hazardous Trees

If city staff determines a tree is hazardous, then it is the property owner’s responsibility to remove the hazard (Municipal Code: Title 10).

When hazardous trees are in the city right-of-way, the city’s Hazardous Tree Program will reimburse property owners up to 50 percent of the removal and replacement costs.

To be eligible, the property owner must submit a minimum of three written bids from approved arborists to the City Streets Division for approval.

Once the bid is approved by the city, and before removing or pruning trees, you must:

Arrange for the work to be done by the date specified by the city.

Fill out and submit the Tree Permit to the Parks Superintendental

(See “TREES” page 11)
Flood... (from page 5)

water supply standards in case of a fire. Hydrants throughout the city rely on that supply.

“We have to be able to provide 4,000 gallons per minute throughout the city and 20 Psi,” said Smith.

Kuhnert estimates that Reservoir 13 would deplete in less than an hour if called upon to fight a major structure fire with no pump available to maintain the supply.

“The biggest fear was ‘what if we had a fire up there?’ If they pull it out, you don’t have water,” said Smith.

“Our doomsday clock gets elevated, and you start to think of everything else that could go wrong, and mentally planning for all scenarios,” said Kuhnert.

“This cooperative cohesive effort reduced the risk significantly,” said Smith.

Once the flood water was drained from the station, the three flooded pumps had to be removed and sent to a shop in Medford for emergency repairs and servicing before being reinstalled.

Meanwhile, a call back to the Water Treatment Plant set staff on the task of using the city’s Geographic Information System (GIS) to provide an overlay of the drainage lines beneath the ground in that area.

Streets and Drainage Superintendent Shelly Stichter received the next call.

“We were in our staff meeting while all of this was going down, because I was getting texts like crazy,” said Stichter.

Early the next morning, Stichter dispatched her crew with a jetter truck and contacted members of Collections Superintendent Lance Baker’s team to bring in the city’s Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) truck to attempt to locate the drainage problem.

Hefley Pump Station
Action Timeline:

Monday, Feb. 10
2 p.m. Staff discovers the flooding
2:10 p.m. Kuhnert dispatches Distribution crew

2:25 p.m. Crews are pumping out the flood waters
4 p.m. Plumbers are snaking the lines
6:30 p.m. Station is back online in single-pump mode

Tuesday, Feb. 11
6:30 a.m. Primary pump refills Reservoir 13
8 a.m. Submerged pumps removed and sent for service
8:30 a.m. Streets and Drainage crews are jetting the lines
9:30 a.m. CCTV crews are scooping the lines
11 a.m. Drains are working

Wednesday, Feb. 12
8 a.m. Crews are re-installing all three secondary pumps

“Anytime we have an emergency situation like this, we jump,” said Baker.

“It’s communication. We trust our crews to work together and get the job done,” Stichter said.

Her crew jetted the main line from access points at both ends, covering more than 200 feet of storm drain.

“We wanted to make sure that main is clean so that the inlet can get into it,” she said.

The CCTV crew ran their camera down both ends to the deepest points in the line the camera could access. On the one end, turns in the line, called “jogs” prevents the camera from going any further. On the other end, changes in the pipe diameter and steep climbs halted the process.

“We don’t want to get anything stuck,” said Stichter.

Between the two operations, the water started to drain.

“What they did caused it to drain,” said Smith.

“It’s the multi-team rapid response that got that thing turned around in less than 48 hours,” he said.

From start to finish, the emergency response process included four team members from the Water Treatment Plant, five members from Distribution, three from Streets and Drainage, and two members from Collections, all working together to address and correct the problem and avoid what could have been a major disaster,” said Smith.

“The amount of damage averted was significant. Had the water filled up in there, it would have fried everything,” Smith said.

In the end, there were no service interruptions experienced by any residents, and the net cost of the entire incident was less than $2,000, said Smith.

“It’s what the people who work for the city do for the people of the city. It’s about commitment, immediate concern, action, and support,” said Smith.

Baker... (from page 5)

said Baker.

It isn’t much easier to have to tell property owners when the problem they are having is on their end of the line, and not the city’s responsibility, he said.

Those moments are offset by the rewarding feeling that comes with replacing sections of aging infrastructure, some of it dating back to 1927, when the standard was to install terra cotta clay pipe, or replacing concrete pipe that is 40-50 years old, said Baker.

