

COLUMBIA CITY NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2010



COLUMBIA CITY
1840 SECOND STREET
PO BOX 189
COLUMBIA CITY, OR 97018
PHONE: (503) 397-4010
FAX: (503) 366-2870
colcity@columbia-city.org
www.columbia-city.org

"QUAKE SHAKE 2010: PREPARING FOR EARTHQUAKES"

Are you ready for an earthquake? Do you know what you need to do if one occurs? Columbia County Emergency Management is promoting "Columbia County Quake Shake 2010" on Monday, April 26th at 10 a.m. It is a time where the department would like everyone in Columbia County to spend a few moments going over their earthquake procedures and plans, specifically "drop, cover and hold on".



"Quake Shake" is based on the State of California's Shakeout program, which promotes a day of earthquake preparedness through California. "Quake Shake" is a Columbia County effort, however. "It is our intention to make sure that people are prepared locally for earthquakes, among other hazards", says Derek White, Director of Emergency Management for Columbia County.

White states that it is important to be prepared for earthquakes in our area due to the location of the Cascadia Subduction Zone fault off the Oregon Coast. "These faults only erupt occasionally, but when they do they release a tremendous amount of energy. Earthquakes such as the 1964 Anchorage earthquake and the one in the Indian Ocean a few years ago were caused by subduction zone faults."

"Quake Shake" is intended to get folks to think about what they need to do to prepare for earthquakes. According to scores of emergency preparedness and response agencies, dropping to the floor, taking cover under a sturdy table or desk (or covering the head while getting next to an interior wall or something that is stable), and holding on until the earthquake is over is the best

way to respond. Once the earthquake ends, you should try to evacuate as quickly but as safely as possible. If you are stuck, do not yell, as this will use up oxygen and will cause you to breathe in deadly amounts of dust. Instead, knock on a nearby wall or pipe so that neighbors or rescuers may notice.

For earthquake and other preparedness tips, go to <http://www.oregonredcross.org>. To learn more from Columbia County Emergency Management, check out its blog at <http://columbiacountyem.blogspot.com> or on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/columbiacoem>.

THE BIG ONE IS COMING What are you going to do about it?

A disaster of the proportion that the Pacific Northwest has never seen before lies in wait and yet progress has been slow to reduce the potential loss of life and impacts on our infrastructure and economy. A Town Hall meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 21, 2010 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:45 p.m. at the Marriott Downtown Waterfront Hotel in Portland. This meeting will present the latest information on the earthquake hazards and associated risks in the Portland metropolitan area and the Pacific Northwest and what steps are and need to be taken to prepare for the Big One.



TEA ON FRIDAYS AT THE CAPLES HOUSE MUSEUM

Each Friday from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. join the Caples House for a pot of tea and sweets. Come alone or bring a friend for a relaxing visit and a lovely setting. Cost is \$5 per person with proceeds going to the museum. Caples House Museum is located at 1925 First Street.



2010 CENSUS

With the 2010 Census underway, Columbia City is partnering with the U.S. Census Bureau to make sure everyone completes and mails back their census form. Participation is important to the future of our community.

Taking 10 minutes to complete and mail a census form is the easiest and most efficient method of participation in the 2010 Census. Additionally, mailing back a census form reduces overall costs of conducting the census. For each census form returned by mail, the Census Bureau saves \$60-\$70, or about \$85 million for every one percent increase in mail participation.

Why Participate in the Census?

As mandated by the U.S. Constitution, everyone in the United States must be counted in the census. This includes people of all ages, races and ethnic groups; citizens and noncitizens. Conducted every 10 years, the census is more than just a population



count. The 2010 Census will present a new portrait of America, showing us how our nation has changed in the past decade and helping to determine what our

communities need for the next 10 years.

