



Local Focus

The Magazine of the League of Oregon Cities

Q3 2023



Recruitment & Retention

Best practices for hiring, creating culture & keeping the best

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

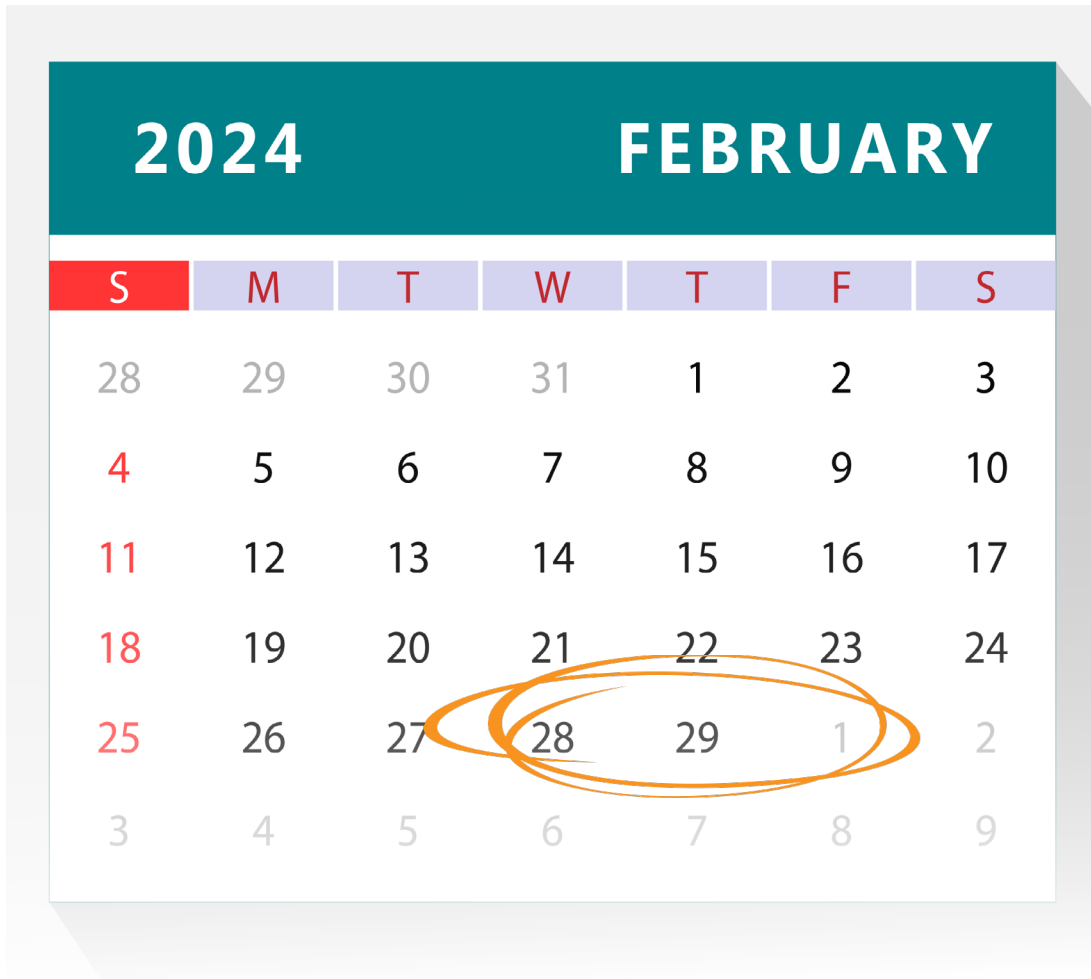
Apply for the LOC Board
98th Annual Conference

Post-Session Information

City of St. Helens employees participate in Citizens Day.



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Save the Date: CIS Annual Conference

Feb. 28 - March 1, 2024 | Salem Convention Center

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CIS makes it easy to attend, with scholarships that provide one representative from each member city free registration, meals, and one night's lodging.

Watch cisoregon.org/conference for more information.



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* <https://www.infrastructurereportcard.org>

** 2017 IPSOS Survey of HomeServe policyholders and non-policyholders

Local Focus



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www.orcities.org

Showing Up

When LOC President and Hillsboro Mayor Steve Callaway made his remarks at the 2022 LOC Annual Conference in Bend he said, “Leaders can pretend to care, but they can’t pretend to show up.” It was the first time I had heard that phrase. And in the many months since the President said those words, I’ve witnessed firsthand the countless local government leaders in Oregon who “show up” for their constituents and their colleagues. There are hundreds of examples to share, but two highlight, in my opinion, the true depth of commitment Oregon’s mayors, councilors, commissioners, and city staff have for those they serve.

Oregon is facing an unprecedented homelessness crisis—a crisis first identified by city leaders, and with city leaders serving on the frontlines of equitably and humanely attempting to provide relief. Yes, Governor Kotek and state leaders have allocated historic levels of funding to address this crisis. These efforts deserve our respect and are worthy of the news coverage they’ve received. But what has unfortunately gone unnoticed, or at least unreported, is how city officials are showing up, and have been showing up, to this crisis. Here are some examples:

- Cities all over this state have hosted town halls to discuss the causes, impacts, and potential responses to their unique homeless crisis. In some cases, cities hosted multiple town halls. In each town hall I attended, and there were many, what I saw were city leaders listening, learning, emphasizing, and planning.
- Mayors, leading more than 100 cities in this state, collaborated to propose the first locally led solution to homelessness in the state’s history. The Oregon Mayors Association’s Homelessness Taskforce was a sight to be reckoned with—it showed the true power of unity, and highlighted how city leaders show up for their constituents, those that are housed and unhoused. And while the specific request was not achieved, those mayors, for the first time in a generation, had a seat at the decision-making table, and made gains in securing needed resources for the most vulnerable in their communities.

Serving in locally elected office isn’t easy, which is why mayors and councilors rely on one another for support. While many people may think being a mayor or councilor is attending ribbon cuttings, participating in a meeting once a week, or walking in the Independence Day parade, it’s so much more; and the more part is tremendously difficult. City leaders make impossible decisions every week: When a budget shortfall occurs, which city programs get cut, the library or the police department? Or, when a water system is failing, how do you pay for its replacement when many water users live paycheck to paycheck? Decisions like these weigh on mayors, councilors, and commissioners, which is why they lean on their local government colleagues for ideas and support. Across Oregon, there is a collegial network of local government leaders who share the same burdens and challenges, but who

also share the same dedication to making sure no one local leader carries the weight themselves.

While there are no absolutes in life, I believe it’s fair to say that those people who serve on city councils in Oregon are inherently built to “show up” for their communities—it’s certainly not for the salary. And as a longtime employee of local governments, I think most of us working in this space are also the type of people who naturally “show up” to do civic work. Representing a city is hard work, and it’s not always appreciated. But it is honorable work, comprised mainly of honorable people who are not pretending to care, and instead are showing up every day to make their community a little bit better and to positively impact their constituents in whatever way possible.



Patty Mulvihill
LOC Executive Director



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Apply to Serve on the LOC Board of Directors

The LOC is currently soliciting applications for service on its board of directors beginning in January 2024. Applications can be found by visiting the LOC website at www.orcities.org. The application includes information on board responsibilities, what is expected of board members, and the time commitment it will take to serve as a director or LOC Vice President.

The board sets the policy positions LOC takes, including advocacy at the Legislature. It also guides the LOC staff and oversees the budget.

LOC President and Hillsboro Mayor Steve Callaway says all of us who serve in elected positions bring unique life experiences, outlooks, understandings, interests, and expertise. When all these perspectives are represented on the board from throughout our state, the LOC is stronger and can work together for better solutions to serve all Oregon communities. “I encourage all elected officials, regardless of their length of service, to consider applying for a board position or any of our committees.”

There are two types of board positions open for 2023:

1. **LOC Vice President.** There is one open position for Vice President. The LOC Vice President is one of four board officers who serve on the LOC Executive Committee. The office of LOC Vice President can be held by an elected city official. The Vice President position will expire on December 31, 2024 (but please note the person in that position will automatically ascend to the position of LOC President for

calendar year 2025 and serve as the LOC Immediate Past President in 2026).

2. **Elected City Official Director Position(s).** This year, there are three open Elected City Official Director positions. Elected City Official Directors represent all geographic regions of the state and varied city populations. The term of office for the Elected City Official Director positions is three years, with the term beginning at the first board meeting of the new calendar year following the election.

All applicants for the LOC Vice President position and Elected Official Director position should note that they will be required to make a presentation to the LOC Nominating Committee during a publicly noticed meeting on Thursday, October 12, as part of the 98th LOC Annual Conference in Eugene. The Nominating Committee will put forward its recommendation to the LOC membership during the LOC Annual Business Meeting, Saturday, October 14.

The application deadline for all positions is **September 26**.

Candidates for all offices should know that the LOC Bylaws allow for nominations from the floor during the LOC Annual Business Meeting.

Contacts:

Jayme Pierce, General Counsel – jpierce@orcities.org

Jasmine Jones, Administrative Assistant – jajones@orcities.org

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LOC Board of Directors Meets in Hillsboro

The LOC Board of Directors met in person in Hillsboro on June 23 and took the following actions:

- Preliminarily supported the LOC working with the Coraggio Group on a potential Strategic Planning Cohort for member cities. The cohort would allow cities, with limited fiscal resources, the opportunity to collaborate with one another to receive high-quality strategic planning services from the Coraggio Group at a reduced cost. LOC staff have been directed to further work with the Coraggio Group to outline a program for consideration.
- Approved unanimously the LOC's budget for Fiscal Year 2023/2024. This fiscal year budget is fully balanced, continuing to provide the same services and programs historically offered

by the LOC, including the continuation of scholarships for LOC members to attend key educational and training events, like the LOC's Spring and Annual Conferences.

- Directed staff to work with the Finance Committee to develop a strategy by which the associate member dues rates reflect the value of the program and are increased as appropriate. An LOC Associate Membership is available to public bodies which are not cities or counties; the membership allows the public body to participate in CIS insurance and risk management services.

The LOC Board will next meet October 11 in Eugene, prior to the LOC's 98th Annual Conference.



Welcome, Brie

The LOC is pleased to welcome Brie Ligammari to our Member and Administrative Services Department as our Conference Coordinator. Brie comes to the League from Marion County, where she worked as a paralegal for the district attorney's office for three years, and as a deputy for the Marion County Sheriff's Office for four years. Brie enjoys bringing people together and is excited to be a part of the LOC's long-standing tradition of producing excellent conferences and training opportunities for our members.

Brie can be reached at bligammari@orcities.org.

When's the best time to prepare for **wildfire season**?

Right now.

Get prepared at portlandgeneral.com/wildfireoutage



98TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

OCTOBER 12-14 • GRADUATE EUGENE

Register Today for the 98th Annual Conference

We are excited to announce that registration for the 98th Annual LOC Conference is now open! The premier training and networking event for city officials will be held from October 12-14 at the Graduate in Eugene.

The LOC Annual Conference is a must-attend event for city officials looking to stay up-to-date with the latest trends, best practices, and legislation affecting local government.

Register by September 11 and save! Register online at www.orcities.org.

Thank You Sponsors



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Preliminary Conference Agenda

Visit www.orcities.org for a detailed agenda.
Agenda subject to change

Thursday, October 12

- 7:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. Trade Show & Continental Breakfast
- 8:00 a.m. – 3:15 p.m. Human Resources Workshop
- 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. OMA and OCCMA Business Meetings, Joint Workshop and Lunch
- 8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Councilors Workshop and Lunch
- 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Trade Show Lunch (for staff, exhibitors, and tour attendees)
- 11:45 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. People of Color Caucus Business Meeting
- 12:45 p.m. – 2:45 p.m. Local City Tours
- 1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. Breakout Sessions
- 2:30 p.m. – 3:15 p.m. Networking Break
- 3:15 p.m. – 4:45 p.m. Welcome and Keynote
- 4:45 p.m. – 6:15 p.m. Welcome Reception
- 5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. LOC Nominating Committee Meeting

Friday, October 13

- 7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. Breakfast with Trade Show
- 8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. Small, Medium and Large Cities Networks
- 8:00 a.m. – 4:10 p.m. Housing Workshop
- 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Local City Tours
- 9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. Breakout Sessions
- 10:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Networking Break
- 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Breakout Sessions
- 12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. Lunch with Trade Show
- 12:15 p.m. – 1:15 p.m. Women's Caucus Business Meeting
- 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Local City Tours
- 1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. Breakout Sessions
- 2:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Networking Break
- 3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Breakout Sessions
- 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. Awards Dinner

Saturday, October 14

- 7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m. Networking Breakfast
- 8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. Homelessness Session
- 10:15 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. Closing Keynote
- 11:15 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Break
- 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Annual Membership Meeting



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Visit us at: UpstartCyber.com/LOC

We're sponsoring the "Cybersecurity Challenges for Local & Regional Governments" session at this year's LOC Annual Conference. We look forward to seeing you there!



