

# City News

The Newsletter of the  
City of Veneta

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## The state of the City of Veneta in 2013

*This is an abbreviated version of Veneta Mayor Sandra Larson's State of the City address presented to the City Council on January 28. For the full speech, visit the City's website: <http://www.ci.veneta.or.us/>*

2012 was a turbulent year worldwide. Some even prepared for the world to end on the Winter Solstice, but here we are, fortunate to be living in Veneta, Oregon, where it was a year of progress and celebration, partnership and change.

The need for clean, safe water was the impetus behind the drive for Veneta's incorporation in 1962, and it is fitting that in its 50th anniversary year, the City began construction of a 10-mile pipeline that will enable us to purchase bulk water from EWEB. Combined with our groundwater sources, EWEB's McKenzie River water will insure a secure, safe water supply sufficient to serve Veneta residents for fifty

years and beyond. What a legacy!

Groundbreaking for the Fern Ridge Service Center on West Broadway, Veneta's other major construction project, was held during the Veneta Harvest Festival in September. It was the culmination of six years of collaborative work, fund-raising and planning by the City, Mid-Lane Community Partnerships, and the senior programs of Lane Council of Governments (LCOG).

The service center will house the senior services and meal programs provided by LCOG, as well as the LOVE Project's Food Pantry, services that have outgrown the Tony Garcia Center. With luck, the dedication ceremony for the center will be held during this year's Harvest Festival.

Highway 126 between Veneta and Eugene got some long-awaited attention from the Oregon De-

partment of Transportation (ODOT). Three well-attended community forums held at Elmira High School provided local input on the agency's Highway 126 Fern Ridge Corridor Plan. Residents clearly preferred an upgrade to a four-lane highway, and were adamant regarding the need for a separate multi-use path.

Those big EPUD trucks have been doing more than holding up traffic and trimming trees along Territorial. They have been installing fiber-optic cable that will eventually provide broadband to Veneta. And, we took another big step into the 21st Century last year, reaching an agreement with ODOT to lease two spaces at the Veneta Park and Ride for an electric vehicle charging station. The station has been installed and will soon be operational.

In its fifth year of opera-

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## Sanipac offers new services

Last month, City Council approved a sanitation franchise contract renewal with Sanipac. The agreement includes some cost and service changes, which go into effect in February. Rates will increase between \$.72 to \$1.46 per month, depending on the services each customer requests.

To assist senior citizens and smaller households that do not need weekly trash pickup, Sanipac is instituting a new bi-weekly pick up service with a 20 gallon can, for \$9.20 per month. Households using this service will still get a full size recycling and yard debris can.

Residents will now be able to put glass directly into commingled recycling cart instead of using a separate container.

In response to local demand, Sanipac will offer weekly yard debris pick up in May, in addition to weekly pickups in April and November. For the rest of the year, yard debris pick up is every other week.

## City of Veneta launches Adopt-A-Park program

In December 2012, the City Council adopted a new Adopt-A-Park program to recruit organizations to assist the Park Board and Public Works staff with routine maintenance and beautification of local parks, open spaces and trails. Community members, groups, schools and

businesses can all participate, adopting a specific park or open space for at least a year and coordinating their quarterly cleanup efforts with the Public Works staff.

"It's a great way for a service group to make a positive impact in Veneta," says Veneta Public Works

Director Kyle Schauer. "We have great parks and open spaces in town, and it's a great way for folks to take ownership of them."

For more information on the program, contact Schauer at 541-935-2191. Adopt-A-Park applications are available online at: <http://www.ci.veneta.or.us/>

# State of the city address, continued from page 1

tion, the Veneta Farmers Market grew to an average of 155 customers and 11 regular farm vendors, in addition to six regular consignees. The Market took an important step toward independent operation with the formation of the Downtown Veneta Farmers' Market Board of Directors.

The State of Oregon approved Veneta's application for an enterprise zone, one of only 68 statewide. Enterprise zones are designed to attract new businesses or allow expansion of existing businesses by offering property tax exemption for a limited time.

At the city's 50th anniversary celebration in July, we showed that we know how to party. With our great partners and major contributions from the Oregon Country Fair, we threw a bang-up 50th birthday celebration that exemplified the spirit of community that "Venetians" share with one another and with our neighbors.

