

Monthly Departmental Update November 2015

Utility Billing

- Reminders: Monday, December 21st - Utility Bills are due; Tuesday, December 22nd - Late Fees will be applied to past due accounts; Monday, January 4th - Past Due accounts will be Shut Off.
- Outstanding balances for Active Accounts as of 12/3/2015: 90 day \$0, 60 day \$6.00, 30 day \$855.01. Outstanding balance for Inactive Accounts: \$9,472.58.
- Utilities clerk added 4 new water/sewer accounts to our billing system .

Police Department

- The Vernonia Police Department will be participating in annual firearms training during the month of December. A portion of the training will be classroom. Officer qualifications will occur at TNW Firearms on Timber Rd. The date for the qualifications has not yet been set.

Finance

- Several applications have been received for the City Recorder opening. They have been reviewed and interviews have been scheduled for December 4th.
- The restrooms at Spencer Park are almost finished. Dan Titus and his crew did a great job getting them built. Parks staff will be doing some repair work around the play shed and next spring will put in the sidewalk around the restrooms.
- We would like to welcome Ben Fousek as the newest member of our staff. He has been working on contract for the past few years as our GIS consultant; with the restructuring of duties we have hired him to continue the GIS work as well as assist the Planner with land use issues.
- The draft audit has been received and reviewed. There was only one correction needed and the final should be arriving next month.

Public Works

- Staff did some much needed ditch, culvert, storm drain cleaning this month on OA hill.
- The last of the leaves on the streets have been picked up by street sweeper. This time of year there is more street sweeping than

normal because of the leaves.

- Staff has been trying to get some much needed street patching done. This is a never ending job as all of our streets were chip sealed over 10 years ago and they are now deteriorating badly.
- Another new water service was installed on Rose Hedge Court.
- Water plant operations took up more staff time this month with all of the heavy rain we had. The heavy rain causes Rock Creek to become very heavy with silt thus it takes more time to make good clean drinking water out of it.
- A very large stump became lodged on the intake structure clogging the intake every few hours. The stump has been removed now that the creek level has gone down.
- A few automatic valves have been not functioning correctly at the water plant. Parts have been ordered but have not arrived yet. Luckily parts are still available from the factory.
- The security fence has been installed around pump station # 1. The fence purchase and installation was made possible by a CIS Risk Management Grant Fund. This lessens the City risk as the area of pump station #1 is secure.
- Wastewater operations have now doubled in time since we are now discharging to the river. Most of this time is in lab time, since there are now double the tests to be done. Instead of 2-3 hours, lab now takes 3-5 hours to complete.

Library

- The library will be participating in the Spirit of Christmas in Vernonia this year on Saturday, December 12, 12:30 pm for a reading of Chris Van Allsburg's *The Polar Express* and make a silver bell ornament for your tree.
- Adopt-a-Book event starts Wednesday, December 2. Create a unique holiday gift by purchasing a book for the Vernonia Public Library's collection. You can dedicate the book to the person of your choice with a special bookplate. Sponsored by the Friends of the Vernonia Library.
- Christmas decorating starts Tuesday,

December 1 at the library. Thank you to Mike's Christmas Tree Farm for donating the Library's tree. Please shop locally for your Christmas tree this year!

- Circulation is up at the library this year. In October 2015, patrons checked out 2,085 items. In October 2014, patrons checked out 1,728 items.
- Library Director submitted the Ready to Read Grant 2014-2015 final report for funds used in Summer Reading 2015. The final report is due December 1 every year.

GIS/Land Use Planning

- GIS work continues on water services/billing. New services have been added; meter reading/importing and billing has been almost completely error free; and staff continues to learn to utilize MuniBilling features to improve efficiency and accuracy of the overall billing process, track numbers for overall picture of water utility customers, consumption figures, etc.
- Work has begun on the cemetery update. Burial records through 2015 have been entered into the system. Updated maps for staff are being created. The next steps in improving cemetery operations, e.g. better record keeping on sales of plots, burial documentation, are on hold pending the hiring of the new City Recorder. Work will then continue with said person to design and implement a simple, effective solution to improving cemetery operations.
- Worked with community members in daily calls about properties for sale, floodplain questions, and information requests related to development and building.

Parks

- 4 downtown street trees were removed per the Council direction to remove trees that were pushing up the sidewalk. Staff had identified 6 to be removed, only 4 were found to be actually causing damage.
- Installed wood fence posts and trimmed trees at Ora Bolmeier park.
- Raked and removed leaves at all of the parks.
- Site prep for concrete pour at New Spencer

bathroom partially completed.

- Evacuated mud and debris from storm drains at New Spencer Park.
- Shut water off at the primitive campsite at the lake.
- Prepped for installation of new ceiling heaters at lake bathrooms.
- Winterized bathrooms at Hawkins Park.
- Replaced broken faucet at gazebo/picnic area at Anderson Park.
- Shut water off at Shay Park.
- Assistance to water/sewer/streets with day to day operations and emergencies is ongoing.

