

The Newsletter of the
City of Veneta

88184 Eighth Street
PO Box 458
Veneta, OR 97487
(541) 935-2191

<http://www.ci.veneta.or.us/>

City News

Residents should take flood precautions

Every few years Mother Nature reminds Willamette Valley residents just how much water moves through our area during heavy winter rains. Overflowing detention ponds, bank-full drainages and submerged streets are the norm for communities like Veneta that are flat, low and surrounded by water.

Still, Veneta fared better than some during the recent rains.

"We had areas around town where we had water in the streets for short periods, but overall, we did ok," says Kyle Schauer, the City's Public Works Superintendent. "We're not aware of any property damage within the City

caused by high water."

Although the City weathered recent storms without any significant damage to public or private property, residents can help prevent future problems by using common sense and taking a few simple measures to keep the water moving.

Do not blow leaves or other yard debris into the street. Doing so runs the risk of plugging storm drains and causing localized flooding for you and your neighbors

Don't dump grass clippings or other debris into detention ponds, wetlands, or other drainage areas. Doing so impedes drainage and can lead to major problems.

Avoid high water areas. Driving through flooded streets pushes flood waters into yards and garages that would otherwise be above the water line.

Keep an eye on curb inlets on your street. City crews inspect them, but when waters recede, debris can cause blockages at the curb that are easily fixed by removing sticks, plywood scraps, and other debris that floats in preventing drainage.

When high waters are expected, the City will have sand bags available for residents. For information on availability and pick-up locations, visit the City's website or call 541-935-2191.

Chamber requests DSA nominations

Who was really there for the community? Who stepped up and made things happen in Fern Ridge in 2011?

The Fern Ridge Chamber of Commerce is now accepting nominations for the 46th annual Fern Ridge Distinguished Service Awards(DSA), to be held later this Spring. The Chamber and the Fern Ridge Kiwanis sponsor the yearly award ceremony with support from many partners.

"What this is all about is recognizing extraordinary service or outstanding contributions to the Fern Ridge community," says Veneta Mayor Sharon Hobart. "We really need people to submit their nominees."

Area residents can suggest their picks for Man of the Year, Woman of the Year and for the Lifetime Achievement award. Non-profit organizations can select their best volunteer.

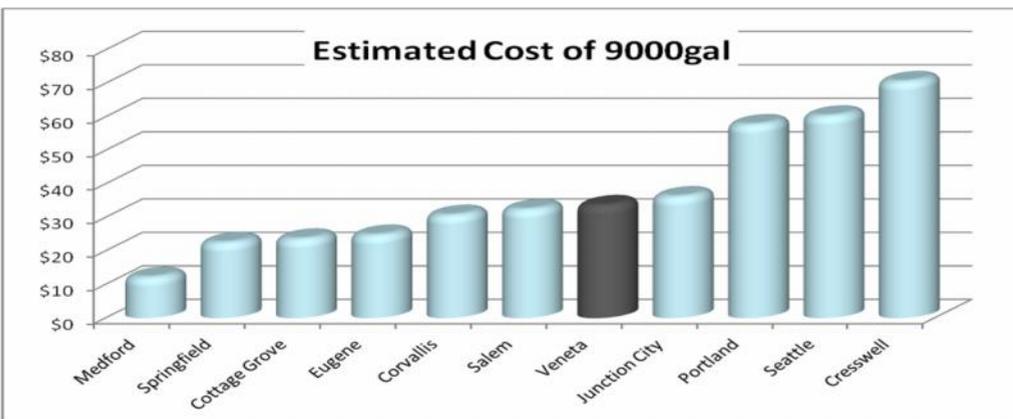
DSA nomination forms will be available at the Veneta Administrative Center and at the Fern Ridge Chamber of Commerce office in the West Lane Shopping Center. Nominators can drop their completed forms at the Chamber office.

Water and Sewer rates adjusted to reflect costs

As of January 1, water rates in the City increased 3 percent, while sewer rates rose by 1 percent. Based on cost of service studies conducted in 2008,

semi-annual increases are necessary to keep up with increasing costs of providing utility service due primarily to needed system improvements.

The chart below compares the estimated cost of 9,000 gallons of water across several Oregon communities. Sewer rates show a similar pattern.



