

COLUMBIA CITY NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2010

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

COUNCIL MODIFIES PROPOSED CHANGES TO WATER AND SEWER RATES

The City Council recently postponed action on changing the City's water and sewer rates after citizen input prompted an interest in the further study of rate structures. Following several weeks of further review and careful consideration, the City Council is moving towards approving the following water and sewer rate schedules:

Residential Customer within City limits of Columbia City:	Proposed Rates:
Water minimum charge - includes 100 c.f. of usage	\$30.75
For each additional c.f. of usage up to 500 c.f.	\$0.0050
For each additional c.f. of usage over 500 c.f. up to 1000 c.f.	\$0.0425
For each additional c.f. over 1000 c.f.	\$0.0475
Sewer minimum rate	\$24.50
Sewer usage fee for each c.f. of water used (applies during the months of October through May; does not apply June through September)	\$0.0065

The proposed rate structures are more usage-based and will help promote conservation. The customers that use more water also tend to create more sewer. Therefore, those customers will pay more for sewer than customers that use less water. The sewer usage fee will not apply during the months of June, July, August or September. The following table shows the effect the proposed water and sewer rates will have on billings at various levels of water usage:

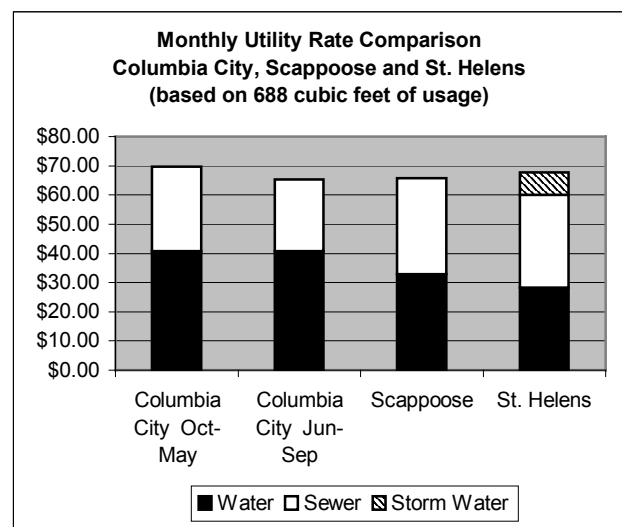
Monthly Water Usage	Proposed Water Rate	Current Water Rate	Proposed Sewer Rate (Oct-May)	Proposed Sewer Rate (Jun-Sep)	Current Sewer Rate
230 c.f.	31.40	30.75	26.00	24.50	\$24.15
440 c.f.	32.45	30.75	27.36	24.50	\$24.15
690 c.f.	40.83	38.25	28.99	24.50	\$24.15
920 c.f.	50.80	49.50	30.48	24.50	\$24.15
1350 c.f.	70.63	67.50	33.28	24.50	\$24.15
1590 c.f.	82.03	76.50	34.84	24.50	\$24.15

These rate increases are needed to generate additional revenue to cover recent rate hikes imposed by the City of St. Helens on wholesale water rates and sewer treatment fees, and to help pay for necessary system maintenance, repairs and improvements. The rates for commercial, industrial and outside City water and sewer users are scheduled to change in similar proportions. The Council will consider approving the rate increases during their March 4, 2010 meeting. If approved, the rates may be reflected on the March 26, 2010 billings.

HOW DO OUR UTILITY RATES COMPARE?

A recent rate study compiled by the League of Oregon Cities provides water, sewer and storm utility rates for 108 cities throughout the state. According to the study, a single-family residence using 688 cubic feet of water per month pays between \$9.81 and \$68.73 per month for water, between \$6.96 and \$68.00 for sewer, and up to \$11.77 for storm water.

If approved, the proposed water and sewer charges previously described will compare with the rates charged by the cities of Scappoose and St. Helens as shown in the chart below.

