



GP Now

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Grants Pass, OR FREE

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The Life Of The Building

Community maximizes use of an old building in its final days.

It was a long process, but when Nathan Miller received approval from the Grants Pass Historical Buildings and Sites Sites Commission to tear down an old church building on his property at the corner of 4th and 'J' streets to make room for a new development, he wanted to make sure the building's salvageable materials could be put to good use.

Miller, who now serves on the HBSC, contacted the local Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints who once had ties to the old building, as well as local historian George Kramer and the Josephine County Historical Society.

"We talked to them all before we did anything," said Miller.

Some components of the building were saved and provided to the church. The most significant aspect of the building, its steeple-like structure, was preserved and will be incorporated into the design of the new development. Reusable materials were donated to Foundry Village, a local development to



GRANTS PASS FIREFIGHTERS TRAIN ON THE ROOF OF AN OLD CHURCH BUILDING ON 'J' STREET BEFORE ITS PLANNED DEMOLITION.

provide temporary housing for those in need.

Miller said he contacted a local Rotarian, Doug Walker, who helped organize the salvage of flooring materials, plumbing fixtures, and modern glass.

"It's a worthwhile cause and a beneficial project that made sense. The worst place these things could end up is in the landfill," Miller said.

Before the building came

down, it also served another purpose to the benefit of the community when local firefighters spent six full days using the building as a training opportunity.

When Miller called Grants Pass Fire/Rescue and offered them the site, they seized the opportunity.

"Acquired structures are incredibly valuable for training,"

(See "BUILDING" page 6)

Essay Contest: 'Imagine A Day Without Water'

The City of Grants Pass Public Works Department is sponsoring an "Imagine A Day Without Water" Essay Contest for local students. All Grants Pass middle school and high school students, including home-schooled students, are eligible to enter the contest.

The Public Works Water Department has been supplying quality drinking water to city residents since 1931. In collaboration with partners across the country, the city will participate in the sixth annual "Imagine A Day Without Water" national education campaign to highlight how water is essential, invaluable, and in need of investment.

This year, the day of action will take place Oct. 21, and will include events, proclamations, student contests, social media engagement, and more, all across the country.

"Our students' ability to assess and understand the importance of and value of water will help ensure that our water resources and infrastructure remain in the forefront of our civic discourse, helping to raise awareness about life's most essential resource," said Public Works Director Jason Canady.

Students are asked to compose an essay of 500-650 words responding to the following question: "What would a day

without water be like?" Submission deadline is 5 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 1. Winning selections will be announced Oct. 21.

Prizes will be awarded in both middle school and high school categories. First place winners will receive \$100 gift cards. Second place winners will receive \$50 gift cards, and third place winners will receive \$25 gift cards. All participants will receive a certificate of participation.

Entries will be judged by a panel of city staff members on the following criteria: position statement, supporting information, organization and structure, tone, authenticity of voice, grammar, and punctuation.

Contest rules and requirements conform with established Common Core State Standards for literacy, grades 6-12, including the standards for writing with a purpose and for an authentic audience.

"Imagine A Day Without Water is a day to pause and notice the way that water systems impact our lives and communities, while we commit to ensuring a sustainable water future for generations to come," said Canady.

For additional details and contest rules visit: <https://bit.ly/3hu9jox>.

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Imagine A Day Without Water, Oct. 21

By Lisa Beutler
Special to GP Now

For many of us, 2020 will forever be hard to forget, but for the people of Newport, Oregon, July Fourth weekend, 2020, will be especially memorable.

As Newport businesses were gearing up for weekend tourists and visitors who were hungry to escape the heat and enjoy a little socially-distanced nature, Newport Mayor Dean Sawyer called the media and issued a public plea. He told those who didn't live in Newport, to stay away from Newport.

Two weeks earlier, the water flowing through the city's water pipes, had suddenly, for no apparent reason, been cut in half. The Newport water utility team worked day and night to find and fix the problem, but the clock was ticking, and they soon knew it would not be fixed before Independence Day. So that summer weekend, in the midst of everything else 2020 had already dealt, Newport only had enough water for its townspeople.

Millions of Americans take water service for granted every day. Just like in Grants Pass, people across the country turn on their taps and clean water flows out. They flush the toilet, and dirty water goes away. Frequent handwashing has become a part of everyone's routine health and safety measures.

Fortunately, the people of Newport could still access their tap water, and the problem (an unlikely filtering issue) was eventually found and fixed. The shortage was not without consequence. It shut down local economic engines such as fish plant operations, which use half of the city's water; the Rogue Brewery, and most tour-

ism operations.

Local fireworks were discouraged, as the water needed to fight a potential fire would have overtaxed the system. Mayor Sawyer explained to reporters that halting fish plant operations was the hardest decision to make and "a punch in the gut for families working there after already being forced to close because of the pandemic."

