City Offers Pre-Approved ADU Plans

Accessory dwelling units (ADUs) can help ease city’s need for more affordable housing.

The City of Grants Pass Community Development Department has developed pre-approved building plans for the construction of accessory dwelling units (ADUs) within the city.

Full plans, truss calculations, and building permit applications are now accessible at the city’s website: https://www.grantspassoregon.gov/1396/Accessory-Dwelling-Unit-ADU-Building-Plans.

Applicants wishing to add ADUs to their property can submit for a building permit by providing the Community Development Department with three complete sets of to-scale building plans printed at 24” x 36”, three copies of a to-scale site plan, and a completed and signed application.

If the proposed site property is located within a hazard area such as a flood area or steep slope, additional requirements may apply.

Development in Special Flood Hazard Areas requires additional city permits.

For additional information, call (541)450-6060.

New Welcome Center Hours

The City of Grants Pass downtown Welcome Center has extended its operating hours to 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Saturday to accommodate an increase in visitors recorded at the center, 198 SW 6th St.

During the last few months, local hoteliers have reported weeks with occupancy rates surpassing numbers from 2019, and Grants Pass is leading the region in total visitors.

“It’s such a joy to represent our community every day at the Welcome Center.”

The steady stream of visitors has also translated into additional guests at the Welcome Center, which has also been fielding regular phone calls and emails from visitors and potential new residents.

Welcome Center Hospitality Specialist Kate Bortells said she has been seeing more visitors coming to the center later in the afternoons.

“I went out to my car at 2:05 p.m. yesterday and noticed a couple walking past Dutch Bros. I had a feeling they were headed to the Welcome Center. I was correct! They stayed for over 30 minutes, and are seriously thinking about moving to Grants Pass,” said Bortells.

Bortells said potential new residents start out as visitors who learn about the many attributes of Grants Pass, and “fall in love with the community while they’re here.”

She provides potential new residents with literature and information about the city’s history and its many assets, as well as various maps, brochures, and visitors guides.

She also answers questions, provides suggestions, and helps guide them to various city attractions.

“It’s such a joy to represent our community every day at the Welcome Center,” she said.
Third Quarter Strategic Goals Progress Report

By Aaron Cubic
City Manager

It is my pleasure to provide you an update on some of our strategic community goals. The city’s success in accomplishing its goals is directly related to the leadership of council, the community’s constructive participation, and a quality staff.

Each quarter I provide council with an update on our progress of initiatives identified as priorities for our community and the organization. This reporting process facilitates an important dialogue between city council, the community and staff on projects and issues of importance.

The foundation of our Strategic Plan rests on five goals: keep citizens safe; provide cooperative shared leadership involving council, community and staff; encourage economic opportunities; facilitate sustainable, manageable growth; and maintain, operate, and expand our infrastructure to meet community needs.

The following are some examples of the positive movement in accomplishing our goals throughout the third quarter of this year.

Objective 1: Maintain necessary criminal justice infrastructure.
Council sent a levy rate of $1.89 to the voters, Measure 17-96. An information fact sheet, approved by the state, was posted on the City’s website, and was mailed to citizens in their utility bills.

Objective 3: Ensure efficiency and effectiveness in city operations.
Action 1: Perform a comprehensive GIS needs assessment to ensure community and department GIS expectations are met.
Report completed and presented to city council July 27. Staff will work on implementing key findings as recommended in the final report.
Item complete.

Objective 4: Rezone Urban Growth Boundary areas from rural to urban before Transportation System Plan update is complete (Allen Creek Road).
A virtual community forum for the UGB Rezone Project was held in August with approximately 30 participants. Draft rezone maps have been prepared and the website is active. UAPC public hearing to rezone 545 acres to urban zoning is scheduled in October. Final UGB rezone ordinance anticipated in December 2020 or January 2021.

Objective 7: Ensure park infrastructure needs are met.
Action 1: Develop a Forest Stewardship and Recreational Use Plan for Dollar Mountain.
Fire suppression contractor has completed brush clearing. Burning of piles scheduled for November.

ODF finalized their budget to award us a $438,250 grant for significant fire suppression work. Agreements and RFP pending.

Crescent Parking Lot design is at completion. Staff and consultants are working to award us a $438,250 grant from ODF finalize their budget to award us a $438,250 grant for significant fire suppression work. Agreements and RFP pending.

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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!

Several readers contacted us to point out a few errors in our September issue.

Gordon Langenbeck, Laura Gutowski, and Ruth Bowie were among those who caught the “stragie” headline mistake on page 9.

Jay Grosenbach found one too many “sites” in the first column of page 1.

Suzon Bishop and Germaine Cartmell discovered a missing “n” on page 11, and Cartmell also pointed out the misuse of “smoothly” on page 4, as well as a repeated line in a paragraph on page 10.