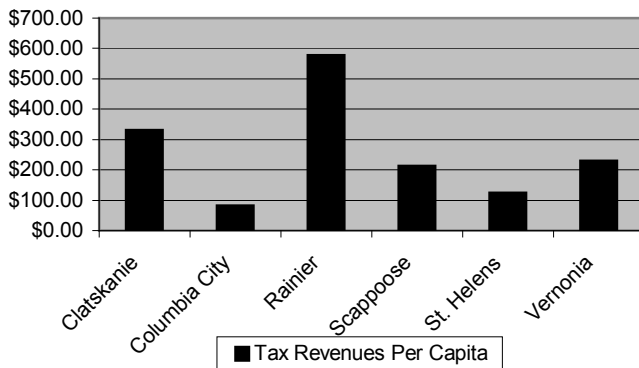


CITY CUTS BACK & SEEKS FUNDING

The City Council met recently in a special workshop session to review current and projected financial information, and to review cost-reduction recommendations that included a 14% reduction in City staff. Resources continue to decline while many costs continue to increase, making it more and more difficult for the City to provide basic services to the community with the resources that are available.

Columbia City is primarily a bedroom community, so the majority of our property tax revenue comes from homeowners. In addition, because the Port of St. Helens owns the industrial land in Columbia City, all of the industrial land within the City is exempt from property taxes. The comparison of city property tax collections per capita within the County in 2009-10 is as follows:

**Taxes Levied Per Capita
by Columbia County Cities**

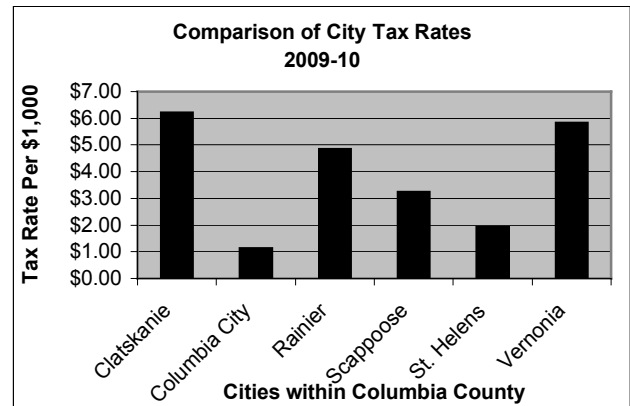


*Note: The City of Prescott (population 60) has been left out of the comparison.

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 \$629,408, Rainier levies \$1,034,957, and Vernonia levies \$615,269, compared to Columbia City's levy of \$172,512.

For years Columbia City has provided services to the citizens of Columbia City at a tax rate that is significantly lower than other cities within the County. The services the City provides include, but are not limited to, police protection, street and storm water maintenance, building inspection, planning, administrative, municipal court, park and library services. The City also provides water and sewer utility services, which

are self-supporting through user rates. Volunteers help us provide many of these services to our community.



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

The City currently spends in excess of \$200,000 per year for police protection services, and receives just over \$160,000 a year from the City's permanent tax rate. Paid staff in the Police Department is equal to just two full-time equivalents (approximately 350 hours per month). Volunteer reserve officers supplement the paid staff - sometimes working in excess of 90 hours per month.

The City currently spends approximately \$80,000 per year maintaining the City's street and storm water systems. This year the City expects to receive about \$76,000 in State Highway tax revenues, and the City has no revenue source for storm water maintenance. Periodically the City receives grant funds that are used for street development and pavement overlay projects.

The City Council is currently establishing goals and objectives for fiscal year 2010-11. One of the main goals currently under consideration is the pursuit of a voter-approved three-year levy for police and streets. The Council will consider taking action to adopt the 2010-11 goals and objectives during their March 4 City Council meeting. Citizen participation and input during the meetings is always welcomed.

HOW TO SHELTER IN PLACE DURING A RADIATION OR CHEMICAL EMERGENCY

What Shelter-in-Place Means: One of the instructions you may be given in an emergency where hazardous materials may have been released into the atmosphere is to shelter-in-place. This is a precaution aimed to keep you safe and at times when an evacuation would be more risky. (This is not the same thing as going to a shelter in case of a storm.) Shelter-in-place means selecting a small, interior room, with no or few windows, and taking refuge there. It does not mean sealing off your entire home or office building.

Why You Might Need to Shelter-in-Place: Chemical, biological or radiological contaminants may be released accidentally, by a truck or facility, or intentionally by a terrorist. Should this occur, information will be provided by local authorities by television and radio stations or by telephone call through the Columbia Alert Network (CAN) on how to protect you and your family. The important thing is for you to follow the instructions of local authorities and know what to do if they advise you to shelter-in-place and keep a television and radio on to receive further information and instructions.