(904) 676-4512

contactus@upstartcyber.com

7307 SW Beveland Street
 Suite 200
 Tigard, OR 97223

2023 LOC AWARDS

The LOC Awards program recognizes great leaders and great projects in Oregon's cities. LOC members are invited to nominate elected or appointed leaders who have made outstanding contributions to their city for one of the LOC's prestigious awards. In addition, there are award categories for progressive and innovative city programs and projects.

The deadline to submit a nomination is **Friday, September 1, 2023**.

Who is an Outstanding Leader in Your Community?

Do you know of an individual who has made outstanding contributions to your community or to the state of Oregon? Help us recognize their efforts by nominating them for one of the LOC's **Exceptional Service Awards**:



Former Redmond Mayor George Endicott was the recipient of the 2022 Mark O. Hatfield Statesmanship Award.

- The **James C. Richards Memorial Award** recognizes exceptional contributions by elected city officials.
- The **Herman Kehrl Award** is granted to a city employee who has provided lasting benefits to their community.
- The **Mark O. Hatfield Statesmanship Award** is presented to individuals who have demonstrated exemplary service that has positively affected the citizens of Oregon.
- The **Civic Education Award** acknowledges individuals who have demonstrated an ongoing commitment to nurturing civic responsibility in youth.

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Honoring Excellence in Local Government

Show Off Your City's Successful Project or Program

The **City Awards** recognize and encourage excellence, innovation, efficiency and great public service in city government. It's an opportunity for your city to receive the recognition it deserves. Winners can use their success as a positive selling point for their communities and as a boost to the community's spirit. The awards also serve as a forum for sharing the best public service practices in Oregon.

- The **Award for Excellence** recognizes cities that have undertaken progressive and innovative approaches to city operations and providing services to their citizens.
- The **Helen and Alan Berg Good Governance Award** recognizes programs, projects or events which have a specific purpose of reaching out to and/or educating citizens.

Nomination forms and submission instructions, as well as past award winners, can be found on the LOC website at: www.orcities.org.



The city of Lake Oswego won the 2022 Award for Excellence for their "Shop Lake Grove" business support and promotional program.



LOC partners with NPPGov. LOC serves as the Lead Public Agency for cooperative contracts available through NPPGov.

NPPGov.com



Ninth Circuit Declines to Rehear Case Involving Public Camping Ordinances

On September 28, 2022, the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed *Blake v. Grants Pass*, a class action matter addressing public camping. The court upheld the U.S. District Court’s prior ruling that persons experiencing homelessness are entitled to take necessary minimal measures to keep themselves warm and dry while sleeping outside. The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals opined that cities violate the Eighth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution if they punish a person for the mere act of sleeping outside or for sleeping in their vehicles at night when there is no other place in the city for them to go.

The LOC, in conjunction with several other similar organizations across the nation, filed an amicus brief in support of a request from the city of Grants Pass request for a rehearing in front of the full panel of judges.

On July 5, most of the court’s 29 judges voted against the request for a rehearing from the city of Grants Pass. However, the court did issue an amended opinion. The revised opinion slightly softened previous language and held that “it is an Eighth Amendment violation to criminally punish involuntarily homeless persons for sleeping in public if there are no other public areas or appropriate shelters where those individuals can sleep.”

The difference from the previous holding is that sleeping and camping ordinances were unenforceable if there were no other public areas or appropriate shelters for individuals to sleep. The previous opinion limited enforcement when the number of homeless individuals exceeded the number of available shelter beds within the city.

In addition to the amended opinion, several judges filed dissenting statements and opinions in support of the city, creating a favorable record for an appeal to a higher court. The LOC has been notified that the city will appeal the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals opinion to the U.S. Supreme Court.

As a result of this amended opinion, the LOC has updated its [Guide to Persons Experiencing Homelessness in Public Spaces](#) (available in the Reference Library on the LOC website). LOC members are encouraged to reach out to their legal counsel with concerns related to this update. The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals amended opinion may be accessed at tinyurl.com/zas3h2rd.

Contact: Jayme Pierce, General Counsel - jpierce@orcities.org



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Recreational Immunity at Risk After Court of Appeals Opinion in Slip and Fall Case

On July 6, the Oregon Court of Appeals issued an opinion impacting public entities and recreational immunity. This case involved a slip and fall claim where the plaintiff, while on their way to the beach, was injured while walking their dog on an improved trail which was owned and maintained by the city of Newport.

The trial court granted summary judgment in favor of the city on its recreational immunity defense. The trial court determined “there are no genuine issues of material fact in dispute” and that under state law, the plaintiff was “using the trail for recreational purposes” by “walking her dog on a trail to the beach with a friend,” and thus entitled to recreational immunity from any liability. The plaintiff appealed the judgment, arguing in relevant part that there are issues of material fact concerning whether her principal purpose (as required under state law) in walking on the trail was recreational or to access Agate Beach.

The Oregon Court of Appeals decided that an issue of material fact existed about whether the plaintiff’s use of the trail was recreational in nature or only for the purpose of accessing the beach. If, on remand, the principal purpose of the plaintiff using the trail was for accessing the beach, the court opined that recreational use immunity would not apply and therefore the city is liable for the plaintiff’s injuries.

It is expected that the city of Newport will appeal this matter to the Oregon Supreme Court. Additionally, the LOC lobbying team will push for a statutory amendment to the recreational immunity statutes.

LOC members are encouraged to reach out to their legal counsel with concerns related to this matter. The full Oregon Court of Appeals opinion may be accessed at tinyurl.com/5n7vnhn7.

Contact: Jayme Pierce, General Counsel - jpierce@orcities.org

HUD Announces Competitive Grant Process to Help Cities Obtain Needed Housing

In late July, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development announced \$85 million in competitive grant funding to help local governments obtain needed housing. Oregon cities are eligible recipients of these federal dollars, and if awarded, a city can use the funds to:

- Develop, update, or advance housing and community plans;
- Create transit-oriented development zones;
- Incentivize the development of vacant lots or the conversion of commercial properties to residential and mixed-use development;
- Streamline permitting processes and expand by-right development; and
- Update land development codes to increase residential property height limitations, address off-street parking requirements, increase density, and reduce minimum lot sizes.

Cities that wish to apply for these grants have until 8:59 p.m. PST on **October 30, 2023**.

More information on this competitive grant opportunity is available at tinyurl.com/3tjerap2.

Contact: Ariel Nelson, Lobbyist – anelson@orcities.org

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Contact us:
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Register Now for Upcoming Grant Writing Workshops

The LOC is pleased to announce an upcoming series of training opportunities: Introduction to Grant Writing and Advanced Grant Writing.

Whether you're looking to learn the basics of grant writing, or to further your knowledge at a more advanced level—join PARC Resources Senior Consultant Laura Prado for a multi-day, virtual workshop that will provide a unique opportunity to learn and ask questions about the grant writing process.

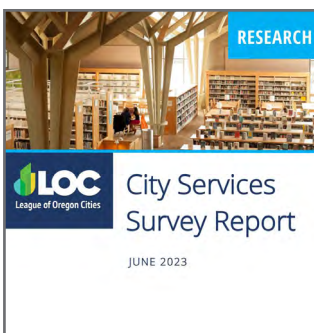
Introduction to Grant Writing:
August 29 & 30, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Advanced Grant Writing:
September 11, 13, & 15, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Register now at www.orcities.org.

For questions, please contact LOC Training Coordinator Steffany Sweet at ssweet@orcities.org.

LOC Publishes City Services Survey Report



The LOC's City Services Survey amalgamated the findings of the 2015 data collection and the 2023 collection to produce a fuller understanding of the services offered by Oregon cities. The findings show that while many services are offered by cities, many are provided in partnership with counties and special districts. This varies often by city size. In addition, several regions offered more city services than other regions, partially due (it is speculated) to their geographic isolation.

The [survey report](#) is available in the [Reference Library](#) on the LOC website.



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Newly elected? Need a refresher on municipal law?

Sign Up for Municipal Fundamentals Training

Municipal Fundamentals is a low-cost half-day training that covers four core municipal concepts:

- Home Rule 101
- Social Media Update
- Public Contracting Basics
- Handling Difficult Meetings

Cities are encouraged to sign up new mayors, councilors and members of city boards or commissions to learn the basics prior to being sworn in. The training is also a great primer for returning elected officials and city staff.

Registration is now open at www.orcities.org. Seating is limited so register early. The cost is \$30 per person (includes lunch).

Dates and locations *(subject to change)*:

- September 8, 8:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. – Coquille
- September 20, 8:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. – Forest Grove
- September 21, 8:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. – Salem
- November 3, 8:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. – Redmond

Small Cities Meetings Schedule

The Small Cities Network is a League program for cities with a population of 7,500 or less, with quarterly meetings to network and discuss common issues and solutions.

All meetings start at 11:00 a.m. Register at www.orcities.org under Training & Events > Small Cities Program.

Upcoming Meetings

North Coast (Region 1)
Rockaway Beach, November 3

Portland Metro (Region 2)
Estacada, September 20

North Willamette Valley (Region 3)
Independence, November 9

South Willamette Valley (Region 4)
Oakridge, November 8

Central Coast (Region 5)
Dunes City, August 16

South Coast (Region 6)
Port Orford, August 17

Southern Valley (Region 7)
Drain, September 7

Columbia Gorge (Region 8)
Mosier, September 14

Central Oregon (Region 9)
Mitchell, September 15

South Central Oregon (Region 10)
Bonanza, September 8

Northeast Oregon (Region 11)
Island City, October 18

Eastern Oregon (Region 12)
Vale, October 19

City Deadline Calendar

Important statutory deadlines cities need to know

AUGUST

August 22

ELECTION DAY – Special

Note: Double majority rules apply for property tax measures.

SEPTEMBER

September 7

November Election: File Statements of Offices, Candidates and Measures with County

City elections filing officer must file no later than the 61st day before the date of the election. Thursday, September 7 is this year’s deadline to file as it is 61 days before the November 7 election.

September 30

Budget: Submit Budget Documents to County Clerk

No later than September 30, cities that certify a tax on property must provide a complete copy of the budget document to the clerk of the county in which the taxing district is located. A complete copy includes the sample ballot for each new tax and

all budget detail sheets, meeting notices and affidavits of publication, resolutions, and ordinances from the budget process.

Note: Although the budget process may begin sooner or later than noted, all the documents referenced above must be submitted to the county clerk by September 30.

OCTOBER

October 31

Statewide Transit Tax: Returns and Payments Due

City employers are required to file a tax return, along with payment of the statewide transit tax withheld from employee wages to the Oregon Department of Revenue for the third calendar quarter (July 1 to September 30) by October 31.

Reminder: Public Employee Retirement System (PERS) Reports

City must remit a regular report to PERS Board no later than three business days after the end of the city’s pay cycle. (ORS 238.705; OAR 459-070-0100.)

Download the full 2023 deadline calendar

The complete calendar is available on the [LOC website](#) under Resources, then Reference Materials.

Small Deposit, Big Return

For 50 years, Oregon’s first-in-the-nation Bottle Bill has helped dramatically reduce litter and improve the state’s environment by keeping bottles and cans out of our waterways, natural areas, and city streets. It pushes us to deliver strong circular recycling outcomes, with some of the best results in the nation and the world. We’re proud to serve as the steward and operator of America’s original EPR program, ensuring 2 billion containers are returned for Grade-A recycling each year.



October 26-27, 2023 in Ashland



26th Annual

Oregon Connections Telecommunications Conference

Broadband : Future Proofing Oregon

Opening Keynote



Ron Wyden
United States Senator

Closing Keynote



Adam Geisler
Division Chief (NTIA)

Sessions include

Working Partnership Models (Non-Profit, Municipality, EDD, Tribal) • Convergence-Colliding Technologies • Broadband 101 • What Happened To Telephone? • Telehealth • Overbuilding? Or Future Proofing?

Register today at

www.OregonConnections.info



In Light of Recent Cyberattacks, Members Encouraged to Add More Cyber Coverage

In June, the Oregon Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) was the victim of a global hack due to a vulnerability in a third-party software. This impacted an estimated 3.5 million Oregonians, as information from their drivers' licenses, permits and ID cards were stolen. That brazen attack is one more reminder that all public agencies are vulnerable.

In 2022 and 2023, 12 CIS members fell victim to cyberattacks.

While many of these cyber claims are still in process, some are coming to a close. Two CIS members — which had the minimum \$50,000 of cyber coverage — are facing an excess of \$400,000 combined expenses related to cyber events.

Because the members had the minimum amount of coverage, anything greater than \$50,000 is their responsibility.

“Those two members are a cautionary tale,” said CIS’ Executive Director Patrick Priest. “Had they increased their coverage to \$250,000 or over \$1 million, we would have most likely covered their entire claims — or close to it.”

