

# NEWSLETTER

Issue 208 \* April 2015

## Police tackle traffic problems by the numbers

In 2014, there were 1,106 traffic crashes in Grants Pass. The Public Safety Department is working to reduce that number in 2015 by using a “data-driven” strategy.

Traffic stops and crashes are linked. The more traffic stops police make, the fewer crashes occur.

Our Public Safety Department now is using the “Data-Driven Approach to Crime and Traffic Safety” here in Grants Pass.

Data from 2014 shows most crashes occurred between 7 a.m. and 9 p.m. Monday through Friday. Officers wrote the most traffic tickets between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Many crashes (485) occurred at intersections.

Not surprisingly, these times coincide with the morning and evening commutes. Sunday has the lowest



**Police Officers Dennis Burge and Scott Williams are the Grants Pass Traffic Enforcement Team. In addition to their patrol duties, they train other officers in traffic enforcement.**

### Top Intersection Crashes in 2014

Grants Pass Pkwy. & NE F Street	15
Grants Pass Pkwy. & NE Beacon Drive	12
Grants Pass Pkwy. & SE M Street	11
Redwood Hwy. & Allen Creek Road	9
Grants Pass Parkway & Parkdale Drive	8
SE 7th Street & SE M Street	6
SE M Street & Grants Pass Pkwy.	5
Grants Pass Parkway & NE Terry Lane	5
NE Agness Ave. & Grants Pass Pkwy.	5
Grants Pass Pkwy. & E Park Street	5
NE 7th St. & NE Hillcrest Drive	5

number of tickets.

Using the crash and citation data, the Public Safety Department assigned its two-member traffic team to patrol during the busiest times. One officer works Monday through Thursday, the other works Wednesday through Saturday. Their time on the road also is staggered: 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., and 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

All patrol officers conduct traffic stops and investigate crashes. The traffic team supplies extra force to the patrols. Together, patrol and traffic team officers issued 3,055 traffic tickets last year.

Both traffic officers have completed rigorous motor officer training

and handle criminal cases as needed. Officer Dennis Burge also is a drug recognition expert, and Officer Scott Williams is a sniper with the department’s SWAT team.

The traffic team focuses their patrols on known crash locations and in school zones. They also answer hit-and-run calls, traffic complaints, and DUII investigations.

The traffic team also trains other patrol officers in traffic enforcement.

The data-driven approach comes from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Highly visible traffic enforcement has proven to deter traffic violations and other crime.

# Budget meetings for fiscal year 2015-16 start in May

One of the most important City duties is to create a budget each year before the fiscal year starts on July 1.

The process began in December with the gathering of public comment. At the City Council's goal-setting and planning session in January, Council reviews input from the public, advisory committees, and staff. The Council decides what City government should strive to accomplish in the coming year, and prioritizes those goals.

The next step is for the Budget Officer (City Man-

ager Aaron Cubic) to put together a proposed budget. The budget contains expenditures for City Operations (police, fire, water, sewer, streets, parks, planning, building inspections) and Capital construction projects. The budget divides up the City's available funds to best meet the levels of service set by the City Council, and for capital construction projects.

Then comes the budget review process by the Budget Committee, made up of the eight City Councilors and eight public lay members. The Budget Committee must review and approve the budget before Council formally adopts the budget. The public is invited to the meetings, which begin at 6 p.m. May 5 in the Council chambers.

The Council conducts a budget hearing in June, and adopts a budget before the fiscal year starts on July 1.

**Who:** City Budget Committee

**What:** City budget meetings

**When:** 6 p.m. May 5, 7, 12, 14

**Where:** City Council Chambers

**Information:** 541-450-6000 or [www.grantspassoregon.gov/210](http://www.grantspassoregon.gov/210)

## Grants Pass' commitment to urban forest pays off in many ways

Grants Pass has been named a "Tree City USA" for the 27th year, thanks to residents who cherish and protect our community forest.

The Tree City program recognizes a city for its commitment to community forestry. It is sponsored by the National Arbor Day Foundation, in cooperation with the National Association of State Foresters and the USDA Forest Service.