How to Shelter-in-Place

At Home:

- Close and lock all windows and exterior doors.
- If you are told there is danger of explosion, close the window shades, blinds or curtains.
- Turn off all fans, heating and air conditioning systems.
- Close the fireplace damper.
- Get your family disaster supplies kit and make sure the radio is working.
- Go to an interior room without windows that's above ground level. In the case of a chemical threat, an above-ground location is preferable because some chemicals are heavier than air, and may seep into basements even if the windows are closed.



- Bring your pets with you, and be sure to bring additional food and water supplies for them.
- It is ideal to have a hard-wired telephone in the room you select. Call your emergency contact and have the phone available if you need to report a life-threatening condition.
- If possible, you may want to use duct tape and plastic sheeting (heavier than food wrap) to seal any large cracks around the door and any vents into the room. This is only an extra precaution.
- Keep listening to your radio or television until you are told all is safe or you are told to evacuate. Local officials may call for evacuation in specific areas at greatest risk in your community.

In Your Vehicle:

If you are driving a vehicle and hear advice to “shelter-in-place” on the radio, take these steps:



- If you are very close to home, your office or a public building, go there immediately and go inside. Follow the shelter-in-place recommendations for the place you pick described above.
- If you are unable to get to a home or building quickly and safely, then pull over to the side of the road. Stop your vehicle in the safest place possible. If it is sunny outside, it is preferable to stop under a bridge or in a shady spot, to avoid being overheated.
- Turn off the engine.
- Close windows and vents.
- Listen to the radio regularly for updated advice and instructions.
- Stay where you are until you are told it is safe to get back on the road. Be aware that some roads may be closed or traffic detoured. Follow the directions of law enforcement officials.

Local officials on the scene are the best source of information for your particular situation. Following their instructions during and after emergencies regarding sheltering, food, water and clean up methods is your safest choice.

For more information on this or other emergency preparedness needs, go to www.fema.gov/plan.

CHIEF'S CORNER

Columbia City Police Department Supporting Oregon's Three Flags Traffic Blitz Campaign

The Columbia City Police Department conducted increased traffic safety patrols along Hwy. 30 February 10th through February 21st. The focus of this campaign was to ensure that motorists were properly using their seat belts along with their child safety and booster seats.

The lack of seat belt use was a major factor in half of all Oregon motor vehicle occupant deaths last year. One in three children under the age of eight who were killed or injured were using adult belt systems or were totally unrestrained. Speeding and driver impairment were the other most common causes of injury crashes.



Oregon's Three Flags Campaign is a federally funded enforcement program, administered by ODOT through the Oregon Association of Chiefs of Police, the Oregon State Sheriffs Association, and the OSP Patrol Division. The campaign is committed to reducing traffic crash injuries and deaths by promoting safety belt and child restraint use and discouraging speeding and impaired driving.

According to the US Department of Transportation, safety belt and child restraint use is the single most effective way to protect people and reduce fatalities in motor vehicle crashes. Please remember to buckle up, watch your speed, and never drive while under the influence of intoxicants!

Columbia City Police Department Has a New Look

As many may have already recognized, our department has a new police vehicle. The new vehicle, a 2010 Chevrolet Tahoe 4WD, will enable our officers to respond to a wide variety of incidents regardless of terrain and weather conditions. In the past, winter storm conditions have hampered our ability to safely and efficiently respond to our citizens in emergency situations. With the upper half of our City being on a significant slope, snow and ice would force

officers to respond on foot once conditions became too dangerous.

The new vehicle's purchase was provided by a designated equipment reserve fund from which the City allocates \$7,000.00 per year for police vehicle replacement. The Tahoe replaced a 1999 Ford Crown Victoria sedan which, at almost 100,000 miles, had reached the end of its service life.

Most recognizable is our vehicle's new look. We have returned to a more traditional "black and white" color scheme, with reflective safety markings, in order to hallmark the re-birth of our organization, maintain compliance with administrative safety rules governing emergency vehicles, and to also increase our visibility within the community. The two remaining vehicles in our fleet will also be upgraded to show department continuity.