Last year, the CIS Board of Directors approved hiring a Cyber Risk Management Consultant to help members prevent cyberattacks. There were no premium increases for CIS’ first two tiers of coverage and a minimal 5% increase for Tier 3.

Members with CIS’ cyber coverage receive free cyber security consulting from in-house IT expert Greg Hardin. CIS’ coverage is tailored to cities and counties, and often better than what can be secured from the for-profit insurance market.

It’s not too late to increase a CIS member’s coverage. This spring, CIS reduced the eligibility requirements so more members could qualify. When cities have CIS cyber coverage, they receive free dark web monitoring, a cyber risk management expert to assist, and much more.

CIS cyber coverage is reasonably priced, and unlike the cyber insurance market, CIS contributions are stable because they can self-insure the first \$250,000 in limits.

Here’s are the details:

Tier 1: \$50,000 Limit – No Applications Needed. The CIS Board wants to ensure every Oregon city and county has a minimum level of cyber coverage. Although this contribution is very reasonable, CIS encourages its members to work with their agents to secure Tier 2 or Tier 3 cyber coverage.

Tier 2: \$250,000 Limit (\$200,000 excess of \$50,000) – Application Required. To help cities and counties obtain this coverage, CIS has reduced the minimum requirements to:

- Having a cyber security policy;
- Strong passwords;

- Offsite backups;
- Training employees; and
- Having CIS Property and Excess Crime coverage (**Required**)

Tier 3: Up to \$1,250,000 Limit (up to \$1M excess of \$250,000) – Qualifying for Tier 2 can also qualify for Tier 3. Tier 3 is a fully insured program. Keep in mind that this excess coverage program is in addition to the \$250,000 limit.

For those who are worried about their personal information being distributed on the dark web because of the DMV hack, they can monitor their credit report for a year by signing up at www.annualcreditreport.com. It’s also recommended that they freeze their credit through the three credit bureaus: [Equifax](#), [Experian](#), and [TransUnion](#).

For additional information about CIS’ cyber efforts, contact Greg Hardin at ghardin@cisoregon.org or (503) 763-3889. To download and complete an application, visit cisoregon.org/cyber. CIS member cities can also contact Tena Purdy at tpurdy@cisoregon.org or Karen Masterson at kmasterson@cisoregon.org for more information.



Photo courtesy of the Port of Portland

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CIS' Laurie Olson to Serve as President of National PRIMA Board



After years of service to Oregon's Public Risk Management Association (PRIMA) chapter, CIS' Senior Risk Management Consultant Laurie Olson has accepted the role as National PRIMA's first Oregon President.

Olson had already served a four-year term on the PRIMA Board of Directors, prior to being inaugurated into her new role as president. She accepted the presidency at

PRIMA's national conference in June.

This is an impressive achievement for Laurie, as she represents CIS as well as thousands of peer public entity risk managers. She is just the third Oregonian to serve on their board.

"I'm beyond excited about my new role," said Olson. "This association has already given me so much, both at the state and national level. I'm so happy to take this endeavor on and give back."

As a native Oregonian from Banks, Olson is excited to represent Oregon. The National PRIMA Board of Directors has a reputation for being a very cohesive and talented group of professionals from all over the country.

Olson enjoyed another important milestone in June when she earned her Executive Master of Public Administration (EMPA) from Portland State University. She graduated with Pi Alpha Alpha honors. Pi Alpha Alpha is a global honor society recognizing outstanding scholarship and accomplishment in public affairs and administration.

"These accomplishments reflect not only Laurie's expertise in the field of public risk management but also her tremendous leadership skills," said CIS' Executive Director Patrick Priest. "We're very proud of her, and hope members join us in congratulating her."



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Spring Wellness Academy Proves Popular

CIS' Spring Wellness Academy was popular with members and received a rating of 4.4 out of five stars based on a post-conference survey. The academy was designed to give HR staff and wellness committee members ideas on how to refresh their worksite wellness programs. The first-day's sessions, which highlighted mental health issues, proved most popular. Some of those surveyed shared these responses about the academy:

- “So well planned. You went outside the box to make it very enjoyable.”
- “I had a great time at the Wellness Academy. It offered a wide range of topics relating to both mental and physical wellness. It was organized well and included fun and engaging activities scattered throughout, which was a great way to keep people's attention.”
- “I learned a lot about the benefits available to employees and good ideas to help encourage more employee engagement with programs.”

- “The conference presentations were very informative, and I really enjoyed getting to meet folks from other communities in similar roles as myself.”
- “Very informative and motivational. CIS did a fantastic job organizing it. Our team is ready to create a Wellness Room and encourage employees to use BeyondWell.”
- “I'm so happy the Wellness Academy has returned! I get really excited about taking the information I've learned back to my team.”
- “Learned a lot! Great variety, great speakers, great people. Good food and fun.”
- “This was a great event: excellent speakers, a wide variety of ways to interact, and excellent practical takeaways to bring home.”

To view the materials from the Wellness Academy, visit www.cisoregon.org/member/Benefits/WellnessAcademy. The next academy will be in 2025.

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CIS Learning Center Hits Impressive Training Milestone

In July, the CIS Learning Center inched closer to a significant milestone: 100,000 completed trainings since 2019. With 95,645 completions and counting, they are on track to reach 100,000 by the end of the summer. One hundred thousand training courses completed is not easy to accomplish in today's fast-paced world.

"We congratulate our members for helping us achieve this important milestone," said CIS' Learning and Development Manager Tila Maceira-Klever.

When it comes to important trainings—from a mandatory blood-borne pathogens course to sexual harassment training—there's a lot to keep track of.

"The best way to keep track of your team's training is to create annual training plans," said Maceira-Klever. "When you have a good training plan, you help foster your employee's overall development."

Now that many cities are in a new fiscal year, Maceira-Klever suggests that they take a few steps for success.

1. Identify Required Training for Staff

To create a learning plan, one needs to identify the trainings that are required. This includes training required by law, contractual obligations, or one's organization. Make sure to think about training for both new hires as well as existing employees. CIS' Learning Center team can help set up training plans for both.

When it comes to important learning initiatives, there's no one-size fits all. CIS has 149 customized plans composed of 219 different courses, which range from just one course on the plan to over 30! Some of the most common include:

- Bloodborne Pathogens;
- Cybersecurity Basics;
- Preventing Discrimination and Harassment;
- Distracted Driving;
- Valuing Diversity; and
- Personal Protective Equipment.

2. Decide How Often Staff Should Take Training

Training can be set to auto-assign staff at any desired interval. Receiving five required training courses in July can seem daunting, but plans can be set to assign one per month or quarter—and

Public Safety Learning Center Content Added

From *Using Body Cameras for Training* to *Ways to Strengthen Your Agency's Mental Health Support Network*, the CIS Learning Center is dedicated to helping public safety leaders get the training that they need. CIS has added an additional 11 public safety courses to the catalog this month, bringing the total number of public safety courses available to 106. Popular trainings include:

- De-Escalation: When & How to Make It Work;
- What's the Mission: Responding to Suicidal Subjects;
- Duty to Intercede: Conceptual, Cultural and Legal Aspects;
- Law Enforcement Personnel and Implicit Bias During Interactions with Citizens and Suspects;
- Deadly Sins: Seven Law Enforcement Career-Killers; and
- Response to People in Crisis: Mitigating Harm & Enhancing the Safety of All Involved.

reports can be set to alert you of completions (or of outstanding assignments) by month, quarter, or even annually.

3. Contact the CIS Learning Center for Help

Once a city member has identified what training is required and how often staff should receive it, the final step is setting up a plan in the CIS Learning Center. Each plan is highly customized to meet a city's needs. Contact Brenda Chapin at learn@cisoregon.org to request a consultation to get started planning. A customized learning plan allows a member city to choose courses, set due dates or recurrence intervals, and automate assignments. CIS can also include items such as internal policies or new hire packet documents for online review along with electronic acknowledgments and tracking reports. There are many custom options available, and CIS is happy to work with a city to find just the right mix.

Recruitment & Retention

City leaders share best practices for hiring, creating culture, to keep the best

By Melody Finnemore



City of St. Helens employees participate in Citizens Day.

If you check in with most cities in Oregon—no matter the size or geographic location—about the hiring landscape right now, the unanimous consensus is that it is challenging across the board. It is difficult to fill positions, particularly those that are highly specialized, technical and certificated jobs.

The city of St. Helens prefers to do its hiring and promotions from within. However, when it had trouble hiring a new finance manager after nearly six months, staff took a more creative approach to the hiring process. They created a brochure that illustrated the city's appeal and featured a Mary Poppins-style rhyme about the qualities it was looking for in its new employee, blending traditional recruitment techniques with a playful twist.

"That was a team-building exercise for our staff that also helped demonstrate the work culture we seek to promote," said City Administrator John Walsh.

Police retention also is a challenge for St. Helens, which often loses members of its force to larger nearby cities like Hillsboro and Beaverton. It has worked with the local police union to raise wages so it can level the playing field with those cities and be more competitive.

"As far as attracting talent generally, we realize that paying more usually gets you more," Walsh said.

St. Helens has adopted other incentives to attract and retain talented staff during a transitional time in the workforce where employees are seeking more from their employers. The city has given staff the flexibility to work at home if their job lends itself to that. It created a "pandemic leave bank" so employees didn't have to use all of their time off caring for themselves or other family members. It also changed its employee benefits slightly so that new employees could accrue vacation immediately, rather than having to work for a specified amount of time before that could happen.



As far as attracting talent generally, we realize that paying more usually gets you more. – St. Helens

City Administrator John Walsh

Employee appreciation banquets and other activities have helped keep staff motivated and engaged, as well as established a culture where they are looked at as individuals.

"We try to get the best and the brightest and embrace diversity, and we've had a lot of success around that," Walsh said. "We meet people where they are. Some people need to work as a team and some are more solo, and we don't shove everybody into one box."

Like St. Helens, other cities have tried to fill positions for several months and have had to become more creative in how they

WANTED: A FINANCE DIRECTOR FOR A TALENTED DEPARTMENT

[To the tune of "The Perfect Nanny"
from *Mary Poppins*]

*If you want this choice position
Have a cheery disposition
Smart humor, not warts!
Reconcile accounts, all sorts*

*Must have work mantra quirk
Of Health, Family, and then Work
Take us to OMFOA Conferences, give us treats
Share your humor and lots of sweets*

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Live by your word, always be true
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And have the financial magic craft*

*A real team player you must be
A nut that grew into a very strong tree
Staff will always have your back
If you keep the City on financial track
So don't delay, apply right now
the future is calling, take a bow.*

*Hurry now
Many thanks*

*Sincerely,
The Finance Division*

A Mary Poppins-style rhyme featured in St. Helens' finance director recruitment brochure.

recruit qualified candidates. Once they have them on board, that creativity extends to developing a workplace culture that will encourage new hires to become long-term members of the team.

Several city leaders from across the state recently shared their best practices for recruitment and retention, along with some lessons learned while crafting those strategies.

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Employee Surveys, Flexibility Enhance Culture

Independence City Manager Kenna West, JD, describes her community as a growing city that is relatively safe, with a police force that is essential to its success. So, with many officers retiring or leaving law enforcement for other careers, it's a cause for concern. West considers the city fortunate to have had seven strong candidates during its last round of recruitment.

However, when the city conducted a compensation equity survey it found it was underpaying employees across departments and raised its wages. Its previous finance director was recruited away by another city that offered more pay. Independence has hired a financial consultant to help fill in through December.

West is finding that, in addition to retirements, many people don't seem to want to pursue government jobs the way they did in the past. Yet Independence has turned to a decidedly old-school approach to recruitment.

"We've really started to do a lot of word of mouth. Our most recent hire was 100% word of mouth. When the job opened up, we just started telling everyone," she said, adding one new employee came through West's connections as a barrel racer.

Nearby Monmouth has faced similar difficulties, particularly with a workforce of less than 70 people and as a city that operates its own electric utility.

"We've been having challenges finding people for technical jobs like police officers, electric line workers and wastewater maintenance staff. Those jobs are highly technical and require a lot of training and certification," said City Manager Marty Wine.

Nine months before Monmouth's finance director was to retire, she reached out to her colleagues in the field and personally recruited people to apply for her position. Wine said she talked to about 20 candidates, but, despite that, the city still had a small pool of applicants. Wine said personal recruitment within the discipline was "extremely helpful."

"You are able to attract people who know how to do the job," she said, cautioning that there is a fine line between recruiting and poaching, particularly in smaller markets.

Wine said postings on the Government Finance Officers Association's job board showed many vacancies for finance directors. Other positions are equally competitive.

"I knew, even as we opened the position for a wastewater technician, that every one of our neighbors was looking for at least one of the same jobs that they wanted to fill," she said. "There is demand for these workers, but little supply."

Both cities focus on improving employee satisfaction to improve retention. Independence is implementing an annual service day, during which employees wear specially created t-shirts and spend the day volunteering for local organizations. The day includes a company lunch.