Can you find any typos in this November issue? Email us to let us know, and we’ll thank you in print right here in the next issue!

ssabel@grantspassoregon.gov
Listen And Learn

City Councilor Rick Riker focuses on good communication before making decisions.

Grants Pass City Councilor Rick Riker came to the city council as a replacement to serve the remaining term of a councilor who was recalled in the infamous mass recall of five city councilors in 2009.

Riker said he had mentioned to his wife, Judy, “it would be interesting to be on city council,” before he was asked to apply for the six-month appointment, and then it happened.

“In that first six months, I was afraid my phone would be ringing off the hook, but that didn’t happen,” said Riker.

His “fears of being inundated” going unrealized by the end of the term, Riker said he sought guidance before deciding to run for a full four-year term.

“I asked the Lord, ‘Should I go for this?’ And he said, ‘Yes,’” Riker said.

He is currently serving his second four-year term, and “emails have not been loading in my box,” he said.

“People know me. They know what I do, and they trust me, so they don’t feel like they need to be pounding on my door to get me to make the right decision,” said Riker.

Born and raised in Manchester, Connecticut, Riker obtained his bachelor’s degree in geography from the University of Miami before enlisting in the Navy.

When the opportunity to accept a post in Sicily presented itself, he extended his term in order to accept the post.

He then toured Europe, and eventually landed in Munich, where he worked for such low wages, he “lived on bologna sandwiches,” he said.

Returning stateside, Riker said:

“The thing I have really enjoyed on the council is that we really are a team. We can work together and communicate ideas.”

He then toured Europe, and eventually landed in Munich, where he worked for such low wages, he “lived on bologna sandwiches,” he said.

Returning stateside, Riker determined he wanted to live in the Bay Area of California, and found a position selling life insurance, which he did for five years.

In December 1973, Riker met his wife through a mutual friend in the Bay Area. He said he knew right away that she was the one, and they were married in her hometown of Grants Pass just four months later.

One year after that, they moved to Grants Pass permanently when Judy accepted a position at Josephine Memorial Hospital.

Soon, Riker accepted a position with the Josephine County Planning Department, where he spent the next 20 years.

“I opted to leave and go into private practice as a consultant for the next 10 years,” said Riker.

That allowed him more time (See “RIKER” page 11)
Leverage Assets & Find Solutions

Brad Clark is GP’s new director of Community Development.

Spending two years of high school as an “Air Force brat” in Turkey exposed Brad Clark to a “whole new world,” he said. “It was a bigger world than I ever imagined,” said Clark, now the new director of Community Development for Grants Pass.

Clark obtained his degree in international community development for George Fox University in Newberg, Oregon. After college, he went to work for Mercy Corps in Portland.

For the next seven years, he served as a U.S. program officer writing grants and finding funding to support indigenous organizations in Nicaragua, Honduras, and the Philippines.

“It’s very different from domestic development. These were developing nations,” Clark said.

Next, Clark landed in Meridian, Idaho, where he accepted a position as an entry level planner but was eventually tapped to serve as interim director of the department. During Clark’s tenure in Meridian, the population there more than doubled from 20,000 to 50,000.

“That area at that time was just insane with very rapid growth,” said Clark.

When nearby Gem County formed a new joint planning department with the City of Emmett, Clark became its first planning director.

“There was so much excitement in the community to have this full-service office available,” he said.

Throughout the next 10 years, Clark helped grow the department from 2.5 full-time employees to six, handling a lot of county area planning.

“If you’re growing at 2.5 percent, but you started with a population of 7,000, it’s still 2.5 percent, but it’s all relevant to size,” said Clark.

Overseeing the development of such a rural area presented unique challenges and opportunities, he said. Bringing much-needed amenities to the area, such as a park-and-ride, an industrial park, and a new comprehensive plan through working in collaboration with community volunteers, made the job rewarding, said Clark.

Along the way, Clark said he also mentored several staff members into senior positions, including the current director of the department who first started as a building permit technician. Eventually, Clark moved to King County, Washington, where he became the first suburbia planner for the county.

“That was a kick, suddenly working in a giant county of 2.1 million people and 39 cities,” he said.

While in King County, Clark specialized in working with the county’s unincorporated communities, including the unique community of Vashon Island with a population of 11,000, where Clark helped develop another comprehensive plan.

Regardless of the intriguing challenges and rewards of working in such a unique place, Clark said it became evident that he needed to move somewhere where the housing market was more affordable, and he began to miss the “smaller community feel” of his previous locations.

While considering a return to Idaho, possibilities in Colorado, (See “CLARK” page 11)

Getting the ‘Innovation’ Band Back Together

Dennis Dreher has been a part of the process to create a makerspace and business incubator for Grants Pass since the early inception of the idea first resulted in plans to create the Rogue Innovation Hub (RIH).