In addition, this month's police activity report looks a bit different but still contains the same information that our citizens have been provided in the past. Although it is condensed in format we hope that you still find the report helpful and informative. 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

LET'S CLEAN IT UP!

Did you know that the City's nuisance ordinance prohibits the outdoor storage of junk, rubbish, trash, and debris upon private property, alleys and streets?

Voluntary compliance is our most cost effective method of enforcement. Please be aware of and comply with the above regulations, and share this information with others. Please feel free to report violations to the Police Department by calling (503) 397-4010.

SPRING CLEAN UP EVENT COMING SOON!!

Mark your calendars!
April 24, 2010 - 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

A LOCAL SHOWCASE FOR TRILLIUM

From March through June, large-flowered trilliums bloom gracefully on the forest floor throughout Jim Bundy Memorial Park. The trillium has a large, often white, three-petaled flower above three broad leaves. Along with its three sepals, it's easy to see where trillium got its name. The plants are 8 - 18 inches high with a stem bearing a 2 - 4 inch flower. The white flowers turn pink with age. They grow in rich wooded areas, and trillium is often the first wildflower noticed by casual walkers as other spring wildflowers are much less apparent.



Trillium

Trillium flowers should never be picked. In fact, it is illegal to pick trilliums in Oregon, Washington, New York, Michigan and British Columbia. The three leaves below the flower are the plant's only food source and a picked trillium may die or take many years to recover. Trillium plants take 6 years to grow from seeds to flowers.

Trillium is one of many plants whose seeds are spread by ants and mice. Trillium seeds have a fleshy organ called an elaiosome that attracts ants. The ants take the seeds to their nest, where they eat the elaiosomes and put the seeds in their garbage, where they are protected until they germinate. They also get the added bonus of growing in a medium made richer by the ant garbage.

PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING

The Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, March 9, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers at City Hall. The purpose of the hearing is to receive written and oral testimony on an application for multiple variances. E&V Development LLC, has submitted the application for Tax Lots 5128-DA 2400 and 2401 and 5128-DB 100, 101, 103 and 104. The involved properties are located at 1645 Third Street, 1655 Third Street, 1705 Third Street, 1715 Third Street, 1725 Third Street and 1735 Third Street. All related documents are available for review at City Hall.

WATER CONSERVATION TIP

Make sure the dishwasher is full before you turn it on. For most dishwashers, you do not need to rinse the dishes first – just scrape them clean.



POLICE ACTIVITY REPORT

Your police officers answered 453 calls for service during the past reporting period. These activities increased from 385 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: 285
- Area Patrols: 10
- Foot Patrols: 8
- Assist the Public: 13
- Disabled Vehicles: 3
- Radio Calls: 74
- Welfare Checks: 2
- Abandoned 911 Calls: 2
- Animal Complaints: 2

Criminal Activity:

- Burglary: 1
- Criminal Mischief: 1
- Fraud: 1
- Juvenile Abuse: 2
- Noise Complaints: 1
- Investigative Follow Up's: 11
- Suspicious Circumstances, People and Vehicles: 15
- Threat Calls: 2
- Traffic Complaints: 1
- Traffic Stops: 37
- Violation of Restraining Order: 1

DAYLIGHT-SAVING TIME BEGINS



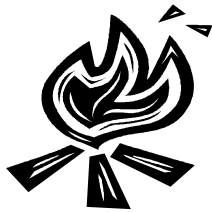
Daylight-saving time begins on the second Sunday in March. Mark your calendars to set your clocks ahead one hour on March 14th.

OPEN BURNING PERIOD FOR YARD DEBRIS BURNING PERMITS NOW REQUIRED

The next **biannual burn period will begin on Saturday, April 3rd and end on Sunday, April 18th**. The burn period is for yard debris only, and burn barrels are prohibited. Yard debris is lawn clippings, leaves, brush, trimmings, prunings, sawdust and wood scraps. It is **not** dirt, gravel, paper, plastic, metal, rocks, bricks, sod, or food waste.

Burn permits are required prior to burning!