Census data provide numerous benefits to the people of this nation and the places we live. For example:

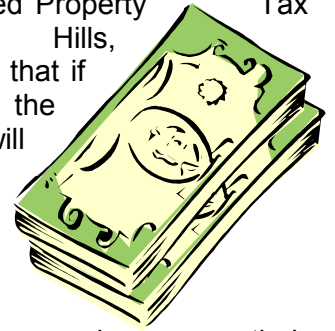
- Census data are used to reapportion seats in Congress and ensure proper district representation in state and local governments.
- Every year, the federal government distributes more than \$400 billion to tribal, state and local governments based on census data.
- Information from the census helps determine locations for child-care and senior centers, new roads, hospitals, schools and community centers.

These and many other benefits are possible with an accurate count in 2010. Participating in the census is one of best ways the people of Columbia City can contribute to society and make a lasting difference.

For more information, visit 2010census.gov.

PROPERTY TAX REDUCTION SCAMS

Property owners in Columbia County and throughout the State of Oregon are receiving a letter from a company called Property Tax Adjusters in Granada Hills, California. The letter states that if you complete and mail the coupon with a fee, they will prepare and submit documentation to the Appeals Board and act as your agent. This is a scam.



In Oregon, a taxpayer can appeal their value for free to the Board of Property Tax Appeals. Petitions can be filed after tax statements are received until December 31. In addition, if you want your property to be reassessed for the following tax year, you should contact your local assessor's office and request a reassessment. To report a suspected scam, call the Oregon Department of Justice Consumer Hotline at 877-877-9392 or go to www.oregonattorneygeneral.gov.

Columbia Humane Society
Celebrates 25 Years
of Helping Friends Find Each Other!

Saturday, May 1st, 5:30p.m.
Dinner and Auction Benefit
St. Helens Elks Lodge

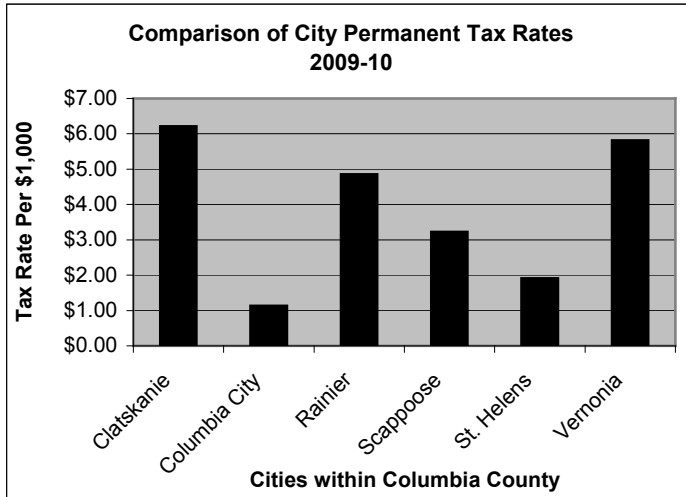
*Join us to share the magic of pets
and celebrate forever homes!*

*Purchase dinner tickets before April 24 for
\$20 per Person and \$38 per Couple
AND GET 5 FREE RAFFLE TICKETS!
(\$25 per Person and \$45 per Couple if purchased after April 24)*

For more information, or to donate
to our auction, please contact us at
(503) 397-4353
www.columbiahumane.org

CITY SEEKS FUNDING FOR SERVICES

Columbia City provides a range of services, including, but not limited to, police protection, street and storm water maintenance, building inspection, planning, administrative, municipal court, park and library services. Volunteers help the City provide many of these services to the community. For years these services have been provided to the citizens of Columbia City at a tax rate that is significantly lower than other cities within the County, as shown in the graph below:



Note: The City of Prescott (population 60) has been left out of the comparison.

Of the cities shown above, Clatskanie, Rainier and Vernonia are very close in population (1735, 1825 and 2370 respectively) to Columbia City's population of 1990. Under their permanent tax rates, Clatskanie levies \$362.77 per capita, Rainier levies \$567.10 per capita, and Vernonia levies \$259.61 per capita, while Columbia City levies \$86.69 per capita.

