

CROSBY,

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"I've had guns pulled on me. That was while working for the City of Salem," he said. He was working in code enforcement at the time.

He and another officer were conducting a standard inspection on a multi-family dwelling. The landlord had given notice but apparently not everyone read it.

As they made their way through the building, Crosby knocked on a door and when no one answered he went into an apartment. He walked out of a room he had just inspected to find approximately 10 gang members, some armed, standing between him and the door out. Thanks to his chutzpah he was able to bluff his way out.

"Some people went to jail. Some were told to not threaten city officers." All of this said with a smile, as if he is telling a story about how he was the victim of a rather funny practical joke. Humor is also part of his tool set.

"The scariest thing is the unknown," Crosby said.

He starts his day reading emails and listening to voice mail.

"People call and email all day and night long," he said.

Crosby receives approximately 10 complaint calls and 10-20 emails a day, but this can fluctuate going up or down depending on the time of year.

He gets help from several employees in the planning division. Megan Hurley, who is a building permit specialist, is one such person. She does ad-

ministration work for Crosby.

"This department is very customer service oriented. Megan is helping with that," he said. Hurley takes many of the calls, emails and messages reporting violations.

He also gets help from Dina Russell, the assistant planner. She helps out with signage, zoning issues, food cart licensing as well as assisting with some of the admin work.

Shane Witham, now senior planner, previously handled code enforcement while juggling his duties as assistant planner. When Crosby needs back up, Witham goes with him or if it looks like it might be a dangerous or difficult call a police officer will go with him.

"It really comes down to the team effort. There is so much to do here and we took on a lot more," he said. This is because other departments see the value of letting code enforcement do the work.

Crosby prioritizes all of the complaints he receives each day. It's his hope that he can make contact within a couple of days. He hopes that a face to face meeting and some education on city code will clear the problem up. He understands that there are times when life can be overwhelming and that people let things slide.

Given the volume of work he has to do in an eight hour period, this at times seems impossible but he gets it done. Anything that requires a notice is addressed within the week.

All that said he is understanding and tries to help individuals who have complaints lodged against them and who are in violation of

city codes.

"I'll grant an extension, but you have to work for it. As long as people are trying I will work with them. It all comes down to livability."

This is his focus and what he likes best about his job.

"The ability to help change neighborhood expectations, to get them raised up, to a higher quality of life and livability," Crosby said.

Often complaints stem from a resident not know the neighborhood's expectation. This is especially in older, established neighborhoods.

When Crosby responds to a complainant he offers some very simple advice: "Talk to your neighbor. As our society grows people talk less and less to their neighbors and chose to call in reports" which often creates hard feelings and ill will between neighbors. "I want you guys to talk to your neighbors. Try to defer the problem. It helps knowing what the community expects of you as a member."

Crosby finds that rental properties have the large majority of complaints made against them. Most people who live in rental homes do not know what the neighborhood expects of them. He hopes to make a difference, to bridge this gap between expectation and understanding.

"I have hope, that the need is there, that the want is there" to solve the problem, he said.

While most of the complaints he gets are legitimate, there are some folks who will

abuse the system. They usually call about minor issues such as trash cans on the street, parking issues or a bag of trash left sitting out. Once again this is usually a case of neighborhood expectations. Crosby's answer to is the problem is talk to your neighbors.

Crosby's life is not all code enforcement. He is married and has a family. He met his wife while attending McKay High School and started dating after graduation.

"We have a 16 year old daughter and a nine year old son," he said.

The family lives south of Salem on property that was once home to an overgrown Christmas tree farm. They spend their free time cleaning it up. Their goal is to turn the property into an event venue and host weddings and other gatherings there once it has been cleaned up and made ready.

"We slowly chip away at it," he said.

Fun time is hiking and camping anywhere near or around Bend and hiking the trails around Detroit Lake.

BIZ: 'I didn't feel like they were helping me flourish'

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Cutter said members of the Iris Festival Committee cited the need for ADA parking and safety issues as the reason for closing down that section of the road and the refusal to move the barricades north.

When Cutter asked councilors for proof of the relevant safety issues, Chief John Teague of the Keizer Police Department responded.

"The first year (the closure) was further north and people were having to do three-point turns in the middle of Cherry Avenue and that is a safety issue. Blocking it off at Alder reduces that problem," Teague said.

Cutter said members of the Iris Festival Committee agreed to add verbiage to the "local access only" signs announcing that the businesses along that stretch of Cherry Avenue were still open, but he didn't feel that was enough.

"I wanted the sign moved and I was told I had no option,"

Cutter said. "For an (organization) whose mission it is to help businesses flourish, I didn't feel like they were helping me flourish."

Cutter said members of the committee suggested he pay someone to hold a sign at the closure point to attract customers to the business, but he didn't see how adding additional people to an already congested area would alleviate the problem.

Councilor Marlene Parsons asked Cutter if he would be more amenable to a sign that included the names of the businesses in the closed-off section of Cherry.

"That's a lot better than any solution I've heard so far," Cutter said.

Mayor Cathy Clark requested city staff investigate the issue and return to council with a recommendation if necessary. The council will also have a chance to revisit the matter before the city issues a special use permit for the festival.

Soggy fun at KRP April 21

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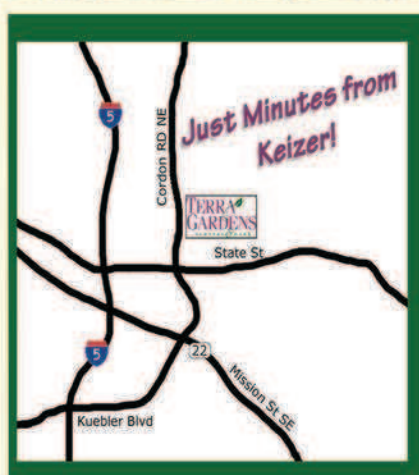


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