Forests make cities more livable. Trees clean the air, provide shade (and reduce air conditioning costs), soften the harshness of streets and buildings, and improve property values.

Arbor Day celebrations are one of the requirements of being a Tree City USA. Grants Pass plants a ceremonial and other trees during the first week in April. The City also sponsors these tree-planting programs:

- **The Memorial Tree Program** allows residents to donate a tree to be planned in a Memorial Grove inside a city park to honor an individual. A ceremony is held during Arbor Week (the first week of April) to honor those individuals. For a \$100 donation, the City will buy and plant the tree. The



Above, Public Works Director Terry Haugen and Assistant City Manager David Reeves took part in last year's Arbor Day ceremony. This year, the Tree Committee selected a Katsura tree for Riverside Park. Its leaves emerge reddish purple, change to blue-green, and turn an apricot color in fall.

application is available on the City website, or by calling 541-450-6060.

- **The Hazardous Tree Program** is for trees located in the City

right-of-way (along sidewalks and streets). The City provides a free inspection of the tree to determine if it is hazardous. Then the property owner may apply for a free permit to remove a tree in the right-of-way. The City will cover up to 50 percent of the cost of: removal of the hazardous tree, stump grinding, and replacement of the tree with an approved street tree. The permit application and a list of the approved trees is available on the City website, or by calling 541-450-6060.

- **The Tree Canopy Program** is available to 50 city residents each year. Applicants may purchase a tree and have it planted in their front yard for \$50.00. Registration for the canopy program begins in the fall. The trees are planted in February. Applicants may choose between such trees as: Scarlet Sentinel Maple, October Glory Maple, Eastern Redbud and Crape Myrtle. To participate in the next planting cycle, please contact the Parks and Recreation Office at 541-471-6435, or at [grantspassrecreation@gmail.com](mailto:grantspassrecreation@gmail.com).

## City offers break on sidewalk repairs

Hazardous sidewalks are accidents waiting to happen, leaving a property owner in jeopardy of liability if a pedestrian is injured.

Many property owners are surprised to learn that maintenance of the sidewalks along their property is their responsibility. (City of Grants Pass Municipal Code, Section 6.34.080)

To help property owners with unexpected sidewalk repairs, the City offers a Hazardous Sidewalk Repair Program.

When the Street Maintenance Division determines that a sidewalk is hazardous, it will send a notice to the property owner. The notice explains why the sidewalk must be repaired, the time allowed for the

repair, information about permits, and general information on the City's Hazardous Repair Sidewalk Program.

If the property owner makes all arrangements for the repairs, he or she may pay the bills in full and request reimbursement from the city for 50 percent of the cost.

If the City makes the repair arrangements, the property owner must sign a "Sidewalk Removal and Replacement Program Agreement" and agree to:

- Split the cost and pay their half directly to the contractor, or
- Split the cost and pay their half directly to the City, or
- Pay their half in monthly installments to the City.



**Tree roots lifted this sidewalk, creating a trip hazard.**

More information about the Hazardous Sidewalk Repair Program is online at [www.grantspassoregon.gov/290/Hazardous-Sidewalk-Repair-Program](http://www.grantspassoregon.gov/290/Hazardous-Sidewalk-Repair-Program).

If you have questions, please contact Streets Superintendent Steve Scrivener at 541-450-6125, or [sscrivner@grantspassoregon.gov](mailto:sscrivner@grantspassoregon.gov).

## Need to make room for more family?

Homeowners often like to add onto their house to make room for aging parents or growing teenagers. Homeowners also like to add a small building on their lot to increase their income.

The first step is to talk to the staff at the City Parks and Community Development Department about "Accessory Dwelling Units." (ADU).

An ADU is a structure that is secondary to the main home. In addition to creating more room and income, accessory dwellings also help meet long-term housing needs while reducing growth into rural areas.

As part of its growth management planning, the City recently adopted new standards to authorize ADUs. The new standards help maintain neighborhood compatibility by addressing the size, location, and appearance of an accessory dwelling.

One accessory dwelling is permitted per lot. An accessory dwelling can be attached to the main home or be a separate structure. It can be a conversion of existing space, or new construction.

