



A Message from Warrenton's Mayor

by Henry Balensifer

Growth is great, but prompts Warrenton to set goals

Warrenton is a very exciting place to be.

We've seen unprecedented growth in the past 10 years. This has translated into a cornucopia of shopping and dining choices, and we're building more housing than any other city in the county.

There's something for just about everybody. There's no denying — these changes have come with growing pains, but we are poised to meet those challenges. The primary question we're asking is "What decisions can we make now to ensure Warrenton is a great place to live and raise a family in 10 years?"

Last meeting, the City Commission established 4 goals to begin answering that question.

Each has specific benchmarks to ensure the citizens can measure tangible results from these goals.

The goals are Community Building, Vision Plan Update, Downtown Improvements and Emergency Preparedness.

I'll briefly cover the benchmarks for these goals:

•Community Building: We want to create more opportunities for residents to interact. This includes encouraging city departments to sponsor events. We will also create a public email newsletter to better spread the word about events, projects and meetings. Finally, we wanted a citizen police academy to foster better understanding of police work in our city. I'm proud to say the WPD is already taking applications on the city website!

•Vision Plan Update: We have prioritized starting a communitywide process

for updating the 2001 Community Vision Plan. This will inform future changes to our city code as we lay the groundwork for a more livable, vibrant city in the decades to come. We also decided to apply for grant funding to start an economic roadmap plan. Unlike a vision plan, which is aimed at long-term future goals, an economic roadmap looks at what exists and creates an action plan for immediate work and near-term results.

• Downtown Improvements: These have been talked about for decades. Using grants, as well as city and Urban Renewal Agency funds, we plan on updating our urban renewal plan to detail the most strategic use of funds and increase mobility in our downtown corridors. We also are going to deal with blighted and nuisance properties.

• Emergency Preparedness: This is ongoing, but overall, we plan to do better

at getting the word out and preparing citizens for emergencies. This isn't just for "the big one," but also smaller incidents.

Preparedness is a mindset, and we recognize the city must take a more active role in shaping that. We are currently trying to put together a new Emergency Operations Plan to serve as a springboard for more preparedness, and we are putting up sirens at the Warrenton and Hammond fire stations.

Concerned about elk?

I will be hosting my second Town Hall at 6 p.m. Thursday, April 12, at the community center.

The topic will be elk and there will be a briefing from OSP, ODFW and WPD.

Come find out more about the elk issue, the stats and what to do about it.

I'll also be looking for community-driven ideas on what other things we could do about it.

Auto dealer donates van to mission

Warrenton KIA donated a van to Astoria Rescue Mission last week after learning it was having trouble serving the homeless with just one vehicle.

"God hasn't given up on these people, and it's nice to know that neither has Warrenton KIA," said David Newman, the mission's executive director. "Many who come to us are struggling with overwhelming problems.

"The Astoria Rescue Mission helps provide for their physical, emotional and spiritual needs. To know that someone cares, means a great deal to the staff and to those who come to the mission."

The 1996 Ford Econoline will



David Newman accepts the vehicle title from Erik Hansen, Warrenton KIA inventory manager, right. At left is Newman's wife, Amy.

help the organization continue its mission of helping those in need of food, shelter, clothing and spiritual support.

Warrenton KIA was glad to help a worthwhile organization that is helping others, said Roxanne Williams-Morrinville, owner of Warrenton KIA. "Being a part of this community is what this company was founded on."

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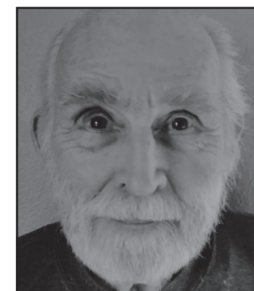
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I wish to serve the good people of Warrenton, Hammond, and West Astoria for 4 full years. Being retired, I can spend substantial time investigating issues and seeking solutions to problems. But this election is not about me.

It's about us. It's about our Tax Money. Is it being used wisely?

It's about our Justice System. \$24M for a new jail?

It's about our Environment. What kind of community do we want? During 53 years by means of solidarity and dialogue positive outcomes were realized among persons of divergent views. Let me continue this practice as your Commissioner.

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