

2017: Visioning process to get underway early next year

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six-month job review, which included high praise from the Council, City staff, and the community, as well as a \$2,500 raise.

According to Ryan, "Some of the more significant projects completed or well underway include the following: Newly adopted long-term sewer and water rates; a kick-off of our Sisters Country Visioning Project which will help define the long-term strategic vision and decision-making for Sisters Country; and significant progress on the study and update of our Transportation System Plan (TSP) which will define long-term infrastructure and funding needs in this critical area."

City Manager Kucera also noted the TSP, which will be complete in 2018, as well as the completion of the water and sewer rate study, with new rates set to go into effect in 2018.

The citizens have been kept informed on significant issues of public interest with outreach meetings regarding the water and sewer rates, the TSP, and contingency plans for the solar eclipse, possible flooding of Whychus Creek, and the Milli Fire at the end of the summer.

The Community Development Department, under director Patrick Davenport, has successfully applied for three grants. The

largest grant will allow for new ADA approaches to the pedestrian bridge over Whychus Creek between Creekside Park and the campground, as well as riparian restoration along the creek banks between the Highway 20 bridge and the Locust Street bridge.

In conjunction with Deschutes County, the City received a grant to conduct an inventory of historic structures in Sisters Country. Most recently, word was received of a services grant for Community Planning Assistance for Wildfire to assess how to make the City of Sisters safer and better prepared to deal with wildfires.

Kucera added, "The City continues to invest in its employees, with the majority attending training within their respective fields."

The Public Works Department, with Paul Bertagna at the helm, had a very busy, productive year. Early 2017 saw monumental snow that required Herculean efforts to keep all the city streets plowed and sanded.

Memorial Day weekend marked the opening of the long-anticipated Highway 20/Barclay Drive roundabout, with residents and tourists alike having to learn the proper etiquette for maneuvering the new traffic pattern, which has improved the flow of traffic into and out of town. Completion of the landscaping and installation of the center artwork will take place in 2018. The three finalists for the artwork will be on public display and available for

comment in February 2018.

An early Christmas present to the City came in the form of a donation of quasi-municipal water rights from Dorro Sokol's Pine Meadow Ranch to the City. Sokol's daughter Cris Converse made the announcement at a recent City Council meeting. The gift saves the City \$250,000 it was prepared to pay for the water rights. Converse told the City Council she was making the donation in memory of her mother who died last January, and was a longtime resident and avid supporter of Sisters.

"2017 was not without its challenges, including the unprecedented wildfires that clearly tested the community overall," Ryan noted. "However, I personally am so proud of how well we responded to these challenges and the tremendous coordination and efforts provided by so many selfless people.

"2018 is going to be a very busy and exciting year for Sisters," promised Ryan.

"We will finish our visioning project by the end of calendar year 2018, which will allow us to strategize and plan our future with the utmost efficiency. We also plan to look at ways to further enhance our downtown landscape by using available Urban Renewal Agency (URA) funds."

Ryan added, "Your Council will continue to pursue new and challenging goals and objectives that optimize our city and its financial and community strength. There are also other exciting prospects that will develop over the year."

Kucera highlighted the efforts being made by so many on behalf of the city.

"It's exciting to see so many people investing their resources and time to improve the Sisters community. City Council, staff, and appointed volunteer committees look forward to the opportunities the new year will bring in our efforts to improve the community in making Sisters a desirable place to live, work,

and visit."

Ryan also looks to the future full of hope and invites the citizens of Sisters to become active or continue their involvement.

**"2017 was not without its challenges, including the unprecedented wildfires that clearly tested the community overall."
— Mayor Chuck Ryan**

"I am so excited about our city and its future," he said. "If there is one thing that I could ask of our great community, it is to get engaged by attending public forums and Council meetings, volunteering for various committees, and lending your support in whatever way you can. The City needs to hear from all of you so we are making informed decisions."

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