Three Musketeers of the EOC

Emergency management is about relationships.

For Josephine County Emergency Management staff members Sara Rubrecht, Emily Ring and Rikki Perrin, emergency management is about relationships.

“Our success or failure during an event is dependent on our relationships,” said Ring.

Emphasizing the wide range of relationships Emergency Management requires in order to coordinate emergency planning, mitigation, response, and recovery, Ring points to the program’s connection to divisions within county government, other agencies, media outlets, members of the public, and interpersonal relationships.

“After an event, there is always work to do to improve those relationships,” she said.

The connection between Rubrecht, Ring, and Perrin is undeniable and results from their close work together, especially during stressful emergency events that can call upon them to serve long hours under sometimes grueling conditions.

“Sometimes you’re just always on. It can be exhausting,” said Rubrecht.

Rubrecht came to Emergency Management in 2001 after serving as a 911 dispatcher for the City of Grants Pass. Just months into her new career, the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks occurred in New York City.

“I found out what emergency management was, and I was immediately hooked,” said Rubrecht.

The following summer, the Biscuit Fire became the most massive wildfire in Oregon history, “and I became even more enthralled than I already was,” she said.

Named after Biscuit Creek, the fire burned for more than four months encompassing nearly 500,000 acres in the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest. Rubrecht managed the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in Josephine County.

“I lived at the EOC for weeks,” Rubrecht said.

Since then, she has been a “sponge,” learning all she possibly could over the years, she said.

(See “EOC” page 10)

Citizen’s Public Safety Academy

Citizens who wish to learn more about the Grants Pass Department of Public Safety are encouraged to apply for the 29th annual Citizen’s Public Safety Academy (CPSA), a 12-week program meeting 6-9:30 p.m. Tuesdays at the new Grants Pass Public Safety Center, 726 NE 7th St. Dinner is provided.

The course also features four optional Saturday sessions where registrants participate in defensive tactics, firearms training, emergency vehicle operations, and fire suppression techniques.

The GP DPS CPSA is held once per year and was originated in 1997. A Student Public Safety Academy for students at GPHS is also conducted once per year. Registrants will learn several aspects of police and fire operations through classroom and hands-on training, taught by members of GP DPS and the District Attorney’s Office.

“This is a chance for residents to have a better understanding of how Public Safety works in our community and ask those questions they’ve always wanted to ask,” said Sgt. Jeff Waite.

Applications will be accepted until 5 p.m. Friday, July 31. The first class will be held Tuesday, Aug. 25, and graduates (See “CPSA” page 11)

Committee Openings

Applications are now being accepted for positions on two City of Grants Pass advisory committees, Urban Area Planning Commission, and Bikeways & Walkways Committee.

There is one position open on the Urban Area Planning Commission (UAPC) due to a resignation. The term expires Dec. 1, 2022. All city appointments to the UAPC shall be required to have their principal residence within city limits or the Urban Growth Boundary.

The purpose of this commission is to review and render a decision on all Type III Land Use Applications, including Zone Changes, subdivisions, Planned Unit Developments, and Major Variances, and to function as an appellate body on appeals from Type I and Type II decisions of city staff.

The UAPC also reviews and recommends to the council (See “COMMITTEE” page 12)

From The DPS Chief: Our Law Enforcement Teams

By Warren Hensman
DPS Chief

Nobility in Public Safety is achieved when our actions are centered on service, justice and fundamental fairness; never forgetting that our actions can have an instant impact on others for a lifetime, and even a community for generations. I am honored to serve as the Public Safety chief, proud of our public safety team, and take the responsibility of keeping Grants Pass safe with earnest intent.

Our team philosophy, coupled with the progressive and professional manner in which we deal with community challenges, will assure Grants Pass continues to be a safe and prosperous community for many years to come.

Patrol

Patrol is the backbone of the police department; first to respond to crimes in progress. Our patrol officers are highly-professional men and women who maintain exceptional standards. Each officer receives an average of 50 hours of training per year to help maintain these standards.

Currently, there are 36 officers assigned to Patrol, including four sergeants and four corporals, who are split into four teams. Officers work rotating 12-hour shifts and provide 24-hour coverage for the City of Grants Pass. Officers are assigned geographical beats within the city, allowing for faster response to calls for service.

Officers typically patrol and respond to calls from their car, but they can also be seen on foot patrol in the Central Business District (CBD).

While on patrol, officers respond to citizen calls for service, conduct self-initiated activity such as traffic stops, and conduct focused patrol of hot spot areas. In 2019, patrol officers responded to a total of 42,233 calls for service, wrote 4,772 reports and made 3,667 arrests.

Crime Prevention Officer

The Crime Prevention Officer is the department’s liaison to community organizations and businesses. The CPO provides numerous public lessons focused on personal safety, protecting property and preventing crime. This is done through Neighborhood Watch programs, Southern Oregon Financial Fraud and Securities Team, and countless public and civic group events.

One of the most prominent tasks of the CPO is facilitating the Citizens Public Safety Academy, a hands-on and informational way for the public and department members to build relationships (see story this issue).

The CPO also heads the Auxiliary and Chaplain groups, coordinates the Reserve Officer program, is a member of the Josephine County Drug Court, and participates in numerous other groups and committees.

K9 Team

The K9 program consists of three canines and their handlers. Two of our canines, Brock and Maro, are tracking and apprehension dogs. They provide specialized policing functions such as conducting building searches, missing persons searches and suspect apprehension.

Our third canine, Match, is a drug detection dog, trained to detect the presence of methamphetamine, cocaine and heroin. The program has proven to be an effective enhancement to officer safety and our criminal apprehension capability in the 18 years of its existence.

School Resource Officers

The GPDPS has a long-term partnership with Grants Pass School District 7 to best provide a safe learning environment for everyone on campus. In 2019, we added a second School Resource Officer (SRO) to serve a growing need in the schools.

The SROs teach a semester-long Student Public Safety Academy for students interested in law enforcement, fire/rescue, and paramedic fields.