Recent financial projections show that Columbia City will need to reduce service levels by July 2011 unless additional resources are secured. The City Council has identified police protection and street/storm water maintenance as critical services that are seriously under-funded.

Police Protection Services:

The amount of tax revenue generated by the City's existing permanent tax rate falls short of funding a Police Department staffed by two paid full-time equivalents (FTEs) and volunteer police reserves. Expenses associated with police protection services have exceeded tax revenues since fiscal year 2004-05.

In 1992 Columbia City voters approved a tax base of \$67,574. With the passage of Ballot Measure 50 in 1997, the tax base transitioned to a permanent tax rate of \$1.1346 per thousand - the lowest permanent property tax rate of any City within Columbia County, with the exception of Prescott (estimated population - 60). Columbia City is primarily a bedroom community. The greatest majority of tax revenue comes from homeowners. There are few taxable commercial and industrial developments within the City.

Street System Maintenance:

Revenue from state highway tax falls short of meeting the costs associated with basic street maintenance. Pavement preservation activities extend the life expectancy of street surfaces. In many areas, aging pavement is in need of crack sealing, seal coating, pavement overlay, or other restoration work, and potholes and sinkholes are in need of repair. These pavement preservation measures help to protect the original investment that went into the development of the street system.

Storm Water System Maintenance:

The City has no identified revenue source for storm water system maintenance activities. The City's storm water system consists of drainage swales, dry wells, storm pipe and open bar ditches. The system requires routine maintenance. In addition, the City must pursue compliance with Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) rules and regulations for dry wells. In order to comply, the dry wells must be approved through DEQ rule authorization or a Water Pollution Control Facility Permit.

Council pursues support for funding:

The City Council may place a measure on the ballot to request voter approval of a three-year levy for police protection services, street system maintenance, and storm water system maintenance. The tax levy currently under consideration is a three-year levy of \$1.10 per \$1,000 of assessed value. This amount would cost a homeowner with a home assessed for \$200,000 an additional \$220 a year for three years.

Of the proposed \$1.10 tax rate, \$0.67 would be used for police protection, \$0.23 for street maintenance, and \$0.20 for storm system maintenance. The Council will solicit public input about the three-year levy proposal during the next few months through town hall meetings and citizen surveys.

PLANNING COMMISSION NEWS

The Planning Commission will hold a public hearing during their meeting on Tuesday, April 13, 2010 at 7 p.m. to consider an application to expand the urban growth boundary by approximately six acres, annex the property into the City, re-zone the property to R-1 low density residential, and create four single family lots with approval of a variance to minimum street frontage. The property owners, Wayne and Judith Weigandt, have submitted the application for property described as Tax Lots 200 and 417, Columbia County Assessor Map 5128 and Tax Lot 200, Columbia County Assessor Map 5121-032. The property is generally located at 3505 Sixth Street and at the west end of Yakima Court.

A second public hearing will be held during the same meeting regarding an updated population forecast and related amendments to the Comprehensive Plan.

The meeting will be held in the Council Chambers at City Hall. Interested parties may attend the public hearings or submit comments in writing prior to the hearings. Copies of all related documents are available for review at City Hall. The staff report can be reviewed at City Hall after April 6, 2010.

THE VALUE OF VOLUNTEERS

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

Margaret Mead

Dedicated volunteers contributed more than 1600 hours to the City last year, helping the City deliver the following services to your community:

- ❖ Staffing the library - 887 hours
- ❖ Police Reserve Officer services - 105 hours
- ❖ Preparing utility bills and newsletters for mailing - 164 hours
- ❖ Staffing the annual Spring Clean Up event - 26 hours
- ❖ Assisting with park and landscape maintenance - 74 hours
- ❖ Staffing the annual Celebration - 48 hours
- ❖ Serving on Councils, Commissions and Committees - 337 hours

The contributions our volunteers make to the City are invaluable and extremely appreciated, and we are so very grateful for their community service.

