

## Exploring the School Resource Officer Proposal

The Veneta City Council is continuing to evaluate a Fern Ridge School District proposal to share the cost of hiring a School Resource Officer (SRO) to serve all schools in the district. An SRO is a sworn peace officer who works with school administrators and faculty to develop comprehensive safety and crime preven-

tion plans to ensure schools are safe places for students to learn. Ideally, an SRO is trained in what is called the "triad" approach and performs three roles: law enforcement officer, law-related counselor, and law-related education teacher.

In December, the City Council requested public input on the proposal. At

its Jan. 13<sup>th</sup> meeting, public testimony ran nearly 20 to 1 in favor.

"With this early support, the Council instructed staff to move forward with the conversation," said City of Veneta Management Analyst Jenna Boyd. "The City is now conducting an in-depth analysis of the costs, benefits, and potential

funding structure of the SRO position."

Should the School District hire a year-round SRO, that individual could "potentially work at the schools during the regular school year, stay engaged with local youth throughout the summer, and could also supplement Veneta's contracted law

*(See "SRO" on page 2)*

## Land Development Happenings

A Dollar General store at Highway 126 and Cornerstone Dr. joins a wave of development activity in Veneta, according to Community Development Director Evan MacKenzie. "The City has just received a Site Plan Review application for the new

store, which will go before the Planning Commission on March 3<sup>rd</sup>," he said.

Meanwhile, Grocery Outlet Bargain Market at the corner of Territorial Hwy and Hwy 126 has been approved and construction is well underway. City staff does not have

an anticipated completion date.

The City also approved a Demolition Permit for the former Cash Connection/Big's Hi-Yu-He restaurant building adjacent to the Grocery Outlet site and the structure was removed in Jan-

uary. "Demolition of that structure was a condition of approval for the Grocery Outlet application," explained MacKenzie. "That structure was on a separate parcel, which will soon be available for possible development."

*(See "Land Development" on page 2)*

## Meet Deputy Keegan McQuillan

The City of Veneta welcomes Deputy Keegan McQuillan to its contracted law enforcement team. He fills a position vacated by Deputy Richard Smith, who was reassigned to Lane County Sheriff's Office (LCSO) investigations after serving the City for three years.

Deputy McQuillan has been with the LCSO for nearly five years. After graduating from Churchill High School in 2010, he worked as a loss prevention and public safety specialist while studying criminal justice at Lane

Community College.

"In 2015, I met the current Lane County Sheriff, Cliff Harrold, while serving on a church leadership team," McQuillan explained. "He convinced me to apply at the Sheriff's Office and I started my career in the corrections division that year."

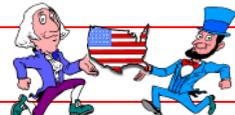
McQuillan moved to patrol duties in 2018. He was an LCSO instructor for both the Defensive Tactics team and the Oregon Physical Abilities Test team. In 2019, he generated or handled

*(See "McQuillan" on page 2)*

### CIVIC CALENDAR

February 2020

All meetings held at City Hall unless otherwise noted

4	Planning Commission Meeting	Cancelled
5	Park Board Meeting	4:30 p.m.
10	City Council Work Session City Council Meeting - Urban Renewal Agency - immediately following	5:30 p.m. 6:30 p.m.
14	Happy Valentine's Day	
17	Presidents' Day	 Closed
19	Economic Development Committee	2:00 p.m.
20	Municipal Court	8:30 a.m.
24	City Council Meeting	6:30 p.m.

## SRO

enforcement team,” explained FRSD Superintendent Gary Carpenter. FRSD could partially fund the SRO for the 2020-21 school year through the Student Success Act, with the City of Veneta contrib-

uting an undetermined portion of the balance.

The Veneta City Council feels that an SRO could have a positive impact on students and the greater community, but wants further public input

to determine whether residents want to adopt the proposal and, if so, to decide how it will be funded and at what level.

“The City urges the community to stay engaged through social me-

dia, news coverage, and a public meeting to be scheduled this month,” said Boyd. “The Council aims to make a final decision by March so that both FRSD and the City can make budget decisions.”

