

Welcome to the monthly GO TEAM CITY newsletter!

Every other week at the City Council Business Meeting, I deliver a City Manager's Report to Council and the public. The reports highlight the incredible work being done by you, the City staff. I want to share this report with you in a monthly email. It's important for all of us to stay connected on what is going on in the City organization, including the great work of your colleagues and the City Council.

**Have a great weekend everyone and "Go Team City!"**

**Best,
Joe L.
City Manager**

Have you ever wondered about the outreach efforts of the City and the ways that the community connects with us? Most know that Council meets biweekly, this in addition to City Commissions and Committees who meet regularly as well. The public is invited to attend these meetings.

We also offer other ways for us all to connect. For example, special events like the Ashland World Music Festival or the free City Band concerts in the summer. Last fall we offered a citywide survey so that we could hear from our citizens. In January 2023, we hosted a well-attended Townhall meeting. A couple of months later in March, we held an Economic Roundtable Discussion and identified next steps in converting economic challenges into economic opportunities for Ashland – This group will meet again soon. In the summer of 2022, we held a Business Roundtable and invited members of the business community – This group too will also reconvene.

Most recently we hosted a Coffee & Conversation with the Council and City Manager and found the interest for such an occasion to be high--- We look forward to future gatherings! All of this takes place throughout the year, in addition to regular news releases, social media posts and our monthly newsletter. In September 2022, we rolled out our, "Let Curiosity be Your Guide," corner on our website, which gives folks the opportunity to ask us what they are curious about. To date, we've had nearly 100 questions sent in. The answers are posted on the City website for the community to see.

And while all of this is important in our efforts to stay connected with one another, the most important connection is the interaction that takes place between you, our City staff, and the citizens of Ashland. The encounters between staff in the field or at one of our customer service counters is the most important. I would like to extend a personal thank you to all of you who connect with the community on a regular basis. **"We are better together!"**

WHAT'S COMING UP?

The **Ashland City Band Concerts** will continue on Thursday evenings through August 10, 2023. Enjoy a free concert every Thursday from 7 to 8 p.m., at the Butler Memorial Bandshell in Lithia Park. Bring a picnic dinner, a comfy chair or blanket and don't forget family and friends! A pre-concert ensemble will take place at 6:15 p.m. each Thursday evening.

The popular **Lithia Park Guided Walks** are back! The walks are offered at no charge and are led by trained volunteer naturalists on an easy, interesting, 1.5-hour nature walk through Lithia Park. Topics include, trees, flowers, birds, climate, water, geology and the history of the park. Plan to meet at the front entrance of Lithia Park on Saturdays at 10 a.m.

The **Daniel Meyer Memorial Pool** will be open through Labor Day 2023. Don't miss your chance to go swimming this summer, ashland.or.us/Swim. (check the online schedule before heading out). The pool is located in Hunter Park at 1705 Homes Ave. And, if swimming pools are not your preference, check out the Swim Reservoir in Lithia Park.

Below is an update from our City Departments

CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE:

- The City is gearing up to do a **citywide DEI assessment** with our selected partner Paradigm Public Affairs with more messaging on this initiative coming soon
- **Cooling Center at Ashland Library:** The City supported a cooling center at the Ashland Library on July 15 from 1 to 8 p.m. More than 30 people showed up during the heat of the day. Water and donated food were distributed
- **Fire in the watershed on July 13:** A fire on the East Fork of Reeder Reservoir was held at 2-acres on US Forest Service land. Everbridge advisory messages were sent out to citizens. The Alerts Feed link in the message has proven to be a great help in delivering further information to citizens. Thanks to **Dorinda Cottle** for her help in setting this up for our emergency alerts. If you or someone you know did NOT receive these advisories, please text "97520" to 888777, and then take some time to go to our much improved webpage under Emergency Preparedness, ashland.or.us/BetterPrepared, go to our Alerts page, and create a full account with Citizen Alert/Everbridge
- **Interviews:** Live interview with KTVL to cover the emergency messaging switch from Nixle to Citizen Alert (Everbridge). Also, live radio interview with KSKQ FM radio covering emergency alerts, emergency preparedness and Alameda fire stories. Interview on Newswatch 12 to discuss the criteria for opening an emergency shelter for extreme heat
- **Everbridge message training with Jackson County emergency managers:** On July 31, Holly Powers (Jackson County Emergency Management) and Delaney Heurta (Jackson County Emergency Management) will be training with us on the Citizen Alert/Everbridge system at fire station 1. Our Ashland team of personnel who are able to send out messages will get official on-boarding with our county EMS

