Drainage Responsibilities

Rain has been soaking our region and with it comes responsibility from all of us to ensure that drainage ways adjacent to our homes are maintained, free of debris and ready to operate as intended. Section 8.56.030 of the Grants Pass Municipal Code states: “... owners of properties adjoining any existing stream, canal, ditch, pipeline, culvert or other facility for carrying off surface water shall keep such drainage way open and free from growth and other obstruction through the property of each respective owner...” Why is this issue so important that City Council adopted this ordinance back in the early 1950s?

Water is critical to our well-being and quality of life in Grants Pass. We cherish our local creeks and the Rogue River. But water can also be a devastating force when uncontrolled. Urban flooding caused by excessive stormwater runoff can cause traffic delays, property damage and even injury. Each of us has a responsibility to our downstream neighbors to ensure that we eliminate uncontrolled runoff from our properties. Part of that responsibility includes ensuring that ditches and creeks are unobstructed and that water can run off without debris, trees, bushes and grass causing backups and flooding.

The Grants Pass Public Works Department encourages homeowners to contact the City for advice on any drainage way improvements prior to beginning any clearing project. The Streets and Drainage Division is happy to instruct homeowners on the importance of keeping the waterways unobstructed and free-flowing as well as the potential resources that are available to assist in their efforts. Drainage way clearing should be undertaken after the end of irrigation season (generally early October) and before the onset of the rainy season.

Want to Join the Tourism Advisory Committee?
All interested parties are encouraged to apply.

Applications are being accepted for three positions on the Tourism Advisory Committee due to terms expiring March 31, 2017. These positions are three-year terms.

The purpose of the Tourism Advisory Committee is to review the strategy for the implementation of the tourism program and to report its findings and recommendations to the City Council on a quarterly basis. The committee also coordinates the efforts of local tourism providers and others for program events and to identify and stage special events, promotions and other tourism-related activities.

You may obtain an application at the City Administration Office at 101 N.W. A Street, or at www.grantspassoregon.gov/committee-application. Applications must be received no later than Monday, March 6, 2017. Appointments will be made on Wednesday, March 15 at the City Council Meeting.
In the event of an emergency you might not have access to food, water or electricity for several days. Taking the time to store emergency food and water supplies now will help you be prepared for the future.

Having access to a supply of clean water is a top priority in an emergency. A normally-active person needs to drink at least two quarts (half gallon) of water each day. When you consider additional water for food preparation and hygiene needs, you should plan on at least a gallon of water per person per day. If possible, store at least a two-week supply.

Recent inclement weather has reminded us that an emergency can happen in our city. We are fortunate to have talented and well-trained emergency responders in both the public and private sectors. They will help as much as they can. However, if a disaster-sized event occurs in the Grants Pass area, your own resources and preparation will be your first and best protection.

There is a comfort that comes to those who have prepared. Having water and access to emergency supplies such as food, blankets, medications and basic support items such as flashlights and simple tools will help you be prepared.

As Miguel de Cervantes, the Spanish writer and philosopher said, “To be prepared is half the victory.” You can learn more at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) website and by reviewing the Josephine County Family Emergency Preparedness Handbook posted on the City’s website at: www.grantspassoregon.gov/DocumentCenter/View/574.

Meet Barry Eames, new City Councilor for Ward 4

- First Car: 1960 MGA
- Favorite Word: Freedom / Love
- First Concert: Andre Rieu in Portland
- Most memorable day: The day I met my future wife. It was in my last term at the University of Oregon. I worked part-time at Safeway adjacent to the campus and was responsible for closing the store at night. One night, after all my duties were completed, I headed home tired and having to study for a class the following morning. Arriving home, I saw a huge party going on thanks to my roommates. So much for studying!!! I walked in the door with a large frown on my face when I saw the most beautiful woman I had ever seen. She was my roommate’s blind date that night, but they had no chemistry. She and I started conversing. Two months later we were married.
- Life’s passion: Travel. I had always wanted to explore the world. I was fortunate to have the time and resources at the end of my career to set out on this adventure. My travels included the USA, Canada, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and a brief stop in Peru. We explored Southeast Asia and a good portion of Western Europe, including a trip on the Orient Express from Istanbul to Venice. However, my favorite destination of all, by far, is Africa. We explored Egypt from the pyramids to the Valley of the Kings. We went on safaris in Kenya, hiked in to visit gorillas in Rwanda and Uganda. Stayed in safari camps in Zimbabwe, South Africa and my very favorite, the Okavango Delta in Botswana. Some day I would like to return.