“I’ve seen concrete you could put your finger through,” Baker said.

“When we make those improvements, we replace the customer’s lateral to the right-of-way, and we don’t charge for that because we benefit from the improvements. People are happy to learn they’re getting those improvements at no cost,” said Baker.

Over the years, Baker and his team have found quite a number of unusual items in the sewer system, from shoes to a bowling ball, an ironing board, and even a plastic skeleton. People call about losing jewelry down the drain as well, he said.

“We’ve done some searches, but never found anything,” said Baker.

Once they discovered nearly $300 in pocket change while cleaning a line leading away from a laundromat. Cleaning the filthy change was a task, he said.

Though collections staff wear special personal protective equipment, and the machines “do most of the dirty work,” dealing with the slime and sludge, the smells and vapors of the wastewater system is still a process of “mind over matter,” Baker said.

Together, he and his team make sure the system can handle an average of 6-8 million gallons of wastewater every day.

“There would be nothing - I wouldn’t have a job - if it wasn’t for my crew. They’re the teeth in the clock that makes it tick,” said Baker.

That’s the kind of “constant collaboration” he said he thrives upon.

“I love what I do, and it’s important, but the relationships within the city is what drives me,” said Baker.

“We all come from different walks of life, but we all come here with the same goals: to provide excellent service to the city,” he said.

Did You Know?

- The average person uses 80-100 gallons of water every day.
- One gallon of water weighs 8.34 pounds.
- That’s between 667 and 834 pounds of water for each person each day!
Economic Development

Advocating Business: Susan Seereiter is ‘here to serve’

As the business advocate for the City of Grants Pass Economic Development Department, Susan Seereiter is a one-woman show responsible for advocating and promoting the development and sustainability of a vibrant business culture within the city.

She helps identify challenges, needs, and obstacles within the business community, foster relationships between the city, business partners, and economic development partners, and facilitates city programs designed to improve and maintain a positive business climate.

“I work together with many partners,” she said.

Seereiter came to her post in November 2015 after a long career in the banking industry. Her years as a branch manager for a local bank provided the training and experience she needed, thanks to a solid background in customer service and strong working relationships with local merchants, she said.

“It is rewarding having such great communication with our local merchants, our economic development partners, and the businesses I have worked with through our programs,” Seereiter said.

She also serves as the city staff liaison to three city committees: the Committee on Public Art, Tourism Advisory Committee, and Collaborative Economic Development Committee.

“Those are very active committees,” said Seereiter, and they all go hand-in-hand when it comes to fostering growth while overcoming challenges, she said.

“We are all here together, and we can work together to overcome the obstacles we face,” Seereiter said.

Seereiter works very closely with Rogue Community College’s Small Business Development Center (SBDC), one of the top five SBDCs in the state, she said.

“I enjoy serving as the conduit to connect people together with the assistance they need to grow their business, create more jobs, and foster additional opportunities to increase the vibrance and vitality of our business community,” said Seereiter.

“This office should do more marketing to potential businesses and industry,” she said.

Seereiter said promoting regional resources is also an aspect of local economic development.

“You’re not just looking at Grants Pass. You’re looking at the economic ecosystem of the entire region. We are at the center of it, but we have to take advantage of the resources represented throughout Southern Oregon,” said Seereiter.

Tourism is one of the major keys. “Tourism and economic development go hand-in-hand,” she said.

She meets weekly with the city’s tourism contractor and helps coordinate business needs and concerns regarding city departments, services, and policies.

“Economic development is everybody’s job,” she said.

“It’s the way we welcome visitors and new residents; it’s the way we do business; it’s the customer service we provide; it’s fostering our youth so that they are prepared to take over the mantle and keep the legacy going,” said Seereiter.

For additional information about business incentives, relocation, expansion, new business development, and other available programs, contact Seereiter at (541)450-6014, or email: sseereiter@grantspassoregon.gov.

“I’m here to serve. This has been the most wonderful job I have had in my life,” Seereiter said.

Question of the Month:

Should shops and businesses in downtown Grants Pass be open longer or later hours?

“Yes, I think things are going up, generally. Southern Oregon evenings are awesome.”