"I truly believe that when you can help people together it creates a stronger bond, so that's where our focus is and we're just getting that set up," West said. "When you have good people that is your best asset, especially when you can't pay as much as



City of Independence staff pose for City Hall Selfie Day.



When you have good people that is your best asset, especially when you can't pay as much as other cities.

*Independence City Manager
Kenna West*

other cities. We really focus on what is important to the person."

She noted that even pre-COVID, the city explored options for employees to work remotely when a previous finance director's wife had to move out of state for a job, but the finance director wanted to continue working for the city.

More recently, a senior-level employee wanted to spend more time with family living out of state, but also keep their job. That employee will work remotely a few weeks of the year.

"We tailored that to him," West said. "That's what he needed in order to stay with us, so we did it. It's really focusing on what they need to keep them because you just can't replace good people."

Wine said her previous experience in other cities has shown her that people want to stay in jobs where they feel valued, heard and what they think matters.

"Culture is not something you can build by just flipping a switch, you have to create it," she said.

Wine is a proponent of "stay interviews" and employee engagement surveys in which city leaders talk with employees about what brought them to the organization and what makes them stay.

"You're asking the person what makes the job worthwhile to find out what is good about your organization so you can try to maintain that," she said. "It can help you figure out how to improve your culture and make your organization better."



The city of Lincoln City hosted a barbecue for the city parks crew.

Housing Solutions Help Attract Candidates to Coast

Seaside is celebrating having a full city staff after several months of recruiting for positions when all but two of its department heads retired or left for other jobs over the last 18 months. Its new hires include a finance director, public works director, convention center director, community development director and library director.

A nationwide shortage of building officials and inspectors, on top of Seaside's high cost of housing, added to the challenge of finding strong candidates, according to City Manager Spencer Kyle.

"It is especially difficult right now," Kyle said. "The biggest factor for us is the high cost of housing and we have very low availability of housing. The cost is high, but even if you have the budget, it's very difficult to find something to buy or rent," he said.

Seaside's first top candidate for its library director position had to decline because of the housing situation. The city then turned to a recruiter, who helped fill the position after a nine-month search.

"That was money well spent because the recruiter was able to get the job announcement in front of people all across the West who weren't necessarily looking for a new job," Kyle said.

As part of its recruitment efforts, Seaside has offered to pay for some moving expenses for department directors and provides salaries near the top end of the range to remain competitive. It also highlights the benefits of living and working on the coast and in a unique community.

"Certainly, there is a lifestyle component that is a part of our recruitment, and we try to hit that hard," Kyle said, adding the city also has removed barriers to its application process and made it completely electronic.

Halloween fun, cook-offs and potlucks are among the ways Seaside's departments maintain a strong culture for employees.

"We're always trying to develop the right culture," Kyle said. "In recent years we've had very good retention in our police department and that includes our dispatch center. We credit that to the culture created by our police chief."

Daphnee Legarza, Lincoln City's city manager, agreed that a positive work environment is essential to retention.

"It's all about culture," she said. "You want to promote a culture and an environment where people want to work." Legarza added that the city has put together an employee softball team as part of its wellness program.

"We are trying to roll out programs that show our employees how important their role is to our overall success, and we want to make sure we communicate that and show gratitude for the great work they do," she said, pointing out the city likes to recognize employee milestones and accomplishments throughout the year.

Legarza noted that employees are given a choice about whether they want to be recognized publicly, such as during city council meetings.

(continued on page 26)

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Examples of employee recognition efforts by Lincoln City include a weekly staff recognition award and a social media post recognizing the city's lifeguards.



In recent years we've had very good retention in our police department and that includes our dispatch center. We credit that to the culture created by our police chief. – Seaside City Manager Spencer Kyle

"It's just being open and listening to what the employees want," she said. "Every employee feels differently about things, and a lot of times it's being flexible about how they want to be recognized."

Lincoln City uses several professional organizations for recruiting, and communicates job openings to them so it can be more targeted with its postings. The city also has a slight advantage over other coastal cities because it has several workforce housing

units that may be available on a short-term basis for new hires moving to the city.

"That helps with relocation and gets people here and working," Legarza said. "I think that has really been helpful and has led to some of our success."

Promoting Professional Development, Community Building

In Southern Oregon, the demand for both entry-level and executive-level candidates is also much stronger. The search for department heads has ranged from several months to three years for a senior planner position in Grants Pass. In some cases, more than one round of recruitment was needed.

Grants Pass City Manager Aaron Cubic said the city used to receive 75-100 applications for municipal employees, and that is now down to about 25. With such a competitive market, especially for positions that require a high level of certification, it has been essential to provide coaching and mentoring for existing employees with the goal of promoting from within departments.

Medford City Manager Brian Sjothun said his city also has developed succession plans and spends time and money to grow future leaders internally. While some positions have been difficult to fill, others such as public safety have not.

"We feel very fortunate to have the number of applicants we do when we are recruiting police and fire positions," he said. "People from smaller cities want to work in Medford."

Cubic said Grants Pass made its application process more flexible after leaders realized that some requirements were too rigid and specific. As an example, while the city would prefer that someone has five years of professional experience, they are now considering candidates who may only have two or three years of experience but would be a good fit for a position. The city also has changed some of the terminology it uses on applications.

"When we've done that with some of our positions, we have seen a direct increase in the number of applications simply by changing that language and those requirements," Cubic said, adding the search for candidates has been honed by zeroing in on what type of individuals the city wants to attract and who usually applies for certain positions.

"What we're really trying to focus on in a future colleague of ours is who has intrinsic values and aptitude to meet our culture? What are the incentives in working for a municipality?" he said. "The colleagues I work with want better communities, and we want applicants to feel motivated to make a difference rather than just making a paycheck."

Cubic said it is essential for cities to promote their vision, mission, values and leadership philosophy because that helps ensure good matches with job candidates who want to be community builders.

"Finding those individuals is key to retention because they tend to stay longer," he said. "It's easier to train an individual how to make widgets than it is to train them to have that internal spark to better their community."

Sjothun agreed that it is important to promote culture and self-development over self-fulfillment.



Ugly sweater holiday parties, Halloween fun, cook-offs and pot-lucks are among the ways Seaside's departments maintain a strong culture for employees.

“Even when budgets are crunched, we don’t cut our training budget, and that draws people who want personal and professional growth,” he said. “You have to be able to sell what you do, so we have our core values, and we utilize our Medford 2040 Vision Plan and our aspirational statement of helping Medford grow.”

Medford lists the salary and total compensation package with each job posting, which Sjothun said is particularly beneficial

when recruiting for positions that are competing with the private sector.

“Our salary may be less, but when you look at no cost for health insurance for the base plan and our portion of PERS it evens out,” he said. “We add up all of these things that would normally be coming out of their pocket, and people are coming here because they are money-ahead even though it might be a lower salary.”

One thing Medford will not do as part of its recruitment strategy is offer signing bonuses, Sjothun noted.

“We think that is counterproductive to the culture that we have created here. We have folks who have been here a long time and they could say, ‘If I leave and come back in six months and the position isn’t filled, can I have my job back and will you give me a signing bonus?’ so we really want to stay away from that,” he said.

Cubic adds that while it can be more difficult to recruit a diverse workforce in some parts of the state, a focus on diversity, equity and inclusion is crucial to attract underrepresented candidates. Social media, advertising, service organizations and employee referrals help spread the word about job openings to college students, people who speak other languages as their first language, and those who are seeking to change careers.

Another best practice Grants Pass utilizes in recruiting new employees is to provide vacation and sick leave banks.

“New employees may have years of experience, but they lose that vacation time and sick leave when they change jobs,” Cubic said. “Make sure you honor the expertise and experience they come in with by establishing some kind of bank for them.”

In addition to providing training and promoting internally, Medford retains its employees through a culture of flexibility. From remote working agreements for some to prioritizing family needs for others, the key is to provide employees with as much flexibility as possible, Sjothun said.

“Every day is ‘bring your dog to work day’ for some folks. I’m pretty lax about that,” he said.

Sjothun added that the city strives to break down the silos of having 11 different departments spread across the city. One

(continued on page 28)



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Along with activities such as potlucks, theme days and employee recognition events, the city of Grants Pass promotes continued learning and employee development. Examples pictured (left to right) include City Manager Aaron Cubic "kicking off" the summer wellness campaign; city staff enjoying the annual employee appreciation barbecue; and city staff interacting with a (green-screened) T-Rex.

annual employee gathering, which will be held in December at the new Rogue X aquatics and events center, features food, games and a dunk tank. Several employee appreciation events are held throughout the year.

In addition, Sjothun personally delivers pies to Medford's fire stations on Thanksgiving morning, serves ice cream to different shifts, and goes on ride-a-longs and attends briefings to thank them.

Medford also provides a free gym to employees that is housed in the basement of one of its department's buildings but rivals private gyms.

"Having that perk is pretty nice and it's cool to see people from different departments together down there," Sjothun said.

Cubic said Grants Pass strives to provide a healthy, vibrant work culture as a leading way to have actively engaged colleagues.

"If you ask employees what is most important, a positive culture, job security and flexibility tend to top salary in importance," he said.

To that end, Cubic and other city leaders conduct satisfaction and stay surveys so they can look at things from employees' perspectives. That includes reviewing job descriptions and asking about workloads to prevent burnout. When an employee does leave, Cubic reads each exit interview to determine trends and areas for improvement.

Along with activities such as potlucks, theme days and employee recognition events, Grants Pass promotes continued learning and employee development. These include: a leadership academy and special trainings; tuition programs; mentoring and coaching; and a financial wellness program.



Medford City Manager Brian Sjothun sits in the dunk tank during the city's annual employee appreciation gathering.

“We provide more than just a health benefits program so employees have tools for life as well as work,” Cubic said.

Word of Mouth Attracts Recruits, Appreciation Bolsters Retention

Redmond Legal and Human Resources Director Keith Leitz said his city’s best recruitment practice was hiring Hailey Looney, SHRM-CP, as human resources recruiter, two years ago.

“Before that, payroll and recruitment were full-time positions with one person performing both, and it was too much for one person to handle, so hiring a person specifically for recruitment has helped tremendously in speeding up the process,” Leitz said. “The turnaround time from recruitment to hiring has gone down significantly. Governments are notorious for taking a long time, so this helps because if you take too long someone else can come along and scoop up your best candidates.”

Leitz added that Looney’s role is different from other entities in that she is hands-on with every applicant from the time they submit their application, through the interview process and even through their first day at work. She orchestrates and participates in every interview, preps all the questions, supplies all of the interview materials, guides interview scoring and negotiates salaries with applicants.

“I can’t overstate how valuable Hailey is for the city’s recruitment,” Leitz said.

Like other cities, Redmond has faced challenges in hiring police officers because of the length of time it takes for hiring and training before they can work in the field.

“If you get through the background check and then they don’t make it through the academy or training, you’ve spent nine months and you need to start over,” Leitz said.

Word of mouth has been an effective tool, with several officers actively trying to recruit others.

“I think that’s been very helpful because you’re not going to recruit someone you don’t think can do the job, especially as a police officer. It also gives a comfort level for somebody applying because they already know someone in the department,” he said.

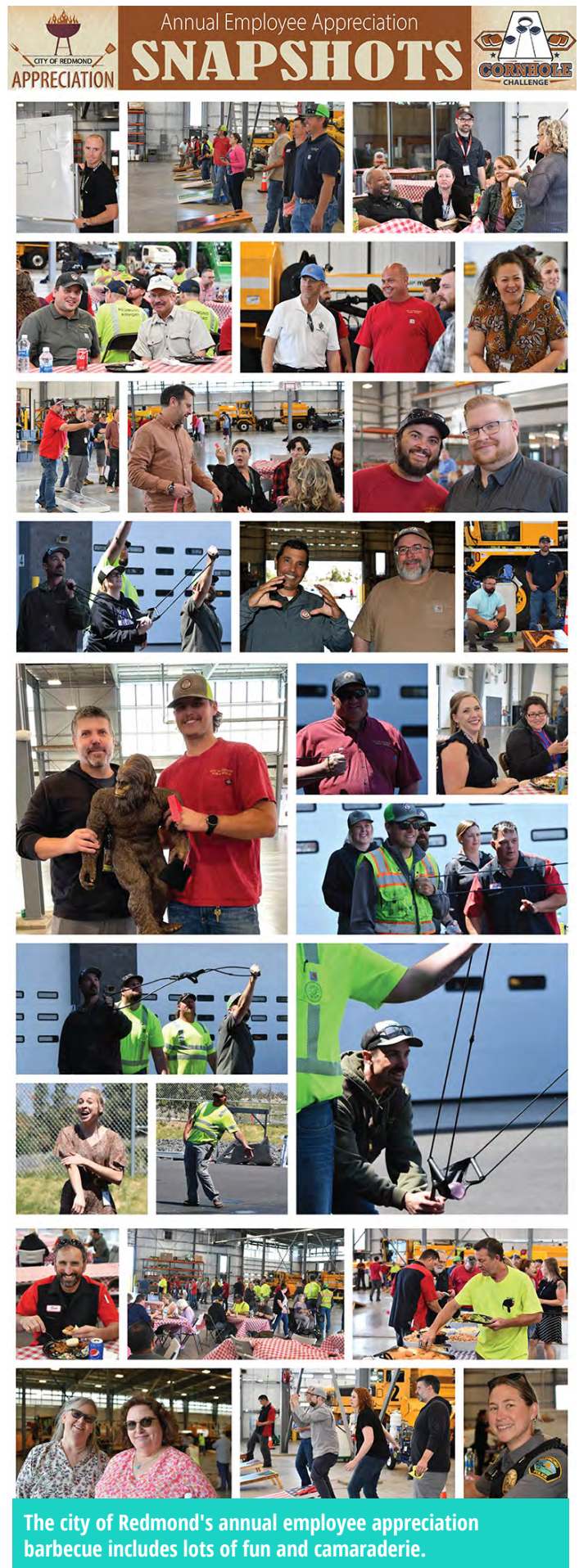
Looney said Redmond is advertising job openings on more social media platforms to attract candidates not only across the state, but across the country. The city also partners with local agencies to get the word out. Salary ranges are posted with each job opening so applicants know before applying.

