



KEIZERTIMES/Craig Murphy

As Terry Lowells (back left) watches, Tom Vanderhoof (from left), Jesus Montes and Tom Reeves work on a ramp for the Lowells on Monday.

VETS, continued from Page A1

a construction contractor before retiring.

Terry was humbled and appreciative of the help offered by his fellow veterans.

"It's hard for me to ask for help," he said while watching the ramp being built. "I'd

always been athletic until I had knee problems. I was going to get a few friends to help, because I didn't want to get the whole world involved. This kind of organization doing this is very heartwarming. They don't even ask questions, they just come in to help. They are ready to help other veterans. I'm grateful for all of their help."

Larson noted all of the

veterans working on the project have some sort of disability.

Terry was pleasantly surprised to see the group show up at his door Monday morning.

"If you need help they're there, with no red tape involved," he said. "It just blows me away how quickly it went up. They just unrolled and started building."

Taking the challenge

KEIZERTIMES/Craig Murphy
Students from Whiteaker Middle School recited their pledge for their Great Kindness Challenge Week at Tuesday's Keizer City Council meeting (above) and met with mayor Cathy Clark later (bottom).




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Front Street at Pine

Mayor gives update at WKNA

By CRAIG MURPHY
Of the Keizertimes

A neighborhood association meeting last week turned into a quasi state of the city address.

Mayor Cathy Clark was the guest speaker at the West Keizer Neighborhood Association meeting Jan. 14 and gave an update on what's happening around the town. Clark was elected to the Keizer City Council in 2006 and won the unopposed mayor seat in 2014.

"I'm more optimistic than ever about what our community can do when we put our heads together," Clark said. "This last year we did a project they said couldn't be done. We done did it. We built the Big Toy. You ought to be proud of the neighbors who did it. There were over 1,000 volunteers. It was two years in the making and 101 percent of the funds were raised. There's a grant being written right now to add features to make it more accessible for kids with special needs. We want this to be a place all children of all abilities can come and enjoy. Now all the naysayers are saying, 'I guess you did it.' Yeah, we did."

Speaking of Keizer Rapids Park, Clark also referenced the sand volleyball courts done by Hans Schneider.

"Those courts are always busy," the mayor said. "They were beautifully done and done right. You can hold a tournament there. Volunteers wanted to bring that amenity to Keizer."

"Were we done? Oh no," Clark added. "We also did the field turf project at McNary High School. Danielle Bethell and the boosters worked tirelessly to put in the turf field. That field was in use again tonight. It can be used 365 days a year. It's not going to be destroyed in the rain. More student athletes can use the field. It's way more accessible. It means more students can be involved in sports."

In short, Clark was proud of what was accomplished last



Mayor Cathy Clark gives an unofficial state of the city address Jan. 14 at the West Keizer Neighborhood Association meeting.

KEIZERTIMES/
Craig Murphy

year.

"It's been a banner year," she said. "2015 showed when Keizer puts its mind to it, we can get it done. That's what makes Keizer so special."

In terms of looking ahead to 2016, the first thing Clark mentioned was the recent sale of Schoolhouse Square, as mentioned last week in the *Keizertimes*.

"It will be a good thing for us to have more businesses and vibrancy," Clark said. "It will transition to being a vibrant place instead of being vacant."

The mayor also referenced the Keizer Creekside Shopping Center, in the news quite a bit in recent months since Haggen closed there in late September.

"Creekside is our other challenging child," Clark said. "If there's a way for the city to be a partner and encourager, there is the proper zoning in place. We've done what we can for it to be leased. Right now, we are open for business. We want property owners to know that. Those spaces have to be filled. We want to make sure our economy moves forward with a strong base."

Clark noted some new businesses came in along River Road last year.

"We're a great place to live and do business," she said. "People really do support their neighbors. But if you do a slipslop job, word gets around fast. We expect you do the right job. We're proud of who we are, we're proud of our businesses and we want to make sure they're proud to do business here."

The mayor mentioned the Bonaventure and Mountain West project going on at Keizer Station Area C, which will add 180 apartments and a 154-unit senior living center.

"Area C is now under construction," Clark said. "McLeod Lane is connected through. Sidewalks will go in. We're waiting for the retail portion to sell. It's ready to go. Businesses that are interested, come talk to us. That's what we deserve."

While the city could use a conference center — something Clark hopes can come in the future with a new Keizer Station hotel — the civic center is being heavily used.

"The numbers we'll see with dollars coming in, we'll see improvement like we see at the Keizer Heritage Center with booking and rental fees," Clark said. "That runs the heritage center. Over here, it maintains the building and makes it available for groups like us to meet here tonight."

Clark also mentioned the city is working with Salem and Marion County to deal with homelessness.

"Doing what we're doing isn't doing it," the mayor said. "We've looked at how we can collaborate to address the needs of the homelessness community. An initiative will get underway on Feb. 17. We'll look at what we're doing, what are the best practices, pitfalls to avoid, where are the gaps and practical changes that will impact the availability of housing. It's very complex. There are no two stories that are the same."


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