

City News

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/>

Veteran members start new council terms

If anyone in Veneta understands the importance of serving the community by sitting on the City Council, Tim Brooker and Thomas Cotter do. In January, both men, who have more than two decades of combined service in the volunteer position, were once again sworn in as City Councilors.

A former Veneta Mayor, Brooker served in the Marine Corp during the Vietnam War Era. Afterward, he lived in California before marrying in 1987 and moving north to the Willamette Valley.

"I lived in Veneta 27 years," says Brooker, who worked for several large companies since moving to the Fern Ridge area. "The last company I worked for was Levi Strauss, for ten years, until my retirement in 2011."

Brooker began his long history of service on the Veneta City Council in 1991, serving as a city councilor until his appointment as mayor in April 1999. Voters reelected Brooker as mayor in 2001, and he served until the end of 2008.

Though he chose not to run for office again in the 2008 election, Brooker came back to the City Council for a single year in Jan. 2010 after Mayor Sharon Hobart-Hardin re-appointed him as to serve out the unfinished term of another councilor.

Cotter too has served as a city councilor for many terms, beginning with decade-long stint between 1997 and 2008. In 2008, Cotter chose not to run for the council at the end of his previous term.

After a two-year hiatus, the Principal Broker/Owner of Fern Ridge Realty, decided to run again and received approval from voters for another four-year term in the November 2010 election.

Cotter, who studied Psychology in college, successfully ran for re-election in November 2014. He is currently the president of the Veneta City Council, a position he has held in the past.

In addition to his long service on the council, Cotter sits on the board of Lane Council of Governments (LCOG), a voluntary association of Lane County local governments, where he also serves on their Loan Advisory Committee.

The dedicated public servant is also an alternate member of Lane Area Transportation Committee (Lane ACT), an advisory board of local elected officials and other transportation stakeholders that works with the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and other local organizations to deal with a wide range of transportation issues.

City thanks Boothe for service

As two veteran public servants rejoined Veneta's City Council in January, City officials want to thank outgoing council member Brittany Boothe for four years of dedicated service to the community.

Local voters elected Booth in 2010 and she completed her term in December 2014.

"Brittany took her position as a representative of Veneta's residents very seriously," says Veneta Mayor Sandra Larson. "While she leaves the Council for the best possible reason – motherhood – we will very much miss her commitment and diligence."

As a first time member and newer Veneta resident, Boothe added a valuable fresh perspective and new energy to the council. She had lived in town for a little over a year before seeking election, and her husband has owned property in the City since 2006.

"I was really motivated (to serve on the City Council) after attending meetings" Boothe said on being elected. "I want the community I live in to be strong and healthy and vibrant."

|  CITY OF VENETA - CIVIC CALENDAR - FEBRUARY 2015 Veneta City Hall - 88184 8th Street, Veneta, Oregon | | |
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| 3 | Veneta Planning Commission Meeting - City Hall | 7:00 p.m. |
| 4 | Veneta Park Board Meeting - City Hall | 4:30 p.m. |
| 9 | Veneta City Council Meeting - City Hall Veneta Urban Renewal Agency - Immediately following | 7:00 p.m. |
| 14 | Happy Valentine's Day  | |
| 16 | President's Day - City Hall Closed  | Closed |
| 19 | Municipal Court - City Hall | 8:30 a.m. |
| 23 | Veneta City Council Meeting - City Hall | 7:00 p.m. |
| 28 | Meet Sgt. Halvorson (Lane County Sheriff's Office contract Sergeant for the City of Veneta) - Fern Ridge Library | 1:00 p.m. |

Veneta residents prepare to start Neighborhood Watch

The effort to establish new Neighborhood Watch groups in Veneta is gaining momentum. In October 2014, the City of Veneta hosted a Public Safety Town Hall with the Lane County Sheriff's Department and, later in the year, met with interested citizens to discuss the Neighborhood Watch program in more detail.

February 24, a Neighborhood Watch Kickoff meeting will take place at 6 p.m. in the Fern Ridge Library's Konnie Room. The goal of meeting organizers, says Veneta resident Liz Killam, is to inform citizens what a neighborhood watch is, how to organize local groups and how the Sheriff's Department will support them.