If you would like more information, please call the Parks and Community Development Department at 541-450-6060.



### Steps to add an Accessory Dwelling Unit

- Check any private covenants for your property for private restrictions or requirements.
- Review the city standards before planning an accessory dwelling.
- Make sure your construction or conversion plans meet residential building codes.
- Include applicable permit fees and system development charges in your budget.
- Apply for a building permit.

# New councilor ready for challenges facing city

The City Council's No. 1 goal is public safety. However, the shortage of beds in the County jail makes that goal extra challenging.

"The announcement of new federal funds for the County has made the (county public safety levy) even more scrambled than it was," said city Councilor Dennis Roler. "What is (the federal money) going to allow the County to do?"

That puzzle is just one of major challenges facing the Council. The other is the "\$70 million question" on how to replace the water filtration plant and expand the wastewater treatment plant. Replacing the 84-year-old water plant will cost around \$50 million. Expanding the 53-year-old wastewater plant will cost about \$20 million. A solution and final price tag won't be known for some time.

"When the decisions need to be made, we want to be sure we have explored all alternatives," Roler said. "No one on the council wants to vote (for expensive projects), but something has to be done."

Roler decided to run for Council after retiring 15 months ago. He wanted to do more volunteering, and he already knew a lot about the issues from 27 years at the Daily Courier.

One thing Roler didn't expect was frustration over open meetings laws.

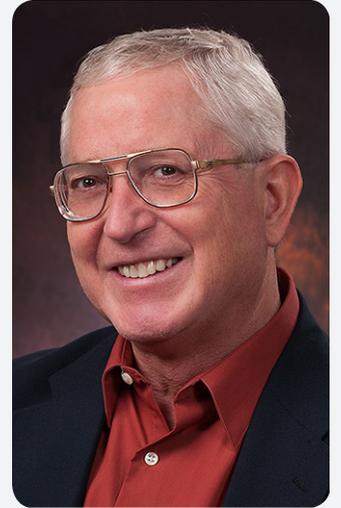
## City Councilor Dennis Roler

**Background:** Dennis was born and raised in Albany, Ore. He worked at the Daily Courier from 1987 through 2013. During his 40 years as a journalist, Dennis also worked in Roseburg, Ore., Pennsylvania, Nevada, and California.

**Education:** Bachelor's degree in liberal studies from Oregon State University, and a master's degree in communications/newspapers from Syracuse University, N.Y.

**Family:** Dennis is married to Shawn, a specialist for Josephine County Circuit Court. They have a daughter, Cory, who is a teacher in Rogue River.

**Hobbies:** Racquetball, traveling, volunteering, including chairing this year's Duck Derby.



"They are good. They make us more transparent," Roler said. However, the Council has limited time at meetings to discuss complicated subjects.

"Some of your colleagues know more about a subject than you do," he explained. "It would be nice to talk with them more about it." (Laws prohibit the councilors from meeting on their own if more than half of them are present.)

Grants Pass has a lot going for it, Roler said: recreation, lakes, rivers, and nearby skiing and the coast. The city's location provides easy access to I-5 and the airport, which is important to businesses, residents and tourists. Having a well-known reputation for being friendly is an asset, too.

Residents also have shown they want solid police and fire protection, as well as amenities such as the pedestrian bridge and public art. "They know they have to invest in their community," Roler said. And "I know they want (the cost) to be reasonable."

On the other hand, we have higher than average unemployment. "Part of that is the decline of the forest industry," he said. "But we've been saved by the growth of the medical community."

Development of scarce industrial land is risky. The City and County are starting the process to create an economic strategic plan. "Maybe there will be an area where we can work together on things like that," Roler said.



## Your Grants Pass City Government

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City Council meetings begin at 6 p.m. on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of every month at the Council Chambers, 101 NW "A" Street. The meetings are televised on Cable Channel 183 and posted on-line at [www.grantspassoregon.gov](http://www.grantspassoregon.gov). City Councilors and staff talk about local issues on radio station KAJO (1270 AM) at 9:30 a.m. on the 1st and 2nd Tuesday of every month.