



## **Fellow Citizens of Phoenix,**

I hope everyone is having a great summer. Time sure seems to go fast! I am very excited about our future prospects in Phoenix. We have had a lot happening in the city and I want to bring you up to speed on our progress, challenges and future opportunities.

**New City Manager Hired:** I am happy to report that we just signed a contract with a new City Manager for Phoenix. His name is Mr. Steve Dahl, and he will start working for us on July 22, 2013. Steve is currently the Economic Development Coordinator in Grants Pass. He has some very specific skill sets that will greatly enhance our planning and economic development efforts in the future. Additionally, he has a wealth of experience in both city and county government and extensive contacts throughout Oregon that will assist in our learning from others who have experienced similar challenges and opportunities that we now face. Welcome Steve! Mr. Eli Naffah, who has been our Interim City Manager for the past year and a half will be leaving us on July 31, 2013. Eli's efforts in the city have been greatly appreciated and he has done a fine job serving as a stabilizing force as we have addressed budget and city revitalization issues. As a result of Eli's assistance, we are a stronger city with a stable economic footing that will enable us to best address the future. Because of strong ties and obligations in the Crescent City area, Eli was not able to move here which we felt was critical for a permanent City Manager.

**Water Rates:** We received a final report from the Consultant with the Rural Community Assistance Corporation. It was paid for through a grant from the Department of Health and Human Services. In short, the study showed that our water fund is stable and meets the recommended goals for both affordability and operating fund ratios. The question left is whether it is as fair as it should be. The consultant left us with several different scenarios to examine further that included; 1) higher charges to heavy water users 2) reduced costs for those in multi family structures; 3) charging by meter size; and 4) leaving the system the way it is now. The Council assigned the Water Commission to review all options and make recommendations to us by September 30, 2013. They were told that any option chosen has to maintain our stability in operational funding as well as to continue to allow us to set aside funds for future maintenance and repairs.

**A Rare Privilege:** It is a rare honor and gratifying opportunity for local government to be able to provide assistance directly to the people in the city who need it the most. That is what recently happened to Phoenix when the state informed us that we needed to return or very quickly use grant funds from 1978 originally issued for low income housing improvements. As those who had received the grants sold their houses, the fund received back almost \$69,000. We requested and were granted permission by the state to use the money to purchase food directly from our own Ray's Supermarket (at slightly above their cost) and distribute it to Food Pantries in Phoenix. Local Food Banks at the Presbyterian Church and Neighborhood Church will distribute the food through their established processes. The food purchased will also provide some assistance to the twice monthly Community Dinner that serves about 200 people at each meal and is open to everyone in the city. We received the first large shipment in June and will receive 3 more before the end of the calendar year. This was a great opportunity to use grant funds a second time to buy from a LOCAL business to help LOCAL people.

**Urban Renewal:** Urban Renewal is a long term effort that will allow the city to invest approximately \$16 million over a 25 year period to improve and revitalize our downtown area. Most efforts to date have been on

planning long term improvements to the City Center. The City Council and I have met several times recently with the Urban Renewal Board and Director to help ensure we all have a shared vision for how this program can help shape our future. As a result, we will be placing increased emphasis on achieving short term objectives on Main Street. People want to see their dollars at work NOW while still knowing we are planning for more complex projects for the future. I will devote a larger section of the next newsletter to this subject and would like to hear your thoughts.



**Portland Rose Festival Parade:** I was proud to represent Phoenix by walking in the Grand Floral Parade with about 30 other Oregon Mayors on June 8, 2013. There was a tremendous crowd along the 4 mile route and quite a few people yelled out to me indicating they were from the Rogue Valley or "Go Phoenix". Parades are really a great way to bring a community together and have fun. It made me think again of how we need an annual parade in Phoenix. Doing something once in a while is fun but we really need to build traditions for your kids. If anyone has ideas or wants to help with something like this in the future, please contact me or any of the City Council members.

**Communications:** In addition to newsletters, we are working on our pledge to improve communications between the city and the public. We recently entered an agreement with a company called "Project A", to redesign and support our city website. They have worked with Ashland, Medford and others to significantly improve their web presence and effectiveness in communications. They are developing our first prototype in July so watch for big changes and further notifications. I will continue to be available from 1-3pm each Tuesday and Thursday in City Hall to meet with anyone in Phoenix who wants to discuss ideas, issues, compliments or complaints. I enjoy meeting with people and am often able to help. If those hours do not work for you, please contact me by phone at **(541) 535-1955 ext. 305**, or email at [jbella@phoenixoregon.gov](mailto:jbella@phoenixoregon.gov), and we can arrange a time that meets your schedule.

#### **Important Upcoming Events:**

**Carlos DeBritto Community Stage Dedication and Community Dinner on July 25th:** We are planning a formal dedication of the new Community Stage (also referred to as the Band Shell) at Blue Heron Park at 7 pm on July 25, 2013. This will be dedicated to Carlos DeBritto, our former mayor who just passed away in January of this year. Carlos was very involved not only in city government, but in promoting the arts and community activities. The dedication will follow a free Community Dinner at the same location that begins at 5pm. Please come to one or both activities and support your community as well as having a good time.

**Meet and Greet Scheduled for July 30th:** We are planning a social get together at Si Casa Flores at the Shops at 24 on July 30<sup>th</sup> from 5pm – 7pm. Everyone is invited to come and say hello and meet our new City Manager, Steve Dahl; and, to say good-bye and thank you to our Interim City Manager, Eli Naffah. Come meet your city staff, council and neighbors. It should be a great time.

*Jeff Bellah*  
Mayor, City of Phoenix