

Mayor's report September, 2016

Summer is done and we are moving into the fall. This is the time we look at the city's goals and ask if we need to step up our efforts. One of the goals is making sure our community and citizens are safe. In August, I met with other Gorge leaders and the Union Pacific President and officials. We stressed the need for more information, quicker replacement of lag bolts such as the one that sheared off and caused the Mosier derailment, stronger lobbying for safer cars and refinement of Bakkan oil at the origin rather than transporting such highly flammable oil.

I also specifically asked that Union Pacific get involved in resolving the problem of its mass produced ties at Amerities and find a way to move the treated ties away from residential areas and store them at a different site. This week I will tour the Amerities facility to see for myself how it operates.

The Urban Renewal Agency and Advisory Committee have completed their review and recommendations to change from a two committee structure to only one Agency Board made up of three council members, two citizens and four tax district representatives. The City held a public hearing to take comments on this proposed change.

Construction of the waste water project is set to begin in the Spring of 2017 and will take about 9 months. Negotiations are underway for three other projects. The first is for final terms for the Tokala apartment complex to be constructed where the Tony's building is and will go all the way to 1st street. The second is an offer to construct a new development where the recreation building is located, to include the Blue building and several lots across the alley to the north. The third is a proposal to rehabilitate and operate the Granada building. All three potential projects are being proposed by strong and capable partners which ensures these projects will be successful.

The Dalles Airport, which is a partnership between The Dalles and Klickitat County is moving ahead with its grant to construct a new, extended runway. A grant to construct a new facility for Life Flight is also moving forward.

The Neon Sign Museum has made great progress. With removal of asbestos completed and construction of display areas underway, it looks as if this world class museum will be opening in April, 2017.

The city is experiencing an extensive turn over in department heads. In addition to the recent hire of our new police chief and a new personnel manager, a new planning director will be on board in October and recruiting is underway to replace our financial officer who will be retiring in December. The City Manager is also currently recruiting for an assistant who will be responsible for economic development and projects.

Businesses are continuing to come into town looking for opportunities. This is a direct result of the growth and increased activity obvious to anyone coming into the downtown area. Mainstreet and the Mid-Columbia Economic Development District, in partnership with the City and Urban Renewal, have been key drivers in stimulating this successful change in The Dalles. Congratulations to the City Council, staff and the Mainstreet Board of Directors, volunteers and Matthew Klebes for winning a prestigious partnership award from the state Mainstreet program.

The Chamber of Commerce continues to market our area, respond to inquiries and encourage visitors to see what is happening. We are headed in the right direction. If you want to get more involved, contact myself or Julie Krueger, our City Manager at City Hall.