This October, Grants Pass is joining more than a thousand cities, counties, utilities, professional associations, and engineering and consulting firms, to Imagine a Day Without Water. The day is part of a national education campaign that brings together diverse stakeholders to highlight how water is essential, invaluable, and in need of investment. This year, the day of action will take place Oct. 21, and will include events, resolutions, student contests, social media engagement, and more, all across the country.

It's hard to imagine a day without water in a place such as Grants Pass. The city has long benefited from the foresight of its founders to plan for sufficient infrastructure that is managed today by an outstanding water utility team. However, keeping the city's historic water treatment plant operational requires constant maintenance, and every day the plant is at significant risk of failing during a seismic event.

The city has already started the process of replacing the aging plant, but it will take at least four more years to complete. Plans are in place should the existing treatment plant fail, but the very best-case scenario during a seismic event is to save enough of the plant to be able to provide water for health and safety purposes only.

The worst-case scenarios are catastrophic and would fundamentally alter life in Grants Pass until the replacement plant is built.

During July, the city worked with local business, health care, civic, and faith leaders to learn more about their thoughts regarding the local water situation. Most of those leaders knew there was a need to do something about the water treatment plant, even if they had different views on the best solutions.

Some of them have spent time in third-world countries serving in the military, participating in faith and humanitarian missions, or conducting international business in places where there is little or no safe, clean water. Going a day without water was not something they had to imagine, as they had personally experienced it and would not recommend it to anyone.

Each of them affirmed that without adequate water, Grants Pass would not be a viable community. Many suggested that the city should spend a great deal more time emphasizing the urgency of the situation.

Imagine A Day Without Water

The sixth annual Imagine A Day Without Water will take place Oct. 21, when more than a thousand cities, counties, utilities, professional associations, and engineering and consulting firms will take part in a national education campaign that brings together diverse stakeholders to highlight how water is essential, invaluable, and in need of investment.

For those who are informed about the city's water situation, imagining a day or days without water isn't difficult, but across the nation, most people don't stop to think about the impressive infrastructure and treatment required to make sure clean water comes out when they open the tap, or safely returns water to the environment from the drain.

The truth is the entire nation's water and wastewater systems are getting older. In some places such as Grants Pass, those systems were installed decades or even close to a century ago. Everyone should be concerned with the vulnerability of those systems.

In the western U.S., the issue is not just water treatment plants, but also drought conditions. It isn't too hard to remember the dry days of 2015. In Portland, temperatures hovered nearly seven degrees above average and across the state, access to water for some farms was shut off.

Director Tom Byler from the Oregon Water Resources Department said that was the kind of year we might see more regularly, "and that is a big deal, because that means that water may not be available during the times of year that people have been used to it."

Byler explained that in Oregon, "we've been so successful as a society, in getting water to people and meeting so many different needs; it's seemingly abundant. I think we're entering a period where we won't take it for granted as much because it's going to be less available than it has been in the past, and the cycle of water that we've experienced in the past is not going to be something that we can rely on in the future."

There are two clear options for responding to these changes, one is increased conservation and the other is improving water storage capacity. Conservation allows for the best use of every available drop of water, and improved water storage greatly increases the ability to provide reliable water service.

According to Byler, storage capacity isn't increasing across the state as needed, as Oregon may need an additional 424 billion gallons of water annually by the year 2050 in order to meet irrigation and municipal needs.

So, in answer to the question: "Could it happen here - could there be a day without water?" The answer is yes, it could, but Grants Pass is taking every step possible to prevent that.

City leaders have already anticipated the need to accommodate future growth and respond to changes in historic seasonal patterns. In addition to replacing the water treatment plant, the city team is moving forward with improving its water reservoir capacity. This one-two bold action will help secure the city's water legacy.

Oct. 21 is the day set aside to Imagine a Day Without Water. It's a day to pause and notice the way that water systems impact our lives and communities and commit to ensuring a sustainable water future for generations to come.

Everyone is asked: "What would your day be like if you couldn't turn on the tap and get clean drinking water, or if you flushed the toilet and wastewater didn't go anywhere? What would happen to restaurants, hospitals, firefighters, farms, breweries, or the hundreds of industries that depend on water (See "WATER" page 8)

Unidirectional Pipe Flushing Continues On Schedule

City of Grants Pass Water Distribution staff began the process of unidirectional water flushing Monday, June 8. Unidirectional flushing opens specific pipes in the city's water distribution system to flush water through the pipes in a single direction in order to clean the insides of the pipes.

The process continues as city staff moves from section to section of the city to complete the work along 188 miles of piping. Staff opens specific pipes to flush the water in one direction. This increases the speed and force of the water which helps scrub the pipes. The water is tested during the flush until it meets clear water standards, releasing thousands of gallons of water into the surrounding streets.