The officers are high visibility and build healthy and helpful relationships with students and staff.

Traffic Team

The City of Grants Pass takes a multi-pronged approach to traffic problems, balancing education and enforcement of traffic laws. We currently have two patrol officers assigned to full-time traffic duties. They respond to crashes, investigate traffic crimes, and enforce traffic laws.

In addition, the traffic team coordinates many of the special events which occur within the city. Our traffic officers analyze crash data, engineering recommendations and citizen complaints, to identify areas for targeted enforcement.

Community Service Officers

Five full-time and one part-time Community Service Officer make up the CSO team. Two of the primary functions of the CSOs are addressing “livability issues” for the city (including parts of the Urban Growth Boundary) and acting as liaisons to the downtown.

They are often seen on foot patrol, stopping to check in with merchants and interacting with citizens and visitors to our vibrant downtown. CSOs are responsible for municipal code enforcement in the historic downtown area.

Cadets

The Cadet program is a new addition to GPDPS in 2019. Cadets provide non-emergency support to the police division by enforcing Municipal Code within the CBD and public parks, along with other duties. The position provides employees an opportunity to engage with the community while learning law enforcement basics.

For additional information about DPS law enforcement, see our annual report: https://bit.ly/2BfB3NW
City Councillor Barry Eames looks forward to traveling after his term expires.

When Councilor Barry Eames joined the Grants Pass City Council, he “didn’t have an agenda,” he said.

“A lot of people run for council because they have an agenda, and I think that’s a dangerous thing,” said Eames.

Eames first signed on to join the council to fill the final eight months of a term vacated by a previous councilor. Later, he was convinced to run for a four-year term, and was elected to the council in November 2016.

The son of a former Grants Pass city manager, Eames had some knowledge of city government, and he “wanted to come in to learn where I could fit in, and how I could best serve the city,” he said.

“Having that bit of knowledge, I thought, I can probably do this,” said Eames.

Still, the first year was a “learning curve,” he said.

“The first thing was learning where the Council Chambers is,” Eames laughed.

In seriousness, he said he was “dumbfounded by the amount of information you need to absorb,” he said.

“They give you an agenda several inches thick for every meeting and you need to know what is going on,” said Eames.

He estimates that he spends between 10 and 25 hours per week on city business, including council meetings, committee meetings, studying the agenda and background materials, and fielding phone calls from citizens.

“Sometimes you can get three, four, five calls per week. It depends on what the city is facing,” Eames said.

“When I first came on the council, I received a lot of calls from people wanting me to adopt their agenda. You can’t do that. You have to be your own person,” he said.

Navigating from meeting to meeting, issue to issue, is one of the more challenging aspects of the job, said Eames.

“Every council meeting is something new. When we come into each council meeting, we have a different set of items before us, and I try to learn and focus on them. You have to give so much thought into each one of them. Then you vote, put it aside, and move on to the next one,” Eames said.

Some of those items have been “difficult issues,” and not everybody always agrees with decisions made on the dais, said Eames.

“I don’t take it personal. As long as I’m proud of what I’m doing, I don’t care what people think. There’s going to be people out there who are against what you’re doing. I’m used to that. When my dad was city manager, he was bombarded all the time,” Eames said.

Eames has known every Grants Pass city manager and subsequent administration dating back to 1960, and he says the city’s Water Treatment Plant built in 1931.

The City of Grants Pass is seeking a superintendent for the city’s Water Treatment Plant. The superintendent is the supervisory level of the four-level Utility Operations Series, the three-level Maintenance and Operations Series, and the Fleet Operations Series.

The Water Treatment Plant superintendent leads the water treatment division under the general supervision of the Public Works director. The position exercises full supervision of employees in the division as well as seasonal, full-time temporary staff.

The position manages the operation and maintenance of a 20 million gallons per day conventional surface water treatment plant, 13 remote booster pump stations and eight reservoir sites. The superintendent is also responsible for the Treatment Plant’s water quality laboratory utilized for quality control and compliance analysis. The superintendent assumes fiscal responsibility by participating in the preparation and administration of an operating budget as well as planning city-wide projects relating to the water division.

The City of Grants Pass has embarked on a new era of infrastructure renewal, and through their strategic planning process, confirmed that constructing a replacement Water Treatment Plant is their number one priority. The superintendent will be a key member involved in the planning and replacement of the city’s current treatment plant. The new treatment plant is scheduled to be online by late 2023.

Incumbents are responsible for supervising plant or field operations, construction and maintenance activities, and semi-skilled and skilled maintenance staff. Incumbents may be assigned to supervise program services and events.

Responsibilities include planning, prioritizing and assigning work, serving as a department liaison, making budget recommendations, reviewing and approving billings, soliciting bids, authorizing expenditures, preparing regulatory reports and budgets, and coordinating work projects.

Incumbents approve and make process control adjustments. Duties may include participation in departmental, city and community meetings.

Incumbents perform the full (See “SUPER” page 11)
Now Displaying Some Gratitude

Wild Rogue Emporium
202 SW 6th St.
(541)479-0220

(See “GRATEFUL” page 12)

Added Security

Musashi is a recipient of the city’s Security Camera Grant Program.

Restaurateur Rich Howard said the process to apply for the city’s Light the Storefronts/Security Camera Grant Incentive Program was “fairly easy.”

Howard, who owns Musashi Sushi Bar and Japanese Cuisine on SE ‘H’ Street said he has had some minor difficulties with some security issues at the location during the state-mandated shutdown, and he wanted to install security cameras to help mitigate those issues.

An incident surrounding an attempted break-in phoned in by a neighboring business, led to a police response, and prompted Howard to consider adding security measures.

“This town didn’t used to be this way,” said Howard, a 30-year resident of the community.

When his wife, Yukiko, saw a post about the city’s grant program on social media, Howard contacted the city for assistance.

“So, I called an officer out to assist with camera placement,” said Howard.

Grants Pass Department of Public Safety Officer Ken Frownfelter visited Musashi and provided professional law enforcement guidance.