- Justin Hull

“At least till 6. I know it’s hard to staff people, and a lot of owners run their own business, but at least that extra hour when people get off work.”

- Abby W.

“I don’t know. I mean if they’re making money it would be helpful. If there’s a call for it.”

- Chris Kunst

“I would say 6 o’clock, because everyone gets off work at 4 or 5. Maybe even 7 o’clock in the summer.”

- Brittney Mesica

“Absolutely! Especially in the summer-time hours, and time to get people out after work without that time crunch if they close at 6, and you get off at 5.”

- Jessica Ramirez

City Awards Downtown Building Renovation Grant

At their regular meeting Feb. 19, the Grants Pass City Council adopted a resolution awarding PKT Property Management a façade renovation grant in the amount of $5,000, and a building renovation grant in an amount up to $50,000. The two grants will be used by building owner Patricia Thoman to create studio apartments out of 1,300 square feet on the second floor of her building at 115 and 117 SW “G” St. in the Central Business District.

Known as the Blind George’s Building, the structure was built in 1900. The grant will be used for a design build sprinkler system connecting a fire line from the city’s water main to the front corner of the building.

“As the owner of several rental properties in Grants Pass, I am very aware there is a huge need for affordable housing. With this being said, smaller units could really help fill this need,” said Thoman in her application.

Funding for the grant comes through the city’s Building Renovation Loan and Grant Program approved by the city council in 2017 with a budget of $240,684. Remaining unencumbered funds are approximately $83,000.

For additional information about this or other city economic development programs, contact Business Advocate Susan Seereiter, (541)450-6014, or visit www.grantspassoregon.gov.

“People rarely succeed unless they have fun in what they are doing”

- Dale Carnegie
Go Firewise This Year Youth... (from page 1)

Preparing for and defending life and property from wildfires requires the efforts of all of us. Fire is everyone's fight, and everyone must know their role in a Fire Adapted Community. Recognize that you, as a homeowner or property owner, are responsible for reducing your home's vulnerability to wildfire.

The more you know about wildfire behavior, the more you'll understand how to protect your home and property. This is where Firewise techniques and the Firewise Communities program come in.

Why Firewise?
It's the little things that count. Did you know that the majority of homes lost to wildfires are the result of embers from a wildfire and not the fire itself?

Wildfires can put dozens of homes at risk simultaneously. Firefighters may not have the resources to protect each home. Residents can take action to increase their homes' chances of surviving a wildfire.

With adequate planning and cooperation among varying interests, wildfires can occur without disastrous loss of life, property, and resources. It's not a question of if, but when the next wildfire will happen.

At-Risk Areas
Although wildfire activity can occur anywhere in Grants Pass, certain areas have a higher risk for wildfire activities and wildfire embers due to their topography and adjacency to forested areas. To see maps of the highest risk areas, visit: https://www.grantspassoregon.gov/287/At-Risk-Areas.

Protecting Your Home
There are many things that can be done to protect your home and property from wildfires and the embers they produce that require little or no expense and result in a more attractive and fire-resistant landscape. To learn about best home protection practices, visit https://www.grantspassoregon.gov/340/Protecting-Your-Home.

Residents can also contact Fire Marshal Joe Hyatt at (541)450-6200, for a free, no-obligation consultation of their property.

Firewise Communities USA Recognition Program
Firewise Communities are neighborhoods that work together as a group to promote participation in the use of technology, policies, and practices that minimize the loss of life and property to wildfire, independent of firefighting efforts.

There are more than 1,100 Firewise Communities in 41 states. This program encourages and acknowledges citizen action to reduce community wildfire risk. Communities that partake in the program ensure a continuing commitment to maintaining a reduced level of wildfire risk.

For additional information, visit www.grantspassoregon.gov/922/Firewise-Home-Preparedness, or contact Grants Pass Firewise Coordinator Rick McClintock at: (541)450-6212.

COFFEE TALK
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.

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

Some Organizations and Events supported by members of JCYF:

Grants Pass Chamber of Commerce
Grants Pass Rotary
Joe's Place
YMCA
Porchfest
Back to the Fifties
Club Northwest Civic Activities

Josephine County Youth Foundation
Misti King, program manager
mistik@jcfserves.org
(541)244-8276

The last event, held in 2017, raised more than $2,000, said King.