The city also initiated a monthly internal newsletter that features kudos, photos of employees being recognized for their accomplishments, introduces new hires, and highlights the hobbies and interests of staff members through an employee spotlight.

“That’s been a fun new thing we’ve implemented, and it really helps employees get to know each other,” Looney said.

The city hosts an employee appreciation barbecue with a cornhole tournament each May, and a December breakfast when department leaders recognize employees for their work. Leitz and Looney noted that the department leaders want employees to look forward to coming to work. Employees also receive a “work-iversary” gift for every five years of service to the city.

(continued on page 30)



The city of Redmond's annual employee appreciation barbecue includes lots of fun and camaraderie.



What we're really trying to focus on in a future colleague of ours is who has intrinsic values and aptitude to meet our culture? What are the incentives in working for a municipality? The colleagues I work with want better communities, and we want applicants to feel motivated to make a difference rather than just making a paycheck. – Grants Pass City Manager Aaron Cubic

Ongoing Efforts to Become Employers of Choice

Even with hiring challenges out there, the city of Beaverton still believes it is a choice place to work! Applications for many positions are down from pre-COVID levels by half or more, and those hard-to-fill positions (for example, engineers or skilled trades-workers such as plumbers or electricians) are not getting any easier to fill. Retention is Beaverton's greatest challenge in this market.

One area of retention success, unlike reports from some cities, is the city's police department. While non-retirement turnover is low, the department was not able to send new recruits to the Community Police Academy in Salem during the COVID pandemic and yet, the team has kept pace with responding to the needs of the Beaverton community.

"If I could shout from the rooftop, I would say just come and look at the model of the Beaverton Police Department," said Patricia

Anderson Wieck, the city's human resources director. "They care about and support each other, and when we ask why they stay, it's because of the work they do. It's tough work and they call each other out when needed, but they value the work they do here."

Despite its larger size, Beaverton joins its smaller counterparts in its struggle to compete in the hiring market because of the wages it is able to offer in a region where the cost of labor is high. The human resources team touts its benefits package and culture instead, noting that Beaverton's people-first culture of equitable employee care is something the city strives to improve daily.

"We are trying to increase our efforts around engagement, training and feeling like part of a team," Anderson Wieck said. "People are coming out of the pandemic with a lot of uncertainty, and they are afraid of an economic downturn. We're actually navigating a marketplace where people are saying, 'If you hire me, am I going to be able to keep this job and are there going to be opportunities for promotion and advancement?'"

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City of Beaverton staff participate in a local Autism Walk.

As part of its ongoing efforts to attract an ethnically diverse workforce, Beaverton focuses on women with job postings because women traditionally have been more hesitant to apply for jobs and question their qualifications.

“We’re encouraging women and people of different ethnic backgrounds to apply and enrich a diverse experience here,” Anderson Wieck said.

The city also has made it easier to apply for jobs. It doesn’t require all applicants to routinely answer essay questions anymore, ensuring that the application process is relevant and more accessible to those with language or skill barriers. It also removes data that could cause bias in the screening process.

Molly Brandt, Beaverton’s talent acquisition specialist, credited the city’s resilient hiring managers with the success of attracting talent.

“Their ability to speak directly to candidates about the unique opportunities of their positions and the creativity of their teams is often what seals the deal,” she said. “Hiring managers are the ones doing the work, who are excited about it, and can really sell that passion to the people they’re interviewing.”

Beaverton’s Organizational Development Team, led by Matthew Halderman, uses the “street to seat” approach in prioritizing onboarding and training for new hires. All city departments are partners with HR in the onboarding process. Once people are hired, supervisors are encouraged to have one-on-one conversations and stay interviews that Beaverton has dubbed “peak performance conversations.”

“City leaders are committed to a strong culture of community for our residents and demonstrated employee care,” Anderson Wieck said. “It takes all of us being employees of choice in order for us to be an employer of choice.” ■

Ms. Finnemore is a Portland-area freelance writer. Contact her at precisionpdx@comcast.net.

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HR Consulting Services Provide Recommendations as Advisors, Employers

By Melody Finnemore

As CIS Executive Director, Patrick Priest has a unique perspective on the topic of employee recruitment and retention. CIS is a human resources consulting organization as well as a risk management and insurance provider.

“We are there when things go wrong and you don’t recruit the right people,” Priest said. “It’s really important to get it right and maintain great workplaces. It helps prevent difficult and costly employment claims. Also, if you don’t have the right staff, there can be tremendous risks for your operations and that can result in liabilities.”

An employer himself, Priest looks to hire the most qualified professionals to fill niche positions at CIS with candidates who have specific insurance-related experience that isn’t broadly available in Oregon.

“As a leader, recruitment and retention are extremely important. You need to be progressive in how you are seeking candidates,” he said, adding CIS uses LinkedIn and other social media tools to find potential candidates. “That’s been an effective technique.”

CIS also is budgeting for internships for college students who are interested in claims handling, underwriting or public-entity risk management. He hopes to develop candidates internally and provide training to help them gain valuable work skills.

All CIS employees are encouraged to provide feedback about their ideas of CIS’s culture, identify gaps where it is falling short, and take part in addressing those gaps.

“We’re doing that to make sure our people are engaged and on the same page with our mission,” Priest said.

CIS has a hybrid policy that allows some employees to work remotely at times. To combat disengagement that can come when in-person interactions with co-workers are limited, Priest initiated monthly virtual meetings for all employees so those in the field feel a greater sense of connection to their colleagues who work in the office.

“I think maintaining a sense of community and connection is a best practice,” he said.

During the pandemic, Priest implemented a weekly email to keep staff informed about COVID-related matters.

“It was so well received that I’ve decided to continue it even though the emails aren’t about COVID anymore,” he said, explaining now they are more about employee activities such as a recent wellness challenge and his own outdoor adventures.



CIS Executive Director
Patrick Priest

Other retention strategies have included allowing employees to bring their dogs to the office, which he described as “challenging at first but successful,” and staff events such as an annual retreat and a social gathering for employees and their families each year.

Mental health and physical wellness are top priorities at CIS for both its staff and member cities, and it provides a Wellness Academy every two years. CIS also offers training with Sharon Harris, a senior consultant in human resources and organizational development, who provides informative sessions such as “Hiring Right to Avoid Managing Tough” and “Employee Performance – How to Have Effective Conversations.”

Hiring Help Available for Special Districts

Frank Stratton, executive director for the Special Districts Association of Oregon (SDAO), noted that special districts have a higher retention rate than other types of governments because of the lack of politics involved.

“City managers have shorter terms, but special district leaders aren’t in the spotlight like other positions and the same is true for staff,” he said.

In addition, funding for special districts is more stable than other types of government. For example, water districts only provide water, so those fees are more stable than property tax revenue. Fire districts also have a pretty high retention rate, although a large number of retirements has started to change that, Stratton said.

“We have 250 fire districts, and traditionally, it has been difficult to get a job as a paid firefighter. That has completely changed. Now it’s difficult to recruit and train people to fill these spots,” he said.

Finance directors also are hard to find because their work is so specialized. Professionals with significant experience in public budgeting had strong retention, and there wasn’t a need to bring people up through the ranks. However, now there is a gap in knowledge.

“It’s not something you can just go to college for,” Stratton said. “Finance people were auditors in the past and audited government agencies. Now auditing firms also are struggling to fill positions. In general, it’s a real challenge out there for everyone.”

The SDAO offers consulting services to help hire for management positions by contracting with retired district managers who are paid on an hourly basis. It also has HR staff who can help with recruitment and application materials as well as interview questions.



SDAO Executive Director
Frank Stratton



(Left) CIS staff gather at their annual summer picnic; Daisy the dog joins Kirk Mylander at the CIS office.

“A lot of our districts are pretty small, so we can help them step up that process,” Stratton said.

Marketing Key to Recruitment

Laurie Grenya, SPHR, president and owner of HR Answers in Tigard, works with cities of varying sizes across the state as well as special districts and other government entities. Among her services, she helps evaluate job markets to ensure her clients are competitive and explores ways to expedite recruitment. She, too, has seen a dramatic shift.

“Even though they have put in place more resources to achieve a shorter period of six to eight weeks, what we’re finding is a lack of quality candidates so they are having to recruit multiple times for the same position,” she said.



HR Answers President & Owner Laurie Grenya

Grenya recommends that government organizations do regular market research to help attract top candidates, noting, “If you are offering lower pay you will be overlooked. More states’ laws are requiring published information about salary and benefits, so applicants are better informed.”

She advises city leaders to map out an entire recruitment schedule before they launch the first ad for a job opening. The schedule should include all steps with calendared tasks, including all participants. It also should allow for job offers contingent on reference checks, drug tests and other screening criteria.

While government organizations need to be careful about changes to their application process in consideration of contractual obligations with unions, changes to web-based systems and services may also be of assistance. Additionally, recruitment should be a marketing effort which informs the candidate about salary and benefits, the actual job description, incentives for career development and training, and a clear path for advancement.

“Government is struggling a bit in that the typical tenure of employees has reduced significantly from eight to 10 years to four to six years,” Grenya said. “This means the traditional systems

which were built to support longer tenure are not supporting the current interests of applicants or employees.”

“Cities have to start marketing their jobs, and what I mean by that is making sure people know why the city is their best choice,” she added. ■

Ms. Finnemore is a Portland-area freelance writer. Contact her at precisionpdx@comcast.net.





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Thank You, Cities!

From LOC President Steve Callaway

To Our Members,

One of the most tumultuous and challenging legislative sessions in Oregon concluded at the end of June, and I wanted to take a moment to

thank our 241 member cities for their extraordinary efforts to advocate for cities and home rule over the five months of session.

It started on January 25 when 250 mayors, councilors, and city staff from across Oregon, representing every LOC region state-wide, assembled at the Salem Convention Center for “City Day at the Capitol.” During those one-on-one visits with your legislators, a message was first sent that cities are present and engaged, and city leaders will go the distance to advocate for their communities.

Time and again during the session, elected city leaders and city staff enthusiastically answered the call to help our LOC lobby team advocate for our top eight legislative priorities, which you as LOC members helped to set.

This was demonstrated most powerfully during the final days of the session, when LOC members responded to action alerts, reached out and lobbied their legislators, and helped the LOC achieve several key policy initiatives, including:

✓ **HB 2009**

A key element of the semiconductor package was securing sunset extensions for Oregon’s most significant economic development tools: SIP-Gainshare and enterprise zones for rural and urban communities. In addition, a tax credit for research and development is a crucial component. While not ideal, all three of these incentives moved forward with this legislation.

✓ **HB 3201**

This bill aligns state statute to maximize Oregon’s ability to capture federal broadband funding. It provides the necessary flexibility and alignment to ensure cities can take full advantage of \$689 million in broadband funding from the federal government.

✓ **HB 2095**

It may have taken multiple sessions, but we were successful in extending fixed and mobile photo radar authority to all cities. In addition, flexibility was added to local speed setting authorities, which will now allow up to a 10-mph adjustment to local street speed.

