



Hoquiam Happenings

MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Editors: Alissa Thurman and Tracy Wood

Newsletter
January 2010

Mayor looks back on a successful year



Happy New Year from your City of Hoquiam. I have never been afraid to borrow others' marketing ideas. My favorite that I use over and over that is very appropriate to Hoquiam is the old Avis Rent-a-Car motto: "We try harder!" Like Avis comparing itself to a larger company (Hertz) I like to use it when comparing ourselves to larger communities in Western Washington. When you look at our history of building and maintaining schools, facilities, or historic treasures like the 7th Street Theatre, we can all be very proud of what our community has done for many decades - through good times and bad.

At the City of Hoquiam, our trying harder has reaped some awards: an AWC Municipal Excellence Award for our train station restoration, the prestigious Smart Communities award by Governor Gregoire for our multi-year effort to develop a new Comprehensive Land Use Plan, our designation as one of the few cities in the state of Washington as a Tree City USA, a Government Finance Officers' award for the quality of our budget document and two year budget process, and others.

We have also tried harder during the past year to meet the goals set out by our Hometown Hoquiam process: abating nuisance structures and abandoned cars from our neighborhoods, obtaining grant money to replace many downtown sidewalks and install new lighting, installing nearly 2000' of sidewalks in partnership with residential property owners, and continuing to be active in economic development through our partnership with the Port of Grays Harbor and the Hoquiam Business Association.



Photo by Police Chief Jeff Myers
Officer David Blundred is sworn in at a City Council meeting by Mayor Jack Durney.

Our partnership with the Hoquiam School District has gained some sidewalk improvements near schools as well as increased police patrols in cross walk areas to assure pedestrian safety. A very recent financial partnership with the school district proposed by our Finance Director Mike Folkers allowed us to purchase bonds from the District for the middle school remodeling project. We are charging them less interest on the money they need for the project and in turn they are paying us more interest on our various reserves than we would otherwise have made.

As we look back at 2009, we see a lot of progress in many areas, but going forward, we will try even harder to make you proud of your hometown. As always, I welcome your thoughts and suggestions at mayor@cityofhoquiam.com or by calling me at 580-9856. All of the employees, elected officials and volunteers of the City of Hoquiam wish you a very happy New Year!!

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Polson Museum Railroad Camp Capital Campaign Under Way

By John Larson, Director

As most citizens of Hoquiam know, the Polson Museum embarked on the beginning phase of construction of our long awaited Railroad Camp this past year. As one of the most ambitious projects in our museum's history, the

\$850,000 to complete Railroad Camp's design and finish constructing the camp's Locomotive Shop.

In October, the Polson kicked off a Capital Campaign requesting the support of individuals and businesses to help raise the additional funding to complete the project. Through this

An important aspect of our project is its value to the Harbor – and the state – as a new heritage tourism destination. Given its location along U.S. Highway 101, Railroad Camp will serve as an educational gateway for travelers heading to and from the ocean beaches and the Olympic Peninsula. Offering visitors new, quality experiences is crucial to the state and local economy. Just as importantly, we hope to attract more of our core audience – the residents of Grays Harbor.

We invite you to stop by the Polson in the coming year to take a closer look at Railroad Camp as it continues to take shape. We also ask that you call, write, or e-mail to request information on how you can make a donation in support of the project and put your name on our permanent donor wall. No contribution is too small, and every contribution matters. Your support to preserve the past is truly an investment in Grays Harbor's future.

Polson Museum

P.O. Box 432

1611 Riverside Ave.

Hoquiam, WA 98550

www.polsonmuseum.org

360.533.5862



camp's dramatic new exhibition spaces promise to delight, entertain, and educate with first class displays of our region's rich logging and sawmilling history.

Through grant writing efforts and several key individual donations, we have raised and invested over

campaign and future grants, we need to raise an additional \$450,000. Electrical systems, lighting, surface treatments, landscaping, boardwalks, signage, artifact restoration and exhibit fabrication, as well as Railroad Camp's second building – the Dolbeer Donkey Shed – remain to be completed.

Water Transmission Main Replacement Project

By Brian Shay, City Administrator

The City of Hoquiam has started the initial design and environmental work associated with the Water Transmission Main Replacement Project. The City's drinking water comes from Davis Creek and the West Fork of the Hoquiam River. Once the water is purified at our water treatment plant, it is piped six miles to Hoquiam through a transmission main along SR 101 that is over 50 years old and in need of replacement. The transmis-

sion pipeline is the only link between the water source and our customers.

The first phase of the project is being funded with revenues from the Watershed Fund specifically saved for this project over the last 20 years. Future phases, including construction, will likely be implemented in 1- to 2-mile segments of the 6-mile pipeline over several years as the City aggressively pursues grant and loan funding opportunities.

During the next several months, expect to see surveyors and other technical field staff on-site along SR 101 gathering field data necessary for the design and permitting. This project is critical to our water system infrastructure and the City is working hard to ensure continued reliability and quality drinking water now and for future generations. For more information please contact the public works department.

Hoquiam Police pay tribute to Lakewood officers

By Deputy Chief Jim Maloney

In the early morning light and the quiet surroundings of the coffee shop, the four officers sat sipping their coffee as they tossed about the banter of the day. Little did the officers know that in the mind of an approaching killer their uniform had been reduced to the mere equivalent of a target. The officer's names or sex did not matter to the demented killer who strolled into the coffee shop that morning intent on completing his premeditated goal of killing another human being in a police uniform.

