

**MAYOR'S NEWSLETTER**

**ATTENTION – IMPORTANT LOCAL NEWS**



**JEFF BELLAH, MAYOR**

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**FELLOW PHOENIX CITIZENS,**



**We are at long last having a PARADE!** Yes, in conjunction with Phoenix High School, the City of Phoenix is sponsoring a **Home Coming Parade** at 6 pm on Wednesday, October 15, 2014. This will be the first time to my knowledge, that Phoenix has been able to hold a parade on MAIN STREET. Thanks to the efforts of the Oregon Department of Transportation, Phoenix Police and our Public Works Department, and many volunteers, we will be able to use our Main Street as hundreds of other cities in America do. The Route will start at the Elementary School -- move down 1<sup>st</sup> Street to Main -- turn left on Main and go to 5<sup>th</sup> Street -- then up 5<sup>th</sup> to Rose Street and end up at the High School. Once at the High School the Parade will end, but the fun will just be beginning with a BBQ and other fund raising concession stands at the stadium. This will be followed by a "Powder Puff" Football Game. This promises to be a great time and our chance to recognize the Phoenix High School Football Team, Band, Cross Country Team, Cheer Leaders, Clubs and Leaders from the School District and City. It would be great if we can get lots of kids and parents lining the streets throughout the parade route. Parades are all about KIDS! Come on Phoenix, this is the time to get your PARADE HAT on and support our High School and our town. I hope this will become an Annual Event so please come out and show your support and enthusiasm! OH, I LOVE A PARADE ..... Watch for more information regarding traffic changes during the parade.

**PHOENIX PROGRESS:** As I reflect on the past couple of years, I am encouraged by the progress Phoenix has made. I decided to make a list of results in order to help us assess progress and form goals for the future. Here is list of some of the high priority areas.

- We have achieved a high degree of financial stability where we are now able to add needed services and employees. We have been able to do this without adding taxes or fees as most cities are doing.
- We have established a "**save before spend**" strategy that is now allowing us to better maintain streets, water infrastructure and the like without passing bonds or taking loans. This year we plan to spend almost \$750,000 that we have saved for this purpose to upgrade and maintain many of our streets while replacing the water pipes in those construction areas. Our 5-year goal will be to bring all of our city streets up to acceptable standards.



- We have and will continue to focus on improving the appearance of our downtown corridor. Many of you have commented on the new **Flower Baskets** this year along Main Street. We started with 15 baskets and hope to increase that next year to at least 20. You have also hopefully noticed the new **BANNERS** recently added. For the near future, more than cosmetic changes are needed and planned for downtown. Our Urban Renewal (UR) Agency and the City Council will work together to complete the street additions and buildings in the City Center land owned by UR. Additionally, much needs to be done to renovate dilapidated buildings. We must encourage and facilitate the private development of commercial and residential areas in the City Center (Main between 1<sup>st</sup> Street and 4<sup>th</sup> Street). I truly believe we can have a vibrant, pedestrian friendly and business driven city center but we must work together to make it happen.
- Behind the scenes, we have been able to substantially improve our collections of overdue charges, system development charges, transient fees, etc. With the recovery of past overcharges and non-payments to the city, we have collected over \$200,000 and are working to collect significantly more in the near future.
- Communication Improvements have come about through the Mayors Newsletters and the redesigned City Website <http://www.phoenixoregon.gov/>. Next up, I would like to see us utilize social media like Facebook to create opportunities for daily dialogue between citizens, city staff and elected officials. I would also like to see us establish Neighborhood Liaisons for each area of town. Those people could help establish **NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH** programs that would serve as another communication link between the city and the citizens. We would love to hear any other ideas you have for improving communication.
- We are finally fully immersed in the I-5 Interchange Construction. When completed in 2016, this will make the entire east side of Phoenix very attractive to business, light industry and residential development. A large part of it will be added to our **Urban Growth Boundary** and is designated to be used as a campus type setting for job creation industries such as corporate headquarters, employment centers and the like. We must work diligently with private and public partners to help make this entire area benefit Phoenix and not let the growth take place without our guidance and direction. This is a top priority for the future.
- Finally, I hope we can continue to develop our current and future parks (like Bi-centennial in the City Center) to meet the needs of our families and individuals. We get many requests for the types of facilities that are becoming very commonplace such as skate parks, splash pads, dog parks, sand volleyball courts, more picnic shelters, etc. We can potentially implement all of these ideas in the future, but we must decide on our priorities and how to fund them. This will take a lot of interaction between citizens and the city to accomplish so it will be a very important goal.

I am proud of what we have been able to accomplish as a city. Even with a lot of outside interference we have moved steadily forward and are poised to continue making Phoenix a city we can all cherish and be proud of in the future. Below I am listing the current City Council members with their email addresses. I would strongly urge you to contact any of them to state your priorities for the future and give feedback on progress to date. That type of interaction is how we will continue to improve.