“He gave me great advice on where to point the cameras,” Howard said.

Frownfelter also advised Howard on the type of cameras that would serve his needs best, and soon Howard had cameras installed and connected to his cell phone, where he can create

Wild Rogue Emporium is located on the corner of 6th and ‘G’ streets.

Jan Bertaggia wants to help others embrace and display their gratitude, especially “at this time with all the community has been going through during the pandemic,” she said.

Each year, Bertaggia, owner of the Wild Rogue Emporium on SW 6th St., hosts what she calls a Gratitude Window for customers and passers-by to use to showcase the things they are grateful for. Happy to have her store reopened under the state’s Phase Two Guidelines, Bertaggia has relaunched her Gratitude Window this summer.

“I’m grateful for the overwhelming support the community and my customers have shown since reopening,” Bertaggia said.

The Gratitude Window in Bertaggia’s store faces “G” Street and provides an open space for anyone who wants to complete a sticky note by writing something they are grateful for on the note and sticking it in the window.

People write notes that include comments about the community, the weather, relationships, prosperity, good health, and other reasons to be thankful. Some of the notes are written by long-time customers, and some are written by first-time visitors to the store.

“I love meeting people. I love helping customers and many of my friends come from this store,” said Bertaggia.

Some friends are fellow store owners in the city’s Central Business District, where Bertaggia often serves as a motivating force behind special programs and promotions such as her Gratitude Window, sidewalk sales, and other events.

“Getting other businesses involved is crucial,” Bertaggia said.

Some ideas have been more successful than others, she said.

A “Men’s Night Out” promotion she supported for Valentine’s Day in February was a “failure,” but a “Bring Your Own Scarf” event focused on teaching customers various ways to wear the popular accessory “was a huge success,” said Bertaggia.

Next on her list of ideas is plans to host private shopping parties centered around special events such as birthdays, bridal showers, and other gatherings.

“It’s a unique shopping experience with food and drinks,” she said.

Wild Rogue Emporium first opened in Grants Pass in 2014. Bertaggia and a partner opened the shop as a consignment store providing space for mostly locally made gifts and hand-crafted items created by 30-50 different vendors.

She said at the time, her best seller was air plants.

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She said at the time, her best seller was air plants.

“Now everyone has air plants, so we don’t sell them anymore,” said Bertaggia.

She also used to host “Build Your Own Fairy Garden” days,

(See “GRATEFUL” page 12)
The Bottom Line is Water

By Lisa Beutler
Special to GP Now

It’s pretty easy to take water for granted in Grants Pass. Thanks to investments by city leaders, reliable clean water is just a turn of the tap away, but as the city moves forward with building a new Water Treatment Plant, several local business leaders are not so sure the community really understands how important water and replacing the existing plant really is.

For Brandon Crews of Weekend Beer Company, water is everything. Crews is the brewer and co-owner of the thriving brewery and tap room. He and his partners like to say their business is about living your weekend every day of the week.

Owned and operated by two local couples - Ashley and Brandon Crews, and Kelsey and Troy Yoho - Weekend Beer Company is a homegrown enterprise. Brandon, Ashley and Kelsey have been friends since middle school. Kelsey and her husband Troy met at the United States Military Academy at West Point. They both served 10 years in the U.S. Army as officers and each deployed twice to Afghanistan. All four moved back to Grants Pass to raise families and pursue a shared passion for great beer. Starting a brewery seemed like a “no-brainer,” they said.

Craft brewers around the world agree that water is actually beer’s most important ingredient. One expert, Max Unverferth, one of three brewers at the mobile beer outfit, Nowhere in Particular, emphasizes that beer, like our bodies, is mostly water and that, “Water is the most important ingredient in beer.”

In a recent interview for The Vine, a beverage trade publication, Unverferth explains that regional differences in water affect the taste of beer. Water experts can pinpoint varying water factors and, in fact, a significant number of brewers have backgrounds in chemistry and related sciences. Ultimately, brewers know that differences in water create differences in beer.

According to Unverferth, “East Coast beers tend to be a little earthier, West Coast beers are danker, and Midwestern beers are juicier.”

To him and other brewers, the importance of water to the overall taste of beer cannot be overstated.

“If you ignore H2O, the beer will be dead in the water,” said Unverferth.

Europeans also take the water in their beer seriously. Some European cities are associated with distinct water profiles. Experienced tasters can recognize the regions that a beer emanates from by the quite different and beloved beer styles. More than one brewer in the U.S. has mimicked the source water of these beers to reproduce similar flavor profiles.

For Brandon Crews and Weekend Beer Company, water quality consistency is also especially important. Some breweries use secondary treatment to ensure that their water is always the same, said Crews. Weekend does not need to do this, he said.

Crews knows the water they receive from the city is always clean and reliably contains an expected composition of minerals and other positive water features. This provides for con-

City of Grants Pass water distribution staff began the process of unidirectional water flushing Monday, June 8. Unidirectional flushing opens specific pipes in the city’s water distribution system to flush water through the pipes in a single direction in order to clean the insides of the pipes.

The process is expected to continue throughout the summer as city staff moves from section to section of the city to complete the work along 188 miles of piping. Staff will open specific pipes to flush the water in one direction. This increases the speed and force of the water which helps scrub the pipes. The water is tested during the flush until it meets clear water standards, releasing thousands of gallons of water into the surrounding streets.

Flushing in each neighborhood can take between 10 minutes and more than four hours, depending on the area and number of fire hydrants located there. Some hydrants may get flushed twice, so staff may leave an area and come back later to flush them again.

During the flushing, residents in the area will experience lowered water pressure. Water may become discolored for a temporary length of time, and city staff recommends residents use bottled water or other liquids during the flushing. Residents are also cautioned to avoid running tap water, or appliances such as washing machines, dishwashers, and automatic ice machines until the flushing process is completed.

Residents should also avoid driving through the water being flushed if possible and slow down for safety. Water can be deeper than it appears and is not safe to drive through at full speed.