“Dennis has been through every single part of it,” said Cat Bonney, executive director of Common Connections.

The local nonprofit was tapped to lead the continued development of the RIH after Rogue Community College withdrew from furthering the program under their umbrella. Now, Common Connections will lead the charge with Dreher and Bonney coordinating the efforts.

“I fully believe in this project and I fully support it,” said Bonney.

“The ideas are there and they’re still viable,” said Dreher.

Common Connections was established in 2016 “to respond to community needs,” said Bonney.

Current efforts of the organization include development of a construction pre-apprenticeship program, a rental resources collaborative program, and a pending contract to facilitate the Housing Repair and Rehabilitation Program for Josephine County.

Dreher serves on the Common Connections board of directors and will serve as the new project coordinator for the RIH.

“We looked at it historically and we looked at what we want to do,” said Dreher.

“There’s a person who handles keeping everyone’s feet to the fire, and he’s been that person,” said Bonney.

Picking up where others left off isn’t always easy, but Dreher has a plan to move forward with a two-fold program he says will serve as both a makerspace and business incubator for the community to assist prospective entrepreneurs with developing their ideas.

“Our next step is to begin to launch,” Dreher said.

The makerspace is envisioned to be a shared space that will provide facilities and tools “that can be useful to a lot of different ends uses,” he said.

Some proposed aspects of the space include woodworking materials, metal shop, certified kitchen, light machinery, and tools for light manufacturing.

“It will be a place where people can collaborate and work together,” said Dreher.

The idea is to provide entrepreneurs a means to produce a product or design with less startup cost requirements, while also providing access to collaborative effort.

“There will be no need to buy tools and machines, but also they’ll have access to other craftpeople who can serve as a sounding board,” Dreher said.

“The board of directors and members will find the facilities or acquire tools deemed to be of value to the users and potential users of the space,” he said.

The business incubator will help already viable businesses to reach their full potential. The goal will be to introduce businesses to additional resources, such as collaborators and venture capitalists, said Bonney. (See “HUB” page 12)
Ron Goss Receives Prestigious Award

Ron Goss is no stranger to recognition for outstanding service. As the director of the Rogue Valley Small Business Development Center (SBDC), Goss has celebrated his team ranking in the top five Oregon centers for the last five years in a row. Last year, they received the Oregon State Star Award by a unanimous vote of previous award winners.

“None of these awards are really possible without the outstanding staff we have here at the Rogue Valley SBDC,” said Goss.

However, when the Oregon Small Business Development Center (SBDC) Network announced Goss as the recipient of this year’s prestigious Sandy Cutler Award, Goss said he was taken by surprise.

“I had no inkling that this was coming,” Goss said.

Named for the founder of the Oregon SBDC Network, the Sandy Cutler Award is bestowed on individuals in the Network who have demonstrated exceptional leadership, dedication and entrepreneurship to benefit small business in Oregon beyond the local SBDC where they work.

In 2009, Goss was hired as the small business management coordinator of the Rogue Valley SBDC. His primary role was coordinating an annual cohort of businesses and then providing them educational and development courses through a 9-month program.

In 2013, Goss became the director of the SBDC. He oversees operations and manages a staff of eight professional small business advisors.

“It’s always challenging to manage a very experienced staff. You have to respect their experience and skills,” said Goss.

Most of the staff are retired executives, and some of them have more business experience than Goss.

“They don’t expect you to tell them what to do, they expect you to support them,” he said.

As a teenager, Goss played offensive tackle for the Grants Pass High School football team and earned himself a scholarship to play football at Stanford University. He sees building a good team as a crucial part of his success at the SBDC.

RCC SBDC
https://sbdc.roguecc.edu/ (541)956-7494

“Thank has been our culture. Not everyone is a quarterback or a wide receiver, but everyone has something to contribute to the team effort,” said Goss.

An avocational approach to the effort is also important, he said.

“The members of my team do this because they love the community and want to give back. They want to help people keep their businesses open, keep their employees, and feed their families,” said Goss.

This year, that commitment to service has been even more crucial due to the need to assist local businesses with COVID-19 relief efforts, he said.

State government mandates shut down the economy in March. By April, the SBDC was “consumed” with responses to those affected by the closures.

“We talked to close to 200 inquiries in less than 90 days,” said Goss.

In a normal year, the center can work with as many as 400 or more clients over a 12-month period. This year, they have already assisted close to 500 businesses, and the number continues to grow.

“We’re trying to keep as many local businesses in business as possible,” Goss said.

Part of the “Business 101” rules his businesses advisors teach their clients involves the importance of personal connections with customers that cannot be replicated on the internet, he said.

“If all you want to do is compete with commodity level sales, you don’t have the volume and the breadth to do that. What you need to do is create an unusual and valuable experience for your customers,” said Goss.