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**MEDICAL MARIJUANA DISPENSARIES/FACILITIES (MMFs):** The City Council has a ***Moratorium effect until May 1, 2015 (if needed)*** that prohibits MMF's from operating in the City. As you may remember, we had one business that had insisted on operating against this Moratorium and had been operating illegally for many months against federal, state and city laws and ordinances. To resolve this the city obtained a temporary injunction ordering the business to cease operations, which they did by Judges Order. The Moratorium does not mean there will never be MMF's in the city and in fact the Council has been taking necessary actions to allow such facilities in the future if and when we are ready to issue a valid business license. These actions include:



- Placing a City Charter change question on the General Election Ballot on November 4, 2014. The question will ask whether the Phoenix Voters will approve a change to the City Charter removing the requirement in the ***Oath of Office for the Mayor and Council*** to support federal law. Currently, the Council would be breaking their Oath of Office to allow any business that operates in violation of federal law. To explain the questions simply, If you feel Phoenix should change our charter to allow MMF's then vote "YES"; if you don't, then vote "NO".
- Developing an ordinance through the planning commission that clearly delineates time, place and manner for marijuana based businesses. This will also address Recreational Marijuana Dispensaries since that is a distinct possibility to consider based on the outcome of the November 4<sup>th</sup> voters decision on Measure 91.
- The Council decided to tax Recreational Dispensaries (should a license ever be approved) at 10% per transaction but not to tax Medical Marijuana.

If the Charter Question is voted on in the affirmative, it is likely that the Council could approve the city to issue a Medical Marijuana Dispensary license by early 2015.

**LITTLE FREE LIBRARIES:** Our Citizens Leadership Class this year (sponsored by the Ford Family Foundation), has been working on a really creative way for promoting reading for all ages through the "swapping" of free reading materials. They are building and installing these pole mounted "Libraries" at City Hall, School District land near the Elementary School and Otto Caster Park. The concept of this program is to leave books at each site where people can borrow a book and leave a book to take its place. A great idea that has worked very well in other cities. This project is being funded through both the Ford Family Foundation and citizen donations. The city is allowing the installation of the poles on city land. If you would like to help, look up "***Little Free Libraries in Talent & Phoenix***" on Facebook.



**PHOENIX COMMUNITY PANTRY:** This is one of a number of valuable programs centered at the Presbyterian Church on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. The Pantry is a great program that provides food to those in need in our community. They are now in need of your help. Food donations are always welcome but they also need volunteers to help with the distribution process on Wednesdays from 1-3pm and Saturdays from 10am to noon. Volunteers are also needed in the ***Community Clothes Closet*** to collect donations, launder and fold, and assist people in need of clothing. Councilor Karen Jones can connect you with these programs if you would like to volunteer or visit the pantry.

**FREE COMMUNITY DINNERS:** These are also provided at the COMMUNITY KITCHEN in the Phoenix Presbyterian Church on the second and fourth Thursdays each month from 5-7 pm. I often attend these for the fellowship of meeting with my neighbors. They always need volunteers and frequently hold "Food Handlers Trainings".

**DEVELOPING A SENSE OF COMMUNITY:** We are extremely fortunate in Phoenix to have 3 great public spaces with Blue Heron Park on Hwy 99 Northbound, Colver Park on Colver Road, and Otto Caster Park near the Elementary School. While we don't have a separate Parks and Recreation Department yet, we are well served by our Public Works employees and a Citizens Parks Committee. During the past year we have supported several events that I hope will become Annual Celebrations that will improve and grow each year. These events include a ***Summer Kick-off Dinner*** with the Community Kitchen in June; the ***Dog Days of Summer*** sponsored by the Parks Commission in July; ***Vegi-Jam*** (organized by Kendra Smith), in September; the ***Homecoming Parade*** in October; and, the ***Tree Lighting Ceremony*** in December (which will feature a live planted tree starting this year). In early



2015 we will hold an **Easter Egg Hunt** for the kids on the Saturday before Easter. Personally, I would like to see even more community events such as concerts, movies in the park and a Spring Parade. I love Parades if you can't already tell.

**COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD:** Please stop by the new Community Bulletin Board next to the Gypsy Trader on First Street. This bus stop was refurbished and decorated by one of our citizens, Tony Chavez. There are places for city announcements, handouts, brochures and general announcements. I think this will become a very well used and informative Kiosk for Phoenix.

**OTHER PHOENIX NEWS:** The freeway Interchange Project is progressing nicely and meeting time expectations for a completion date in 2016. We have agreed to take over the couplet on both North and the Southbound Hwy 99 between Oak Street and the Triangle by the Phoenix Pharmacy. The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) has given us a \$400,000 credit for this action as part of contributions for the Interchange work. They are also transferring \$270,000 to Phoenix to complete the repaving of the south section of Main Street when needed. In the long term this will be positive for Phoenix in that it will give us more control over Main Street. During construction please continue to patronize Phoenix Businesses!

Congratulations to the City of Phoenix. A national security organization has published the "SafeWise Report" which lists Phoenix as one of the **30 Safest Cities in Oregon**. This is based on their analysis of FBI statistics. Jacksonville is the only other city in the Rogue Valley included on this list. Thanks to our police for their excellent work and to our law abiding citizens.

Thank you for your support and confidence. I can speak to you in person during drop-in hours at City Hall on Tuesdays and Thursdays (1-3pm) or other times by appointment. Feel free to contact any of our Council members with ideas, concerns and local events.

**Jeff Bellah**  
Mayor, City of Phoenix