

A Look Back at Holiday Festivities

Venetians brought much festive spirit to the annual community holiday events! Many thanks go to the Veneta Fern Ridge Chamber of Commerce, Fern Ridge Kiwanis, the S.A.N.T.A Project, and other local groups and individuals who helped organize the 2023 festivities, ensuring memories for years to come.

Public Works Director Kyle Schauer reported that an estimated 500 people attended the annual Tree Lighting event at Veneta Elementary School on November 30th.

The 20th Annual Light Parade on December 7th was also a great success. In addition to an excellent turnout, local businesses showcased their exceptionally decked-out holiday floats. Participants really took it up a notch this year. Selecting winners was especially challenging given that there were so many eye-catching entries!

"There were about 55 parade floats, vehicle groups, and critter groups. So many Grinches were seen throughout, and Santa Claus capped

(See "Holiday Festivities" on page 2)

New Faces on Committees

Economic Development Committee

The Economic Development Committee welcomed one new member! Lewis Rucker, owner of Veneta's Roger's Towing, was selected to serve a three-year term on the nine-person committee. Rucker is engaged and invested in the local community. Rucker's business, Roger's Towing, has been instrumental in donating their services to support the annual Light Parade and other community events. Rucker previously served seven years on the Coos Curry Douglas Regional Strategy Board as a director.

Budget Committee

Mayor Weiss appointed Johnathan Boggs to the Budget Committee. Boggs was selected to serve a three-year term on the ten-person committee. His experience includes working with Northwest Community Credit Union for eighteen years. Boggs is the current Vice President of retail branches for NCCU.

Mayor Weiss re-appointed Darlene Harris. Harris, who also serves on the Park Board, will serve a three-year term on the Budget Committee. Harris

(See "Committees" page 2)

Rate Adjustment Reminder

Just a friendly reminder that residential water and sewer rates will be adjusted effective January 1, 2024. The adjustment will be on your January utility bill that you will receive in February. The adjustments reflect a 3% increase for water and a 2% increase for sewer based on a utility rate study that looked out over five years. The City Council reviewed and approved the utility rates adjustment in October.

Concerned about experiencing a higher water bill? One lesser known contributing factor could be a running or leaking commode. The City has free dye tablets to test your toilet(s) for leaks, swing by City Hall to pick some up.

City staff is available Monday through Friday from 9:00 am - 5:00 pm or you can call 541-935-2191 if you have questions about your utility bill or are concerned with high usage.

CIVIC CALENDAR JANUARY 2024		
All meetings held at City of Veneta, 88184 8th St, unless otherwise noted		
1	New Year's Day 	Closed
8	City Council Meeting, Urban Renewal Agency immediately following	1:00 p.m. 1:45 p.m.
9	Planning Commission Meeting	6:30 p.m.
10	Economic Development Committee	2:00 p.m.
10	Park Board Meeting	4:30 p.m.
15	Martin Luther King Jr. Day 	Closed
18	Municipal Court	8:30 a.m.
22	City Council Meeting, Mayor State of the City Address	5:00 p.m.
26	Business Assistance Committee	9:00 a.m.

Holiday Festivities continued

off the show,” stated Administrator Michel. “What an AWESOME Light Parade! Congratulations to the Veneta Fern Ridge Chamber of Commerce for putting on such a memorable community event that shows what a world-class small town feels like!”

Here is the list of winners in the Light Parade:

- **First Place** went to Veneta Veterinarians’ Frozen-themed extravaganza with bubbles.
- **Second Place** went to Ag West Farm Credit’s “udderly” original dancing cow-apalooza.
- **Third Place** went to Oregon Empire’s snow-blowing Christmas scene
- **Judges’ Choice** was the Rainbow Volkswagon Bug!

The 31st Annual S.A.N.T.A Project took place on December 9th at Veneta Elementary School. In 2023, the toy charity served 440 children from 172 families.



Committees continued

is the owner of Harmony With Hands, a past Kiwanis President and has served on the Budget Committee for the previous three years.

Park Board (Openings!)

The Park Board has a rolling deadline for interested applicants. There are currently two open positions on the Park Board. One of those positions is reserved for a student. Applicants must have an interest in helping the City of Veneta park system. The Park Board is also active in

planning the annual Egg Hunt, Earth Day Celebration, and Veneta Celebration Run. Applicants are encouraged to serve a four-year term on the board, and do not need to be a resident of Veneta. The Park Board meets on the first Wednesday of each month at 4:30 p.m. Interested applicants can learn more on the City website by locating the “Government” tab then by clicking on the link that reads “City Council, Boards, and Committees.”

Volunteer Veneta

Current volunteer opportunities for the City of Veneta and local non-profit organizations.



The City currently has several vacancies. If you are interested in volunteering for any of these committees, you can contact the City of Veneta by calling 541-935-2191 or visiting our website at www.venetaoregon.gov

City of Veneta

- ♦ Park Board - 1 adult and 1 student vacancy

Senior Meals - Help Deliver Meals!

Senior & Disability Services relies on dedicated volunteers to help deliver meals to seniors. You can volunteer as little as two (2) hours per week. For more information, contact a **Volunteer Coordinator** at **541-682-1366**.

Mid Lane Cares

There are vacancies for their new shower and laundry program. You can volunteer as little as once a week or once a month. Contact Deanna at 541-935-4555 to find out more.