We sincerely regret the recent loss of William (Bill) H. Jackson. Bill actively served on the Columbia City Planning Commission since his appointment in February 2009. His service to the City and its citizens was greatly appreciated, and we extend our heartfelt sympathy to his family.

CODE ENFORCEMENT REMINDERS

Citizens should be aware of the following regulations and report violators to the City Hall.

Political signs: Political signs may be displayed no sooner than 45 days prior to an election, and must be removed within 15 days of election. For the May 18 Primary Election, signs may be displayed as early as Saturday, April 3, and must be removed by Wednesday, June 2.

Pet waste: Pet owners must pick up after their pets. This has been an ongoing problem throughout the City, especially along the bike path.

Keep grass and weeds cut: Between April 15th and September 30th weeds and grass cannot exceed 10 inches in height within the City limits.

Maintain sidewalks: Owners of property abutting a sidewalk are responsible for maintaining the sidewalk in good repair and safe condition at all times.

Spring Clean-Up
April 24 - 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Volunteers Needed!

Please call City Hall (503) 397-4010
to volunteer!

THANK YOU

We'd like to extend a very special "thank you" to:

- Judy Anderson, Karin Bates, Jean Carulli, Gloria Chinell, Nell Harrison, Dolores Heinz Gladys Riahi and Phyllis Rowley for helping with the utility billing and newsletters in March.
- Marian Calnon working in the flowers beds around City Hall.
- ODOT for hauling off the piles of stumps from the corner of "I" Street and Hwy 30.

POLICE ACTIVITY REPORT
February - March 2010

After input from several citizens, this month's police activity report looks a bit different from last month's. Although it still contains the "snap shot" information we will also include specific calls of interest for you. Please feel free to contact me, or any of your outstanding police officers, with any feedback or further questions that you may have.



Stay safe,
Chief Michael S. McGlothlin

Your police officers answered 379 calls for service during the past reporting period. These activities decreased from 453 calls for service during the previous month. Although many of these calls were self-initiated by officers of this department, we have also summarized below both significant community policing and criminal investigations that we have conducted.

Community Policing Activity:

- Residential security checks: 232
- Area Patrols: 8
- Foot Patrols: 14
- Assist the Public: 12
- Civil Situations: 1
- Radio Calls: 81
- Welfare Checks: 2
- Abandoned 911 Calls: 1
- Animal Complaints: 1

Criminal Activity:

- Domestic Disturbances: 1
- Sex Crimes: 1
- Warrant Services: 4
- Harassment: 1
- Theft from Motor Vehicles: 16
- Investigative Follow Up's: 6
- Suspicious Circumstances, People and Vehicles: 5
- Theft Calls: 1
- Traffic Complaints: 1
- Traffic Stops: 37
- Violation of Restraining Order: 1

Calls of Interest:

1. Suspicious Person at 175 S. Columbia River Highway on 02/02/2010 – Person checked out OK.

2. Suspicious Person at Harvard Park/3025 Sixth Street on 02/07/2010 – Person checked out OK.
3. Suspicious Person at Sixth Street near Penn Street on 02/07/2010 – Person checked out OK.
4. Suspicious Person at Jim Bundy Memorial Park on 02/12/2010 – Person checked out OK.
5. Theft call at 3055 6th Place on 02/15/2010 – Case referred.
6. Suspicious Vehicle at Sixth Street near Calvin Street on 02/17/2010 – Vehicle checked out OK.
7. A total of 16 Thefts from Motor Vehicles throughout the City. These cases occurred during the early morning hours of 03/16/2010 and 03/22/2010. All of the vehicles were unlocked at the time of the crimes. With much hard work by your officers, and other officers from surrounding agencies, two suspects have been arrested for these crimes. The department is still investigating all of these cases and we will be coordinating with the reporting Victims for the return of all property that we are able to recover.

