

Observing Vancouver

Vancouver City Hall Moves Downtown

Services combined under one roof

The City of Vancouver has moved! City staff and services from five Vancouver buildings will now be housed under one roof for the first time at the new City Hall building at 415 W. Sixth St. in downtown Vancouver.

A dedication ceremony and open house is scheduled Saturday, Sept. 17, from noon to 3 p.m.

Vancouver Mayor Tim Leavitt, Vancouver City Council members and City Manager Eric Holmes closed up old the City Hall last month which had served the community for 44 years.

The new City Hall represents a historic homecoming. Located next to Esther Short Park and the Hilton Hotel and Convention Center, it's just a couple of blocks from where the first City Hall stood in 1886.

Esther Short Park, dedicated in

1855, is the oldest public square in the Pacific Northwest in the heart of Vancouver's downtown district. Renovated by the City in the late 1990's, its five acres of public green space and plazas include fountains, a bell tower, flower gardens, playgrounds and picnic areas. It serves as a cornerstone of downtown redevelopment and revitalization.

Future redevelopment includes revitalization of Vancouver's waterfront, which will eventually connect 35 acres along the spectacular Columbia River to the historic downtown core.

Vancouver purchased the new City Hall building and vacant land for \$18.5 million, about half its actual value out of bankruptcy court, leveraging a depressed real estate market to advantage.

"Challenging times allowed us to



get into an incredible new building," said Mayor Leavitt. "We're no longer leasing buildings all over town. We're a buyer now, not a renter, so we save money now and we'll save even more when we own it in future years. We're consolidating expenses from five buildings to one with this move."

City staff and services have moved and consolidated from five different locations in Vancouver to one City Hall downtown, saving roughly \$1 million per year in lease payments and operating expenses.

At the same time, the move stimulates downtown redevelopment the city has worked so hard to create.

Vancouver's new City Hall at 415 W. Sixth Street in downtown Vancouver.

Veterans Needed as Mentors

Honorably discharged veterans are needed to serve as peer mentors to vets struggling with substance abuse and mental disorders.

The mission of the Veterans Court Mentoring Program is to support veterans in treatment who are adjusting to civilian life and help them navigate the

court and Veterans Administration systems. In essence, mentors act as friends and allies during a difficult time.

Mentors serve a variety of

roles, including coach, guide, advocate and recovery supporter. They listen to participants' concerns and problems, and help them find solutions. A mentor encourages and motivates the veteran as he or she progresses through the justice process.

Having an ally who can relate

to a vet's concerns and experiences is critical to success in the therapeutic court.

If interested in the veterans mentoring program, contact coordinator Jim Lunstrum, a U.S. Marine Corps Vietnam War vet at 360-241-3448 or email jlunstrum@gmail.com.

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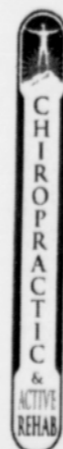
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Ticket Tax for Stadium Proposed

Clark County is considering a proposed tax on admission charges for movie theaters, amphitheaters, the Clark County Fair, fair concerts and professional baseball games.

The Yakima Bears Class-A baseball team is considering moving the team to Vancouver. The admissions tax could be used to help build a multi-purpose stadium for baseball and other events on the Clark College campus. The money also

could be used to help pay for other public programs.

County Commissioners have scheduled a public hearing for Tuesday, Sept. 20 at 10 a.m. in the sixth-floor hearing room at the Public Service Center, 1300 Franklin St.

The focus will be a draft ordinance for a 5 percent tax limited to certain venues and events, subject to an agreement with the city of Vancouver.

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