Department Updates

ADMINISTRATION

- The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) continues to seek funding from the Federal government for the “OR126: Huston to Ellmaker Project”. We recently heard that the project was not selected for grant funding, so ODOT will find out why it was not selected and what they can do to make it a stronger candidate for the next round. Right now, ODOT is limited to only being able to continue with the design work for the intersection at Huston Road.



As a brief reminder, the Project will provide much needed safety and mobility improvements along a 1.9-mile segment of road on OR126 that is a regional connection for commuters, freight movement, residents, and tourists traveling between Interstate 5, Eugene-Springfield and the Oregon Coast. Elements of the project include: a widened four-lane road; an eastbound left turn lane into Lakeside Drive with widened shoulders; an upgraded railroad crossing at Huston Road; and a separated shared-use path located on the north side of the highway from Huston Road east to Lakeside Drive. This shared-use path will connect with the Fern Ridge Wildlife Viewing area providing options for the visitors and residents to travel by walking or biking.

- The City's pre-applications to the Oregon Emergency Management Department for a City Hall Seismic Retrofit, and a new Veneta Community Center Seismic Design were selected for the next round of qualifications. The next deadline for the more detailed applications is Jan 26th.
- The Oregon Department of Transportation sent us a reminder that the current state fuel tax rate of \$0.38 per gallon will increase to \$0.40 per gallon, effective January 1, 2024. Veneta's local fuel tax rate remains \$0.03.
- On Saturday, December 9, 2023, Mayor Weiss traveled to Southwest Oregon Regional Airport in North Bend to meet Senator Ron Wyden, Congresswoman Val Hoyle, and Senior White House Advisor and Infrastructure Coordinator Mitch Landrieu to promote the \$2.3 billion Pacific Coast Intermodal Port (PCIP) Project. This was an impressive



show of regional solidarity around the Port expansion project for the President's infrastructure policy advisor.

PUBLIC WORKS

- Another gentle reminder to our Veneta neighbors to only include leaves inside your curbside leaves bags. The City will not pick up bags that have sticks, garbage, or other debris inside of them. Bags must be tied shut and anything over 50 lbs. will be left on the curbside. We'll put a tag on bags that don't meet these criteria to give you the opportunity to allow us to provide this service safely.



PUBLIC SAFETY

- The City won its third straight National Night Out Award from the national association that coordinates the event across the nation. Every year seems to bring more residents out to City Park for fun and appreciation of our First Responders. Way to go, Veneta!
- A big “THANK YOU!” to Veneta's Lane County Sheriff's Office (LCSO) Sgt. Ware for organizing so many deputies for the Light Parade's traffic control and safety, including three patrol cars from the Coburg Police. If you were at the parade you may have heard and seen the LCSO drone flying overhead playing holiday music! Veneta's world-class small town feel really shined that night!



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- We're working with our neighbors at the regional Forestry office to get an appraisal of that ¼ acre sliver of land adjacent to the Bolton Hill Sports Complex. The first appraisal came in just a couple days ago at almost \$12,000. The second one is expected sometime next week. We'll discuss the asking price once that second one comes in.
- Here's an update on housing growth in Veneta: Tentatively Approved Lots and Apartment Units total 442 Residential Lots and 128 Apartment Units. The developers will determine when they will actually build these new housing units, so we may see them start building in 2024, or after.

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State of the City Address - January 22, 2024

Mayor Keith Weiss will be delivering his State of the City Address during the January 22 Council Meeting held at 5:00 p.m. at Veneta City Hall

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT cont...

- We're working with the City Architect on a concept design and cost estimate for sidewalk rain covers at the Fern Ridge Service Center. This will be submitted to the State for a Community Development Block Grant project. We have a very strong chance of getting selected for the grant to do the work, so once we do get selected we would move toward the engineering design and construction plans preparation.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Lane County allocates Rural Tourism Marketing Program (RTMP) funds to cities for tourism program support. This year's amount is \$8,000 more than in the past, resulting in a one-time boost to \$19,471. The City uses these funds to support staffing and program support at the Visitor's Center located at the Veneta Fern Ridge Chamber of Commerce in the West Lane Shopping Center.



- The City met with Emerald PUD's General Manager Kyle Roadman and Board Director Patti Chappel to compare notes on opportunities to jointly pursue energy-related federal and state grants. One idea that EPUD will look into is switching out street lights with LED lights.
- We learned that we did not receive a Rural Opportunity Initiative program grant from Business Oregon. However, the grant award-ees included our partners, RAIN Catalysts who received \$100,000. RAIN and project partners will be active in the Veneta area community providing programming, events, and youth entrepreneurship bootcamps that harness existing momentum and contribute to sustainable ecosystems that prioritize entrepreneurs.



Public Safety Report - November 2023

<u>Incident Type</u>	Calls			Cases		
	Calls	Prior Year	5-Year Average	Cases	Prior Year	5-Year Average
Property (Thefts, Criminal Mischief, Trespass, Fraud)	36	38	37	13	13	25
Person (Assaults, Menacing, Harassments)	29	22	18	7	4	4
Public Order (Disorderly Subject, Citizen Contact)	68	55	71	3	0	3
Individual Welfare (Welfare Checks/OD, Missing Persons)	20	17	21	3	1	1
Vehicle (DUII, DWS, Illegal Parking, Traffic Hazard)	20	21	16	3	2	2
Offense Against State (Drug, Warrants, Local City Ord)	18	5	9	5	4	6
Civil (Civil Service, Eviction Process)	5	5	9	0	0	0
Neighborhood Watch	1	0	0	0	0	0
Traffic Stops	21					
Total	218	163	181	34	24	41