Prior to COVID-19 restrictions, business advisors often visited their clients’ shops or storefronts to maintain their personal relationship with the client, make observations about their operations, and offer suggestions for improvement.

“Those things happen through personal one-on-one engagement,” said Goss, which ties back to the avocational approach of the advisors and their commitment to the community, he said.

“All of my staff have strong community connections. It’s hard to go wrong,” Goss said.

“We’re really here to help. It doesn’t end. We’re here throughout. If we’ve helped you before and you need help again, don’t be bashful about calling us,” he said.

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Parks

Water Features Make GP Parks Special

Grants Pass is a special community in many ways, including our many beautiful and unique city parks.

With four parks with boundaries along the banks of the Rogue River, parks containing five major water features, and a series of fountains to maintain, Grants Pass requires specialty employees to keep these unique additions to the community in proper shape for residents to enjoy.

“My people have to be everything from a plumber, an electrician, drywall installer, landscaper, irrigation expert, equipment operator, water feature specialist, lawn care professional, and athletic field authority,” said Parks Superintendent Wendy Giordano.

“It’s an incredible amount of things to juggle all at once,” she said.

Maintaining parks along the river requires taking great care to make sure horticultural and maintenance practices minimize any potential impacts to wildlife, vegetation, and the health of the river, said Giordano.

That includes monitoring invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed in an effort to eradicate those species before they cause irreparable harm to the ecosystem.

“We did have some bad patches on both sides of the pedestrian bridge,” Giordano said.

“It is important to prevent species such as that from moving downstream where it can spread,” she said.

That requires the Parks Team to work collaboratively with other agencies, such as the Rogue River Watershed Council and the Oregon State Marine Board.

Giordano’s Parks Team works with the Marine Board to maintain the boat ramp at Baker Park, the only boat ramp within city limits. In order for the boat ramp to qualify for funds to assist with its maintenance, the Parks Team had to first bring the ramp up to state standards.

Currently, Giordano is pursuing a grant to renovate the restroom facility located in Baker Park.

At Reinhart Volunteer Park, a series of fishing ponds encompassing approximately 125,386 square feet, or 2.90 acres of the park, require regular maintenance and monitoring. The pond system is served by a 50-hp pump drawing water from the Rogue River to maintain pond water levels. The ponds also serve as a stormwater detention system to help offset the paved, impervious surfaces of the park.

A recent algae bloom in the ponds has demonstrated that keeping the pond pump operating and maintaining water levels can be a difficult process, said Giordano.

“We realized with the algae bloom our system wasn’t working properly, so we are working with a pond professional to address the problem,” she said.

The pond is stocked with fish on a regular basis by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, who monitor pond conditions for ideal times to release the fish. It is also home to various waterfowl who have to be rescued by Parks Team employees from errant fishing line and hooks from time to time.

Dealing with waterfowl is just another unique aspect of serving on the Parks Team, who regularly post signs to remind people not to feed the ducks and goose human food such as bread.

“The geese migration is stunted by humans feeding them. New goslings don’t learn to forage and human domestic food is unhealthy for their proper development,” said Giordano.

Those factors lead to an over population of geese in the area, which upsets the natural cycle.

“It really isn’t good,” she said.

The fly-fishing pond at Reinhart is a different animal. This 7,240-square-foot pond, which

(See “FEATURES” page 7)
Taking Inventory of GP Trees

By Tony Mecum
GP Urban Forester

When you think of a city’s skyline, what do you picture? High-rise buildings? How about the skyline of Grants Pass?

Apart from perhaps the old Redwoods Hotel on 6th Street, you likely picture trees and mountains. It would be impossible to imagine our town without its iconic tree canopy.

From the beginning of its founding, Grants Pass has been known for its natural resources. Sugar pines graced the sky along with Pacific madrones, Bigleaf maples, Oregon white oaks, Ponderosa pines, Incense cedars, Douglas firs, and other native trees.

As our town grew, an urban forest began to take shape with an influx of non-local species, such as Elms, Red maples, Linden, Zelkovas, Callery pears, Black locusts, London planes, Mimosas, and many other out-of-towners adding to the growing population.

Today, the urban forest of Grants Pass contains species that hail from as far away as the Middle East, perhaps even further.

Though most of us have seen a wide variety of trees across our town, no one knows for certain the number of different species, nor the total number of trees. That’s where a tree inventory comes into play.

The City of Grants Pass has partnered with community volunteers to conduct the very first comprehensive inventory of trees in our public parks and along the public right of way. Our goal is to identify the number and quality of our city’s trees.

This information will let us know the value of our urban forest, including the magnitude of services it provides residents and our local environment.

The data collected will impact our future urban forestry planning and management. This is one more step that Grants Pass (Oregon Tree City of the Year 2020) is doing to protect our amazing urban forest asset.

