

# The City of Mt. Angel Newsletter

Volume 7 Issue 2

Written by the City of Mt. Angel for Mt. Angel residents

February 2015

## The State of the City from Mayor Andrew Otte

The "State of the City"; the annual chance to pause for a moment or two and take a look back at 2014 and a look forward to 2015. In the simplest terms, 2014 was a very busy and successful year in terms of the volume of work, changes, improvements, and accomplishments for our city. Here are just a few.

The past year brought more changes in city staff. After dedicating more than 25 years as the City Librarian, Collette DeCock retired in August. We wish her all the best. In addition, Children's Librarian Samantha McDermott left to pursue other career opportunities. We are extremely fortunate to have filled both of those positions quickly. Carrie Alexandria Caster is our new Library Director and brings a wealth of knowledge and experience with her. Theodora Rudolph is our new Children's Librarian and she too brings great experience to the Library in children's programming. The two of them have brought their creativity and planning and have already established to activities in for the Library in the first three months. The first Lego Club days have already been a smashing success.

In addition, after 22 years, Sandy Ryan-Nelson retired from her position as Administrative Assistant in the Police Department. We will miss her extensive knowledge of the logistics of providing police support for Oktoberfest. Thankfully and fortunately, Nann Fleck was looking for yet another way to serve the community and was hired to replace Sandy. Nann has served and continues to serve this community in far too many ways to list.

In addition, we experienced one staff change at City Hall. After three years, Kelsey Lewis left her position as the Assistant to the City Administrator in order to further her career. I am thankful for the time and dedication Kelsey gave to our city. Once again, we are extremely fortunate in our timing or luck or both, in that Justin Hogue was hired as the Assistant to the City Administrator. He has hit the ground running. Despite being bombarded on many fronts with a great many tasks and has held up to it all and is contributing greatly. He has done an excellent job learning the role of city planner.

We also have a change on the City Council. Teresa Kintz decided not to run for another term after serving on the Council for six years. Her dedicated service is greatly appreciated and the city is in a better position due to her contributions.

You, the voters, re-elected Councilor Ray Eder to a third term, Councilor Karl Bischoff to a second term, and Councilor Don Fleck to his first term. I am excited to have Karl and Ray still at the table. Don brings an immeasurable wealth of knowledge on the internal workings of local government from his fire service career.

In addition to electing councilors, you also said yes to a new City Charter. This was also one of the defined goals of the Council in 2014. The Charter serves as the playbook for how the city operates and hadn't been updated in over 30 years.

After many meetings and an uncounted number of hours that spanned the past three years, the groundbreaking work on Ebner Park not only started last summer, but Phase I was completed in the Fall. The work included changes in the use of the space, new and modern playground equipment, a soccer field, resurfacing of the basketball court, a walking path and sidewalks that connect the parking spaces to the usable park spaces. The realization of completing Phase I was only made possible by the contributions from the citizens. As soon as we are assured of good weather and the ground dries out some, there will be an "official" ribbon cutting ceremony to celebrate. There is still more to do at the park including new lighting for the softball field.

A new partnership was started in 2014, one that hopefully can and will continue for a very long time. The City and the Mt. Angel Historical Society worked out an agreement wherein the Society is utilizing the house in Saalfeld Family Park. This is a mutually beneficial deal for both parties. If you are unfamiliar with the Historical Society or want to become a member, I encourage you to visit <http://mtangelhistory.org/>.

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*For a City Events Calendar and links to other community events, please visit the City's website at [www.ci.mt-angel.or.us](http://www.ci.mt-angel.or.us).*

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Community development was a key focus in 2014. A downtown façade improvement program was funded with an economic development grant from Marion County. With \$7,500 in funding, we leveraged over \$26,000 in improvements to storefronts in the downtown core. If you are somewhat unsure of the changes, take a moment to look at the new façade at Bochsler Hardware.

The City was also selected to be the focus of the University of Oregon's 'Green Cities' class last summer. In short, the City Council and members of the community met with students from the U of O and discussed sustainability and tourism options for Mt. Angel. An added bonus was the class partnering with another class of students from Gdansk (Poland) Institute of Technology. The creative ideas resulting from these efforts are exciting. In fact, the professors from Gdansk were able to visit Mt. Angel when the final class work was presented and they offered to continue the partnership into 2015! This is a fantastic opportunity for Mt. Angel to get global visibility, creative ideas from abroad, and to provide a valuable service to students working to complete their degrees. Likewise, we are enlisting help from students at Portland State University to help with city projects.

There were also two key changes and improvements made to provide better service to utility customers. A new and secure payment drop box was installed at City Hall and an online bill pay system was implemented with immediate success. Within the first month, 102 people signed up for the system.

In keeping with the money and finance theme, another important accomplishment was the development and adoption of a comprehensive set of financial management policies. This greatly improves the budget preparation process and financial controls.

As we move into 2015, finances (revenues) and utility infrastructure will continue to be important areas of focus for us. One aspect we are working on is updating system development charges (SDCs), the fees paid by new development to add capacity to our water, sewer, road, stormwater and parks systems. The current SDCs were established in 1999. The process is already underway to review the SDCs to analyze and improve these charges, and also to establish a methodology to keep the levels of fees current and relevant. Additionally, we are concerned about the cost of maintaining just what we have. Some preliminary analysis has been done to look at the current imbalance in the cost of operating and maintaining city utilities with the revenue received from rates.

One last thought on city finances, there are currently openings on the Budget Committee. If you are interested in volunteering your time, or are curious to understand how the City receives, saves, and spends the money it receives, I encourage you to submit an application. You can find the application on the City's website under the Forms and Permits link: [Volunteer Boards & Committees Application](#).

Finally, one of the key topics identified last year was marijuana legalization. We are all aware the voters of Oregon passed Measure 91 in November. Every city in the state is now trying to understand the local impacts of this measure passing and waiting to see how the state will regulate it. We are actively monitoring this topic and have taken steps to ensure we address the impacts to Mt. Angel. In fact, we'd like to hear from you! The Council will be considering an ordinance to regulate medical marijuana dispensaries while we await the state's rulemaking on recreational use. I will host a Town Hall meeting on Tuesday, February 24, at 6:30 p.m., at the Mt. Angel Fire Hall to share and discuss the potential impacts and hear your questions and concerns.

In summary, I am thrilled about the levels of accomplishment in 2014 and I am excited about what we can do in 2015. We have phenomenal and dedicated staff in every department; a great group of elected people representing you, and most importantly we have you the citizen.

### Important Dates:

**City Hall Closure** - City Hall will be closed February 16th 2015 in observance of Presidents Day

**Town Hall Meeting** - Tuesday, February 24th, 2015 at 6:30 in the Fire Hall. This will be regarding medical marijuana dispensaries

**City Council Meeting** - March 2nd at 7pm in the Library Community Room

**Municipal Court** - Wednesday, March 18th, 2015 at 6pm in the Library Community Room

### CONTACT THE CITY

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Library Website	<a href="http://www.mountangel.plinkit.org">www.mountangel.plinkit.org</a>