After flushing has been completed in an area, residents should turn on cold water faucets and spigots until the water runs clear. In order to avoid drawing any sediment into their hot water heaters, residents should not use their hot water tap until their water is running clear.

Information about which neighborhoods will be scheduled for flushing will be available through the city’s social media platforms and the city’s website at: www.grantspaso-regon.gov/1366/2020-Water-Main-Flushing.

(See “WATER” page 9)

LOCAL BREWER BRANDON CREWS POURS A SAMPLE OF ONE OF HIS BEERS AT WEEKEND BEER COMPANY.
Just after midnight Nov. 20, 2019, firefighters in Cincinnati, Ohio, responded to a house fire in an older portion of the city only to find that the hydrant on that block failed to produce enough water pressure to suppress the fire. Crews there had to scramble to bring in a water tender and run hoses through several backyards to reach another hydrant on another block.

By the time there was enough available water pressure to suppress the fire, the house had burned down, suffering $150,000 worth of damage. The hydrants were too old and too small to provide adequate coverage.

Not in Grants Pass, where each of 1,591 fire hydrants in the city are class “A” and have a 6-inch or larger branch. The city’s most recent Public Protection Classification (PPC) report gave the hydrants a perfect score.

A community’s PPC is a specific grade assigned to the community based on the analysis of data using the Fire Suppression Rating Schedule (FSRS) developed by Insurance Services Office, Inc. (ISO), to assist insurance companies in marketing, underwriting, and to help establish fair premiums for homeowners and commercial fire insurance,” says the New Jersey-based company.

“In general, the price of fire insurance in a community with a good PPC grade is substantially lower than in a community with a poor PPC,” said ISO.

“A large part of the rating is based on water supply,” said Grants Pass Department of Public Safety Fire/Rescue Deputy Chief Lang Johnson.

The system rates communities on a scale of 1-10, with a score of 1 being the best possible rating. Only 97 communities across the country have received such a score. Grants Pass is one of only 917 communities with a score of 2.

“For a department our size, that’s outstanding, and that’s in large part due to our community’s willingness to support infrastructure and staffing of our department,” said Johnson.

Communities with a domestic water system receive better scores due to fire hydrant placement and sustainable flow rates. The situation in Cincinnati resulted from low flow rates that hadn’t been properly tested in years.

“A domestic water system’s first purpose is to supply potable drinking water. Fire hydrants are a secondary function, but fire protection is important to keeping infrastructure secure,” Johnson said.

Grants Pass fire hydrants maintain a minimum water pressure of 1,000 gallons per minute (gpm), up to 3,500 gpm. The current average is 1,200 – 1,500 gpm, sustainable for at least three hours.

“We have an incredible water system,” Johnson said.

A community’s water system determines 40 percent of the community’s PPC score, according to the ISO system of evaluation.

“You get credit for the type of system and how it’s designed,” said Johnson.

Those design specifications include the city’s water supply lines, tanks and reservoirs, and pump stations located throughout the community. Regular maintenance and testing such as the unidirectional flushing the city is conducting this summer, help a community maintain its PPC score, Johnson said.

Grants Pass received 38.04 points out of a possible 40 points for the value of its water supply system, hydrants, maintenance, and inspections.

Emergency communications represents 10 percent of the overall score. Department operations, including number of stations, their locations, staffing levels, and available equipment represent 50 percent of the overall score.

“Staffing is a giant component of the ranking when it comes to operations,” said Johnson.

Better PPC scores often result in lower insurance premiums for property owners within the jurisdiction. Property owners within city limits pay less for fire insurance than those who live in rural county areas, especially if county residents live outside the 5-mile radius of an active fire station.

Rural fire departments receive a lower score because they have to bring in pump trucks and water tenders to fight a fire.

“It’s like a motorized bucket brigade,” Johnson said.

City fire departments don’t require water tenders, and city fire engines can function on smaller tanks than rural fire companies require, he said.

“By having fixed water, our community gains that advantage,” said Johnson.

Other factors playing a role in a city’s water system include coverage for industrial and multi-unit residential developments. In commercial zones, fire hydrants are placed 500 feet apart, as opposed to the 1,000-foot distance in residential areas. Fire suppression sprinkler systems also have to be accounted for, with larger buildings needing an auxiliary pump to maintain adequate pressure.

“Water infrastructure and capacity is integral to facilitating new growth, especially multi-unit housing requiring sprinkler systems,” Johnson said.

Future development is something a fire department must always be prepared for, he said.

“Our Community Risk Assessment in 2018 concluded that current staff levels are adequate but will need to grow as the community grows in order for us to maintain our PPC score of 2,” said Johnson.

It’s a score for the city to be proud of. It ensures better protection of city infrastructure, residential homes, and commercial buildings. It helps lower insurance rates for property owners, and it places Grants Pass in the top two percent of communities across the nation, he said.

2019 GP FIRE STATS
GP Fire/Rescue responded to 236 fires in 2019.
Appliance Fire: 12
Commercial Fire: 1
Electrical Fire: 17
Fireworks: 1
Flue Fire: 14
Grass Fire: 55
Large Vehicle: 16
Small Vehicle: 21
Structure Fire: 90
Trash Fire: 4
Fire/Rescue Helps in a Crash

Grants Pass Fire/Rescue also responds to motor vehicle crashes.

While one of the most common things they do is provide emergency medical services, one of the lesser-known things they do is used specialized equipment when people are trapped in their vehicles.

“Given today’s newer cars are built to protect folks better, they can also be more difficult to get someone out of,” said Battalion Chief Randy DeLonge.

“Our most recent upgrades allow for us to have battery-operated extrication equipment,” he said.

This equipment is not only stronger than older models, but they also make things much easier for Fire/Rescue staff.

“Our units can show up and grab tools and get right to work. We are not having to worry about motors, pumps and cords. They are more maneuverable and much easier to bring down steep embankments,” said DeLonge.

However, the new equipment is not without limitations, which is why the department retains one of the older styles with a motor and pump.