ANNUAL SPRING GARDEN FAIR

Don't miss the **Columbia County Master Gardener™ Association's** 15th annual fair on April 24th at St. Helens High School, 2375 Gable Road inside the Commons and outside in the courtyard. The sale starts at 9 a.m. and ends at 3 p.m. Admission and parking are free. Please carpool. No pets.

Certified Master Gardeners will offer over 7,100 tomatoes in over 45 varieties for only \$1.25 per plant. Come early for the best selection. We will also have certified members on hand to provide general gardening information at the education table and tomato-specific information at the tomato sale.

Raffle tickets will be sold for \$1.00 each and hourly prizes will be awarded. Raffle tickets are on sale now and can be purchased from many Columbia County Master Gardeners and at the OSU Extension Service in St. Helens. You don't need to be present to win.

Dozens of local vendors will offer annuals, trees, perennials, shrubs, trellises, garden art, vegetables, ceramics, herbs, containers, hanging baskets and more.

LIBRARY NEWS

Most of you know that the way our library works is a little different than most libraries. We rely on volunteer staff rather than mostly paid staff, and we don't have much of a new book budget. (We also don't charge any fees to use our library!) Instead, we rely on community members donating books that we either use in the library, or use for our book sales.

We have very reliable volunteers for Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. We only have two or three people who are regular volunteers for Saturdays - no one wants to give up all their Saturdays! If we had more Saturday volunteers, each volunteer could work one Saturday a month. So if you've thought about volunteering, we could really use you. Training takes about an hour, and then you can sign up for a Saturday (or other day!) that fits your schedule. It's a great way to meet others in the community, and to get some reading in (it's really an easy job!)

We have a good selection of best sellers in the library, but have held off purchasing some because we thought they would be donated. If you have read any of these books, and would like to donate your copy to the library, we would really appreciate them.

1. *Have a Little Faith* by Mitch Albom
2. *The 8th Confession* by James Patterson and Maxine Paetro
3. *The Lost City of Z* by David Grann
4. *Think Twice* by Lisa Scottoline
5. *Split Image* by Robert B. Parker

The Novel Quilters read Barbara Kingsolver's *Prodigal Summer* this round. We will reveal our quilts on Wednesday, April 21 at 6:30 p.m. at the library. Stop by and see the wonderful quilts that evening! We will choose our next book at the April meeting, so this would be a great time to join our group!

New at the Library...

Blonde Faith by Walter Mosley. I read *Blonde Faith* for our Mystery Book Club, as a black author. It is set on the streets of LA in the 1960s, and moves relentlessly along as Easy Rawlins searches for his closest friend, and tries to protect his family. The end left me hanging, not sure whether Easy will

return in a future book. I would definitely read more of his books.

Portland Noir is an anthology exploring the dark, rainy underbelly of one of America's most beautiful but enigmatic cities. You'll recognize the settings, and perhaps some of the background to the stories. The 16 stories here demonstrate that a little rain is never a deterrent to murder.

Staffed Library Hours:

Monday, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Wednesday, 4 p.m. – 8 p.m.
Thursday, 2 p.m. – 6 p.m.
Saturday, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Story Time:

11 a.m. every Monday

Friends of the Library Meeting:

Monday, April 12 - 7 p.m.

Novel Quilters Meeting:

Wednesday, April 21 – 7:30 p.m.

Mystery Book Group:

Wednesday, April 28 - 7 p.m.

205 "I" Street, PO Box 189

Columbia City OR 97018

(503) 366-8020

cclibrary@opusnet.com

<http://www.freewebs.com/cccomlibrary/index.htm>

WATER CONSERVATION TIP

Before planting, add compost or mulch to the garden. Compost absorbs water and fertilizes plants. Mulches also absorb water and prevent the spread of weeds.