"Mostly importantly, we will begin to determine how many citizens will be willing to officially sign up to participate," says Killam. "After we have an estimate of how many citizens will commit to being neighborhood captains, we will have an idea of how many neighborhood watches we will be able to form and the areas of coverage we will have."

The Sheriff's Department will provide background checks on all interested participants. After the paperwork process, the groups will meet with Sergeant Carrie Carver, the departments' Neighborhood Watch Coordinator, who will periodically check in with groups and determine what resources each might need.

"Once we have the formal number of participants and groups, we will request some financial assistance from the City of Veneta to provide needed Neighborhood Watch signs and Start Up Kits for the neighborhood groups," says Killam. "I will facilitate getting these groups started and projecting the cost and needed supplies in conjunction with the Sheriff's Office."

For more information on the meeting, visit <http://ci.veneta.or.us/>

More information about Neighborhood Watch is available online at <http://www.lanecounty.org/Departments/Sheriff/PoliceServices/Neighborhoodwatch/Pages/default.aspx>

Petsmart renews grant for Veneta Spay & Neuter Program

In late 2013, Petsmart Charities awarded Veneta a two-year grant to launch an effort to control the feral cat population in the Fern Ridge area. Funding for the second year of the grant depended on the outcome of the first year's efforts. The volunteer group behind the effort, Veneta Friends of Ferals, successfully met program benchmarks, aided in the securing of a second round of funding.

The City of Veneta launched its "Don't Litter" program in March 2014 to coincide with the annual feral cat breeding season. During 2014, the program was able to spay and neuter 166 cats, 67 males and 99 females. 112 of the cats were adults and 54 were kittens under six months old. 76 of the cats were strays and 90 were feral cats born in the wild.

"We want to thank the Veneta Veterinarian Hospital and the Willamette Animal Guild (WAG) for their participation," says Veneta Code Enforcement Officer Teresa Warrick. "The Veneta Friends of Ferals want to thank all of our volunteers for their help, and especially four volunteers who went over and above the call of duty: Diane Repp, Kathy Norris, Jo Mazurek and David Hanscom. These four individuals dedicated hundreds of hours to trapping, transporting, fostering, medical care and after surgery care for many of the 166 cats that were altered."

The program needs volunteers to help with trapping, transporting to the participating vets, fostering and after surgery care. For more information, visit the City of Veneta website at: <http://www.ci.veneta.or.us/animal.cfm>

New sergeant puts the focus on community policing

Growing up in Creswell and patrolling that community for three years as a Lane County Sheriff's Deputy, Billy Halvorson has a unique perspective on the law enforcement needs of rural communities in the Willamette Valley. With 17 years of experience as a deputy, Sgt. Halvorson brings an old-fashioned beat cop's sensibility to the administering of Veneta's public safety contract.

Enhancing community policing efforts has been a major focus of the City Council since the 2012 and 2014 Goal Setting Sessions. According City Administrator Ric Ingham, in 2014 the Council identified enhancement of its public safety as its highest priority.

Sgt. Halvorson took over supervising the contract for Veneta back in June. Shortly after that, he started implementing changes to shift Veneta's priority to community policing. The City Council and the County fully support this priority shift.

"The goal is to build relationships with the community, the City and the sheriff's department because that's para-

mount to effective policing," says Sgt. Halvorson.

To open a channel for communication with Veneta residents, Sgt. Halvorson will be hosting a monthly community meeting on the last Saturday of every month at the Fern Ridge Library, starting with one on January 31. The informal, drop-in meetings will take place between 1 and 3 p.m. without a set agenda.

"It's just the opportunity for me to be available to the community, so if anyone has questions or concerns or just wants more information about community policing policies, they can come and I will be available for that two hour block every month," he says.

Sgt. Halvorson says his experience on the Creswell contract gives him the on-the-ground experience to understand the needs of both his deputies and the community. Small town policing has a bit of a different dynamic to that of working a metropolitan area.

"That was something I enjoyed and was glad to get the opportunity to come back and do as a sergeant," he says.