It’s important to know that we are not inventorying trees on private property. Although that makes the inventory limited on the overall landscape of our urban forest, we are still able to gather valuable data on public trees.

You will notice volunteers from now through the end of spring 2021 walking around city parks and along our streets. They will be measuring the diameter of trees, which is an essential input for tree benefit calculators to provide us with information such as the amount of stormwater trees intercept and how much money they add to property values.

Volunteers will also note the general condition of trees and will take photos. The data will be entered into a mapping system that is being funded by the Oregon Department of Forestry.

If you would like to know more about the inventory, including how to get involved as a volunteer, please visit the webpage below, or contact me directly. Volunteers will receive one-on-one training.

The city is excited to be partnered with the Josephine County Master Gardeners through the Oregon State University Extension Service on this project.

Should you have questions regarding tree management or policies, please direct your questions to the city and not the volunteers. Volunteers will have information sheets for the public upon request, but will otherwise defer questions to city staff.

Find out more here: www.grantspassoregon.gov/tree or email me at tmecum@grantspassoregon.gov. You can also call and leave a message at (541)450-6162.

“To exist as a nation, to prosper as a state, to live as a people, we must have trees.”
— Theodore Roosevelt

Parks

River Vista

The River Vista House is a professionally decorated 3-bedroom house between River Vista and the Harry and David Shelter. It is located at 1663 SW Webster Road.

It is normally available to rent during non-COVID times.

The house sleeps up to eight people, and includes a large dining area and living room.

The master suite has a king-size bed, walk-in closet and master bath with a jacuzzi tub.

The other two bedrooms have a queen bed, trundle bed, and shared bathroom.

The beautiful grounds are professionally landscaped.


Features... (from page 6)

is not stocked with fish, requires regular refilling, but has no pump or recirculation system. In the summer, the water evaporates quickly, and in the rainy season, it regularly overflows into the park’s Memorial Grove, said Giordano.

The Spray Park at Riverside Park is only open during the summer months but requires very specialized care. Because the park drains into the Rogue River, Parks Team members use only citric acid-based cleaners to sanitize the park.

“We take additional measures to make sure the sanitation efforts don’t pollute the river,” Giordano said.

As the Spray Park is surrounded by many tees, it requires daily debris cleaning prior to sanitizing during the season. There is also a splash pad at Morrison Centennial Park.

The bubbler rock fountain in the River Vista area at Reinhart Volunteer Park is another popular water feature.

“The great thing about this feature is that it looks beautiful and makes nice water sounds but is very easy to care for. The water is captured under the rocks in a basin and a pump recirculates the water back up. No chemicals are needed just periodic pressure washing,” said Giordano.

“I can’t tell you how many times I see people taking pictures in front of that feature,” she said.

The city also has fountain features at City Hall and in front of the Water Treatment Plant. Those features are maintained and cared for by the city’s Property Management Division of Public Works.
Public Works

Imagine A Day Without Water Essay Winners

The City of Grants Pass Public Works Department has announced the winners of the city’s Imagine A Day Without Water essay contest.

The contest asked local students in middle school and high school divisions to write an essay of 500-650 words discussing the importance of water by imagining a day without the precious resource.

Students were instructed to cite supporting sources for their positions and follow MLA format for the structure of their essay.

A panel of judges conducted a blind assessment of the essays based on multiple criteria, including position statement (clarity relative to theme), supporting information (supports the position), organization (structure), tone (level of persuasiveness), writing with an authentic voice and unique point of view and style, grammar (sentence structure and use of words) and punctuation (correct punctuation and spelling).

Winners in the middle school division included Kiera Nelson (first place), Peter Molina (second place), and Lydia Nelson (third place).

Winners in the high school division included Lillie Olson (first place), Abe Selvas (second place), and Ginger Bliss (third place).

First place winners received a $100 prize. Second place winners received $50, and third place winners received $25.

The first-place essays from each division appear here, in the November issue of GP Now. All participants received a certificate acknowledging their entry.

Imagine a Day Without Water is a national education campaign that brings together diverse stakeholders to highlight how water is essential, invaluable, and in need of investment.

This year, the day of action took place Oct. 21, and included events, proclamations, student contests, social media engagement, and more, all across the country.

The city’s essay contest rules and criteria were in correlation with Common Core Standards for literacy, grades 6-12.

Additional educational resources for teachers and students in grades K-12 are available at the city’s website: https://www.grantspassoregon.gov/1361/Educational-Resources.

High School Essay Winner, Lillie Olson

(This winning essay is re-printed here as submitted in its original form without edits or revisions.)

Imagine a Day Without Water

By Lillie Olson, Grade 9

Imagine a day without water can be almost impossible for those of us who have a constant source of it in our daily lives. For around 2 billion people around the world though, this isn’t an imaginary scenario. Water is humanity’s most vital resource, but many take it for granted. A lot would change if the world had no water for 24 hours.