## Land Development

In addition, a recent ruling by the Oregon Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA) will allow the Sar-to Village Project on East Hunter to proceed. The Veneta City Council had approved the development of this \$30 million

senior living facility on June 24, 2019, and a citizen group appealed that decision. On Jan. 8<sup>th</sup>, LUBA issued a ruling in the case affirming the development. The final decision on this ruling can be found on the LUBA

website at <https://www.oregon.gov/LUBA/Pages/2020-Opinions.aspx>

The project will be built in three phases and eventually comprise 50 acres. Located on Hunter Rd; the “Village” will pro-

vide a mix of independent, assisted living, and memory care units. Construction on phase one of the Village could begin this year and the developer expects it to be completed in 2021.

## McQuillan

nearly 2,000 calls for service.

“I look forward to working for a tight-knit community that supports law enforcement and maintains high expectations of their Deputies”, McQuillan said.

For the past 10 years, the City has contracted with the LCSO to provide

cost-effective law enforcement. Sgt. Steve Sieczkowski has overseen that contract for the past two years on a half-time basis, managing the four deputies who patrol Veneta.

The law enforcement team works to build close ties with the community. That means working pro-

actively with Neighborhood Watch groups, teaching people how to safeguard their homes and businesses, having a regular presence throughout the area, and engaging with schools to help kids understand the role of peace officers in their community.



## Free Cat Spay/Neuter Program

With Spring just around the corner and the start of the breeding season, the City of Veneta will be providing free Trap-Neuter-Release (TNR) services inside City limits in 2020. The TNR began in 2014 in an effort to reduce the number of feral and stray cats in our area.

Feral and stray cats are trapped, spayed or neutered, ear-tipped to mark them as altered, and re-turned to their original

territory, provided they do not face imminent risk. For the past three years, Veneta Veterinary Hospital and Willamette Animal Guild have performed the procedures. Whenever possible, adults and kittens that can be readily socialized are offered for adoption.

The importance of this

program is hard to overstate. Over the past 5 years 418 cats were altered, 325 of which were breeding age. Of those, 284 were feral and 134 were strays. There were 169 male cats and 249 female cats.

An average cat delivers as many as eight kittens per litter and as many as

three litters per year, one female could potentially have more than 100 kittens through her productive life.

If you know of a stray/feral cat or kittens and need information on this free service, or would like to volunteer with trapping, transporting or foster care, please contact Teresa Warrick at 541-935-2191 x309



# State of the City 2020

## Looking Back - A Review of 2019

As I reflect on the accomplishments achieved by our City this past year, I am reminded that we have completed many projects and are well on our way to completing many more. Although the Council and City Staff have worked hard together and have a lot of things to be proud of, the work goes on and we have new challenges ahead. Today I would like to present a short review of the year 2019 in and a short preview of 2020.

As I begin, I would be remiss if I didn't mention the passing of our beloved Mayor Sandy Larson this past year. Sandy was an inspirational leader who loved the City and seemed to be everywhere, involved in helping the citizens of Veneta. She set high standards for me to live up to, as I try to do my best, to be your Mayor.



Mayor Keith Weiss

## Community Development

Now that West Broadway has been spruced up, and building on the success of the Farmers Market, the City has added a Pop-Up business area where local businesses can display their wares. Music has been provided and it has turned out to be a fun shopping experience where folks can

meet, have a drink, shop and listen to music.

### Veneta Works

VenetaWorks is a collection of programs, events, and initiatives curated by the City of Veneta in partnership with Oregon RAIN (Regional Accelerator and Innovation Network),

and RDI (Rural Development Initiatives), aimed at promoting and supporting entrepreneur-based economic development.

Among its activities, the program brought experts to the community for a monthly topic-driven speaker series, launched an accelerator program to

help local businesses grow, and, helped area entrepreneurs find the resources they need. In its first year of its existence, 30 entrepreneurs took advantage of the VenetaWorks services to help launch or improve their businesses.

## City Finances

The City, once again, received a clean opinion from the auditors on the FY 2018/2019 Financial Statements and Report. Primarily due to large capital projects the city-wide expenditures exceeded new revenue for the year. This necessitated the use of fund balance ("savings") in some funds; however, the use was included in the budget and the ending fund bal-

ance in most of the operating funds is still well above the established minimums.