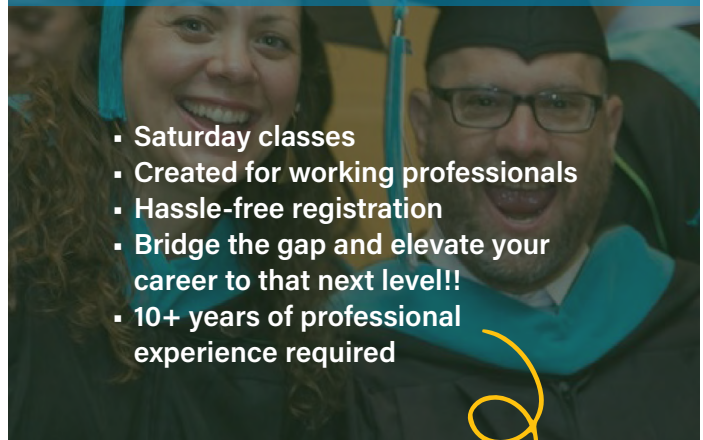
⊘ **HB 3013**

This bill would have added a surcharge on every member prescription. CIS estimated annual costs of \$5 million. HB 3013 lost by one vote on the Senate floor during the last couple of hours of the session largely due to the persistence and involvement from LOC members.

As your LOC Board President, I want to thank and acknowledge each and every one of our member cities for their fantastic advocacy work during this long legislative session—your efforts truly made a difference! Please remember to stay in touch with legislators as they host town halls and attend summer events. These are great ways to keep that engagement going!

– LOC President Steve Callaway, Mayor, Hillsboro

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2023 Session Comes to a Close

By Jim McCauley, LOC Legislative Director

Oregon's 82nd legislative session ended at 4:27 p.m. on June 25, just seven and one-half hours short of the constitutional *Sine Die* at midnight. Back in January, there were signs that indicated what the LOC and others would be in for. House leadership started the session off with a joint press conference focused on shared priorities from Republican and Democratic caucuses. The Senate, however, started the session off with each caucus criticizing each other's leadership and priorities. This contrast would play out over the course of the session with a 42-day boycott initiated by Senate Republicans, which denied the Senate majority a quorum to advance any legislation. This walkout was the Republican's response to their objections to HB 2002 (women's healthcare, abortion access and gender affirming care) and HB 2005 (gun safety), which were key Democratic priorities entering the 2023 session.

The boycott prevented floor votes, created a backup of 400-plus bills in the Senate and left the LOC and other interests wondering when and if the walkout would end. Once a negotiated agreement to return was brokered, enough Senate Republicans returned to the Senate floor on June 15.

The LOC's Priorities:

The LOC entered this session with a robust set of eight legislative priorities. Our efforts to advance these priorities was met with frustration and challenges throughout much of the session. One key priority was a joint effort with the Oregon Mayors Association (OMA). This was a funding proposal which requested \$123 million directly to cities for homeless services and another \$170 million in one-time funding to stand up shelters, affordable housing, navigation centers and other key homeless infrastructure needs. Despite a session-long effort, the OMA and LOC were unable to secure direct resources to cities despite historically high funding for those services. Cities will have to rely on existing financial infrastructure to help fund local needs.

Economic development was also a key priority going into the session, with our focus on sunset extensions for Oregon's enterprise zone program and SIP-Gainshare. These legislative efforts were included in the second phase of Oregon's semiconductor package, HB 2009, which was developed to create an incentive package for the semiconductor industry to leverage \$52 billion of federal CHIPS Act investments. Although we came up short of our objective, these key programs will be extended into 2032

(continued on page 36)

for the enterprise zones and 2030 for SIP-gainshare. We are hopeful with the addition of research and development (R&D) tax credits and an overall allocation of \$215 million, Oregon will be in a good position for additional investments from semiconductor manufacturers.

We found success with a series of transportation priorities, which focused on a three-session effort to extend the use of mobile and fixed photo radar for speed management to all cities through HB 2095, increased flexibility for “safe routes to school” program in HB 2099, and additional investment in the “great streets program” with HB 3113.

You’ll see more details about how our eight priorities fared as our final reports are put together and the LOC’s lobby team provides a session download during the third quarter Small Cities Meetings. The bills detailed below include some of the other important priorities and policy decisions during the session.

Broadband & Cybersecurity

HB 3201 – Aligns state statute to maximize Oregon’s ability to capture federal broadband funding. It provides the necessary flexibility and alignment to ensure cities can take full advantage of up to \$900 million in federal broadband funding.

HB 2049 – Creates the Cybersecurity Center of Excellence that will be housed at Portland State University (PSU), with joint administration between Oregon State University (OSU) and the University of Oregon (UO).

Water Quality and Infrastructure

HB 2010 – The Bipartisan Drought Relief and Water Security Package (BiDRAWS) sets policy going forward that will: fund the costs of actions supporting place-based integrated water resources planning; direct the Legislative Policy and Research Office (LPRO) to report funding opportunities to assist low-income drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater ratepayers; and provide \$1 million for the Oregon Association of Water Utilities to provide technical, financial, and managerial support and resources to small and very small community water systems.

Final Day Drama:

Normally, legislation scheduled for a floor vote has sufficient votes to pass. However, in the final hours of the 2023 session, three bills failed to receive enough Senate votes to advance to Governor Kotek for a signature. These included a priority housing bill from the governor (HB 3414). The LOC had worked with Governor Kotek and her staff to modify HB 3414 and was officially neutral going into the final day. Other interests from land use advocacy and environmental groups remained opposed.

HB 3013 surfaced late in the session and would have added a \$5 surcharge for each prescription at the urging of advocates for pharmacy benefit managers (PBM). The LOC and its members led this fight to oppose the bill, which would have added \$5 million annually to the cost of healthcare for CIS members. The final bill that failed on the floor was HB 3242 (Medical Rights of Action). The LOC was not active in this legislation.


It is rare to lose a bill on the floor, let alone three in the last hours of a session. This is perhaps a reflection of the challenges

faced by factors related to a new leadership group, a one-third turnover in the legislative body, and lack of relationship building. We suspect all three of the bills described above will be part of the 2024 session.

Going Forward:

The LOC kicked off the 2023 session with City Day at the Capitol on January 25. It was a well-attended event for members and state legislators, with all members of caucus leadership present and Governor Kotek providing opening remarks. This helped set the stage for what was clearly a significant increase in grass roots advocacy efforts from the LOC’s members. Every time we needed members to testify, provide comments, or contact their members, our calls were answered. This was very important to this session’s efforts to balance other interests who did not share the LOC’s objectives.


As the LOC lobby team prepares for the next session, we need members to maintain this high level of communication. We need your assistance in helping with our education efforts with state legislators. We urge you to invite them to council meetings, events and budget meetings, and ask that, as city leaders, you make sure to attend the town halls they conduct. Every touchpoint between a local official and their respective state legislator is important for both the relationship and the educational opportunity. We have a long way to go, but the good news is that we are seeing measurable progress and we appreciate everyone who took the time this session to become advocates. ■



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Bills for City Review, Action & Awareness

Cities are advised to review the summaries below and take action as needed to comply with new state law.

Housing and Homeless Issues –

Ariel Nelson, Lobbyist – anelson@orcities.org

HB 3395 – End of Session Housing Package

Effective Date: June 30, 2023

HB 3395, known as the “Housing Package,” incorporated several bills that had advanced earlier in the session, including an omnibus housing bill, [SB 847](#), which may require cities to make changes to local housing development policies or processes. This bill also includes funding for local government capacity to support housing development. The sections most relevant to cities are described below:

- **Residential Use of Commercial Lands (Sections 1-2):** Requires cities to approve the siting and development of housing within commercial zones if it is affordable to 60% Average Median Income (AMI) or below or for mixed-use structures with ground floor commercial and residential units affordable to moderate income households. The bill does not require a city to update its comprehensive plan to implement, however this change in use may impact a city’s employment lands availability. The bill explicitly exempts cities from having to conduct a new economic analysis or comprehensive plan update; however cities may still wish to consider the impact to Goal 9 for economic development and reflect and accommodate these impacts at a later date. HB 3395 requires cities to apply the residential density level most comparable to the density of commercial density currently allowed in zone and specifies that updates or analyses relating to economic development are not required.
- **Residential Approval Procedures (Sections 3-6):** Makes two changes to the Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA) process intended to reduce land use appeals or reduce the duration of those appeals and workload on city staff. First, it provides an extra seven days for a city to take final action on an application for a permit, limited land use decision, or zone change, including resolution of appeals, after an application is deemed complete. Second, it allows a local government or state agency to withdraw a decision under appeal with the LUBA for reconsideration, including decisions related to the development of a residential structure.
- **Emergency Shelter Siting (Sections 6-7):** Continues the existing requirements for when cities must approve the siting of emergency shelters and updates some of the terms. HB 3395 clarifies that cities do not have to hold a public hearing before approving a shelter siting application awards attorney fees to a local government and any intervening applicant that prevail on appeal of approval, or applicant that prevails on appeal of denial, and updates the criteria for qualifying shelter operators. Notably, the shelter siting provisions will no longer sunset or lapse by a certain date but will now be in effect until the statewide point-in-time count for total sheltered and unsheltered homeless population falls below 0.18% of the state population.
- **Single Exit Multifamily Dwellings (Section 8):** Directs the Oregon Department of Consumer and Business Services to review and adopt updates to the Structural Specialty Code through the Building Codes Structures Board to allow residential occupancies to be served by a single exit. The bill requires updates to reduce, to an extent practicable, costs and barriers to mid-sized multi-family dwelling construction while maintaining safety, and encourages less expensive housing types, allowing single-exit residential dwellings consistent with adopted building codes such as those in Seattle, Washington.
- **Planned Community Act Exemptions (Section 9):** Clarifies that development established on or after January 1, 2024, in which each residential unit is subject to an affordability restriction or is owned by a public benefit or religious non-profit corporation, is not defined in Oregon law as a “planned community.”
- **Regulation of Condominiums (Sections 10-14):** Grants the State’s Real Estate Commissioner exclusive right to regulate submission of property to condominium provisions of Oregon statute. Prohibits other restrictions or prohibitions on condominium form of ownership, including charges, taxes, fees, review, or approval processes, or additional permitting requirements or conditions. If a city has local regulations specifically related to condominium permitting, they may need to be updated or eliminated.

(continued on page 38)

- **Subdividing for Development of Affordable Housing (Section 15):** Requires a city or county to accept as other assurance, one or more award letters from public funding sources made to an affordable housing developer that is or will be subject to an affordability restriction or affordable housing covenant, provided those awards total an amount greater than the project cost. This section may require cities to update their external and internal processes and documents for analyzing and approving affordable housing development related to system development charges and entitlements.
- **Single Room Occupancies (Sections 16-19):** Defines “single room occupancy” (SRO) as a residential development with at least four independently rented, lockable units with living and sleeping space for exclusive use of an occupant, but with shared sanitary or food preparation facilities. Requires local governments to allow SRO development within an urban growth boundary, with up to six units per single-family zoned parcel, and with unit counts consistent with density standards of parcels allowing five or more units. Adds SROs to the definition of “needed housing.”
- **Siting Duplexes (Sections 20-23):** Requires cities located outside the Portland metro area with a population between 2,500 and 10,000 to allow duplexes on lots zoned for single family detached dwellings. In other words, this extends the duplex requirements established in [HB 2001](#) (2019) to an additional 50 cities and requires those cities to adopt land use regulations or amend comprehensive plans no later than June 30, 2025. A city amending its comprehensive plan or land use regulations is not required to consider whether those amendments significantly affect existing or planned transportation facilities. The bill allows, no later than June 30, 2024, a request for an extension from the June 30, 2025 deadline, and appropriates \$1,250,000 to the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development to provide grants to cities to assist them with the middle housing updates.
- **Affordable Housing on Public Utility Lands (Section 29):** Allows public utilities to sell at or below market price, or gift, interest in real property for purpose of developing affordable housing and requires such property to include an affordable housing covenant. The bill prohibits a public utility from recovering costs of the property sale or gift from customers.
- **Local Government Housing Support (Sections 37-39):** Allocates \$5 million to the Oregon Department of Administrative Services (DAS) to provide grants to Councils of Governments (COGs) and Economic Development Districts (EDDs) to support housing and community development capacity within cities, counties, and tribes. COGs and EDDs are specifically directed to partner and consult with local governments, developers, financiers, the Department of Land Conservation and Development, the Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS), other relevant state agencies and other interested public and private partners to enable local governments throughout the region to encourage community development and the development of infrastructure

and needed housing, by: (a) Bridging any information gaps; (b) Identifying and securing needed resources, including infrastructure and community facilities; (c) Connecting producers of needed housing with consumers of needed housing; and (d) Working with representatives of historically underrepresented groups to overcome community-specific barriers to obtaining housing.

HB 2984 – Commercial Conversions

Effective Date: January 1, 2024

HB 2984 requires cities to allow conversion of a building from commercial use to residential use without requiring a zone change or conditional use permit. The bill prohibits cities from enforcing parking minimums greater than the amount allowed for existing commercial use or the amount that may be required in lands zoned for residential uses that would allow the converted development. The final version of HB 2984 allows cities to charge system development charges (SDCs) as long as the charge is based on a “specific adopted policy for commercial to residential conversions” adopted on or before December 31, 2023, or if the charge is for water or wastewater and includes an offset for at least 100% of the water or wastewater SDCs paid when the building was originally constructed. Cities already tailor SDC charges to the specific impacts of each development, and the LOC understands this provision will allow cities to continue

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charging SDCs accordingly. The bill is not intended to require cities to conduct a formal SDC methodology review or update by December 31, 2023.

