

City of John Day Newsletter



November 2017

Happy Holidays

Dear Residents –

This time of year has always been a time of reflection for me. A time to think about all of the things I am grateful for, personally and professionally. What a wonderful privilege it is for me to be the City Manager of John Day. We feel very fortunate to be able to raise our kids in their Mom's hometown, surrounded by our friends and family.

As I look back over the past year, I am amazed at everything we have accomplished. In January, we launched a new Strategy for Growth for the City and we have aggressively propelled that strategy forward. In this newsletter, I would like to provide a brief overview of where we have been and highlight a few of the projects and initiatives that will be forthcoming in 2018.

A Year in Review

Here is a brief list of our significant accomplishments over the past twelve months.

- Redesigned and launched a new city website to increase transparency and improve public communications, with 21,528 unique visitors to date
- Sold the old fire station and solicited offers for the completion of the new fire station
- Published our first annual public safety report
- Acquired 53-acres of riverfront and highway frontage property to convert Oregon Pine into a new innovation center that will house our future wastewater treatment plant
- Created a Community Development Investment Fund to begin making substantial economic investments in community revitalization
- Completed a county-wide survey of residents resulting in a collaborative vision for the future of our community
- Awarded two engineering contracts for our treatment plant feasibility study that will save and repurpose up to 80-million gallons of water per year

- Completed Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments for Oregon Pine, removing the final brownfield contaminants that will allow redevelopment to proceed on schedule
- Successfully lobbied the state legislature for new infrastructure investments in broadband network modernization and public safety infrastructure
- Applied for 13 grants and other funding opportunities and won 11, with a final win rate of 83% and a net financial gain for our community of \$2.9 million in external funding

A Look Toward the Future

In 2018, the City will begin a process to increase collaboration with our residents in our planning and community development projects. This process will help give you a broader voice in city projects and in formulating our planning and investment priorities.

Among the projects planned for 2018 are:

- Design for the Innovation Gateway area development plan, funded by the State through a \$200,000 Transportation Growth Management (TGM) grant, scheduled for award in February
- Launch of our new housing development district that will allow us to provide incentives for new home construction and major home improvements, scheduled to begin in March
- Plans for the development of new recreational facilities in John Day including a riverfront trail system that will knit our community together and give our residents improved access to the John Day River, scheduled to begin in April
- Opening our first commercial-scale greenhouse at Oregon Pine, paving the way for new academic and commercial partnerships in controlled environment agriculture, scheduled for construction in July
- Redevelopment of the mixed-use Main Street building purchased by the City in November 2017 through the Main Street Revitalization Grant, scheduled to begin next spring

Community Collaboration

We have seen a significant increase in attendance at our city council meetings over the past year. So much so that at times we have to find extra chairs. It is wonderful to see so many of our residents actively engaged in positive ways with their city government. Attending city council meetings is by far the best way to stay informed about city initiatives, but we recognize that not all of our residents can attend.

Therefore, to help increase two-way communication, the City Manager and members of our City Council will hold a series of town hall discussions with our residents in 2018. These town hall meetings will give you an opportunity to ask questions and hear real-time updates on the status of city projects. Since you can't always come to us, we're going to come to you.

In addition to the town hall meetings, two new advisory committees will be formed in 2018: a Community Advisory Committee (CAC) and a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). These committees will consist of John Day residents and key stakeholders from industry and our public and non-profit agencies. The committees will participate in the design and redevelopment of the Oregon Pine property and the creation of the new Innovation Gateway. We will also use the committees as community and technical advisory boards for other community development projects. If you are interested in serving on either committee, please contact City Hall.

This year, we will also host our first annual State of the City address, where we will discuss in detail the City's finances, our investment priorities, and the options for providing public services like 9-1-1 dispatch and the new wastewater treatment plant.

Principled Leadership

In addition to creating and executing our strategy this year, there are several principles that guide our meetings and our decision-making. They include:

- 1) **Leading with Vision...a Vision of Hope.** We believe in our community and its potential.
- 2) **Tackling the tough problems head-on.** We have not been shy about aggressively taking on the difficult problems that face our community, and we will continue to do so.
- 3) **Unifying our public agencies around a shared vision.** We are engaging our residents and our public agencies to create a shared vision based on collaborative governance. Our goal is to unify public action to achieve better public service results for all our residents.

- 4) **Investing for a bright future.** We are benefitting today from the vision of our predecessors who invested in future generations. We intend to do the same, creating improvements in our infrastructure that our children and grandchildren will benefit from for generations to come.

Local Income Survey

In the coming weeks, you may be contacted to complete an online income survey. This survey will be sent to all John Day and Canyon City residents by Portland State University. The purpose of the survey is to determine our area's median household income, which in turn determines if we are eligible for Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). Our community may receive up to \$2 million in CDBG funds toward the new treatment plant, depending on the outcome of the survey results. These funds do not have to be repaid and would significantly offset the cost of our new treatment plant. The online survey takes less than five minutes to complete. If contacted, please complete it promptly and accurately.

Paperless Billing? Yes, Please!

We have heard your suggestions and are looking into electronic bill pay options. These services incur additional fees and we need a better idea of how many customers are interested. On the return stub of your November bill (enclosed) we have included some options.

- ACH withdraws funds directly from your checking account each month for the bill amount
- eBill is a helpful tool for our current ePay portal. It will allow users to view the previous 12 months of statements.

Please check the option you would prefer or let us know of another option you would like to see. Any further questions or suggestions? 541-575-0028

Happy New Year

Our vision and efforts have met with tremendous success over the past year. We hope to continue our stride into 2018 with a renewed commitment to work with you, our residents, to create a community that brings out the best in each of us.

Sincerely,



Nick Green
John Day City Manager