

# City News

February 2025

## Community Development Block Grant Projects Come to a Close

In June 2021, the City of Veneta applied for and received a \$79,750 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for the 'Veneta Love Project Food Pantry.' The grant funded several improvements to the Love Project Food Pantry, located on the north side of the Fern Ridge Service Center. These upgrades included remodeling the bathroom to include a shower, adding a commercial fridge and two freezers, installing shelving and equipment, and constructing an exterior covered area to provide shelter for both clients and volunteers.

The initial construction was completed in

May 2023. However, in June 2024, the City's former Community Development Director, Matt Laird, facilitated an additional \$50,000 grant to install a covering over the walkway leading to the Food Pantry entrance. This construction was completed in December 2024, providing clients and volunteers with a fully covered entrance and shelter from heavy rain during the wet season.

The Love Project Food Pantry distributes 2-3 tons of food monthly, serving an average of 700 people. This incredible effort is made possi-

(See "CDBG Grant" on page 3)

## Protect Our Waterways: Simple Steps to Prevent Soil Erosion

Did you know that loose soil from places like construction sites or areas tilled for gardens can harm the City's stormwater system? Some erosion is normal, as rain carries with it loose particles of dirt and soil. However, when large areas of loose soil are exposed – like when a yard is dug up or when loads of soil are brought to fill in an area – rain can pick this dirt up and carry mud into our storm drains and natural waterways.

## Welcome City Management Intern

The City welcomes Jillian Liebersbach as our new City Management Intern! Jillian joins us not far from Veneta, hailing originally from our neighbor to the north, Junction City. "As someone who grew up while her city did the same, I have a unique point of view on the economic development and workings of smaller towns. This is what really drew me to the position, it felt personal," Jillian said.

Currently a senior at the University of Oregon, Jillian is pursuing a degree in Economics with a minor in Science Communication. She previously served as a volunteer firefighter for three years in Junction City and worked as an Economic Intern for the Balmoral Group in Seattle. "I have been helping people for as long as I can remember," Jillian explains, "But what makes this experience different is that I get to

(See "Management Intern" on page 3)

Over time, these sediment deposits can make a stream or storm drain shallower. Shallower waterways are more likely to flood, since they can't carry as much water as they used to. The shallow water is also heated more by the sun, causing water temperatures to rise, which can harm certain species that need cool water to live and reproduce. Soil particles also displace oxygen from the water, making it harder for fish

(See "Erosion" on page 3)

CIVIC CALENDAR February 2025		
All meetings held at City of Veneta, 88184 8th St, unless otherwise noted		
4	Planning Commission Meeting	6:30 p.m.
5	Park Board Meeting	4:30 p.m.
10	City Council Meeting	6:30 p.m.
12	Economic Development Meeting	2:00 p.m.
17	<b>Presidents' Day</b>	Closed
20	Municipal Court	8:30 a.m.
24	City Council Work Session	5:30 p.m.
28	Business Assistance Committee Meeting	9:00 a.m.

# Department Updates

## ADMINISTRATION

- Veneta is partnering with Lane County to upgrade and outfit the Fern Ridge Service Center on W. Broadway to be a regional “Resiliency Hub” that can be available to you when smoke, cold, heat, or other natural event creates the need for a safe place. Lane County won a federal Environmental Protection Agency Community Change Grant to fund the project. Look for opportunities to provide community input on the project in the coming year. As you may already know, the non-profit Mid Lane Cares operates the Service Center so they'll be a key stakeholder in the conversation about how to make the Service Center an oasis when you need it most.



