

State of the City

By Mayor Michael Preedin

As our beautiful City of Sisters enters into 2022, it is the perfect time for a little reflection to talk about how the last 12 months have gone. It would be easy to focus on pandemic issues, but let's start with a celebratory atmosphere.

If you did not already know, 2021 was the 75th Anniversary of the City of Sisters incorporation, and we celebrated in many different ways. A proclamation was issued in March, and since then, we have all had opportunities to join historical walking tours, listen to Councilor Andrea Blum's Jubilee Minutes at City Council meetings, visit the City of Sisters booth at the Farmers Market, and the most visible item, the new Historical Mural on the side of the Habitat for Humanity Thrift Store building. The blue 75th Anniversary banners were a sight to see on Cascade Avenue, waving proudly in the wind. It is easy to see how our history has created and shaped this unique and wonderful town that we enjoy today.

In other good news, despite the negative effects of the pandemic, Sisters employment numbers led Deschutes County with a 6.8% increase of job numbers from March 2019 to March 2021. This is an amazing achievement despite all of the uncertainty of our recent times. Much of that can be attributed to our local economy being more diverse than ever through economic development efforts to bring manufacturing, professional, scientific, and technical service jobs to town. I would

like to specifically thank the Sisters Country Economic Development Board, which advised the City Council on economic development. Hardworking businesses had a rough go of things for a while with shutdowns and worker shortages, but Sisters' resiliency has seen most of them through, and there are even better times to come.

Financially, The City of Sisters situation is sound. The FY 2021/22 adopted budget rose to \$22 million to keep upgrades to essential infrastructure at or ahead of the pace of growth. Highlights include over \$1,000,000 of capital investment in water, wastewater, parks, and streets, updating water, wastewater, and parks master plans, construction of the Pine Street multi-use path project, and purchasing a new street sweeper. One city staff assistant planner position was added for a total of 18.5 FTE (full-time equivalents). The City also assisted both nonprofits and for-profit businesses by allocating \$20,000 to the Community Grant Program, awarding \$20,000 to local businesses for pandemic recovery, and giving Habitat for Humanity \$50,000 from our affordable housing grant fund to offset costs on one of their many projects.

One huge accomplishment the whole community can be proud of is the Sisters 2040 Comprehensive Plan Update. This document was last updated in 2005, and since then, our population has doubled from 1660 to 3286. This updated plan informs everyone how we will meet future housing needs, maintain and expand a diverse economy, and oversee



future growth. It took dozens of volunteers, the tireless work of City staff and Council, and hundreds of hours of time to complete. Kudos to all involved as a solid plan is in place.

Other important work is also happening. The excellent law enforcement by Lt. Chad Davis and his team of deputies was extremely positive and hugely impactful to the livability of Sisters. The Sisters Country Vision continues to move projects forward at a fast pace. While they are meeting less often, goals are being set, updated, and achieved. Thank you to all of our volunteer boards and the Planning Commission. It is your time and effort that keeps Sisters livable even while it is growing.

Lastly, I would encourage us all to thank the staff of the City of Sisters. Our City Manager Cory Miskey leads a team of highly talented people that work hard and should be acknowledged by the whole community.

Ultimately, my thanks are to you, my fellow neighbors in our great City of Sisters. It is the people that make our community great, and it is my honor to serve as your mayor.

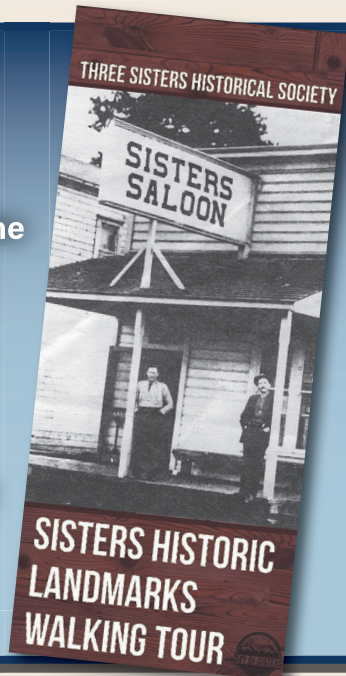
PUBLIC SAFETY

Last year the City expanded its law enforcement services for the first time, to include a permanent Lieutenant (de facto police chief) and three deputies. In 2021, this City Unit worked hard to build local relationships, expand their presence, improve response times, increase traffic safety, and participate in community conversations.



CELEBRATING 75 YEARS ~ 1946-2021

To celebrate the 75th anniversary of the City's incorporation, a historic mural was installed downtown, an updated historic landmark map was released, and new plaques were placed on numerous historical sites.



URBAN RENEWAL AGENCY



The City recently updated the Urban Renewal Agency Plan, allocating funds to support the Locust & US 20 Roundabout, Adams Avenue Streetscape Upgrade, Workforce Housing, and other future projects and amenities in the downtown core.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The City awarded a \$50,000 affordable housing grant to Sisters Habitat for Humanity for infrastructure work on Desert Rose Loop to help create four additional homes. In addition, the City was awarded \$500,000 of American Rescue Plan Act funds from the County to support a multi-family workforce housing rental project. The City will be updating its Housing Plan in 2022.



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