Flushing in each neighbor-

hood can take between 10 minutes and more than four hours, depending on the area and number of fire hydrants located there. Some hydrants may get flushed twice, so staff may leave an area and come back later to flush them again.

During the flushing, residents in the area will experience lowered water pressure. Water may become discolored for a temporary length of time, and city staff recommends residents use bottled water or other liquids during the flushing. Residents are also cautioned to avoid running tap water, or appliances such as washing machines, dishwashers, and automatic ice machines until the flushing process is completed.

Residents should also avoid driving through the water being flushed if possible and slow

down for safety. Water can be deeper than it appears and is not safe to drive through at full speed.

After flushing has been completed in an area, residents should turn on cold water faucets and spigots until the water runs clear. In order to avoid drawing any sediment into their hot water heaters, residents should not use their hot water tap until their water is running clear.

Information about which neighborhoods have been completed and which neighborhoods are scheduled for flushing is available through the city's website at: www.grantspassoregon.gov/1366/2020-Water-Main-Flushing.

Backflow Testing

The required testing of single-family residential backflow assemblies for 2020 continues. All backflow assemblies are required to be tested annually to verify that they are functioning properly.

Backflow assemblies protect both the city's water system and the homeowner from potential and actual hazards under backflow conditions.

City contractors completed testing assemblies in the Northwest part of town in July and Northeast portion in August. Contractors continue throughout the city based on the following schedule:

Southeast – September

Southwest – October & November

Additional information: (541)450-6115, or visit the city's website.



FLEET SERVICES SUPERINTENDENT GRANT CORY OPERATES A CITY FORK-LIFT - ONE OF MORE THAN 200 PIECES OF CITY EQUIPMENT.

Cory...(from page 4)
very often," he said.

When he does, he said he goes to lead mechanic David McAuliffe to ask him how he can help.

"Dave calls the shots on the floor," said Cory.

Usually McAuliffe puts Cory to work upfitting a new piece of equipment or decommissioning an old piece, he said.

McAuliffe has multiple certifications, including a highly coveted certification as a master emergency vehicle technician.

"From a small gas engine on a lawn mower or paint striper, to a million-dollar fire appara-

tus, and everything in between, he can fix anything that is broken or worn out," said Cory.

Eliseo Salas is Fleet Services' newest mechanic. A former mechanic for the US Marine Corps, with a bachelor's degree in diesel technology, Salas "is the future of fleet," Cory said.

Donna Anderson, a former administration employee who transferred to Fleet Services last year, completes the division.

"Together, we have 94 years of combined experience," said Cory.

"My biggest success has been in building that staff," he said.

Water...

(from page 5)
if there just wasn't any?"

While we continue to enjoy high quality and reliable water service now, maintaining that level of service is getting harder and harder. This is not just a Grants Pass issue. All of America's water infrastructure continues to deteriorate.

Meanwhile, new threats from record rainfalls, flooding, toxic algae, drought and wildfires threaten our critical water systems. There are even communities, especially in many rural places across the country, that have never had access to infrastructure in the first place.

The good news is that multiple studies show that in finding ways to help lift the economy out of the recession, investing in water infrastructure is a win-

ning solution. Investing in water creates cascading economic benefits, strengthens American competitiveness, raises GDP, creates jobs and increases wages. Grants Pass is an extremely attractive location for businesses involved in the new economy, but that is only true if it maintains reliable infrastructure. Investing in water provides a path to economic recovery.

This Oct. 21, Imagine a Day Without Water events will provide an opportunity for everyone to get educated about the Grants Pass water systems and affirm the water investment priorities of elected leaders. Investing in water is investing in a future where hopefully no American will actually have to live a day without water.

City of Grants Pass Fleet Vehicles

There are 135 vehicles assigned to different departments:
Public Safety Police: 51; Public Safety Fire: 18; Parks: 10;
Streets: 12; Stormwater: 2; Collections: 5;
Water Restoration: 5; Water Treatment: 3; Distribution: 9;
Property Management: 8; Engineering: 3; Building Safety: 2;
Information Technology: 1; Motor Pool: 6
There are also 92 pieces of equipment, including mowers, tractors, backhoes, trailers, and standby generators.

Second Quarter Saw Strategic Plan Progress

The second quarter of 2020 saw major progress in accomplishing Strategic Plan goals set at the beginning of the year by the Grants Pass City Council, said City Manager Aaron Cubic at the council's Monday workshop session Aug. 10. Cubic outlined several accomplishments related to council goals and updated the council on the progress of other items.

Among the details, Cubic provided a report on the council's objective to enhance a safe and secure environment through increasing proficiency and proactive time at the patrol level in the Department of Public Safety.