## PUBLIC WORKS

- If you like chemistry, you'll like this! The City's wastewater treatment plant is a big organic chemistry experiment. In short, wastewater flows in, bacteria and aeration break it down, then ultraviolet light treatment allows the water to return to ground. In the summertime we sprinkle the treated water across 81 acres of City-owned land west of Territorial Highway. Last year, we applied 300,000 gallons of biosolids to the irrigation site and removed 164,000 pounds of hay! The process is highly regulated and safe.. and pretty cool!
- The Oregon Department of Transportation's winning \$30 million Highway 126 Widening project announcement went out a few weeks back. If you missed it, two-and-a-half miles of Highway 126 from Huston Road to Lake Side Drive will double from 2-lanes to 4-lanes! That should greatly help with congestion and emergency access. There's been some local apprehension over the concept design showing roundabouts at Huston and Ellmaker, and that will be an ongoing conversation with ODOT. For now, it's fair to say that



this project is a MAJOR VICTORY by small-town Veneta getting state and federal attention on a project that the Veneta City Council has been advocating for over 20 years! VIVA VENETA!

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Four upper-level undergraduate students from the University of Oregon's School of Planning, Public Policy and Management will be developing background information and a community survey to start a community conversation about developing the City's downtown block between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Streets. They've already visited Downtown Veneta to learn more about the City's downtown area and current conditions of the City's Downtown District. Keep an eye out for a postcard inviting you to take their survey about the future of Downtown Veneta!
- The City uses its annual share of county-wide lodging tax receipts to help support the Veneta Fern Ridge Chamber of Commerce and partner with the Chamber on economic development initiatives. Veneta's proportional share comes to roughly \$16,000 that will fund a part-time Chamber office staff person who works on Chamber communications, tourism inquiries, and City initiatives. This year, the City-Chamber partnership begins a multi-year initiative promoting a common economic identity for local businesses that invites local folk to Enjoy, Explore, and Engage Veneta!

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## PUBLIC SAFETY

- Please welcome our new evening shift Lane County Sheriff's Office Deputy Juan Hernandez! He's been with LCSO for about 2.5 years after coming over from the Cottage Grove Police Department where he served for nearly three years. We're glad to have you in our community, Deputy Hernandez!



## Volunteers Still Needed



Fern Ridge Community Services provides free dinners every Sunday and needs 10 volunteers each Sunday to cook, serve, and clean up.

Their long-term volunteers are burning out, and they may have to reduce their services. Sign up at: [www.fernridgecommunityservices.com](http://www.fernridgecommunityservices.com) click on the volunteer box under "Community Dinners."

## CDBG Grant cont...

ble by one dedicated employee and 25 volunteers who serve the community regardless of weather conditions. Additionally, Mid Lane Cares, which oversees the Food Pantry, expanded its services in late 2023 to include a shower and laundry program.

On January 13, 2025, the City held a second public hearing to inform the community about all the improvements made to the Love Project and to officially close out the grant. The City is deeply

grateful for the remarkable contributions of Matt Laird, DeAnna Townsend of Mid Lane Cares and the additional City staff who worked on this project, and the many community members and contractors who participated in bringing it to fruition. Together, this project has allowed Mid Lane Cares to expand and improve their services, while also ensuring that the Food Pantry continues its mission to serve the community with dedication and care.

## Erosion cont...

to breathe. When gravel river or streambeds are covered by soil, fish eggs can be smothered.

Even a few small muddy projects can make a mess as they flow downstream. The best way to keep rivers healthy is to prevent soil from leaving your property. Some simple solutions include

covering up dirt piles and sweeping dirt off of sidewalks, driveways, and streets. For larger construction projects, the City requires builders to install erosion control measures like sediment fencing and gravel construction entrances to keep soil from entering our stormwater system.

## Management Intern cont...

work face to face with community members and personally support their personal endeavors and small businesses."

Jillian steps into the role of City Management Intern where she'll assist on projects related to Economic Development, Emergency Management, and Communication. "I would love to pur-

sue a career in local government whether that be as a city administrator, economic development specialist, or somewhere in city management. Working with the city has already provided me unique insights into career fields that I am interested in, and I can only imagine what the next six months will bring," said Jillian.

## Celebrating Community: Annual Events in Veneta

Below is a table of events the Veneta Park Board will be involved with on an annual basis.