- **OTHER ONGOING:**

- **The Wildfire Workshop** rescheduled to July 26. This will be a review of resources and capacities at the City Department head meeting. A fire scenario will drive the process
- **Evacuation Task Force:** A task force made up of Public Works, Ashland Police Department, Ashland Fire & Rescue, and ODOT will convene Aug 7 to problem solve on how to design the most efficient and safe mass evacuation - How to manage "all lanes going OUT" during an event, and how to handle the current Clay St railroad bridge construction in the event of a needed evacuation
- **Updating EOPs (Emergency Operations Plans):** Department heads, look for your EMC to be partnering with you on updates to specific annexes of our City of Ashland EOP. **Kelly Burns** will need your help to make sure what is written in the plan can actually be counted on (Other EOPs in process: Southern Oregon University, Ashland School District, Ashland Airport)
- **Radio class for PW and electric dept Aug 8th 90 N Mountain:** On August 8 our CERT Team radio-heads will be creating and facilitating a hands-on radio class for Public Works and Electric Department workers

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

- **Fair Housing Trainings:** The City of Ashland Community Development Department sponsored three enlightening Fair Housing Council of Oregon trainings from June 29-30. These sessions aimed to educate Housing Advocates, Landlords, Property Managers and community members on various topics, including Fair Housing Basics, Protections for People with Disabilities, Families with Children, Source of Income, Disparate Impact and Fair Housing Law Enforcement. By equipping participants with this valuable knowledge, the initiative sought to empower Ashland residents to be aware of their rights and responsibilities under the Fair Housing Act, and to foster an inclusive community that actively addresses and combats discrimination in housing
- **Ashland High School Humanities Building:** The City of Ashland Building Division has approved a permit application and work has begun on a major upgrade of Ashland High School's Humanities Building. The upgrade includes seismic retrofitting of the existing 1968 building and the addition of an elevator and restroom on the North end. The project involves removing and rebuilding the failing concrete balcony, making various accessibility and site improvements, and completely renovating the plumbing systems, upgrading electrical systems, and heating and cooling systems, and installing emergency power generators. These enhancements will contribute to the overall safety, accessibility, and functionality of the Humanities Building at Ashland High School
- **Building Division Staffing:** The Building Division has appointed **Chad Stichter** to the vacant Building Inspector position. Following his appointment, Chad has successfully passed crucial certification tests, such as the New Commercial Building Inspector Certification and the New Commercial Plans Examiner Certification. These certifications showcase his expertise and strengthen our division's capacity to ensure the safety and compliance of commercial buildings in our community
- **Grand Terrace Annexation:** The Oregon Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA) has reviewed the appeal request for the Grand Terrace Annexation (1511 Hwy 99) and has remanded the planning action back to the City for additional evaluation. The remand focuses on two specific issues... firstly, the adequacy of the size of the affordable units concerning the city's affordability requirements, and secondly, the approval of the Exception to the on-street parking requirements. To address these matters, the Planning Commission is scheduled to hold a public hearing on August 8, and subsequently, the case will be presented to the City Council for further review and final decision in October 2023

FIRE:

- **Sara Jones** as she has been invited to participate in a briefing in Washington D.C. for the work we are doing in Smokewise for schools and preschools. It is an exciting opportunity for us to highlight the proactive approach we are taking for improving children's health outcomes with better indoor air quality. Her trip is being covered by OSU (Oregon State University), and she is a great ambassador for the work she is dedicating her time and talent to promote. She will be in DC September 27-29 of this year
- Ashland Fire & Rescue, along with four other agencies from Jackson County were dispatched to the Golden Fire located in Yonna Oregon, just outside of Klamath Falls. Crews were dispatched late Friday afternoon on July 21, and have the potential to remain until July 28. The fire which is approximately 2,052 acres and 0% contained as of Monday, July 24, has taken out a few structures and is threatening many more. This does not affect our current response capabilities as we have backfilled the positions to keep our minimum staffing



POLICE:

- Two parking spaces in the downtown roundabout, next to City Hall, are now designated to Ashland Police parking. This change occurred because the police department moved out of the contact station, which sits across Main Street from the plaza. When the downtown police presence was housed there, the City had two dedicated spaces behind that building. The police presence downtown has since been transitioned to City Hall, meaning the department parking needs transitioned to needing to be close to City Hall. This will give officers the flexibility to respond in a vehicle if needed

INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY:

- Check out the recent compliment from Allison George, Welcome Center Program Manager for Travel Oregon/Oregon Tourism Commission, "I must share that our welcome center internet service from Ashland Fiber Network is incredible. It's far and away, the fastest, most reliable network throughout the state." – **Way to go Chad Sobotka and team!**
- The City has a new subscription-based aerial imagery service provided by Nearmap. Nearmap updates the imagery regularly, and we have access to images going back to 2016, with the most recent data capture being June 15 of this year. The photo coverage is provided in an internet browser version, as well as a traditional GIS-program version, and we have both straight down (ortho) imagery as well as angled (oblique) from multiple directions.

We are also enrolled in Nearmap ImpactResponse, a post-catastrophe program where Nearmap will fly and publish surveys for our area on request should we experience a wildfire. In fact, Nearmap provided aerial imagery the day after the Almeda fire, and we have access to those photos as well.

If this subscription would be a benefit to you, please feel free to email GIS@ashland.or.us and we will set you up with an account. (Note: Nearmap is for internal/City staff use only.)



Example of an oblique photo of City Hall, OSF, Community Development and the entrance to Lithia Park, June 15, 2023