Permits may be obtained at City Hall or at any Fire Station within the Columbia River Fire & Rescue District and they are valid for one year. Please remember you must call the "Burn Line" at (503) 397-4800 each day to see if it is a burn day.



You must follow these basic rules for proper open burning:

- ❑ You must have a garden hose, or a shovel and a 5-gallon bucket of water at all times, and the fire must **NOT** be left unattended at any time until out.
- ❑ Yard and garden trimmings must be cut and piled no larger than 6 feet wide by 4 feet high.
- ❑ The ground must be cleared not less than 10 feet around the burning area. There must be a separation of 50 feet between the burn pile and any structure, trees, vehicle or property line if the burn pile is greater than 3 feet in diameter; and a 25 foot separation if the burn pile is less than 3 feet in diameter.
- ❑ The fire must not adversely affect neighbors (smoke).
- ❑ It must be daylight hours during a designated burn day.

Have questions? Please call Bill Goodwin, Fire Marshall, at (503) 397-2990 ext. 17.

THANK YOU

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

- Karin Bates, Jean Carulli, Gloria Chinell, Kathie Fellows, Jean Lord Gladys Riahi and Debbie Virts for helping with the utility billing and newsletters in January.
- Marian Calnon for weeding the flower beds around City Hall.

CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING

The City Council will hold a public hearing on March 18, 2010, at 7:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the City Hall, 1840 Second Street, Columbia City, Oregon. The purpose of the hearing is to gather public testimony relating to proposed changes to the training assessment levied by the Columbia City Municipal Court upon fines or bail forfeitures. Information about the proposed fee changes is available for public inspection at the City Hall, Monday through Friday, during regular business hours. Written input will be accepted prior to the hearing and written and oral input will be accepted during the public hearing.

FREE COMMUNITY HEALTH FAIR

Attend the Community Health Fair Event on Friday, March 12, 2010, at the St. Helens Middle School from 3 to 7 PM. All are welcome! Free health screenings, including:

- Diet assessment
- Body fat, BMI, height & weight
- Blood pressure screening
- Cholesterol & glucose testing

Come learn about your health while contributing to science! For more information: www.octri.org/letsgethealthy.



RELAY FOR LIFE – BUNCO NIGHT

Columbia River Auto Glass will be sponsoring a Bunco Night March 12, 2010, starting at 7:00 p.m. to support the American Cancer Society Relay for Life. The cost is \$10 per person and will be held at the Best Western Oak Meadows Inn. The night will include playing Bunco, meeting new people, a chance to enter drawings for prizes and a bake sale of goodies. Who know helping the fight against cancer could be so fun! Signup early by calling (503) 438-4016 or emailing tricia@columbiariverautoglass.com.



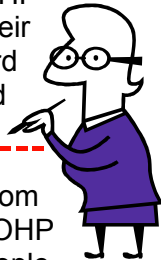
NEW OHP STANDARD RESERVATION LIST IS OPEN FOR LOW-INCOME ADULTS

The Oregon Health Plan (OHP) provides health care coverage for low-income Oregonians through programs administered by the Department of Human Services (DHS). Currently, more than 450,000 people receive health care coverage through the Oregon Health Plan each month. OHP clients are assigned to a benefits package based on several eligibility factors. OHP Standard is one of the benefit packages for low-income adults.

OHP Standard provides coverage for medical services similar to private insurance. Some clients with OHP Standard receive coverage at no cost while those with higher incomes must pay small monthly premiums.

Previously closed to new enrollment due to budget restrictions, the Oregon legislature approved the expansion of OHP Standard to cover more people through a tax paid by Oregon hospitals and matching federal dollars. Unfortunately, there is still not enough money to cover all the people who need health care coverage and qualify for OHP Standard. Therefore, DHS is using a reservation list for people who are interested in applying for OHP Standard.

People interested in applying for OHP Standard benefits must place their names on the OHP Standard reservation list, which opened November 1, 2009.



DHS will randomly select names from the list on a regular basis and mail OHP Standard applications to those people. The number of names selected will depend on the amount of funding available for OHP Standard.

Who qualifies for OHP Standard?

People who qualify for OHP Standard are Oregon residents with limited income who are:

- Ages 19 through 64;
- Not pregnant; and
- Not receiving Medicare.