The "Sponsor" listed below is the host of the event.

The Veneta Park Board will be participating in the events they are not hosting.



Interested in volunteering? Pick up a Committee/Commission application at: City Hall, the City website ([www.venetaoregon.gov](http://www.venetaoregon.gov)) or call 541-935-2191.

Date	Event	Sponsor	
April 19 <sup>th</sup>	Easter Egg Hunt	Veneta Park Board	
April 25 <sup>th</sup>	Arbor Day	Veneta Park Board	
Springtime TBD	Bark & Whistle Dog Parade	Veneta Park Board	
Springtime TBD	Pickleball Tournament	Veneta-Fern Ridge Chamber of Commerce	
July 4 <sup>th</sup>	Veneta Fourths	Veneta Park Board	
July-September	Movies in the Park	Veneta Park Board	
August - 1 <sup>st</sup> Tuesday	National Night Out	City of Veneta	
August 16 <sup>th</sup>	Veneta Celebration Run	Veneta Park Board	
September - 2 <sup>nd</sup> Saturday	Harvest Festival	Mid Lane Cares	
October TBD	Veneta Haunts	Veneta Park Board	
December - 1 <sup>st</sup> Thursday	Tree Lighting	Veneta-Fern Ridge Chamber of Commerce	
December - 2 <sup>nd</sup> Thursday	Light Parade	Veneta-Fern Ridge Chamber of Commerce	



## Rate Adjustment Reminder:

Beginning with this month's utility bill, you will see an increase of 2% on your water fees and an increase of 3% on your sewer base fees.



## We Need Your Feedback

In July 2024, the City of Veneta acquired three vacant lots on W. Broadway in the downtown area. With your help, we aim to gather feedback on potential development opportunities for this property. This effort is in collaboration with the University of Oregon's Institute for Policy Research and Engagement (IPRE) student team.

These lots were purchased by St. Vincent De Paul in 2008, occasionally being used for events like the Farmers Market and Harvest Festival, but have remained undeveloped since that time. Now that the City owns the

property, we're exploring the best ways to use it for our community's needs. Please share your thoughts through this 5-minute survey, by February 14, 2025.



## Veneta's GFOA Budget

If you're curious about how the City operates and want a financial perspective on the life of a city, check out our new Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) budget.

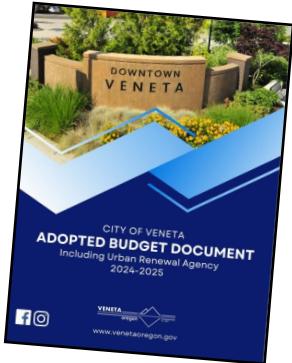
This version of the city budget includes 260+ pages of details on City projects, initiatives, trends, and graphs.

You can find it on the City's website at

[www.venetaoregon.gov](http://www.venetaoregon.gov)

under Departments, click Finance, then scroll down to Budget Documents, click on "GFOA Budget Documents."

There is also a hard-copy for review at City Hall at 88184 8<sup>th</sup> St. Enjoy!



## Public Safety Report - December 2024

Incident Type	Calls			Cases		
	Calls	Prior Year	5-Year Average	Cases	Prior Year	5-Year Average
Property (Thefts, Criminal Mischief, Trespass, Fraud)	12	33	27	2	9	9
Person (Assaults, Menacing, Harassments)	28	15	20	4	2	3
Public Order (Disorderly Subject, Citizen Contact)	64	117	81	0	0	0
Individual Welfare (Welfare Checks/OD, Missing Persons)	24	26	21	4	5	4
Vehicle (DUII, DWS, Illegal Parking, Traffic Hazard)	14	12	16	2	3	3
Offense Against State (Drug, Warrants, Local City Ord)	2	3	3	0	2	2
Civil (Civil Service, Eviction Process)	9	21	10	0	0	0
Neighborhood Watch	0	0	Not Recorded	0	0	Not Recorded
Traffic Stops	11	0	0	1	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>21</b>