King officially joined JCYF last September, after students steered the course without a program manager for nearly five months. She was recruited to the post due to her previous experience as the owner of a toy store and manager of youth summer camp operations.

The foundation will host its inaugural Scavenger Hunt Saturday, May 30. The family-friendly, community-wide event will require registered teams to seek out, photograph, and post to a group page in order to fulfill a list of items found throughout the city. They are currently seeking sponsors and donations, including in-kind services to help set the scavenger course.

In the summer, student members will assist King with operating summer day camps for kids 6 to 12 years old. In Grants Pass, the camps will be held at Fruitdale Elementary 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, June 15-19, and Aug. 17-21.

Serving as camp counselors
Mail... (from page 3)

Service.

“Fed-Ex and UPS contacted us based off of customer reviews,” said Javelona.

His relationship with the local postmaster across the street is also important, he said.

“We’ve developed a very good reputation and working relationship with the post office. When customers bring us their stuff, we need to make sure it gets to where it’s supposed to go,” Javelona said.

Old Town Mail House was recently presented with the Business Excellence Award for small business by the Grants Pass and Josephine County Chamber of Commerce. At the presentation, Jan. 24, Javelona was surrounded by his son, Jordan, and his three other employees to accept the award.

“I did it for my boys, so they would have something to work in and something to work for.”

“It’s their award too,” said Javelona, who shared that he was “surprised” when he received the notice his business had been selected.

“The Chamber has done a lot for my business,” he said.

Trees... (from page 7)

Once the work is done by the specified date, and after the new tree is planted, submit your receipts to the city. The city will reimburse up to half the cost of tree and stump removal, and the replacement tree.

If the work is not done, the city issues a Notice of Violation and gives you a short time frame to finish the work, or the city removes the tree and a lien is placed on the property for the removal or replacement costs and additional administrative fee.

If the cost of removal is a financial hardship, the city can help you with a payment plan. Contact Finance Director Jay Meredith for more information.
"Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life."  
- Pablo Picasso

GP Dog Parks

There are three dog parks in the City of Grants Pass: Gilbert Creek Park, Redwood Park, and Greenwood Dog Park. These dog parks are open from 7 a.m. to dusk. Each is closed for maintenance each week for a specified time period.

All dogs must be leashed when entering and leaving the dog park. Dogs in season or displaying signs of illness are not allowed. Dogs must be licensed and vaccinated with tags displayed.

Dogs must be supervised and under voice control of their owner at all times. Dogs showing signs of aggression must be leashed and removed from the park.

No more than two dogs per person allowed on any single visit. For the safety of children, please do not bring children under the age of 12 into the dog parks. Owners must collect and dispose of all waste. Smoking, eating or glass containers are prohibited in the dog park.

Owners are liable for injury caused by a dog under their supervision. The City of Grants Pass does not guarantee the dog park is escape-proof. You assume the risk that your dog may escape from fenced areas. The city disclaims all liability for injuries caused by dogs or others at the dog park. Usage of the area constitutes acknowledgement of this disclaimer.

New Playground Coming Soon to Lawnridge Park

Installation is estimated to start this April on the new playground at Lawnridge Park. The playground will feature equipment from local company, Playcraft Systems, Inc. It will include a two-story canopyed section, curving slide, and various structures to promote climbing and interactive play.

The surfacing will be rubberized tiles, and three new benches will be added.

The swings will feature traditional swings, and the popular Playshare swing, allowing adults to swing facing their child. It will also feature an inclusive bucket-style seat swing.

GP Now

City Council Meetings
1st & 3rd Wednesdays at 6 pm
in the City Council Chambers, 101 NW A Street

City Council Workshops
typically held Mondays at 11:45 am
(Holidays will alter this schedule)

Any televised meetings are on Charter Cable
Channel 183 and stream live on our website

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

Flaming...

He’s taken on some responsibilities, really stepped up to the plate, and he’d do a good job,” said Councilor Valerie Love-lace.

Councilor Dennis Roller expressed that his vote would be based on the length of service on the council of each candidate. Faszer has served for one year. Flaming is in his fourth year.

A preference poll conducted resulted in a 4-4 tie vote, and a motion to elect Faszer had the same result. According to the city’s charter, the mayor shall break a tie vote.

“Let me preface my vote with an explanation,” said Lindsay.