“As the industry changes, we continue to adapt and improve our performance, while making sure we are prepared for any situation,” DeLonge said.

Like most new police officers, City of Grants Pass Department of Public Safety Officer Mike Sanchez is anxious to get out on patrol. For Sanchez, who was hired by the department last September, it has been a longer-than-usual wait full of stops and starts making the process of becoming a sworn officer full of interruption.

“I could almost taste graduation when COVID happened,” said Sanchez.

Sanchez started his training Dec. 7, 2019, at the Oregon Public Safety Academy in Salem. The first four weeks of the academy are conducted in a classroom setting and focus on book learning, he said. Though that part of the training is very important, he said, waiting to start the hands-on portion of his training was the challenging part, said Sanchez.

“You’re sitting there learning while waiting to get out there and start doing it,” Sanchez said.

By the middle of January, the wait was over. Sanchez and 38 other recruits from law enforcement agencies across the state were finally out of their desks. Eight weeks in, everything changed.

“I was in the middle of training on a car pursuit when the supervisor informed us to return to our rooms and retrieve our stuff,” said Sanchez.

With only four weeks remaining until graduation, COVID-19 shut everything down.

“No one knew if we were even going to be coming back,” Sanchez said.

Concerned that he may have to start the entire program over again once state-mandated restrictions could be lifted, and worried the department would place his employment on hold, Sanchez reported to DPS unable to yet wear a badge.

Initially supervisors put him to work assisting the department with its move to the new Public Safety Center. Next, the department established modified patrol training for Sanchez, including ride-alongs with field training officers. Though he was in full uniform, he was present as an observer only and unable to engage on any calls, he said.

“I am a go-getter. It was difficult for me to just stand around and watch, and not engage,” said Sanchez.

Nonetheless, he said he did all he could to continue learning through watching how other officers work calls.

“Every officer has their own personality and style,” said Sanchez.

In the meantime, details from Salem about returning to the academy were ever-changing as health guidelines shifted from week to week.

“The whole time we were getting mixed messages about the aspects of completing training,” Sanchez said.

Several potential modifications to training were considered, including part-time training and in-house modifications, he said. Through the discussions, at least one became clear: he would not be required to start all over again.

“That was a huge relief,” said Sanchez.

Finally, by the middle of May, he received the call to return to Salem.

“My bags were still packed. I didn’t unpack anything. I was ready to go back,” he said.

Back at the academy, Sanchez and his fellow recruits completed their final driving qualifications, firearm qualifications, use-of-force scenario training, DUII investigative training, and of course the “dreaded” final exam.

“It’s a mandatory pass exam. Those who fail have to start all over again, and most agencies won’t pay for that. I was hitting

(See “SANCHEZ” page 11)
Explaining Utility Bills

The average Grants Pass residential monthly utility bill is $75.87 per household. Many ratepayers mistakenly refer to their utility bill as their monthly “water” bill, but water charges are just a portion of the monthly bill ratepayers receive.

The city utility bill covers a variety of utility costs, including fees associated with stormwater, wastewater, transportation, and important infrastructure improvements.

The monthly in-lieu-of-franchise fee of $3.13 covers the costs of the city utility to use city rights of way for infrastructure. It amounts to five percent of total water and wastewater charges.

The average residential utility bill includes approximately $30 per month in charges for water meter connection, water plant replacement, and six units of city water.

Each unit of water represents 748 gallons, with the average household using more than 4,400 gallons of water per month at a price of less than one cent per gallon.

Purchasing bottled water at the area’s least expensive grocery store would cost approximately $30 per month in charges for water meter connection, water plant replacement, and six units of city water.

Stormwater utility fees are based on the city’s impervious surfaces – areas of land that cannot absorb water runoff, such as driveways, streets, and pavement.

The city covers 27,000 acres of drainage, and maintains a system of creeks, ravines, culverts, and more than 138 miles of underground pipe to prevent flooding, redirect water back to the river, and help mitigate pollutants along the way.

The average residence represents approximately 3,700 square feet of impervious surfaces which amount to one Equivalent Service Unit (ESU) of stormwater utility billed at a rate of $6.40 per unit, per month. Developments with a higher total of impervious surface are assessed based on their total ESUs.

Wastewater fees are calculated by the amount of wastewater discharged by each residence. Wastewater includes sewage, laundry, baths and showers, and anything that goes down any drain in a home. The average monthly fee of $32.60 covers the costs of infrastructure such as pipes, pumps, and the treatment plant necessary to properly restore up to 4,488 gallons of wastewater from each residence before returning the water to the river.

Homes without a connection to the city’s sewer system are required to have a septic system on their property. Installation of a full septic system can cost $15,000 or more. At a monthly payment of $32.60, it could take more than 35 years to pay off a system of that price, not including the costs to pump the system every 4-5 years.

The final charge on a resident’s city utility bill is the transportation fee at an average cost of $3.68 per month. This fee helps cover the cost of streets, gutters, crosswalks, bike lanes, signage, and various improvements such as flashing beacons to alert motorists to pedestrian crossings near schools and other locations such as the local Boys and Girls Club.

For additional information about city utility fees, visit: https://www.grantspassoregon.gov/158/Public-Works, or call Finance Customer Service at (541)450-6035.

Water Plant Sets New Records

Demand for fresh water in Grants Pass was at an all-time high for the months of March and April, with the city’s aging Water Treatment Plant working overtime to produce enough water to meet the increasing needs of city water customers.

Water production during the month of March came close to 113 million gallons of water, crushing the previous record set in 2007 by more than seven million gallons.

“We attribute the high demand for water to hotter-than-normal temperatures, and the current pandemic that has kept people in their homes,” said Public Works Director Jason Canady.

In April, monthly water production totals topped 171 million gallons. That total is 51 million gallons higher than the average month of April, representing seven additional days of average water production totals, and shattering the April 2007 record by 49 million gallons of water.

“High flows at this time of year are a challenge for staff, who must juggle schedules to ensure that production can be met at a time of year when the plant cannot operate at a higher flow rate due to colder water temperatures,” said Canady.