Some of the many changes would happen within our bodies. Our bodies are made up of 70% water and need to be replenished in order to function properly. Without our water levels being refilled, we would become dehydrated. Our mouths would get dry, lips would crack, we could get headaches, and even have a decline in mood as our bodies become more dehydrated. According to “7 Things That Happen To Your Body When You Stop Drinking Water” posted by Gulf News, when the body is dehydrated our brains have to work a lot harder to accomplish simple tasks. It was also stated that our brains could actually shrink slightly due to our bodies taking liquid from our brain cells for essential functions elsewhere.

As well as dehydration, household routines would be shattered. Without water to use, you would be unable to take your morning shower, brush your teeth, or wash your face. We’d be unable to wash away the germs that would inevitably build up on our hands. The CDC put out a piece called “Show Me The Science-Why Wash Your Hands” stating that washing your hands prevents illness from spreading. Without the ability to wash our hands or stay clean, the chances of the town’s residents falling ill with the Coronavirus would be higher. Appliances such as dishwashers, faucets, washing machines, toilets, and refrigerators/freezers also wouldn’t have water to supply their uses. Chores wouldn’t be accomplished as easily without the use of our appliances.

Gardens or yards wouldn’t be watered by the sprinklers or hoses leaving them more liable to wither up in the heat. Even our cooking would be affected due to the lack of ability to wash produce or boil water.

Furthermore, based on the “Water Treatment Plant History” article published by grantspassoregon.gov, the Grants Pass Powerhouse has been using water from the Rogue River to supply the town with drinking water, gas, and electricity since 1893. So without the river, this entire town would lose a part of its electricity. Even worse, people would be left defenseless against wildfires. If a new fire sprouted up close by when we didn’t have water, it could easily have devastated our town. We would have no way to water our local farms leading to the less successful production of products for the town as well.

We use water for numerous tasks in our day to day lives. Many don’t even realize how much water they use in a day or how much it benefits their lives. If Grants Pass were to wake up tomorrow with zero water, a lot would change in our lives.

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Congratulations, on First Place, Lillie!
Imagine a Day Without Water
By Kiera Nelson, Grade 8

Imagine a day without water. Let’s say you just got back from basketball practice and you need to take a shower and you turn the shower handle but no water comes out. You try the sink but no water comes out. Then, you realize that your house doesn’t have any water. You can’t wash your dirty jersey. You realize that in order to get water, you will have to go to the store and buy a whole lot of bottled water. If there is no bottled water at the grocery store you have to walk to the closest river or stream. You will have to filter and sanitize it. This thought is overwhelming. Having clean drinking water and other accessible water is essential for growing food, staying healthy, and making life easier.

Water is important for growing food. If there is no hose water, or irrigation you can’t water your plants that give you food. You would just have to wish for rain. You would have to go to a river and fill up buckets for watering plants. That would work well for a small garden, but not a big field of plants. One community explained, “We can’t grow plants, including fruits, vegetables and grains, without water. Plants provide food for both us and for the animals we eat. So, we also can’t grow cows, chickens or pigs without water. Water is essential to grow corn as well as cows!” (Danos). If Grants Pass was like that, everyone would have little food and would have to give some to the animals. If people got hungry enough, they might even kill their animals for food.

Water is essential for you to stay healthy. You need water for drinking, cleaning, cooking, bathing, and more. If you don’t drink water or eat food then you could die. But let’s say you have water but it is contaminated. It could have germs in it and if you drink it or put it into your food, you could get really sick with diseases. For drinking water, you can’t just get any water; it has to be clean filtered water. “Clean water for drinking is essential for proper functioning of our bodies. Our bodies need to be properly hydrated so that our organs function properly so that we are in good health. Water also helps in losing weight and prevention of heart attacks. Cooking with clean water is also a necessity so that we can serve healthy meals...” (Carleton College). A YouTube documentary (Java Films) says that the #1 Global risk is having no water. Also, being clean and having clean surroundings helps you stay healthy too. You also need water for sanitation.

Having water makes life easier. If the city water was turned off, you would have to go all the way to a river or a stream to get water and then you would have to filter the water which would be time consuming. Half of your day would be wasted getting water. Every bit of water you use you would have to ration. If you use water for washing clothes, you would then use the same water to take a shower with. Then, you can reuse it again and use it for flushing the toilet. Having running water is very convenient and makes it so we have time for other things.

Water is essential. We need to appreciate having clean filtered water whenever we want because all we have to do is turn a faucet. It is a lot easier than spending half of your day getting water that is mostly clean. Water is very important for growing food to eat, staying healthy, and making life a lot easier.

Works Cited

Congratulations, on First Place, Kiera!
Did You Know?

Cross-Training

Firefighters with Grants Pass Fire/Rescue cross train in multiple disciplines. Being ready to fight fires in structures and save fire victims is just one of many specialties that crews constantly train to perform every day.