Getting on the reservation list is easy.

Individuals can put their own names on the list or have someone do it for them, using one of the following methods:

- Sign up at www.oregon.gov/DHS/open/;
- Mail or fax a request to DHS. Forms are available at all DHS/AAA offices, county health departments and most hospitals and clinics; or
- Call 1-800-699-9075, or 711 (TTY) Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

QUILT RAFFLE

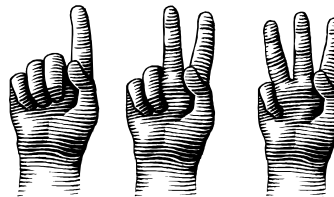
Show your support of the Library and purchase your raffle tickets now to win this quilt! All of the proceeds from this raffle will go to the Library.



Tickets are just \$1.00 each or \$5.00 for six. A total of 1,500 tickets are available for sale. The drawing will be held in the Community Hall during the 2010 Columbia City Celebration on Saturday, September 11, 2010 at 1:00 p.m. The quilt will be displayed, and tickets may be purchased, at City Hall and the Library.

STAND UP, BE COUNTED!

Census Day is April 1, 2010 and the questionnaire is a count of everyone living in the United States. Remember, achieving a complete and accurate 2010 Census is in our hands. In 2010, the U.S. Census Bureau will define who we are as a nation. The form is short, your answers are protected, and many benefits rely upon an accurate count. Help your community receive the funds it requires.



Ensure that everyone is counted.

LIBRARY NEWS

The St. Helens Public Library is doing a program over spring break focusing on *City of Ember* by Jeanne DuPrau. There will be a young adult book discussion, and a scavenger hunt Saturday at 3:00. Popcorn and a movie will be shown on three different nights. Kids will be bringing home information from school, and we will have a brochure at the library with dates and times. Our library has a copy of *City of Ember* and also *The People of Sparks*, the second book in the series. We also have an unrelated book by her, *Car Trouble*.

The Mystery Book Club read mysteries with animals in them last month. Most of those were fairly light-hearted mysteries. The most highly recommended was *The Darkest Evening of the Year* by Dean Koontz, starring a golden retriever with special abilities. The library has it in hardcover and audiobook. Next month we will be reading books by black mystery authors.

Thanks for everyone's support at the book sale! Keep those books coming in to the library, we can always use them! And keep checking out books – the more you have at home, the more we can fit on the shelves!

New at the Library...

Halting State by Charles Stross centers around a virtual reality bank robbery. *Halting State* is a clear and logical extrapolation of current technology pushed a mere decade into the future. *Halting State* is a police procedural first and foremost. A bank located within a Massive(ly) multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG) has been robbed by a band of orcs and one very nasty fire breathing dragon. Even a virtual reality bank has items of value in the real world, and real world detectives get drawn into the action. *Halting State* was nominated for both the Hugo and Locus Awards in 2008.

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, 3/8/10 - 7 p.m.

Novel Quilters Meeting:

No meeting for March, Quilt reveal April 21st

Mystery Book Group:

Wednesday, 3/31/10 - 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>

STREET PROJECT STARTS SOON

Federal stimulus funds under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) will be put to use in Columbia City during the next few months when pavement restoration work begins on portions of Sixth and "A" Streets.

In preparation of the project, the Public Works crew will be replacing old steel water service lines on Sixth Street between "A" and Penn Streets, and on "E" Street between Sixth Street and Highway 30 during the next few weeks.

Baker Rock Resources will perform the street construction and pavement work. The project is funded entirely by grant funds - \$94,000 from ARRA funding, and \$25,000 from the 2010 Special City Allotment Program.

Residents can expect intermittent lane closures or detours during the project.

MONTHLY MEETING AND EVENT CALENDAR - MARCH 2010

March 4 th	7:30 p.m.	Regular City Council Meeting at City Hall
March 8 th	7:00 p.m.	Friends of the Library Meeting in the Library
March 9 th	7:00 p.m.	Planning Commission Meeting at City Hall
March 11 th	7:00 p.m.	Municipal Court at City Hall
March 16 th	5:00 p.m.	Parks Committee Meeting at City Hall
March 18 th	7:30 p.m.	Regular City Council Meeting at City Hall