The Ninth Annual Light Parade, coordinated by the Chamber of Commerce and facilitated by city staff, was the biggest ever with over 50 floats. As mayor pro tem, I got to be in my first parade since high school, riding with Santa in Lane Fire Authority's vintage fire truck.

I have already referenced several of our valued community partners, and many others have contributed to the progress, viability and livability of our community.

The Lane County Sheriff's Department addressed local public safety concerns at a community awareness meeting. Thanks to the wisdom of our predecessors who decided to contract with the sheriff's department for local police protection, Veneta will continue to see 20-hour daily patrol coverage, in spite of countywide patrol reductions.

The Fern Ridge Library District continued to expand services to area residents, who, in turn, renewed the library's five-year local option levy with 70% of the vote in November.

The Ford Family Foundation — a good friend to Veneta — conducted its third Ford Institute Leadership Training, designed to promote vitality in rural communities. Each cohort

collaborates on a tangible contribution to the community. Cohort Three has installed beautiful bike racks at the library, at Our Daily Bread, and at several other locations throughout Fern Ridge.

In October, Veneta hosted 26 visitors from the Grantmakers of Oregon and Southwest Washington. Many partners collaborated to introduce these influential charitable donors to the Veneta/Fern Ridge community and demonstrating what can be accomplished in a progressive rural community when caring citizens come together to advance the common good.

Veneta's active and innovative Park Board collaborated with Veneta Elementary for the first time to put on a hugely successful Arbor Day/Earth Day event at the school, and with Kiwanis, high school Key Club and local Boy Scouts to hold the ever-growing Easter Egg Hunt, also held at the elementary school.

2012 was a year of change for City staff and government. Community Service Director Brian Issa and Associate Planner Zac Moody went on to other pursuits. Kay Bork was promoted to Community Development Director and Lisa Garbett was hired as Associate Planner. After twenty years of superlative service to the city, for which the council honored him, Kyle Schauer became Veneta's Public Works Director.

Mayor Sharon Hobart's resignation as a result of significant injuries suffered in a fall was an unwelcome and untimely change. Her ardent spirit, her great good humor and her tireless devotion to this community are sorely missed.

Long-time City Councilor Marion Esty retired with plans to spend more time traveling and visiting family. We will miss her dedication and the historical perspective that comes with such long service.

79 percent of Veneta's registered voters turned out in November to elect Victoria Hedenstrom and Tom Laing to the City Council, and I was honored to be elected mayor. I am confident that Victoria and Tom will

bring new energy and ideas to our deliberations.

Veneta is a vital and progressive small city with much to be proud of. There are many reasons why it is a good place to live. There's every reason to believe that the council will continue to work together for the common good in a civil and orderly fashion, agreeing to disagree at times, as it should. There's no doubt that Veneta will continue to thrive, largely due to our remarkable staff of just 15 talented and dedicated individuals.

Pipeline and service center construction will take center stage for most of 2013, but there is other work to be done as well. Improvements to Hunter Avenue and Eighth Street are scheduled, for instance, and we will continue to advocate for a multi-use path and Hwy 126 spot improvements identified in Fern Ridge Corridor Plan. On my personal wish list are a partnership with the school district to provide quality after-school programs, partnership with the Applegate Pioneer Museum to place historical markers at significant locations and partnership with the new Farmers' Market Board to expand the Market's offerings and customer base.

For whom do we work and plan if not for our children and grandchildren? In conjunction with the 50th anniversary, we asked students in elementary, middle and high school to look 25 years into Veneta's future, the future we are creating for them today.

Predictions of zombie apocalypse notwithstanding, most of them provided thoughtful, hopeful responses. Several students said they thought water would be the big issue in 25 years. I'm proud to say with certainty that it won't be, thanks to our pipeline project.

I think 15-year old Morgan Craig captured the essence of our community and our hopes for the future when she wrote, "Dear Future Veneta: I want to thank you for a close-knit, loving community. I have lived here my whole life and it's almost like one big family. I hope it will continue to be that way."

Me, too, Morgan.