Each service provided by fire crews has a mandated or required best-practices training, skill, certification and/or needed specialty equipment to ensure victim and rescuer safety and reduced liability.

Some specialties include maintaining proficiency in emergency medical services such as renewing Emergency Medical Technician licensure every two years, which covers how to operate specialty medical equipment, maintain the ability to diagnose a wide range of medical issues, learn treatment protocols, administer a wide range of drugs, and apply skills and knowledge during complex emergencies such as cardiac arrest incidents.

Another example is the hard work that goes into understanding the dynamics of motor vehicle accidents and vehicle construction so crews can apply specialty tools and skills in peeling open cars to gain access to crash victims.

The list of specialties is long and each firefighter goes through months of initial training and basic certification so they can start and focus an entire career on learning and developing the skills and knowledge to address a whole menu of community issues, from combating different types of fires to rescuing people from different environments and predicaments.

GP Fire/Rescue Part of Local Multi-Agency Response System

Grants Pass Fire/Rescue crews are part of a complete and coordinated wildland fire response system that includes neighboring fire agencies, the Oregon Department of Forestry, federal firefighting partners, emergency management personnel, local law enforcement and the Office of the State Fire Marshal.

Decades of work have gone into developing these long-standing relationships and interagency cooperation through the Rogue Valley Fire Chiefs Association to provide a regional approach to wildland firefighting.

Each wildland fire is managed under a common system of incident management that has built-in levels of growth. Each level brings additional resource to a growing fire starting with closest forces, regardless of agency or jurisdiction, to the mobilization of ODF and State Fire Marshal resources from across the state.

Recently, some fifth grade students from Saint Mary’s School in Medford stopped by the Grants Pass Parkway Station with homemade treats and thank you cards. The students wanted to express their gratitude to the firefighters for responding to the Almeda Fire that caused so much destruction to neighboring cities.
Blessing... (from page 9)

Services that are taken for granted in Grants Pass are often lacking in the places where Julie works abroad.

Electricity is a simple example. While it is generally available in most places, it may be very unreliable, even for days or weeks at a time. In these countries there are always candles and matches, and extra blankets at the ready for when the power goes out.

People can live without electricity, but they can’t live without clean, safe water.

Julie explains that it is hard to comprehend what life is like without reliable access to the most basic of needs. In some countries, while there is a general understanding that the only water to drink may come from a bottle, that alone comes with many pitfalls. First, is the expense and waste.

For people with restricted incomes and very little space (in what are often multi-generational homes), bottled water may constitute a significant portion of a family’s expenses. Even then, depending on the level of competence or corruption, the bottled water itself may not be safe.

At one point in her travels, Julie brought her children to reside with her while working in Kosovo. To her horror, she learned that the bottled water her family used may have been contaminated with lead. After testing, it was determined that her own family had not been impacted, but she still recalls the terror of learning the news and her heart still aches for the families that may not have been as lucky.

Julie also recalled that during one trip, she was experiencing ongoing illness until she saw a waiter washing what appeared to be a clean glass with bottled water. At that point, she realized it was her food and drinkware that was making her sick. She adopted the same practice as the waiter, and soon began feeling better.

A lack of reliable water requires many other adjustments. In one country where a shower was an unimaginable luxury, Julie decided to cut her hair short as just trying to shampoo it was an ordeal. She did point out that because she was on a government assignment, she had plenty of access to baby wipes, but after living with it, she wouldn’t recommend that as the sole method of bathing.

Among the many other simple habits she had to change, was remembering to not soap up her hands before checking to make sure there was enough water to rinse them off.

The experience of living in high-conflict regions without reliable water greatly informs Julie’s views about water in Grants Pass. She is uncertain about the best way to achieve it, but she is certain that the community must invest in reliable water infrastructure. She realizes it is difficult to conceive of a life without reliable, safe water, if someone has never experienced it. That is why she is happy to share her story.

She is also happy to explain that like many business owners, she is thrifty with a dollar, but she feels that investing in water infrastructure provides returns many times over.

While for some of us, this is a season of counting blessings and seeking peace, for Julie it is something she practices every day. Her lessons learned about seeking common ground and investing in what is important offers wise counsel for us all.

Riker... (from page 3)

He said it took him “quite a while” to get a grasp of the inner workings of City Hall and the “dynamics” of municipal government.

“It took me about two years to get my feet under me. You just can’t jump right into it,” Riker said.

Learning to take the proper time to make good decisions is an important part of the process, he said.

“Sometimes you can push something too fast, and then you find it was a mistake,” said Riker. “Sometimes it’s best to sit on it for an extra time.”

The councilor, who was once afraid of getting overloaded with citizen phone calls and emails, said he likes to make sure he has given people enough time to contact him with their comments and suggestions.

