

**Welcome to the monthly INSIDE the CITY REPORT!**

Hope everyone had a wonderful Halloween, and you are enjoying the fall weather. On Tuesday November 7, the Mayor and Council confirmed my role as Acting City Manager through January 31, 2024. I am excited and proud to be able to continue to move the city forward with all of you.

What convinced me to join the team here in the City of Ashland was the opportunity to work with all of you. In my 21 months here, that has not changed! The level of expertise, dedication and drive you all exhibit every day in serving this community inspires. I look forward to seeing all we can accomplish as we finish out this year. My office is located at City Hall on the second floor. Please stop by and say hello. I have an open-door policy and would love to connect. I will also be out visiting the various job sites over the next few months to connect with you all again. I also look forward to connecting with you at the holiday lunch on December 6. Hope everyone has a great Thanksgiving. **"Go Team City!"**



**Best,  
Sabrina Cotta  
Acting City Manager**

**WHAT'S COMING UP?**

- The Ashland Rotary Centennial Ice Rink in Lithia Park opens November 18 – The gala opening celebration, FIRST FROST, is scheduled for December 16.
- Ashland Senior Center will present the AARP Smart Driver TEK Workshop on November 29.
- The Ashland Chamber's 31st Annual Festival of Light will begin on November 24, with the arrival of Santa and the Grand Illumination of downtown Ashland at 5 p.m.!

**Below is an update from our City Departments****CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE:**

- **Emergency Shelter:** The teamwork that took place across City departments to get the Emergency Homeless Shelter ready was exceptional. Big shout out to the following City staff for their assistance on the project.
  - Public Works Department: **Steve Walker, Giovanni Cavalli, Ed Walker, Jason Robustelli, Matt Christensen, Jeremy Lowe, Trever, Niestrath, Wes Niestrath, Grant Tecmire, Chuck Schweizer, Shawn Ivaless, Arthur Newlon, Josh Roberson, Robert Halbritter, Dave Arnold, Cathy Crocker & Mike Morrison**
  - Electric Department: **Jess Hawkins**
  - Community Development Department: **Linda Reid & Brandon Goldman**
  - City Manager's Office: **Kelly Burns**

- Our **DEI (Diversity, Equity & Inclusion)** consultants held 10 focus groups, along with one-on-one interviews. These groups were made up of employees from all departments in the City. Next steps will be a city-wide survey.
- City staff and the Ashland Chamber of Commerce did a walking review of our downtown planters in preparation for an upcoming **downtown spring beautification** effort.
- **New Website:** City staff met with a representative from CivicPlus to discuss next steps for the new City website.
- **November News:** The November 2023 newsletter is available online at [ashland.or.us/Communications](http://ashland.or.us/Communications), and will be mailed out in City Utility Bills during the month of November. The newsletter contains December happenings.
- **Emergency Preparedness:** Staff took part in a 3-day FEMA training course in Medford, ICS 300-Intermediate ICS (Incident Command System) for Expanding Events.



Pictured above left to right: **Dorinda Cottle, Dan Moulin, Lynn Merrifield, Bon Stewart, April Lucas**

- **Coffee & Conversation with Council and the City Staff:** The third Coffee & Conversation gathering will take place on Tuesday, November 14, 8:30-10 a.m., at SOU (Southern Oregon University) in the Hannon Library/Meese Room. **Councilors, Bob Kaplan** and **Eric Hansen** will attend. Staff will include **Sabrina Cotta** and **Kelly Burns**.

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

- **Brandon Goldman** represented Ashland at the Oregon Annual Planning conference.

## ELECTRIC:

- **Tom Mc Bartlett** represented the City at the Oregon Municipal Electric Utilities Association annual meeting and learned more about what is happening at the state and federal level regarding utilities. Next week he will do the same at the Northwest Regional Utilities Board meeting where he is a board member as well as the Public Power Council meeting of which we are a member. It is with these entities the discussion and advocacy for the upcoming BPA (Bonneville Power Administration) contract is taking place.

**FINANCE:**

- Accounting/Finance is thick into Audit right now. Auditors are doing their testing, and staff continue to move ahead with audit deliverables.
- Utility Billing (UB) continues to train new staff. Also been at work testing the new software upgrade/conversion to the next level of Tyler Munis. Utility assistance programs ([ashland.or.us/UtilityAssistance](http://ashland.or.us/UtilityAssistance)) are underway and we are currently accepting applications. UB has also opened to the public on Fridays at The Grove.
- Other ongoing projects:
  - USDA loan draft for the Rural Energy Savings Plan loan to provide low-cost funds to residents to upgrade their electrical systems
  - Contracts & Procurement amendments
  - Revenue Study
  - Continued accounting/budget support city-wide

**FIRE:**

- A soft opening of **Community Connect** was launched in late October. Community Connect is a free, secure and easy-to-use platform that allows citizens to share critical information about their household that will aid emergency responders. This platform is only for those who live in Ashland. Those who live outside of the City can engage with Community Connect for Medford or Fire District 3. Ashland residents can go to: [communityconnect.io/info/or-ashland](http://communityconnect.io/info/or-ashland).

**PARKS & RECREATION:**

- **Senior Services Division** – The Senior Flu and COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic on October 13 was a great success, providing 240 shots for 160 people. A second clinic on October 27 delivered 160 shots for 140 people. Unfortunately, some participants had to be rescheduled for the COVID vaccine due to supply chain barriers. Many thanks to funders AGE+, Mountain Meadows Community Foundation, and Ashland Community Hospital Foundation and the 28 volunteers required to host two clinic days.





Middle Picture: **Natalie Mettler (L) and Isleen Glatt (R)**

- **Parks** – The Conversation Clusters project launched on Monday, October 30. The Open Space/Trails crew built and installed benches at Glenwood and Garfield Parks, and stackable chairs are ready to put out at Lithia Park. Senior Services Superintendent **Isleen Glatt** has created signage, an online survey to collect community feedback and a news release. She also pushed the information out to the Ashland Parks and Recreation homepage and Facebook page.



Lithia Park



Garfield Park



Glenwood Park

- The Ashland Japanese Garden Anniversary Celebration took place on Sunday, October 22. An estimated 800 people attended despite the rain. Visitors enjoyed the exhibits put on by Southern Oregon Japanese Association, Dobra Tea, bonsai displays by docents and the Ashland Parks Foundation. Some lovely photos were taken by Bob Palermini and are included in this Ashland.News article:
- [ashland.news/photo-gallery-ashland-japanese-garden-anniversary-celebration/](http://ashland.news/photo-gallery-ashland-japanese-garden-anniversary-celebration/).
- The Park Superintendent position has been offered to an excellent candidate. Once the background check is complete, it is anticipated the candidate will begin in mid-November.

**POLICE:**

- **Chief Tighe O'Meara and Deputy Chief Dan Moulin** represented Ashland at the International Association of Police Chief's conference last week. Grateful to them for representing Ashland and bringing back what they learned.

***Thanks to all who helped make the Halloween Parade a success! (see collage next page)***



**"We are better together!"**