The record all-time maximum total monthly production of more than 334 million gallons was set in July 2018, when according to the Farmer’s Almanac, temperatures reached or exceeded the monthly average high-point at least 10 days during that month, making it the fifth hottest July on record dating back to 1911, according to the National Weather Service.

“The importance of a reliable fresh water supply can not be over-emphasized, especially in times of increased demand for water,” said Canady.

Backflow Testing

The required testing of single-family residential backflow assemblies for 2020 has begun. All backflow assemblies are required to be tested annually to verify that they are functioning properly.

Backflow assemblies protect both the city’s water system and the homeowner from potential and actual hazards under backflow conditions.

City contractors started testing assemblies in the Northwest part of town and plan to have it completed by the end of July. Contractors will then continue throughout the city based on the following schedule:

Northwest – June & July
Northeast – August
Southeast – September
Southwest – October & November

Additional information: (541)450-6115, or visit the city’s website.

Average Monthly Utility Bill Charges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Charge Type</th>
<th>Total Charged</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Franchise fee (5% of total water and wastewater charges)</td>
<td>$3.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water meter base charge</td>
<td>$20.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water volume charge</td>
<td>$4.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Plant Replacement Fee</td>
<td>$5.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stormwater (single family dwelling)</td>
<td>$6.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wastewater base charge (includes first 2 units of consumption)</td>
<td>$17.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wastewater volume charge</td>
<td>$14.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation Utility</td>
<td>$3.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total average monthly charges</strong></td>
<td><strong>$75.87</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Water... (from page 5)

sistent brewing operations and customers knowing that they can always expect Weekend Beer brand quality, Crews said.

While it is easy to understand why a brewery or coffee shop is going to worry about water, other businesses are equally water dependent.

Doug Bradley, chairman of the city’s Tourism Committee and a long-time manager in the hospitality industry, said he can’t overstate the importance of reliable water delivery for his industry as well.

Bradley has been part of the Grants Pass community for more than nine years. He loves the “community spirit” and willingness of residents and businesses to help one another here, he said. Beyond that, Bradley points to the city slogan, and affirms his and his customer’s love for the Grants Pass climate.

Most days you can find Bradley managing the team at the Holiday Inn Express and supporting sales for three sister hotels. He says Southern Oregon visitors choose his property because they place travelers in the middle of natural beauty, breathtaking wildlife and celebrated historic sites.

Bradley also points out that being situated at the junction of I-5 and Redwood Highway puts visitors near Grants Pass’s crown jewel, the Rogue River, and close to everything else. Business guests commute to regional businesses such as ESAM, Marzi Sinks, Encore Ceramics, MasterBrand Cabinets, and Rogue Valley Door, as well as Three Rivers Medical Center and Rogue Community College. He also sees guests heading to Rogue Valley wineries, local breweries, and downtown Grants Pass.

But the river is the star, said Brad. His guests enjoy rafting or seasonal fishing, and during non-COVID times, visitors enjoy annual events such as the Boatnik Festival held during Memorial Weekend, he said.

During tourist season, up to 50 percent of his guests might enjoy a river excursion, said Bradley.

While his guests love the river water, it is the city water that makes his business run. Bradley pulls no punches in explaining that if something were to happen to the city water supply, his business would be shut down.

“We couldn’t open the doors, period,” said Bradley.

On its face this makes sense, but for people who enjoy camping it might be harder to understand why there couldn’t be some type of workaround.

Bradley explains that trucking water might marginally help with things like sanitation and showers, but that it would not resolve the concerns of maintaining fire protection. Water needs to be in the system to operate sprinklers and hydrants.

Then there are just basic logistics, he said. In addition to providing some beverage and food services, hotels have significant water needs to operate their laundries. Facility cleanliness is always a priority and in a time of COVID-19 this is amplified tenfold, Bradley said.

Working in industries that are both dependent on water, Bradley and Crews both like to talk about what their businesses do to conserve water. At the brewery, water is used for beer production, mashing, boiling, sparging, and filtration. Packaging-breweries also use water for heating and cooling as well as cleaning and sanitation of equipment and process areas.

Crews utilizes equipment that allows him to reuse as much water as possible. This saves him money and supports stewardship of the environment, he said.

Bradley is equally proud of the efforts of the hospitality industry to enhance water conservation and references his company’s efforts to engage in sustainable practices.

Holiday Inn Express is part of IHG branded hotels. In 2017, IHG-branded hotels avoided $100 million in total costs by using the IHG Green Engage system accounting for energy, water and waste items, including water utilities.

Both businessmen believe that it is important for the community to know more about city efforts to replace its aging Water Treatment Plant.

Bradley was already familiar with the need for a new plant because of his involvement with the Tourism Committee, but Crews, as a lifelong resident, hadn’t really thought a lot about it until he really focused on the importance of water to him and his business.

Crews noted he was “probably like a lot of people in town,” in thinking the water has always been there, so there wasn’t a need to think about it.

Both men admit that “no one really wants to spend money,” but both also believe that investment in a new treatment plant now is essential to ensure the future viability of Grants Pass, they said.

As businessmen, they suggested the city needs to engage in further public engagement about the importance of water, and the need for constructing a new treatment plant.

At the end of the day, what they each really wanted to emphasize was simple: for local businesses, the bottom line is water.

Tree Canopy Applications Now Available Online

The Fall 2020 application for the Tree Canopy Program is now available. The city has 50 trees for home/landowners at a cost of $50 per tree. The fee includes tree and planting of the tree by city staff. Trees can be planted in front yards or in the public right-of-way in front of properties. The city’s Urban Forester will visit each location to assist with selecting the proper species and placement for each location. Trees will be planted in October and November.

Grants Pass recently received the renowned title of Oregon Tree City of the Year. Such an honor would not have been possible without the help of the community.

Applications are available online at: www.grantspassoregon.gov/tree. For additional information email Urban Forester Tony Mecum at tmecum@grantspassoregon.gov, or call (541)450-6162.