City Administration

- On November 18th representatives from the City, DEQ, Tetra Tech, OTAK, and R&G Excavating attended the construction meeting for the WWTP. Representatives toured the project, DEQ seemed pleased with the progression of the project. Construction has begun on the treatment building, plumbing and electrical installation is the first element prior to the foundation being poured.
- City Administrator and Councilor Hult attended the City/County Dinner in Rainier on November 18th at which ColPac discussed the AGORA system to streamline grant applications and ideas with grant funders. The City will be contacted by ColPac and asked to prioritize economic development projects which are needed in the City.
- City Administrator met with Betsy Johnson, Dan Brown, Commissioner Hyde, FEMA, and Photo Solutions staff on Tuesday, November 24th in St. Helens to discuss the final available extension for Photo Solutions buyout by FEMA. Staff is helping to facilitate communications with Oregon Business and other agencies on re-starting the California Avenue engineering project.
- The City was notified of the success of the CDBG application for the Rose Avenue-Senior Center/Food Bank project on November 30th, 2015. The next step is for the City to approve the contract with IFA for CDBG funds on December 21st, 2015. Then the City can start to go through the recruitment process for a grant manager.

Vernonia and Rainier Health Centers Expand to Serve More Patients

The Public Health Foundation of Columbia County (TPHFCC) is excited to announce that they are expanding access to health care services in Vernonia and Rainier. The Vernonia Health Center, located at 1005 Cougar Street, offers primary care, acute care, mental health, and physical therapy services to the community. The Rainier Health Center, located on the Rainier School District's campus at 28168 Old Rainier Road, originally opened as a school based health center, but began providing care to the entire community in 2014. The Rainier Health Center offers primary care, acute care, and mental health services to the community.

In order to meet the growing demand for local health care, TPHFCC has partnered with Care Oregon to improve the quality and availability of care to Columbia County residents through increased staff, hours, and quality metrics.

The Vernonia Health Center is open five days a week, Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm. A second provider, Physician Assistant Brandy Urbanowicz, was added to the schedule to help

increase the clinic's capacity to serve the community. A Care Coordinator, Patricia Ortiz, was also employed and works with clients on health insurance enrollment, referral follow-up, and on minimizing barriers (i.e., transportation) to care.

Rainier Health Center is now open four days a week, Monday through Thursday from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm, for primary care, doubling the number of appointments available at the clinic. A second provider, Physician Assistant Brandy Urbanowicz, and Receptionist Charlet Snyder-Hathaway recently joined the care team as well as Clinic Manager Nicole McWhirter.

In other exciting news, the Rainier Health Center, which operates as both a school based health center and a community clinic for all ages, received recognition as a Patient Centered Primary Care Home (PCPCH) in July of 2015. To be recognized as a PCPCH, clinics must meet quality standards set by the Oregon Health Authority aimed to provide high quality, patient-centered care. The Vernonia Health Center is currently working toward PCPCH certification with the goal to

be recognized before the summer of 2016.

Other services offered by the Rainier and Vernonia Health Centers include immunizations, preventive screenings, chronic disease management and well-person exams.

Both clinics are listed as In-Network Primary Care Providers for most major insurance carriers including, but not limited to Care Oregon/Columbia Pacific CCO, Lifewise, Providence, Moda, Aetna, HealthNet, PacificSource, Regence and Cigna.

Vernonia Health Center also accepts Medicare, and Rainier is in the process of becoming certified to do so.

For more information, please visit TPHFCC's website at www.tphfcc.org or contact the general mailbox at phealth@tphfcc.org

For appointments, please visit the clinic or call to make an appointment.

Rainier Health Center: 503-556-2178 | 28168 Old Rainier Rd.

Vernonia Health Center: 503-429-0622 | 1005 Cougar St.

Bonamici Invites Students to Compete in App Challenge

Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR) announced details of the annual Congressional App Challenge. High school students in the district are invited to compete. Oregon's First Congressional District includes Washington, Clatsop, and Columbia counties.

The contest is a nationwide event designed to encourage high school students to express their creativity while participating in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) education. Students across the country will compete by creating and demonstrating a software application, or "app," for mobile, tablet, or computer devices.

"Participating in the Congressional App Challenge will require creative thinking, so students will be engaging both halves of the brain," said Congresswoman Bonamici. "Creativity leads to innovation, which we need to grow our economy."

Students entering the competition must submit their app's source code online before January 15, 2016, as well as provide a video demonstration explaining their app and what they learned through the competition process.

More information on the competition is available at: <https://bonamici.house.gov/serving-you/congressional-app-challenge>.