

City News

The Newsletter of the
City of Veneta

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Fern Ridge Festival spreads its wings

By Ephraim Payne

As the Fern Ridge Wings and Wine Festival celebrates its fifth year, new things are in store for first time visitors and longtime fans alike. This year, Domaine Meriwether's new winery just west of town hosts a growing event that has started to gain national attention.

The festival started in 2006 as a "backyard" birdwatching and wine tasting tour of the Fern Ridge area, a birder's paradise frequented by more than 100 avian species.

This year's event, set for May 8 to celebrate International Migratory Bird Day, features bird

and nature walks, hands-on workshops, educational talks, children's activities, and a wine-tasting bus tour.

Some events are free while others require a participation fee. Pre-registration is recommended as some events have space limitations.

"We had over 500 people last year," said City Administrator Ric Ingham. "We think we're going to see those numbers go up."

This year, a charter tour bus will take registered participants 21 years and older on a wine tasting tour of four participating wineries, starting at Domaine Meriwether, then on to Sweet Cheeks Winery, LaVelle

Vineyards and Hinman Vineyards/ Silvan Ridge Winery.

"We knew all along that the wine component was really important," Ingham said. "Now, the festival is fully integrated with all of the wineries in southern Lane County."

Despite its success, the Wings and Wine festival still has room to expand according to Ingham, who would like to see the development of more birding sites and interpretive centers.

For a list of event activities, profiles of birding tour leaders and speakers, plus registration information, visit the festival website at <http://www.wingsandwinefestival.com/>

City starts newsletter

By Ephraim Payne

With the unexpected demise of the West Lane News, a long running local newspaper, the City of Veneta has lost an important means of communication with its citizens.

Concerned with the ability to keep local residents up to date on municipal projects and maintain a conversation with voters on core goals and future plans, city officials have researched different media possibilities to fill the gap left by the local newspaper's closing.

The new municipal utility billing system provides the city with a low cost vehicle to publish a short monthly newsletter that can reach all households inside Veneta.

In order to ensure a level of objectivity in the reporting of news the city council wishes to publish, the council has hired Ephraim Payne, the News' former editor, to produce stories for the newsletter.

Due to space limitations of the current format, expanded versions of stories published in the newsletter will often be available on the city's website: <http://www.ci.veneta.or.us/default.htm>

Veneta set to kick off water conservation program

By Ephraim Payne

Veneta may get its fair share of rain, but that does not negate the importance of water conservation to a growing city.

The City of Veneta uses groundwater for its municipal supply, not the rainwater flowing into Fern Ridge Reservoir. Veneta's five wells currently produce about 1.7 million gallons per day (mgd) and its reservoirs

can store about 3.5 million gallons. But because daily use can reach production capacity during the hottest days of summer, the City is about to launch a new conservation program to reduce the demand on City facilities and save the municipal water system money in the long term.

"The first year we proposed some demonstration projects at City Hall," Community Services Di-

rector Brian Issa said, adding that residents can start conserving now by using water efficiently in the home and in the garden. "(With summer approaching) we just want to encourage people to check their irrigation systems (for leaks) and to really be mindful of the demand on the system."

Read an expanded version of this article at <http://www.ci.veneta.or.us/default.htm>