For years, citizens here have participated in the city’s tree programs, including the Memorial Tree Program and Tree Canopy Program. Both programs increase the canopy coverage of the city, which brings an impressive array of benefits for everyone to enjoy.

The city’s tree canopy can serve to increase property values, reduce energy consumption, improve physical and mental health, reduce crime, purify particulates and noxious gases from the air, intercept stormwater surges from entering the Rogue River, extend the lifespan of paved surfaces under their shade, reduce street noise, calm traffic, enhance tourism, increase retail revenue, improve beauty, sequester carbon dioxide, and many other benefits.

Whereas the Memorial Tree Program increases the tree canopy of city parks, the Tree Canopy Program increases the canopy of neighborhoods, bringing tree benefits to all areas of Grants Pass.

Home/landowners who take advantage of the Tree Canopy Program will be responsible for watering their trees during the warm growing seasons (typically from May to October), or whenever temperatures are high, and precipitation is low. After three years of watering, most trees will be established and can obtain water on their own. The city will replace a tree if it dies within the first year, so long as water was provided.

Due to limited supply, residents are encouraged to apply early. Applications and payment are due by Sept. 25. Payment may be made by check, cash, or credit card. Completed applications and payment (to City of Grants Pass) may be mailed to: Tree Canopy Program, 101 NW A Street, Grants Pass, OR, 97526.

Cash payments may be made at City Hall, 2nd floor, Community Development Department. Credit cards can be accepted in person at City Hall or by phone: Community Development Department at (541)450-6060. There is a small processing fee for credit cards.

Available species include Swamp White Oaks (beautiful, long-lived oaks that are drought tolerant and show off their fall color) or whenever temperatures are high, and precipitation is low. After three years of watering, most trees will be established and can obtain water on their own. The city will replace a tree if it dies within the first year, so long as water was provided.

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EOC... (from page 1)

Ring’s history includes a mix of social service and mental health work, including a background in emergency medical services and firefighting.

While working for a recreation district in Lane County, she saw a position posting for Emergency Management here, and applied.

“I felt like it would be a comfortable fit,” said Ring.

“The reemerging relationship between cities and counties has enabled the position,” she said.

That relationship includes an agreement to provide emergency services for the City of Grants Pass under a three-year, renewable contract.

Perrin first came to Emergency Management as a “loaner” employee. While serving as board secretary to the Josephine County commissioners during the 2018 fire season, commissioners loaned Perrin to the EOC to assist with operations.

“That’s where Rikki and I started working together,” said Rubrecht.

“That’s when we realized that we could better equip the community to deal with an emergency if we could educate them,” Rubrecht said.

It wasn’t long before Perrin was serving as the new education coordinator for Emergency Management.

“There are challenges to building something from the ground up,” said Perrin about her relatively new post. She is constantly receiving feedback on the various education programs she has developed, changing and adapting the programs to meet the community’s needs, she said.

“You can’t be all things to all people,” said Perrin.

“What we’re doing is trying to flatten the curve of the impact of emergencies on the public. We want to make sure that our work is lessening the impact of all disasters that could or do affect our community,” said Rubrecht.

Most recently, the three messengers of emergency management were busy operating the EOC during the peak of the COVID-19 crisis.

“COVID is unlike any other event we have ever experienced,” said Rubrecht.

They all agree that mixed messages and mixed results from location to location made managing the event more difficult.

“We sit between the state and the locals. There was a lot of negotiating between the two entities,” said Ring. Available resources, needs, and demands “don’t always mesh,” she said.

Throughout the entire COVID event we were in response mode to orders coming down from the state that we weren’t in control of,” said Rubrecht.

“Trying to find a balance in sharing public health information, while also sharing messages of the political leaders can be difficult,” she said.

The most rewarding part of managing any emergency comes through the interactions with the public, they all agreed.

“I like the public interaction,” said Ring.

“People call in afraid or concerned, and you can help calm their fears and provide them better understanding. We’re not first responders, but we are first responsive to people’s needs,” she said.

Perrin agrees. As education coordinator, she facilitates the program’s Prep U emergency preparedness classes which include participants creating an emergency supplies kit.

“The best part was people calling in to say ‘thank you for your classes.’ They had what they needed. They didn’t have to panic,” said Perrin.

Once an event is over, it can be difficult returning to regular duties, they said.

“Coming out to the EOC during an event is exciting and intriguing, and all ‘go’ with lots going on and late nights. Then it’s over, and it’s all paperwork and computers and dealing with technology,” said Perrin.

Nonetheless, it takes time to catch up and get back on top of daily duties, including a backlog of training and public education to address, she said.

“Everything we do on a daily basis gets set aside during an event. You can’t offset your hours. You’re in it,” said Perrin.

Now, the three cohorts are busy ramping up regular duties of preparation for fire season and plans to continue community education about the importance of being prepared for an emergency.

“We are always trying to educate everyone at every level,” said Rubrecht.

That’s a task that isn’t always easy, said Perrin.

“The most difficult thing to do is to convince people to plan and prepare for something they haven’t experienced and can’t see. We are always taking people to an uncomfortable place,” she said.

Having a comprehensive emergency plan is crucially important, they advise.

COVID was an event where people “got to actually see the importance of having a plan,” she said.

Eames... (from page 3)

the current organization is the “best group” he’s seen.

“I’m greatly impressed with the way each department carries out their duties. I’ve met so many city employees who are so proud of what they’re doing. It’s more than just a job to them. I think the citizens of Grants Pass should be grateful for that,” said Eames.

Though Eames feels proud of his service on the council, and appreciative of his opportunity to work with fellow councilors and city staff, he said he won’t seek reelection this year.

“I felt like I contributed. I put in my input, and I think it’s time for someone else to come in and have a turn at it,” said Eames.

His advice to potential future councilors includes being prepared for the time commitment and trying to understand what people in the city are doing, “how they’re doing it, and it helps the city.”

He also advises to leave the agendas at home.