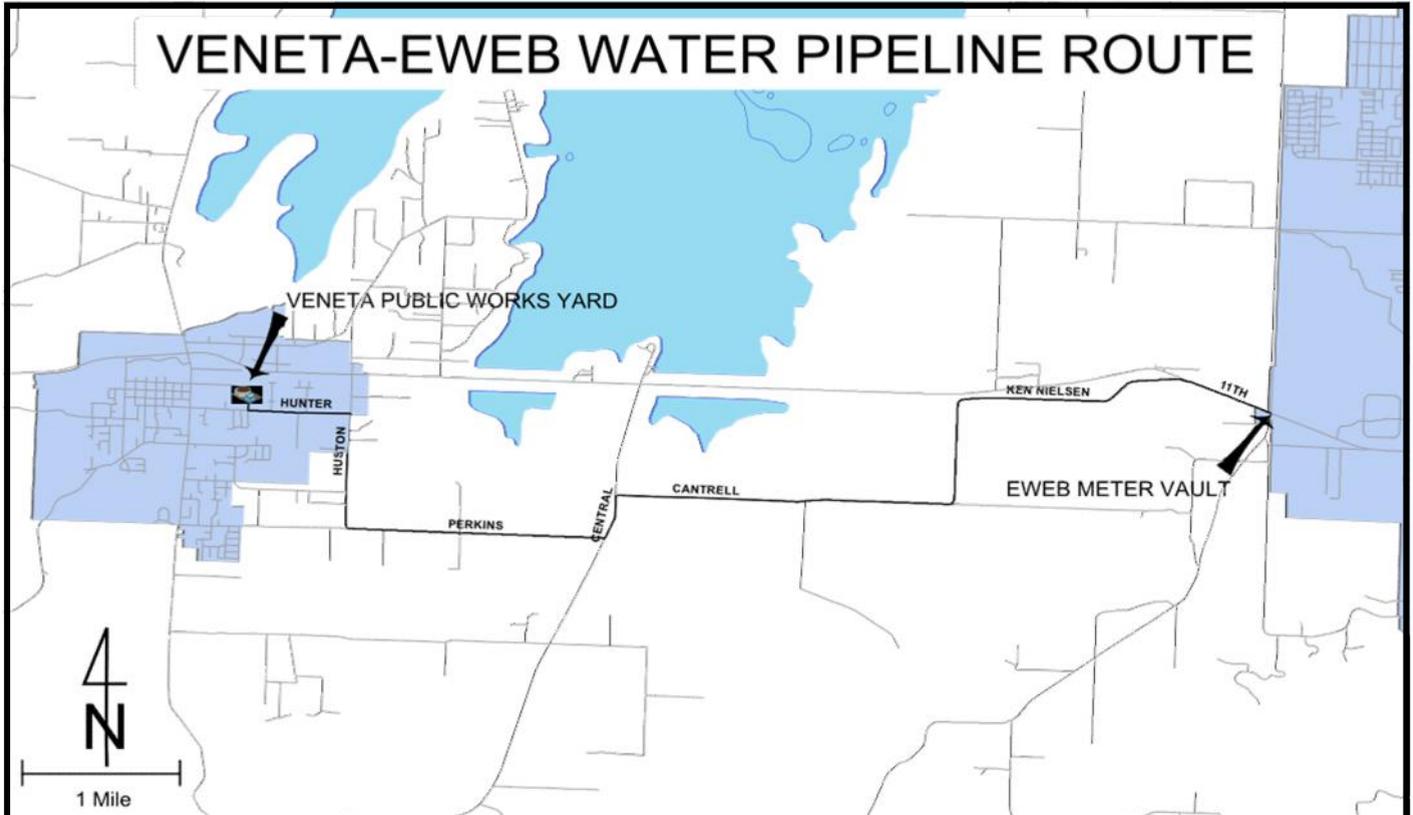
Veneta water pipeline faces environmental challenges

You might think that building a 24 inch pipeline down the middle of an existing road would be a fairly simple project with few if any environmental issues. Not in the case of Veneta's effort to increase its water supplies to accommodate predicted future need.

The City of Veneta's plan to buy water from the Eugene Water and Electric Board (EWEB) has been on the drawing board since 2009. But the City continues to face hurdles ranging from disputes over ownership of the dirt under a County road to concerns over potential impacts on endangered species. Little of this comes as a surprise to

on November 2, 2011 alleging both procedural errors and Endanger Species Act (ESA) concerns. USDA attorneys requested clarification on the scientific basis for these concerns and LWLC filed an amended NOI on December 20, 2011 citing threats to the Fender's blue butterfly and other listed species from future growth in Veneta.

"You have to make several leaps of logic to make the connection here," says Veneta Community Service Director Brian Issa. "Basically, they're arguing that the pipeline will lead directly to more growth in the City, which will lead to more traffic on Highway 126, and, since there are en-



The proposed pipeline between Eugene and Veneta passes under a well-traveled route of existing roads connecting the two cities.

City staff. "Being this close to Eugene, we knew that we'd likely face some push back from anti-growth groups," says City Administrator Ric Ingham.

To head off some of these arguments, the City put significantly more time and money into covering its environmental bases than is typical for a project of this size, including agreeing to enhance habitat within the wildlife refuge adjacent to the project. "They've done more to address environmental concerns than almost any project we've ever seen," says Charlotte Rollier, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) engineer overseeing the project.

The most recent challenge comes from Land Watch Lane County (LWLC), a Eugene-based group whose goal is to "stop sprawl" and "promote responsible and sustainable land use." LWLC filed a notice of intent to sue (NOI) both the USDA and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

dangered butterfly populations within a mile of the highway and those butterflies could fly across the highway and get hit by cars, the proposed pipeline poses a threat to listed species. We doubt this has anything to do with butterflies. We've dealt with Land Watch before and it seems to be mostly about stopping growth in the communities around Eugene."

Unfortunately the City will end up spending additional time and money addressing the potential lawsuit, with the costs falling on Veneta residents. Even with these challenges, City officials are hopeful that the project will begin construction this summer.

"We really hope that we can get out to bid in time to take advantage of a very favorable bidding climate," says Issa.

For information about the water pipeline project, please visit <http://ci.veneta.or.us/waterpipeline.cfm>