

The Newsletter of the
City of Veneta

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City News

Planning continues for city anniversary

Planning is underway for Veneta's Golden Jubilee, as the 50-year anniversary is known. A volunteer steering committee has chosen a date for a civic birthday party and formed sub-committees to plan events to share the City's history through the year.

The anniversary will commemorate the incorporation of the City of Veneta on April 8, 1962, and celebrate the City's 50-year history, its progress and its future, according to the steering committee's agenda. The goals of the committee include promoting a sense of community and inclusivity, hold a relevant and memorable one-

day event and other potential activities, engage the public in meaningful, mission-focused ways and disseminate the "story (past, present, future) of the city" in creative ways that highlight the City's assets.

The steering committee has set a birthday party date for July 21 and the party will take place at the Veneta Community pool with food and free admission.

The steering committee membership has solidified after several meetings with eight people on board, including city council members and staff, Veneta residents and two Elmira High

School students. The steering committee has formed several subcommittees to organize various aspects of the celebration: promotion, birthday party, local history, art and time capsule.

Each subcommittee will meet before the next steering committee meeting, scheduled for January 19. Subcommittees are still recruiting volunteers, who will be able to help shape potential events such as a possible photo contest and time capsule burial.

Those interested in volunteering can contact City Recorder Chris Workman for more info and meeting times at (541) 935-2191.

Local Railroad activity increasing

The railroad running through town is active again after a period of dormancy. Veneta residents should be aware of track use and stay off the railroad right of way.

"At this point we are doing one train a week (each way). Trains are limited to 10 miles per hour because of repair work," says Elise Hammer of The Port of Coos Bay, which operates the railroad. "From a safety perspective, people should stay off the railroad easement and don't trespass. We have railroad work vehicles coming and going all day."

It is illegal to trespass onto the railroad right of way for walking, jogging, off-road vehicle driving or other pursuits. Such activities present a safety hazard to both the trespasser and railroad workers.

A train heads eastbound sometime each Monday or Tuesday, with a return train westbound from Eugene on most Fridays and occasionally on Thursdays. Railroad traffic will increase in the future. Railroad service vehicles may use the railroad at any time, including on the weekends.

Community Form #2: Evaluating the Options



Highway 126: Fern Ridge Corridor Plan is ready to take the next step toward identifying workable solutions to improve the safety and function of Highway 126 between the cities of Veneta and Eugene.

The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) will hold a second community forum on its Highway 126 plan Tuesday, January 24 between 6 and 8 p.m., at the Elmira High School

cafeteria, 24936 Fir Grove Lane, Elmira.

ODOT representatives say they appreciate all the good ideas brought forward by those who attended its October public forum.

At the upcoming meeting, department employees will share what they have learned about the alternatives, and the project team will ask for citizen help to evaluate and narrow the options.

The event will be wheelchair accessible. Interpreters or note takers can be provided for deaf or hard of hearing individuals with a one-week notice prior to the event. Materials can be made available in alternate formats if requested in advance.

Please RSVP to info@highway126.org. For more information, call (541) 345-5091 or visit the plan website at <http://highway126.org/>.

Community pool records second successful season

Despite unseasonably cold summer weather and slightly lower usage, the Veneta Community Pool operated smoothly this year thanks to staff experience gained in the facility's inaugural season in 2010. In November, Community Services Director Brian Issa presented a report to the City Council recapping the 2011 season.

This year the pool operated seven days a week, except holidays including the 4th of July, from June 17 to September 2, for a total of 77 days. The pool brought in \$42,203 in fees against \$95,793.57 in total expenses. Last year the pool cost \$96,678 to operate against \$46,004 in revenue.

One important takeaway message from the report, according to Issa, is that fees do not support the operation of the pool.

"There seems to be a misconception among the public that the pool makes money. The reality is that it doesn't," Issa said. "Pretty much every municipal pool in the country loses money."

Veneta's citizens rallied behind the volunteer-driven effort of fund the pool's construction, he said, because of the benefits it provides to the community.

"Citizens wanted a pool and voted for it," Issa said. "It's a great amenity for the city and improves the quality of life."

The user fee of \$3 per visit goes strictly to offset the pool's operational budget, Issa said, which pays for life-guards, electricity for the facility and propane to heat the water.

Issa credited Pool Manager Stacy Cornelius and her staff's efficient operations for bringing labor costs down. At the same time, propane costs rose and this year's cost estimates take purchasing water for the pool into account though the previous year's figures did not.

Due to the theft of some unattended personal property, the City purchased 36 coin operated lockers for the pool, which will be installed outside of the family change rooms before the 2012 season.

City of Veneta adds experienced planner to its team

The City of Veneta has made several changes to its team this year, and its latest addition brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the planning department. In December, Kay Bork joined the staff as Associate Planner and Urban Renewal Specialist, replacing Associate Planner Zac Moody, who moved to Medford this fall.

Bork's duties include overseeing day to day city planning, plus municipal code updates and helping citizens and developers understand how the code works. She will handle questions ranging from how to build a fence in the City to whether it is permissible to land a helicopter inside city limits. As Veneta's urban renewal specialist, she will work on the downtown redevelopment project and administer grants such as the federal grant for the Fern Ridge Service Center.

"She has been around the Oregon planning system for a long time," says Veneta Community Services Director Brian Issa. "She has a lot of good contacts and a lot of experience."

Bork has over 12 years of regional planning under her belt, having worked for the City of Springfield and the Lane Council of Governments (LCOG). Most recently, Bork worked as a planner for Junction City. Her professional experience provides a good perspective on the varying needs of big cities and small towns.

"The projects that Veneta is working on are exciting for a small town," Bork says of her reason for moving down the valley from Junction City, citing the service center, urban renewal and the chance to do economic development work.

Bork also mentioned the chance to work with Issa and City Administrator Ric Ingham, whom she has known professionally for some time, as an important factor in her decision.

"Veneta really seems to know how to get things done," says Bork. "They just work together really well," she says of the city council and staff, noting overall emphasis on teamwork.

Bork received an undergraduate in urban planning from the State University of New York at Buffalo. She took post graduate classes at the University of Oregon while working in Springfield. Bork grew up in the Village of East Aurora, a small town near Buffalo in western New York State. She says her small town upbringing adds to her desire to work in Veneta.

"I've lived all around, but it is appealing working in a small town," she says, emphasizing the many opportunities to work directly with the community in Veneta and that "at a small city there is not a department or staff person for every type of job or specialty so you get to learn something new all the time – my job never gets boring!"

At home, Bork says she enjoys cooking, especially with locally grown food, photography and cycling around Fern Ridge. She races with the Willamette Valley Women's Cycling Team, known as the Poplollies, a group that volunteers for non-profit organizations and events that support healthy lifestyles for women and works to promote cycling in Lane County. Her husband, Garron Hale, is Associate Director of Information Technology at the University of Oregon's College of Arts and Sciences.



Associate Planner Kay Bork at Veneta City Hall.