“I’d like to hear from more people more often,” he said.

“We have some challenging times ahead of us, but we have some of the best staff and a dedicated council to navigate our way,” Riker said.

Clark... (from page 4)

and the area of Southern Oregon, Clark found the posting for a position as principal planner for the City of Grants Pass.

He was hired to the position in June of 2019. Just 12 months later, city administration called on him to serve as the interim director of Community Development upon the retirement of his predecessor, Lora Glover. He was officially named as Glover’s replacement Aug. 31.

Some of the challenges he faces in his new role with the city include the wide range of responsibilities that come with the many divisions under the Community Development Department, said Clark.

Parks and recreation are “the new elements” to him, he said.

“A major portion of the parks division is maintenance,” Clark said.

As principal planner, Clark was already working diligently on the rezoning of the city’s Urban Growth Boundary, a project he will now oversee as director of the department.

“Of the drivers for this is increasing the land supply for residential development. We need more land,” said Clark.

Economic development is another focus he wants to direct further effort towards.

“I don’t think the city has truly leveraged its assets in this area,” Clark said.

Business expansion and recruitment efforts are in special need of attention, he said.

“We really need to update our economic development strategy. There’s a big connection between planning and economic development that hasn’t been developed,” said Clark.

Another project on Clark’s list includes updating the city’s buildable land inventory so that it can be properly marketed to developers looking to build. Included in that inventory is the Spalding Industrial Park, which presents its own challenges, he said.

“My goal is to find solutions,” Clark said.

DID YOU KNOW?

Grants Pass has more than 187 miles of water distribution piping to transport fresh drinking water throughout the city.
Payment Arrangements Available to Customers

The City of Grants Pass Customer Service Department is encouraging customers with delinquent utility bills to reach out to the department to make payment arrangements to address the delinquency. The department began processing utility bill delinquencies within the last 30 days.

“The Customer Service Department understands that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused financial hardships for many of our customers and wants to work with individual account holders to bring their accounts current,” said Customer Service Supervisor Kimberly Gasperson.

“We strongly encourage customers that are struggling with their utility bill to call our office and speak to a customer service agent who can assist them with setting up a payment arrangement,” Gasperson said.

City staff recognizes that the total outstanding balance may be slightly overwhelming to some customers. For this reason, the city will provide customers with a long-term payment plan option that can spread a customer’s delinquent balance across up to 12 months.

“Customers with delinquent balances will be receiving a letter detailing their delinquent balance and information regarding the COVID-19 Special Payment Program the city will be launching this month,” said Gasperson.

Customers experiencing financial hardship and needing additional time to pay their bills can contact the Customer Service office at (541) 450-6035, or by email at cstrsvc@grantspassoregon.gov. In-person appointments can also be arranged.

Strategic...(from page 2)ستطيع أن يعملوا مع BLM لدفع الرسوم.

Core planning team is nearing completion of phased recreational plan based on input from community, adjacent landowners, and partnering landowners.

Action 4: Install additional security cameras throughout the park system.

Camera has been relocated at Westholm Park with improved viewing and additional lighting. New cameras have been installed at Riverside Park and Greenwood Dog Park. Reviewing additional locations.

Thank you for helping to make this community great.

With yours in public service.

Finance Customer Service Office Reopen to the Public

The City of Grants Pass Finance Customer Service office at City Hall reopens to in-person public service Monday, Oct. 26. The office front desk area has been remodeled to create additional safety and security for the public and staff members.

“We will continue to serve our customers via phone, but are happy to be able to once again meet with our customers face to face,” said Customer Service Supervisor Kimberly Gasperson.

The Finance Customer Service office is located at 101 NW ‘A’ St., Room 103. A variety of services can also be accessed online at: https://www.grantspassoregon.gov/320/Customer-Service-Utility-Billing.

Regular office hours will remain 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. For additional information, call (541)450-6035.

Bulk Water

The City of Grants Pass Public Works Department Water Distribution Division now offers bulk water distribution to customers at two locations in the Grants Pass area. Bulk water stations are located at 2480 Williams Hwy. and a new location at Republic Services, 1749 Merlin Road, also known as the former Jo-Gro site.

Bulk water customers must first establish an account with the city’s Finance Customer Service Department. Bulk water is priced at $6.50 per 1,000 gallons.

For additional information, call the Water Distribution Division 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday at (541)450-6115.

Hub... (from page 4)

“It will be a lab space for existing businesses,” she said.

Common Connections is currently looking into the pursuit of grant funding for the program through both federal and local sources.

“You need some funding to be on the map,” said Dreher.

“There is funding available at each different step. It’s about making sure you have a really strong plan moving forward,” said Bonney.

Moving forward means calling on those people who first worked together to envision the program to reorganize and continue to develop the plan, Dreher said.

“Collaborations are the important thing,” he said.