

City

SOURCE

THE CITIZEN'S SOURCE OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE CITY OF ASHLAND

Having Your Say

Providing public input can occur in many different ways.

Public hearings (the public's opportunity to have a say) are required by State law when the issue is about land use such as zoning, conditional uses, subdivisions and commercial development. Public hearings are also required when the issue involves Federal funds, the distribution of State funds, setting annual budgets, etc.



The Public Meeting Law requires that all City Council meetings, Commission and Committee meetings are open to the public — but the law doesn't always require that the public be permitted to speak.

(See *Having Your Say*, Page 2)

Left Arrow Turn Signals

The Oregon Department of Transportation and several other jurisdictions are among some of the first in the United States to implement a new flashing yellow arrow left turn signal light at intersections, where in the past, circular green signal lights were used. Both types of signal lights direct motorists to turn left after yielding to oncoming traffic. The free arrow provides a protected left turn from oncoming traffic while the flashing yellow arrow indicates left turning traffic must first yield to oncoming traffic and pedestrians before turning. The steady yellow arrow and steady red arrow work the same as they always have. ▼

On-line Survey

The city is interested in improving the usability of the city's website and is gathering information about how Ashland citizens, the end users, navigate the site, the information users look for and the ease of accessibility.

Website users are encouraged to take the on-line survey at www.ashland.or.us. Click on *What do you Think* on the left-hand column of the homepage. Towards the end of the survey, you will have an opportunity to volunteer to participate in a focus group to be held in February. At that gathering, participants will be asked to perform a series of tasks using the current site. Recorders will observe the method that the participants use to navigate in order to complete the task and the ease of usability to complete the task.

The city's website is designed to provide Ashland citizens easy access to city information. The information gathered from the survey and from the focus group will help the city's continued effort to make the site even better.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to complete the on-line survey. ▼



Having Your Say

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Nevertheless, the Ashland City Council always allows and encourages the public to speak on issues at every City Council meeting. The City of Ashland numerous commissions and committees also encourage public input during their regularly scheduled meetings. A public forum section at each Council meeting enables citizens to discuss issues that are not on the agenda.

Many issues brought to the Council, for their review and final approval, come from one of more than 22 committees, commissions, boards or ad hoc committees. Often these groups have already conducted public meetings, solic-

ited public comment and then shaped their recommendation for the City Council based on the input gathered. Therefore, most issues have had significant public input prior to being addressed by the Council. It is much easier for the public to help focus these decisions (i.e., have your say) by getting involved in the process as early as possible.

How Does the Public Find Out About These Issues?

The City gets the word out in many ways. Information is included in this newsletter, which is mailed with the utility bills. Information is posted on the City's Web site and it also appears on RVTV channel 30. Special projects often have flyers that are

printed and placed in brochure racks at City Hall, at the Community Development Building, in Council Chambers and at the front counter of the Civic Center. News releases are sent to local newspapers and radio stations. Sometimes paid advertisements are placed in local papers, depending on the topic and scope of the project.

For projects that occur in specific neighborhoods, postcards or notices are often mailed to the residents in that area to keep them informed of the progress of a project or of up-coming meetings that they may want to attend.

Still, some people may miss out on getting this information. They might not have access to the Internet, don't go to the Library, this newsletter may never be read.

Emergency Training for Ashland Residents

Local governments prepare for everyday emergencies. But during a disaster, emergency services can be overwhelmed quickly. If a natural disaster strikes today, will you know what to do? City of Ashland CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) provides free basic training through Ashland Fire and Rescue. Both evening and weekend courses are offered throughout the year. CERT members learn how to take care of themselves and their families, their neighbors and their neighborhood in a large-scale emergency. Call the CERT office for dates of upcoming trainings and events. (541) 552-2226.



City of Ashland CERT practice their skills

**Ride the Bus
for Free**

The City of Ashland pays RVRTD to operate a second bus route that circles Ashland. This second route ensures 15 minute service between the Plaza and Southern Oregon University. In addition the City underwrites the cost of free bus fare in Ashland. Bus maps detailing the routes and stops are available at City Hall and on-line at www.ashland.or.us.

They may be out of town the day the newspapers carried an article on the subject or ran an ad; they may never go to City Hall or the Civic Center or any other public buildings, they may not attend other local meetings or watch RVRTV. The City is always seeking better avenues for communication — please let us know if you have other ideas to improve City information flow.

It is the responsibility of the City to make information easily accessible and encourage public participation. It is the responsibility of the community to seek out the information and then to participate early in the process on issues that interest them. ▼

**Ashland United
Front**

The Ashland United Front is an informal group that met for a number of months to determine which issues or projects in the community might stand a chance to receive Federal appropriation funds based on previous allocations to other Oregon cities.