“Some of them come in thinking, ‘I’m going to change the world!’ It just doesn’t work that way. What’s put in front of you is how the city works, and that’s a task that isn’t always easy, said Perrin.

“Never at any time do you ever hope that something happens to any person or their property, but it is validating when we get to put our training and skills to use to help others,” Perrin said.

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Though Eames feels proud of his service on the council, and appreciative of his opportunity to work with fellow councilors and city staff, he said he won’t seek reelection this year.

Eames’ term on the council will expire Dec. 31. After that, the only agenda he will focus on is traveling, he said.

“I’m a rover. Me and my dog will be traveling. I want to get in that car and head wherever I go,” Eames said.

GP City Social Media

The City of Grants Pass has four active social media accounts, with the number of followers and subscribers to each account growing every day.

The most popular platform is the city’s Facebook account with more than 3,500 followers. There are more than 3,000 members of the city’s Nextdoor account. The city also uses Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube.

Residents who want to remain informed of city activities, alerts, information, fun events, work projects and more can find the city’s social media pages and tune in to see newsworthy posts, interesting photos, informative videos, and other content focused on the city and the overall community.

https://www.facebook.com/city.grantspass?ref=page_internal
@CityGrantsPass
@CityGrantsPass
Musashi... (from page 4)

Howard first opened Musashi in 1999 in its original location at 5th and “G” streets. This was a real meat and potatoes town back in the day. We weren’t sure how sushi would go down, but the first day I opened up, it was a hit,” said Howard.

He moved the restaurant to “H” Street in 2003. The customers followed.

“We’re really blessed that we have a whole line of customers that really love and are loyal to us,” Howard said.

Some of those customers have been anxious to see the restaurant reopen for dining. Howard has been fielding regular calls, but the rules regarding sushi bars make it a little trickier.

His son, Tim, is his principal sushi chef. He learned the trade from dad and is ready to return to serving customers in the restaurant, once they can find and train the necessary staff and get the seating arranged, said Howard.

It won’t be long before customers can return to the “freshest sushi bar in town,” he said.

Sanchez... (from page 7)

that book every day after the day’s training,” said Sanchez.

“Learning the results of the exam was the only part of his training that didn’t involve some sort of waiting, he said. “You get instant feedback of great accomplishment or epic failure,” Sanchez said.

In his case, the former was true when he passed the exam with flying colors, finally on his way to graduation.

Just like all graduates of any sort this year, Sanchez and his fellow recruits were cheated out of the traditional academy graduation ceremony, but the accomplishment was still something to celebrate, and DPS Chief Warren Hensman presided over a small ceremony for Sanchez at the Grants Pass Public Safety Center.

Sanchez was officially sworn in by Hensman Thursday, June 4, and Sanchez’s fiancée, Paige, was there to pin his badge on him for the very first time.

“I’m thankful for the city’s patience in my training,” said Sanchez.

Friday, June 5, Sanchez reported to work as Grants Pass’s newest sworn officer.

“It’s been wild,” he said. After just one full day of on-the-job patrol training, Sanchez was called to work a very important case.

“I went home to start my weekend, and six hours later I was called in to serve as the Spanish language interpreter on a murder case,” he said.

More than 13 hours of interviews with a Spanish-speaking suspect and witnesses resulted in more than five straight days of paperwork, Sanchez said. Though the work and the case are extremely important, where he really wants to be is out on patrol.

“I’m really looking forward to finishing my training and getting out into the community to serve,” said Sanchez.

“T had have been well on my own by now, but I’m just getting started,” he said.

CPSA... (from page 1)

COVID Small Business Recovery Grant Program

Grant Statistics as of June 25:

463 Applications Received
405 Applications Approved
Total Amount Awarded: $736,000.37

51 applications were not approved due to a lack of proper qualifications.

7 applications are still pending final review for approval.

Super... (from page 3)

range of supervisory duties including directing work, training and coaching, discipline, and performance evaluation of subordinates. The superintendent is distinguished from the Treatment Plant Specialist, Lead Mechanic, Utilities Specialist, and Municipal Services Specialist by its focus on supervisory responsibility for plant, field, construction, fleet and/or maintenance operations.

Positions in this class require an associate degree in a related field and six years of directly-related experience, two years of which must be supervisory or lead.

Training and experience must be sufficient to meet OHA-DWP or DEQ operator certification requirements depending on assignment.

Incumbents must also have or obtain an Oregon Class C driver’s license, and may also be required to have or obtain one or more of the following certifications: Oregon Grade

2019 GP CRIME STATS
Burglaries: 168
Vehicle Thefts: 149
Robberies: 24
Assaults: 598
Arson: 11
Vandalism: 671
Weapons: 161
Forcible Rape: 25
Sex Offenses: 124
Fraud: 265
Theft: 12,223

3 Water Treatment Certificate with Filtration Endorsement; Oregon Grade 4 Wastewater Treatment and/or Collection Certificate; Oregon Grade 3 Water Distribution Certificate; Oregon Backflow Tester/Inspector Certificate.

Applications can be completed online, as well as attaching a cover letter and resume. Any application that is missing required items will not be considered. No late, incomplete or faxed applications will be accepted.

Additional information and application here: https://bit.ly/37WIVrC

The initial selection process includes application review and oral interview. The final selection process following interview includes: tentative offer, background investigation, reference checking, driving check, drug testing, and final offer of employment.

All candidates will be notified of the status of their application after the closing date.

He and his current staff of six employees have been offering take-out orders 4-9 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays. Together they are working on reconfiguring the restaurant to rearrange seating to meet reopening guidelines.

“I’m glad I have a good group who are very loyal and anxious to return,” said Howard.

Still, like many other employers in the city, Howard said he is struggling to find employees to fill empty positions for a staff that is usually 10-12 people.

“It’s a specialty food type that requires specialty skills and training,” Howard said.

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The Gratitude Window at Wild Rogue Emporium.

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 & staff on KAJO (1270 AM)
the 1st and 2nd Tuesdays each month at 9:30 am