More about Councilor Eames next page.
Shedding Light on our Community

Our days are getting longer and darkness is arriving later but we still rely on our extensive network of streetlights to help keep our environment well-lit and safe. It is easy to notice when one of the 1,835 streetlights is not functioning properly. How do you report a broken streetlight, and who is responsible for its repair?

The vast majority of the streetlights within the City of Grants Pass are owned and operated by Pacific Power and Light. Any failures should be reported directly to them so crews can be mobilized to repair the faulty fixture. The exception to this rule is the roughly 185 decorative streetlights that you see downtown and on the bridges. Those fixtures are owned and maintained by the City of Grants Pass.

There are a number of ways in which a citizen can report a failed streetlight. The easiest way is to use Pacific Power’s online tool: www.pacificpower.net/ed/streetlights.html. The form is quick to fill out and notifies Pacific Power of the location of the light and the nature of the problem. You can also report streetlight issues by calling their customer service line at 1-888-221-7070.

To report issues with City-owned decorative lights, simply call the City’s Public Works Division. They can be reached by calling 541-450-6110. You can also report an issue with a downtown light by using our web form which is accessible from our Streets and Drainage Department at: www.grantspassoregon.gov/281/Streets-Drainage-Division.

Councilor Eames On Grants Pass Life

My family moved to Grants Pass in 1961 when I was 14 years old. Except for my time as a student at the University of Oregon, I have been a lifelong resident of our community and as such I have a deep affinity and love for the community.

During the past 50 years, the city has grown threefold and has transformed from being a sleepy little blue-collar lumber town to a vibrant and prosperous city. The mills have been replaced with light industry and a significant retirement community has developed bringing an economic boost to our economy. Through annexation the size of the city has grown and demands on infrastructure have strained the capacities of the city water, sewer and drainage systems. Also, the Public Safety Department has not kept pace with this growth and needs to be enhanced to meet the needs of the public.

My goal as a Councilor is to assure that all of the needs of the city are met in a reasonable and responsible way without bankrupting or causing needless hardships on its citizens. Grants Pass is fortunate to have an extremely professional city management team from top to bottom.

My job as a City Councilor will be to work harmoniously with the city staff to provide the best services at the most reasonable cost. I will always keep an open ear to anyone having a concern or a suggestion about the City of Grants Pass.
Weatherization Assistance

Do you own your home? Are you elderly, disabled, or on a limited income? Are you in need of financial assistance to complete energy-saving weatherization improvements? If so, you may qualify for assistance from the City’s Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. The City is partnering with the United Community Action Network (UCAN) to administer $85,000 in CDBG funds citywide for eligible weatherization projects. Homes must be located within the Grants Pass city limits.

To be eligible, applicants must:

- Own their home;
- Not be subject to foreclosure; and
- Meet income limitations.

Weatherization services typically include:

- A home-energy audit;
- Insulating attics, walls, floors, heating ducts, and water pipes;
- Air-sealing the exterior shell of the home;
- Air-sealing heating and air conditioning ductwork;
- Installation of bath and kitchen exhaust fans venting to the exterior; and
- Restoration of finished surfaces disturbed during the weatherization process.

If you think you might qualify, please contact UCAN at 541-956-4050. Funding for the CDBG program is provided by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. The goal of the program is to develop viable urban communities by providing decent housing and a suitable living environment and expanding economic opportunities for low- and moderate-income persons. Additional information about this program can be found online at www.grantspassoregon.gov/886/CDBG-and-Consolidated-Plan.