The group, which includes the Ashland School District, Southern Oregon University, Community Works, Ashland Chamber of Commerce, Rogue Valley Transit District, Ashland Community Hospital and the City of Ashland identified five priorities: a park and ride lot on Highway 99 at the north end of town, watershed research, land purchase for affordable housing, a model to provide com-

prehensive services for delinquent and dependant youth and completion of the expansion of the USFW forensic laboratory.

The group believes that lobbying Oregon's congressional delegation as a united front sends a clear message that the requests are not "pet projects" but rather are beneficial and necessary for our community. The group heard presentations from both Congressman Walden's office and Senator Wyden's office. Each applauded the group efforts in working together as a "united front" on behalf of Ashland and encouraged the group to submit appropriation requests.

In July the Oregon Congressional Delegation announced that \$3.35 million was secured for the expansion of the forensic laboratory. Ashland United Front requested federal funds for the expansion of the forensic laboratory not only because of the importance of the work but also because of the economic impact to Ashland and to the region. It is anticipated that the expansion will generate \$22 million in hard dollars in construction costs, and the new space can accommodate 40 new positions including twenty-five scientists at a salary of approximately \$50 thousand per year plus fifteen support staff positions at about \$20 thousand per year. Should those positions and salaries be approved, it represents a direct impact of \$1.5 million on our region.

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Ashland United Front

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In addition, the forensics lab has established a valuable intern program with students at Southern Oregon University (SOU). Currently, ten to fifteen students per year take advantage of this program. These internships are unique in the country and simply do not exist elsewhere. Students have the opportunity to work side by side with specialists gaining valuable hands-on experience in the scientific field. The expansion of the facility would allow for the expansion of the intern program enabling an additional fifteen SOU students to participate. Groundbreaking ceremonies for the expansion are expected to occur in early spring.

Earlier this fall, the group was notified that \$250,000 was appropriated for the construction of the park and ride lot. Ashland United Front requested funds for the construction of a park and ride lot to ease parking congestion at the hospital, university, high school and downtown Ashland. Employees who commute to Ashland will be able to park in a secure location and take public transportation into town or ride designated shuttle vans to the hospital. The city is in the process of identifying potential sites to locate the park and ride.

Without the efforts of our congressional delegation in Washington DC, Senator Gordon Smith and Senator Ron Wyden and Congressman Greg Walden these projects would not be possible. The Ashland United Front is grateful for their successful efforts on behalf of Ashland and all of Oregon. ▼

News Notes

Winter Wednesday Nature Talks

Come to North Mountain Park this winter for Wednesday Nature Talks as local experts share their knowledge of the Rogue Valley's natural and cultural history during a 3-part series:

- ☐ January 25 — Oil & Gas in Our World.
- ☐ February 15 — Klamath Wildlife Refuge.
- ☐ March 8 — The Road Less Traveled: Road Hunting Plants & Stories Along "Old 99".

All programs will take place at the Nature Center at 7:00 pm. For more information visit <http://ashlandparks.recware.com> or call 488-6606.

Project FeederWatch

Alternate Saturdays, 9am – 10 am

- ☐ January 14 and January 28
- ☐ February 11 and February 25
- ☐ March 11 and March 25

Join birding experts from Rogue Valley Audubon Society (RVAS) for 1 hour every other Saturday morning beginning at 9:00 am. Count and identify birds that visit the feeders at North Mountain Park (NMP). This is a great opportunity for all-level birders to get acquainted with local birds and mingle with other birders. The information collected will be submitted to Cornell University's FeederWatch project, a nationwide bird monitoring effort. This program is sponsored by RVAS, NMP and the Northwest Nature Shop of Ashland. For more information please call the Nature Center at 488-6606 or register online at <http://ashlandparks.recware.com>. ▼

CITY OF ASHLAND

City Calendar

January 10	Planning Commission	7:00 p.m.
January 11	Forest Lands Commission	4:30 p.m.
January 12	Council Special Meeting	7:00 p.m.
January 17	City Council Meeting	7:00 p.m.
January 19	Bike and Pedestrian Commission	5:15 p.m.
January 20	Public Arts Commission	8:15 a.m.
January 23	Parks and Recreation Commission	7:00 p.m.
January 25	Conservation Commission	7:00 p.m.
January 26	Traffic Safety Commission	7:00 p.m.
February 1	Historic Commission	7:00 p.m.
February 7	City Council Meeting	7:00 p.m.
February 9	Tree Commission	7:00 p.m.
February 14	Planning Commission	7:00 p.m.

◆ Many of the above meetings are cablecast live on channel 9 and replayed on channel 30. ◆ Meetings are held at Council Chambers, 1175 East Main or at 51 Winburn Way. ◆ For information about all City meetings please call City Administration at 488-6002. ◆ Back issues of the City Source are posted under "Documents" on the City's Website, www.ashland.or.us. ◆ TTY 1-800-735-2900