We submitted the FY 2019/2020 adopted budget, in October, to the Government Financial Officer's Association Budget Award Program; however, we have not received any notification yet. If we do receive the award, it will be the 7<sup>th</sup> consecutive year.

### Broadband

The City has worked all year to complete a plan to connect Veneta to Eugene's broadband fiber network. That would, when completed, provide more opportunity for internet service than what is currently available now.

It was hoped we would be able to connect by now. However, a challenge in obtaining the proper permits

needed to physically bring the fiber across a small area between Eugene and Veneta has led to delays. The City is working feverishly to work out the details and obtain the required permits. Once the fiber is connected, additional providers could offer less expensive alternatives for our internet needs.

## Public Works

The Public Works Department has, as usual, kept the City running smoothly and looking great without much of the fanfare they deserve. In addition to their day to day duties, here are a few other larger projects that they have worked on this year:

### 100 YEAR STORM

In February the area was hit with one of the largest winter events in our area in recent memory. There were several days of snow and up to 20 inches blanketed the City. City Staff and the Public Works Department worked in concert to restore things to normal as soon as possible. Some residents were without power for several days. The City Hall was able to get back on line after 1 day. The Public Works Department worked round the clock to clear and plow City streets and got at least 1 lane open on most streets so residents could move about if needed.

### JACK KELLEY LIFT STATION

A not so pleasant, but important subject is the movement of sewage from areas of our City to the City treatment plant. An area in the northeast part of the City needed to be completely reworked for that purpose. Pumps and piping were installed. As you recall, it seemed like the excavation between highway 126 and the shopping center seemed to go on forever. The project is now complete and there is a new state of the art pumping station on Jack Kelly Drive which is operating efficiently.

### MULTI-USE POOL

After considerable efforts, funding was appropriated for the building of the City's Multi-Use pool, (better known as the Kiddie Pool). Construction was completed and we had a ribbon-cutting ceremony on June 15<sup>th</sup>. The new addition looks wonderful and has been used extensively. We now can provide a safe and inviting place for families with babies and toddlers to be introduced to the water and learn beginning water safety and swimming skills. It is an inviting place for family entertainment.

### CITY PARK

A ribbon-cutting event for the major improvements to the City Park was also held on June 15<sup>th</sup>. State Senator Prozanski was in attendance. Wow, what an improvement. There are pathways for strolling, and benches to sit and enjoy the beautiful scenery. There is also new playground equipment for the youngsters. The beautiful landscaping makes it an inviting place for a picnic or just a place to spend some time with family or friends. Additional improvements are scheduled in the coming months. The local VFW Post 9447 has complimented the park with a very nice Veterans Memorial honoring those who have bravely served our country.

### *Veneta Homeless Advocacy Board (VHAB)*

The City of Veneta recognizes the challenges facing the homeless community. Many are Veterans who helped defend our country. We continue to develop ways to help make their lives better and to provide a bridge back into a better way of life. The City has been meeting with the VHAB on a monthly basis to develop ways to improve the conditions of the people who are homeless in Veneta.

The City has passed ordinances which establish rules and regulations to make it possible for faith based organizations to provide transitional camping on their premises. It is hoped that very soon these opportunities will begin to help reduce the homeless population in our community. In addition to our efforts, the Love Project located at the Fern Ridge Service Center, has free groceries that are distributed to needy families, some of our faith based organizations in town are providing hot meals, and one such place operates a warming center for the homeless to get out of the weather on those very cold nights. Much still has to be done, but we are at least on a path to help.



## LAW ENFORCEMENT

The City endeavors to provide a safe and secure place for its citizens to reside. We currently contract with the Lane County Sheriff's Office to assign to the City 4 full time deputies and a ½ time Sergeant. The cost to the City is substantial; however, the sense of security in our community is invaluable.

Discussions are underway to explore funding options to assist the Fern Ridge School District to be able to hire a full time School Resource Officer. School districts who currently support a Resource Officer report glowing results, and, of course, our children are our most precious asset.

## NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

Since 2014 the City of Veneta has been supporting the formation of a Neighborhood Watch program. In addition, there is an engaged group of concerned citizens that have organized to provide volunteer patrolling in our City. The Neighborhood Watch program helping neighbors watch out for each other, citizens organizing patrols to observe and report, and our local deputies all help make our City safer.