HB 2001/HB 5019 – Affordable Housing and Emergency Homelessness Response Package

Effective Dates: March 29, 2023

On her first day in office, Governor Kotek signed three executive orders aimed at tackling the state’s housing and homelessness crisis by: declaring a homelessness state of emergency; setting an ambitious state target to increase home construction; and directing state agencies to prioritize reducing and preventing homelessness in all areas of the state. In response, the Legislature passed HB 2001 and HB 5019, also known as the “60-day housing package,” early in session with broad bipartisan support. The 60-day housing package included \$155 million to rehouse 1,650 Oregonians, prevent homelessness for 8,750 households, and expand shelter capacity by 700 beds by the end of 2023. It also established and funded the Oregon Housing Needs Analysis (OHNA) program, which applies to cities with a population of 10,000 or more. The bill included \$3.5 million in funding at the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) for local grants for housing planning updates. That funding, in addition to investments in the DLCD agency budget, provides a total of \$4.75 million for housing and urbanization grants available to all cities for the 2023-25 biennium.

Cybersecurity –

Nolan Pleše, Lobbyist – nplese@orcities.org

HB 2490 – Public Records Exemption for Cybersecurity Information

Effective Date: January 1, 2024

This bill provides clarity to current statute for allowable public record exemptions. It also clarifies that local governments may exempt from disclosure public records concerning cybersecurity plans, devices and systems, including contractual and insurance records setting forth specifications, applications and coverages.

What cities must do: Cities are not obligated to disclose public records concerning cybersecurity plans, devices, and systems, including contractual and insurance records setting forth specifications, applications and coverages when receiving a public records request.

Economic Development –

Lindsay Tenes, Lobbyist – ltenes@orcities.org

HB 2009 – Local Economic Development Incentives

Effective Date: September 23, 2023

HB 2009 extends the authority of the statewide enterprise zone program, the long-term rural enterprise zone program and gain-share, a facet of the Strategic Investment Program (SIP).

(continued on page 40)



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Enterprise zone sponsors and school districts will be required to establish a school support fee that will apply to projects receiving the enterprise zone benefit between 15-30%. Districts with schools inside the enterprise zone will collect the fee directly from the company. The fee will apply to years four and five of the standard enterprise zone abatement and years six to 15 of the long term rural, so companies receiving the enterprise zone would only receive the full abatement during the first three years of a standard enterprise zone agreement and during the first five years of the long-term rural agreement.

Zone sponsors will be required to post the terms of agreements publicly for 21 days before finalization, except for confidential and proprietary information. Zone sponsors will need to notify neighboring jurisdictions about potential impacts to infrastructure resulting from enterprise zone investments. Zone sponsors will not be able to sign agreements with a retail fulfillment center. *The changes apply to enterprise zone agreements entered into after September 23, 2023. Enterprise zone agreements that have been finalized before the effective date will not be affected.*

The minimum value of the size of the project to qualify for the SIP will be increased to \$150 million for urban projects and \$40 million for rural projects, and each value will increase yearly by the inflation rate, or the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The maximum amount a company receiving a SIP exemption will pay for the Community Service Fee cap will be raised from \$2.5 million to \$3 million and will increase yearly by the inflation rate, or the CPI. The amount of the property value that is taxable while

receiving the exemption will increase. Emergency services and ports will be required to be included in SIP negotiations. *The program changes apply to SIP agreements entered after September 23, 2023. SIP agreements already in place will remain under the original terms of the agreement.*

Property Tax –

Lindsay Tenes, Lobbyist – ltenes@orcities.org

SB 919 – Property Tax Exemption for New ADU Housing and Conversions

Effective Date: January 1, 2024

SB 919 creates a local option five-year property tax exemption for properties with newly constructed accessory dwelling units (ADUs) or a single-family home converted into a multi-unit housing property. Cities or counties may adopt the exemption by resolution. To qualify, the property cannot be used for temporary vacation lodging and must be used as the occupant’s primary residence. The combined rates of taxation of the city or county and all approving taxing districts equal 51% or more of the total combined rate of taxation on the eligible property. It applies to property tax years beginning on or after **July 1, 2024**.

What cities need to do: Cities may adopt the exemption by resolution but are required to obtain approval from affected taxing districts imposing the majority of total combined rate of taxation on eligible property.

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General Government Issues – Scott Winkels, Lobbyist – swinkels@orcities.org

[HB 2805](#) – Serial Meetings

Effective Date, January 1 2024

HB 2805 prohibits serial meetings, defined as gatherings of a quorum of a public body in a physical space, over email or text and through intermediaries. This “new” prohibition is the standard the LOC has trained to since court rulings indicated serial gatherings were prohibited and should not result in significant changes in city operations. However, the bill also requires public officials of entities with budgets greater than \$1 million to attend or view training on open meetings developed or approved by the Oregon Government Ethics Commission once during their term of office.

What cities must do: Ensure public officials are trained in open meetings law once during their term if the city’s total budget exceeds \$1 million.

[HB 3111](#) – Employee Volunteer Privacy

Effective Date: May 16, 2023

HB 3111 prohibits the release of employee and volunteer private information regardless of the type of record that contains the personal data. Previously, records contained in personnel files were exempt, but that information was considered by some, though not all public records custodians, subject to release if included in other types of records. HB 3111 is a prohibition on release and not an optional exemption, removing discretion on the release of this data. The bill had an emergency clause, was signed on May 16, 2023, and became effective immediately.

What cities must do: Cities must ensure they no longer release personal information such as home addresses and personal contact information.

[SB 1047](#) – Public Contracting Threshold

Effective Date: September 24, 2023

SB 1047 raises the public contract price threshold by which a contracting agency may apply certain solicitation and procurement methods for public contracts. Elements related to the state’s Certification Office for Business Inclusion and Diversity (COBID) in this legislation only apply to state contracts and not cities.

What cities must do: Cities are encouraged to review and modify their local procurement policies where appropriate to meet the following standards:

- [ORS 279B.065](#): Small Procurement for Goods/Services contract: \$25,000 or below
- [ORS 279B.070](#): Intermediate Procurement for Goods/Services: \$25,000 - \$250,000
- [ORS 279C.335](#): Public Improvement Contract Goods/Services: \$25,000 - \$250,000

Transportation Issues – Jim McCauley, Legislative Director – jmccauley@orcities.org

[HB 2095](#) – Photo Radar

Effective Date: January 1, 2024

HB 2095 amends [ORS 810.438](#), allowing all cities to manage speed in their communities. Cities in Oregon will have authority for the use of mobile and fixed photo radar in their communities in 2024. Placement of mobile or fixed photo radar has been expanded to include high-speed corridors instead of being confined to “high-crash” corridors. Finally, this legislation adds flexibility for local speed setting authority as well, allowing for speed adjustments of up to 10 miles per hour (MPH) instead of the current five MPH. All other requirements for reporting and the established process for adjusting local speeds remain in place.

What cities must do: Cities planning to add fixed or mobile speed radar programs must still follow all other requirements of reporting and placement of photo radar. ■



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Essay: Finding the Middle Ground

By Eric Mortenson

Originally published in *The Other Oregon*, June 20, 2023. Republished with permission.

I was standing in line at OHSU — Oregon Health and Science University, Oregon’s premier medical facility — when I overheard the clerk ask a patient ahead of me, “Do you want your pronouns added to your chart this morning?”

The country boy in me raised his eyebrows and stymied a smirk, because what could be more Woke, more Portland, more urban lib, than brandishing your preferred pronouns? (Mine are singular.)

Right there, standing at ground-level in OHSU’s Center for Health and Healing complex in Portland’s South Waterfront, with the famous trams zipping overhead and free valet parking for your bike — that’s Oregon’s urban-rural divide right there, isn’t it?

I’ll bet they don’t ask about your pronouns when you show up at the Asher Community Health Center in Fossil.

I was there once when two cowboys burst in the clinic door, one of them carrying a 10-year-old girl who was wearing a western shirt, jeans and boots. The guy who carried her in hollered that she’d been showing her 4-H steer at the Wheeler County Fairgrounds next door when the darn bumbly thing stepped on her foot! Hope it didn’t break her toe!

“She was doing real good, too,” showing her steer, before that happened, he hollered back over his shoulder.

There’s that divide again. It’s a real thing: There is a geographic, cultural, social, political and economic difference between the two Oregons.

The checker who helped me with my coupons at my Portland grocery store the other day had long dangly earrings, eye makeup, a pink swoosh in his long hair and wore a skirt.

But a guy I talked to, Jim Johnson, the land use expert at the state Department of Agriculture, asked a really good question about such encounters.

“So what?” he asked.

You’re not required to declare your preferred pronouns at OHSU, for example, but you can if you want. It’s important to some people but not to others. It’s certainly more common among businesses and institutions in urban Oregon than in rural Oregon, but so what?

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But the divide seems so wide, doesn't it?

We've got Eastern Oregon counties mumbling about joining Idaho and knuckleheads jumping into rural school board races so they can ban books they think are pushed by anti-American Woke Folk drag queens, or something.

We've got urban snoots who think people living Out There are uneducated bigots who couldn't make it in a city. We've got disdainful urbanites who treat scenic rural areas like literal Bike Through country — places to pedal through and pity the people.

But a woman I talked to, Associate Professor Lauren Gwin at Oregon State University's College of Agricultural Sciences, asked another really good question.

"Who benefits?" she asked. Who benefits from the discord?

Fringe politicians and outrage manufacturers, maybe? But not most of us, I'll bet.

Instead, there is a big middle ground sitting unoccupied, and I think most of us wouldn't mind meeting there and solving some problems in this state. I hear people posing some questions and making some points we all ought to consider before we jump into urban vs. rural arguments.

I talked to Therese Bottomly, the editor and vice president of content for *The Oregonian* and its website, OregonLive. I'll bet many rural residents would be surprised to learn that the boss of Mainstream Media in this state is a native Oregonian who grew up in Portland and played varsity soccer at the University of Oregon.

She presides over a news organization that shrank, reduced state-wide coverage and shed a generation of experienced journalists in order to cut costs and stay in business.

My reading of the reporters remaining in the profession is that many of them are young, bright, idealistic, eager as hell and technologically skilled, but lacking the life experience that might help them understand rural Oregon, in particular.

But you know what Therese tells her young chargers these days? She says, "Slow down and listen."

And that is good advice for urban people. Because rural Oregonians will tell you they are more familiar with urban reality than the other way around. They go to Portland, Salem or Eugene for specialized medical care, to catch a flight, to shop, see a show, do business and find services they can't get in Hooterville. They see the homeless camps, the traffic and the bizarre street people in addition to the attorneys, bureaucrats, bankers, executives, politicians, professors and other power brokers who make the state go.

It's not the life for them, but they get it. They aren't so sure that urban Oregon gets them, however, or even thinks about them much.

It seems to me that much of rural Oregon is standing at the edge of common ground, and would welcome some company from the cities. So how do you get there? Recognizing some basic truisms would be a good first step.

First, people in rural areas have to be able to make a living, and much of the economy out there is linked to the land and the water. Urban Oregon has to be careful about imposing laws, limits, taxes, values and beliefs that make that more difficult.

(continued on page 44)



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Urban people ought to recognize that Oregon’s farmers, ranchers and other rural landowners are the first line of defense against environmental degradation. “We live there,” as one exasperated Eastern Oregon blueberry grower put it to me a few years ago. “We’re not going to poison where we live.”

If nothing else, city people ought to go visit rural Oregon and sprinkle around some tourism money. There’s more to see in Oregon than Multnomah Falls, Mount Hood, Crater Lake and the Coast. If you haven’t visited Wallowa Lake, the Steens and the units of the John Day Fossil Beds National Monument, you don’t know this state.

Worried about running into rednecks out there? Say hello. Be courteous.

Flipping the viewpoint, rural Oregon should recognize it’s important that cities work. Portland in particular is cranking up its housing density, packing more people into less space and devoting less room for cars. Urban life isn’t for everyone, but dense development staves off or at least slows sprawl, and preserves farm and forest land.

How about we celebrate and sustain the things we have in common?

Food is a great starting point. You can go anywhere in this state and find excellent local beer, wine, cider or spirits to go with your burger or salmon fillet.

When I was a reporter, I reveled in stories like the Hood River orchardist who held the contract to supply apples and pears to

Portland Public Schools, and the Wallowa County rancher who sold grass-fed beef to OHSU’s food service.