To that end, online police reporting went live with the Police Division initially offering a small number of reporting options while the program is developed, said Cubic.

Further improvements to the city's online systems include the council's adoption of Resolution 20-6917, to enter into a contract with Selectron Technologies for Interactive Voice and Web Response services to implement a new online city utility customer service platform and communication system.

"Implementation is currently under way," Cubic said.

Keeping citizens safe was a top priority identified by the council during this year's strategic planning sessions. Among the actions given top priority by the council is the passing of a new Public Safety Levy in November.

The council conducted numerous workshops on the topic and agreed to a proposed levy rate of \$1.89 per \$1,000 of as-

essed value to be sent to the voters.

The council also directed DPS to implement additional prevention-focused community policing to help reduce crime and build public trust. Chief Warren Hensman and top public safety officials met with organizers and community activists to assist with managing peaceful demonstrations regarding equality.

"That was a great leadership role that the chief took, and I think it really paid dividends in the long run because we had a very clean and violence-free protest that was very respectful to everyone involved. That should be attributed to the chief and his leadership on that," said Cubic.

The DPS also implemented a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) project with the Grants Pass Warming Shelter.

Cubic said the council will soon receive a final presentation regarding the completion of a comprehensive Geographic Information System needs assessment to ensure community and department GIS expectations are met.

"GIS is extremely important in this community," said Cubic.

Cubic presented a separate presentation updating the council on the completed removal of blighted buildings located at the corner of 6th and 'A' streets. The council has asked for a City Hall parking needs assessment to be completed prior to making a decision on the future of the property.

Enhancement of the city's Central Business District continues with the installation of

ornamental streetlights, said Cubic. Additional security cameras have been ordered for installation in city parks, multiple park playgrounds have been repaired and/or replaced, and the Major Site Plan for Beacon Hill Park has been approved, he said.

Several projects have been delayed due to COVID-19 issues and restrictions, Cubic said. Among those areas most affected are alley activation and beautification, landscape amendments, development of a parking/restroom management plan, and decisions regarding the future of Caveman Pool, he said.

Further updates included details about the council's objective of encouraging an environment which provides for the growth of affordable housing opportunities, including the consideration of various potential incentives for developing multi-family units, development of template plans for auxiliary units, the creation of a pilot housing project for city-owned surplus property, and ongoing housing needs analysis.

The city's Housing Advisory Committee has resumed regular meetings and continues to work on these important facets of the council's strategic plan, said Cubic.

Additional details regarding the 2020 City of Grants Pass Strategic Plan are available at the city's website: <https://www.grantspassoregon.gov/DocumentCenter/View/3852/City-of-Grants-Pass-Work-Plan-2020-PDF>

City Seeks Land Acquisition Specialist

Join the City of Grants Pass administration team as a land acquisition specialist. This will be a part-time, 24-hour-per-week position.

The position performs a variety of administrative, technical and facilitation duties designed to purchase, sell and manage records of property for the city.

Key performance areas of the position include the purchase of right of way, purchase of land for city needs, supervising the sale of city-owned property, presenting to council, managing property records and providing data concerning city-owned properties.

Minimum Qualifications:

A bachelor's degree in business administration, finance management, law or a related field, and three years of experience in real estate or law, including contract negotiation/mediation experience are required; or an equivalent combination of education and experience sufficient to successfully perform the essential duties of the job.

The land acquisition specialist is a Programs Stand Alone class. Incumbents are responsible for negotiating the sale and purchase of properties to benefit the citizens of Grants Pass.

Incumbents are responsible for full oversight of the purchasing of right of way and land parcels, following state laws related to the purchase and sale of land, and providing technical advice to departments.

Previous experience with public entities and right of way purchases is preferred.

Application materials must be completed online and submitted by the closing date in

order to be considered for this position.

Any application that is missing a cover letter, resume, or answers to the supplemental questionnaire will not be considered. No late, incomplete or faxed applications will be accepted.

The required materials to be attached to your application for this recruitment are:

1. City Application
2. Supplemental Questionnaire
3. Resume
4. Cover Letter

The city will consider contracting land acquisition services with a qualified firm or contractor.

If interested, please contact the City of Grants Pass Administration Office at (541)450-6000 to discuss opportunities for collaboration with City Manager Aaron Cubic.

The Dollar Value of Water

Imagine A Day Without Water will occur Oct. 21. Consider the value of water in comparison to the average cost of other household services.

The average Grants Pass Utilities bill is \$76.

Water unit charges account for approximately \$26 of each monthly bill.

The average monthly trash collection bill in Grants Pass is \$35 per month.

The average monthly electric bill is \$99 per month.

The average household spends \$110 per month for cell-phone charges, and cable TV/internet charges average \$144 per month.