In the cities, towns and counties across this great country this same scene is played out over and over again each day and night as men and women slide on the police uniform, hop into a marked police car and venture out onto the streets, highways and avenues. Any law enforcement officer can easily become a mere target of anyone who dares to identify them as such.

The names of Mark Renninger, Ronald Owens, Tina Griswold and Greg Richards appear to be only names on the surface. Underneath the fabric of the police uniform they were human beings who stood for all that is right in their community and in this country. They loved, they laughed, and they cried as all people do- but they also dared to care and to stand up because of the profession they chose.

Their names could be replaced at any given moment on

any given day by another man or woman or even someone like Hoquiam Police Officer Donald Burke who dared to dawn a uniform, pin on a badge and step out into the great unknown. On a sunny afternoon on April 16, 1980, Don drove away from the Hoquiam police station and never returned. While on the supposedly safe streets of Hoquiam, Don was shot and killed during a "routine" traffic stop on April 16, 1980. A short time later the King County area bank robbers who had ended Don's life became involved in a shoot out with Aberdeen police. The police shot and killed one of the two suspects and took the other into custody; the second suspect later died of medical disease in prison.

Officer Burke's death and the death of any law enforcement officer is a constant reminder that although we are blessed with the serenity and beauty afforded us in Grays Harbor, our police officers, deputies and state troopers are not immune to the violence that we like to think is more common in other places.

Police officers need the support of the community in which they work. In Hoquiam we believe we have that support. The Hoquiam Police Department is merely a name for our professional employees who dedicate themselves to making Hoquiam a strong and safe community in which to live, work and play.

EMS Levy: A brief history

By Steve Johnson, City Attorney

Prior to 2004, the City of Hoquiam, in common with many other cities, imposed an ambulance services excise tax. Our tax was in the form of a monthly "household tax" of ten dollars. It was imposed upon everyone that received water service from the city. (Former HMC 1.45.080) The funds generated were used exclusively to help provide emergency ambulance services to the citizens of Hoquiam.

In the case of Arborwood Idaho, L.L.C. v. City of Kennewick, 151 Wn.2d 359, 89 P.3d 217 (2004) the Washington State Supreme Court held that Kennewick's ambulance excise tax was unconstitutional, because it had not been specifically authorized by state legislation. That decision applied to all other Washington cities that imposed a similar tax. Therefore, in 2004, the City of Hoquiam repealed subsection (1) of HMC 1.45.080, eliminating its ambu-

lance excise tax. This left a very large hole in the Fire Department's ambulance services budget.

In an effort to fix this problem, a group of cities that included Hoquiam asked the state legislature to create a statute that would authorize cities to impose an "ambulance utility service fee." However, for several months, the City of Hoquiam was not certain that this legislation would be enacted, and in order to ensure that the ambulance services would be adequately funded, the decision was made by the Mayor and City Council to ask the citizens to approve a six-year EMS Levy. If approved, the funds generated by the EMS Levy would replace a portion, but not all, of the funds that the Fire Department budget lost when the household excise tax was repealed. Fortunately, the citizens of Hoquiam approved the EMS Levy.

After the Washington State Legislature adopted legislation authorizing cities to create an ambulance service

public utility and to assess service fees, the City of Hoquiam adopted Ordinance 2006-05, which "reauthorized, ratified and continued" the City's ambulance service utility, and established "ambulance utility service fees." The City could have then imposed a utility service fee that would be large enough to adequately fund the ambulance service utility, or to retain the EMS Levy and impose a reduced utility service fee. The City Council decided to take the latter approach, feeling that it was more equitable since a large service fee would affect low income users disproportionately.

The EMS Levy ballot measure that will come before the citizens in February, 2010, will be to replace the current EMS Levy when it expires at the end of 2010. It is simply a replacement of the existing levy, and will not create an additional tax burden on the people of Hoquiam.

EMS Levy on February ballot

By Fire Chief Ray Pumphrey

Each year for the past several years, the Hoquiam Fire Department has experienced a steady increase in emergency calls. 2009 was no exception and for the first time we received over 3,000 calls for help.

When we receive a call for an ambulance, we often send four people depending on the type of call. Calls such as chest pain, breathing difficulties, person down, seizures, diabetic problems, drug overdoses, serious trauma and vehicle accidents will result in a four man response. Additional manpower is needed

on these types of calls, as there are many things to do. A typical call will require an exam, which includes a patient assessment and medical history. While this is being done other personnel are taking vital signs, attaching the heart monitor and oxygen equipment, starting IV's and administering medications if needed.

We send a fire engine with two people to assist the ambulance crew on calls that require additional help. This provides our citizens with a quicker response time as our personnel can usually respond to the next fire or ambulance

call from their current location without having to return to the station to exchange apparatus.

Our department also averages approximately 20 ambulance transports each month to hospitals and facilities in the Olympia, Seattle, Tacoma and Portland areas when our citizens need specialized care that is not available locally.

On February 9th, the City of Hoquiam will be asking residents to vote on a six year EMS (Emergency Medical Services) Levy. If passed, the revenue from this levy will continue to provide a major portion of the operating budget for

manpower and equipment. This levy would replace the current six year levy which is set to expire at the end of 2010. The rates for the new levy will stay the same as the current levy, which is 50 cents per \$1,000 of assessed valuation.

It is important to remember that this is not a new tax or a tax increase. It is the replacement of the current EMS levy at the same rate as the one that will expire at the end of 2010.

If you have any questions, please call Fire Chief Ray Pumphrey at 360-532-5700, ext. 260.

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