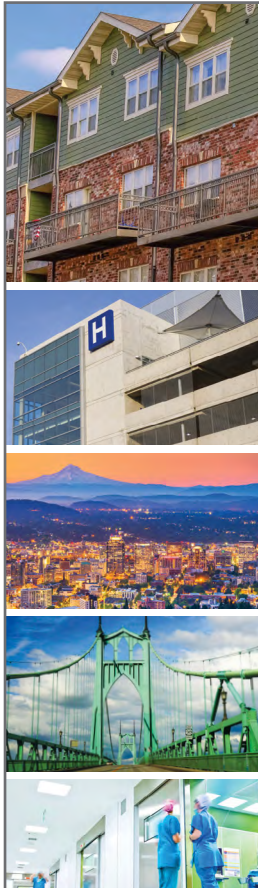
Urban-rural partnerships can take on many forms. Gilliam County, in North Central Oregon, has been burying Portland’s garbage in its Columbia Ridge landfill for more than 30 years—taking in about 550,000 tons per year. A “host fee” collected by the county helps pay for local services.

Gilliam—pronounced “GILL-um,” should you venture out there—is a major electricity producer, too. It has seven wind farms—those giant turbines—and this spring brought online the state’s largest solar farm. The 1,200-acre facility has more than 470,000 solar panels and can generate enough electricity to power 40,000 homes.

“My county in particular has a long history of being in partnership with urban Oregon, to the betterment of both,” said Elizabeth Farrar, the Gilliam County judge. Incidentally, she’s from a fifth-generation farm family in the county but worked in Congress and on political campaigns before coming home.

Yes, the urban-rural divide is a real thing, but it doesn’t have to keep us separated. We can all do things to bridge it. First, go see for yourself. Then, ask so what. Ask who benefits. And slow down and listen. ■

Eric Mortenson is a veteran Oregon journalist who has long reported on the rural-urban divide.



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Around the State

Stories from across Oregon

Good things our cities have been doing all across the state.

REEDSPORT

Matching Grant Bolsters Main Street Upgrades

With a \$200,000 Oregon Main Street Revitalization matching grant from Oregon Heritage, Reedsport will upgrade seven buildings in its Historic District as part of the Reedsport Main Street Program.

The properties will get various fixes, from roof repairs and awnings to electrical and plumbing improvements. The building that houses its post office, the historic Welcome Hotel and the Mindpower Gallery are among the properties to be upgraded. The Old Umpqua Industrial Supply Company Building will receive funding for a roof replacement.

“Our historical buildings are really important to us. A lot of places ... if they deteriorate ... you lose them. So this grant is something that we want to help people revitalize their buildings and without being able to invest money, this gives them leverage to be able to do large projects,” City Manager Deanna Schafer told the local NBC affiliate.

Rosa Solano with the Reedsport Main Street Program said the Highwater Café is coming to town this summer and will also support the economic revitalization.

“Our goal is to make it a sustainable downtown where our businesses remain open all year long, not just during tourist season, in addition to bringing new businesses that can survive the economic challenges that we have here in town,” she said. “Along with helping them to survive, our goal is bringing foot traffic into the area.”

Solano said the city recently launched its First Friday Market to help drum up that foot traffic.

The Oregon Main Street Revitalization matching grant program was created during the 2015 legislative session, and placed with the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office. The legislation established a permanent fund for the Oregon Main Street Revitalization Grant, and provided an initial infusion of funds from the sale of lottery bonds. The legislature included the Oregon Main Street Revitalization Grant in the lottery bond package approved in 2021.

If funded by the 2023 state legislature, there will be future grant rounds in the 2024-'25 biennium. The funds must be used to award grants to participating Oregon Main Street Network organizations to acquire, rehabilitate or construct buildings to facilitate community revitalization. The program also requires that at least 50% of the funds go to rural communities as defined in the bill.

301 Fir Avenue - U.S. Post Office



Present Day - 2023

339 Fir Avenue - former Welcome Hotel



1940's



2019



Present Day - 2023
photo credit - Robb Crocker

Photos courtesy of City of Reedsport

HALSEY

Oregon's Newest, Oldest Tree City USA

Halsey has become the most recent community to earn Tree City USA from the national Arbor Day Foundation, making it one of the state's smallest such communities and also one of the oldest, according to the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF).

Nestled in the heart of the Willamette Valley just west of I-5 in Linn County, Halsey is the 70th city in Oregon to gain the designation as a tree-friendly community. With a population of just 952, the town is also one of the state's smallest Tree City USA communities. It's also one of the oldest, having been incorporated in 1876.

ODF manages the Tree City USA program in Oregon for the Arbor Day Foundation. ODF Community Assistance Forester Brittany Oxford explained that Halsey needed to meet four different criteria to become a Tree City USA: Maintain a tree board or department; have a community tree ordinance; spend at least \$2 per capita on urban forestry; and celebrate Arbor Day.

"Halsey has successfully met all the requirements," she said, noting that at Halsey's first Arbor Day celebration last spring the city gave residents 60 native trees to plant provided by the Native Grounds Nursery in Brownsville. The city planned a similar tree giveaway as part of its Oregon Arbor Month celebration at the end of April and to plant four trees in Halsey Memorial Park.

"It is extremely exciting to be awarded 'Tree City' status," said Halsey Mayor Jerry Lachenbruch. "The commitment to our community in general, and the trees in our community specifically, is much more important than one would think. We all know that trees eat the greenhouse gases that cause climate change and in doing so make our air cleaner for us to breathe, but trees do so much more."

Halsey has drafted a master plan for the two-acre park on the town's south end and is seeking a grant from the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department to fund improvements at Halsey Memorial Park. The Park Master Plan also proposes a new park on the town's north end.

Approximately half the space in the as-yet-to-be-named new park would be improved as a traditional park with play equipment, and a small picnic shelter and lawn and shade trees. The northern half of the property is expected to have native plantings, including a meadow, shrubs and trees, a short walking trail and a viewing platform.



Resource Assistance for Rural Environments (RARE) program participants Julia Fox and Chris Rivera helped Halsey achieve Tree City USA status.

Julia Fox, Halsey's community development coordinator and a Resource Assistance for Rural Environments (RARE) program participant, said the park plan was completed with the assistance of the RARE AmeriCorps Program. Fox worked with a citizen committee, and a citizen survey, as well as many other resources including ODF's Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Program to develop the plan.

"I am very proud of our Tree City designation and the hard work of RARE member Julia Fox," Mayor Lachenbruch said.

ASHLAND

New Sister-City Relationship

The Ashland City Council in June unanimously approved a sister-city partnership with Sviatohirsk, Ukraine, an action that authorized Mayor Tonya Graham to sign a memorandum of understanding with the mayor of Sviatohirsk.

The move to bring the proposal forward was led by Ashland resident Ben Stott, who volunteered with aid organizations across Ukraine in fall 2022, serves as secretary of the Ashland Ukraine Restoration Project/A Sister-City Initiative and a steering committee aimed at the restoration of the Ukrainian city.

“The idea came to me that that would be a good thing for Ashland to do because it would be a way to create more of a city-wide concern about Ukraine than I could generate on my own,” Stott told *Ashland.news*.

Stott acknowledged, from his own travels in-country, that for those who want to help, the huge level of need can be daunting. “There’s hundreds of cities that have been bombed,” he said. “Many people, they don’t know where to start.”

Stott approached Mayor Graham about the concept, and it wasn’t long before she was on a Zoom call with Sviatohirsk Mayor Volodymyr Rybalkin. Graham was able to gauge through the call the tense conditions Ukrainians face daily in Sviatohirsk.

“When you talk to someone who is 50 kilometers (about 30 miles) from the Russian front in the Ukraine, there is just a strain through their entire body that you can pick up on even from Zoom,” Graham said. “His phone was ringing constantly and I told him through the interpreter, feel free to take any call you need. And he said, ‘My phone rings all the time. If I answer it, you and I will never talk.’”

“It was a really interesting call,” she added. “What came through really loud and clear for me was how much he loved his community.”

Sviatohirsk’s population numbered in the 4,000-5,000 range prior to the invasion of Ukraine, but now hovers around 500 people. Graham emphasized that the city isn’t promising the Ukrainian city financial resources, but that they are partnering with the local steering committee to fundraise for their new sister city.

“Being able to respond to specific requests, I think, is part of the magic of this type of community-to-community program,” Graham said.

City Councilor Dylan Bloom praised the concept of the sister-city partnership and made the motion to authorize Graham to sign a memo of understanding creating the new partnership.



Residents of Sviatohirsk gather. Image from city of Ashland staff report for meeting of June 20, 2023.

“I think this is really important,” Bloom said. “If a bunch of cities around the United States, around the world, can all team up and partner with cities in Ukraine, we can all contribute just that little bit. It doesn’t put a lot of burden on us as an individual city and it could go a long way to getting them some sense of normalcy, which has been absolutely ripped away from them.”



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COTTAGE GROVE

Skatepark Reaches Goal for Matching Grant

The Friends of Cottage Grove Skatepark recently received \$300 toward a matching gift for the skatepark from First Presbyterian Church. Still requiring another \$200, the community stepped up within 24 hours and completed the match, though more donations are still appreciated, the *Cottage Grove Sentinel* reported.

City Councilor Dana Merryday, who organized the fundraising, wrote in a Facebook post that the Friends of the Cottage Grove Skatepark had been awarded a YARG Foundation grant to carry out a community design process. It will entail considering all of the possibilities, from attempting to repair the current skatepark to creating a new design on the current site to planning the ideal skatepark in an as-yet-undetermined location.

The outcome will depend on the opinions of Cottage Grove children, parents and community members who are interested in riding sports like skateboarding, BMX, scootering and inline skating. Through Friends or the Cottage Grove Skatepark Facebook page, anyone can receive updates.

“Thank you all and you can still, at any time, give towards our skatepark. It won’t be matched at this time but maybe another community leader or organization will step up and offer to match donations! Ride on,” Merryday wrote.



Photo courtesy of *Cottage Grove Sentinel*.

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MANZANITA

New City Hall Design Unveiled

Manzanita's City Council has approved a design concept for its new city hall, which is intended to transform the city's administrative hub.

The total project cost is estimated at \$5.79 million, which includes \$755,000 allocated for owner contingencies and \$675,000 for the implementation of phase two including demolition. The council considered various financing options including debt or bond financing. Its financial strategy included the potential impact of a decrease in tourism, according to the *Tillamook County Pioneer*.

The demolition, a significant part of the project, is expected to begin in November or December. This decision was made after careful consideration of various factors, including the project timeline, budget and the need to minimize disruption to city operations.

The city hall project was designed with the community in mind, and included a town hall meeting to engage the public and gather opinions. A visual preference survey was also conducted, and the majority of the participants expressed their support for new construction.



The project also includes plans for the utilization of the city hall police station, which is situated on a 2.6-acre property. While the council has not made any definitive decisions, they have discussed potential uses for the property.

 An advertisement for bms technologies. The background is dark red with a network of glowing red lines and dots. On the left, there is a globe with a red map of the United States and a document with various tables and text. The text in the center reads: "The Future of Outsourced Billing, e-Statements, and Payments" and "Serving Utility Sectors and Private industries for 25 years". The bms technologies logo is at the bottom right.

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ST. HELENS

Riverwalk Project to Transform Downtown

St. Helens expects to start construction this fall on its Riverwalk Project, which will expand Columbia View Park and the first phase of a public riverwalk along the bank of the Columbia River.

City Administrator John Walsh emphasized the progress made on the Waterfront Redevelopment project, noting that after years of planning and securing several state and federal grants, the city broke ground on transforming the Columbia riverfront downtown.

“One of the city’s biggest accomplishments in 2022 was the start of construction on the St. Helens Waterfront Redevelopment Project. It’s taken nearly a decade of planning efforts to get to this point,” Walsh said in an article published by *The Chronicle*.

“City staff worked closely with the St. Helens City Council, professional consultants and the community to develop a vision for the St. Helens waterfront that reconnects the community to the Columbia River and supports the future growth of our economy,” he said. “There is great potential in our waterfront, and the city is working hard to create a cohesive connection between our historic riverfront district and the new development that’s to come.”

The project, which was launched in 2021, will set the groundwork for future public amenities and private development on the riverfront property. The city is interested in partnering with private developers who can build a mix of commercial and residential uses on the site.

The waterfront redevelopment will improve the safety of existing intersections, create inviting pedestrian connections in the Riverfront District, and increase parking in the area, according to St. Helens Public Works Director Mouhamad Zaher.

The city’s leadership has been very intentional, open and transparent about the downtown and waterfront master planning, according to Columbia County Economic Team Executive Director Paul Vogel.

“This first phase is a long time coming, with a lot of valuable input from citizens and experts alike,” Vogel told *The Chronicle*. “This first phase will provide the canvas upon which private investment can paint a robust mix of retail, commercial and residential uses – all framed in the context of an historical district with wonderful public access to one of our most treasured assets, the Columbia River. The most important priority is to develop a community ‘place’ that local residents love, and love to be. What attracts and excites locals will attract and excite visitors, adding greater tourism and hospitality to a balanced and productive economy.” ■



This sky-high view shows the planned area of the St. Helens Riverwalk along the Columbia River. Courtesy of the City of St. Helens

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