## CODE ENFORCEMENT

In response from our citizens, the City is planning to put more of a priority in enforcing the City codes that are in effect. The City will be looking at issues such as, but not limited to, animal control, abandoned vehicles and vehicles parked on front yards and as a reminder, RV's need a permit to park on the street. In addition, the City has recently followed the lead of other cities across the nation in passing an ordinance requiring owner's registration of abandoned, vacant, or distressed properties. This was done to urge property owners to keep their properties maintained and productive.

# Events

As in previous years the City has participated in many special events. In March the traditional Easter Egg Hunt was a big hit with the children of the City, with close to 400 in attendance.

On August 6<sup>th</sup> residents celebrated National Night Out at the recently refurbished City Park. Officers from the Lane County Sheriff's Office and Firefighters from Lane Fire Authority, as well as volunteers from our own neighborhood watch group were present to interact with all. City Staff personnel were on hand to pass out information on emergency preparedness. There were free hamburgers and drinks provided by the Alliance Church.

The Harvest Festival seems to get bigger and better every year. Some highlights included the fun chili cook-off competition, the beer garden, the many venter booths, good eats, music and lots of fun things for the kiddies. This year also included the "Veneta Bicycle Show". There were awards for each age group in each bicycle category. Fun was had by all. The City would like to thank the Fern Ridge Chamber of Commerce, the Fern Ridge Kiwanis, the Park Board and Mid Lane Cares for their efforts in organizing these events.

The annual Light Parade in December just seems to get better each year. There were approximately 40 floats. Santa Claus was leading the parade riding on the big red fire truck.

# Looking Forward to 2020

## 2020 CENSUS

Because it is so important for all of us, I have been asked by the Lane Council of Governments, to remind you of the importance of the upcoming 2020 census. Some of the important points why Lane County should strive for a complete count are:

- Distribution of more than \$675 billion annually in federal funds back to tribal, state and local governments.
- Redistricting of state legislative districts.
- Forecasting future transportation needs for all segments of the population.
- Determining areas eligible for housing assistance and rehabilitation loans.
- Assisting local government in planning and implementing programs, services, and emergency response.
- Designating facilities for people with disabilities, the elderly and children.
- Providing important information to use in future planning efforts.
- The State of Oregon could gain a U.S. House of Representatives seat.

As you can see, it is very important to our community, so, please respond to the census.

## 2020 ELECTION

One more very important event happens this year, the 2020 General Election. I would like to ask any eligible person who is not registered to vote, to do so, and to vote by Election Day, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020.

# Visions / Goals for 2020

## VISIONS

My vision for the City of Veneta in 2020 is to continue the level of excellence that the City currently enjoys. The City is growing and we will continue to respond to the community's needs. As we go into 2020, Grocery Outlet has begun construction and is set to open this year. Also, Dollar General has made initial inquiries about putting a new store in our City.

Community and Economic Development will continue to be a priority to keep Veneta a wonderful place to live and play. This year we will complete a Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan to guide the next decade of livability. A short Parks & Recreation community survey is still available online at the City's website until Friday January 31<sup>st</sup>. I encourage you to go online and have a say in what our parks and outdoor recreation future could look like.

## GOALS

Goals the City Council have in place for 2020 include finishing the work listed on the 2019-2020 Council work plan. Completing the Middle Mile fiber project to improve the opportunity for better internet speeds at a competitive cost is included. We look to improve public safety in conversation with the Fern Ridge School District and through our own efforts to keep our neighborhoods clean and safe. All the while we are developing an annual budget this spring that serves citizens' needs and maintains healthy ending fund balances.

## CHANGE

In October, our longtime City Administrator, Ric Ingham announced his intention to retire. Ric has helped shape this City for the past 16 years. His dedication to the City has brought much progress to the community. He has always kept the best interests of the residents in mind when making decisions. He will be missed by all, especially by me, as he has been my friend and mentor. We take this time to thank him and wish him well with his future.

After a lengthy search and interview process, Matthew Michel has been hired as the new Veneta City Administrator. Matt is an attorney and former general manager for Lane Electric Cooperative. The City will be in good hands.

## STATE OF THE CITY

As we enter into a new decade full of hope, it is with great pride that I hereby profess that the State of the City of Veneta, is EXCELLENT!