REMINDER BIANNUAL BURN PERIOD

The biannual burn period will begin on **Saturday, April 3rd, and end on Sunday, April 18th**. The burn period is for yard debris only, burn barrels are prohibited and it must be a burn day. **Call (503) 397-4800 for burn day information before you burn. Burn permits are required prior to burning!** If you obtained a permit in the Fall of 2009 you may not need to get a new one - check the expiration date. Permits may be obtained at City Hall or at any Fire Station within the Columbia River Fire & Rescue District.

CHIEF'S CORNER

The Chief's Corner is a supplement to the Police blotter dedicated to providing specific information to you, the citizens of Columbia City by the Columbia City Police Department.

As many of you have heard, and some unfortunately experienced, we had a rash of thefts from vehicles during the early morning hours of 03/16/2010 and 03/22/2010. We had 16 of our citizens victimized during the crime spree. Although these cases are still under investigation, I am happy to report that the Rainier Police Department was able to arrest and charge two suspects in these cases. I am proud of the hard work and assistance your officers contributed towards these investigations, along with the assistance of the officers of the Rainier and Clatskanie Police Departments and the deputies of the Columbia County Sheriff's Office. Many man-hours were put into these investigations, along with quite a few sleepless nights for all of us.

As we wrap up these investigations we will be coordinating with the victims in order to return all property that we recover. One important lesson for us to learn from this is to be sure to lock your vehicles when you park them overnight. In each of our cases, the thieves targeted vehicles with unlocked doors. Also, please continue to look out for your neighbor, as a concerned neighbor is what broke this case wide open.

As we reported in previous newsletters, the police department has been awarded overtime grant monies for a traffic safety initiative concentrating on seatbelt usage. Since we began this grant in October of 2009 we have been able to show a voluntary seatbelt compliance rate of 97%!!! This is a 7% increase in voluntary usage since before the grant began. Keep buckling up!!!

We have received several complaints from citizens about speeding and traffic violations on our neighborhood streets. Remember that the speed limit in neighborhoods, unless otherwise posted, is 25 mph. Specific areas of complaints have included Second Street, Third Street, Sixth Street and Pacific Street. Extra police patrols will be continued in these areas.

Thanks and stay safe, Chief Michael S. McGlothlin

FOUND ITEM

A pair of men's glasses in a case were recently found on Hwy. 30 near "L" Street. Do they belong to you? If so, please contact (503) 397-4010.

HAZARDOUS WASTE DISPOSAL

The last Saturday of each month from 8 am to noon the Columbia County Transfer Station is open to accept hazardous waste materials. The Transfer Station is located at 1601 Railroad Avenue in St. Helens. The next Hazardous Waste Disposal event will occur on Saturday, April 24, 2010.

The County's HHW facility **accepts** the following:

- Pool and spa chemicals
- Pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, and poisons
- Thinners and solvents
- Household cleaners and disinfectants
- Art and hobby chemicals
- Aerosol spray chemicals
- Propane tanks and bottles
- Fluorescent lamps and ballasts
- PCB's
- Medical Sharps
- Gasoline/diesel
- Oil/Solvent based paint
- Batteries
- Used Oil
- Antifreeze
- Fireworks

Not accepted:

- Ø Radioactive materials
- Ø Household trash
- Ø Explosives
- Ø Bio Medical waste
- Ø Asbestos
- Ø Prescription/Over the Counter medications

MONTHLY MEETING AND EVENT CALENDAR - APRIL 2010

April 1 st	6:00 PM	Regular City Council Meeting at City Hall
April 3 rd	dawn	First day of open burning
April 8 th	7:00 PM	Municipal Court at City Hall
April 12 th	7:00 PM	Friends of the Library Meeting at the Library
April 13 th	7:00 PM	Planning Commission Meeting at City Hall
April 15 th	6:00 PM	Regular City Council Meeting at City Hall
April 18 th	dusk	Last day of open burning
April 20 th	5:00 PM	Parks Committee Meeting at City Hall
April 24 th	9:00 AM	Spring Clean Up Event at the Grade School