

CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE:

- A big thank you to our **Water Division** for their exceptional efforts during the recent storm. Despite freezing temps, **Wilber Gonzalez, Tyler Ramsey, Spencer Ramsey** and **Travis Bennett** (*all pictured below*), with help from **Austin Racca**, worked tirelessly to repair water leaks and assist residents. We also want to extend appreciation to all City Departments, including **Electric, Public Works (Streets, Cemetery, Facilities Maintenance & Fleet Divisions), Parks, Facilities, Fire, Police, Innovation & Technology** and **Emergency Management**, for their hard work and dedication during the storm. **Your teamwork is greatly appreciated! "We are Better Together!"**



- During the recent storm our most popular social media post on Facebook offered a "Shout Out" to staff and also reminded residents how to report a non-emergency issue, such as a power outage, via our new SeeClickFix app, ashlandoregon.gov/SeeClickFix. The post received 824 LIKES, 60 COMMENTS and 30 SHARES! View our Facebook page at facebook.com/CityofAshlandOregon.





City Manager's Report

- The City is in the process of implementing a **records request software program called *Justfoia***. This new software will allow requestors to create an account, which will contain all their requests and response documents for downloading. It will include an easy-to-use payment portal and the ability to search for other record requests as they become available.
- Staff are working on a timeline for **renovating the Municipal Court/Council Chambers** with fresh paint, new chairs, City logo and more!
- Every two years or so, the City conducts a **Livability Survey** to better understand Ashland's quality of life, and how it has changed over time. The results for the Ashland Livability Survey 2024 can be found at ashlandoregon.gov/LivabilitySurvey.
- **Rogue Retreat is managing the overnight severe weather shelter at 2200 Ashland St**, from January 1 through March 31, 2025. Staff recently met with Rogue Retreat to discuss operations. They have received positive feedback from the neighbors who are pleased with how the shelter is operating.
- **The Better Prepared Wildfire Workshop Series** is under development. The City is collaborating with **Ashland.news, Ashland Together** and the **Ashland Climate Collaborative** to bring this important series to the citizens of Ashland. The theme is, **"Take action to be better prepared!"** Hold the dates for the following events:
 - **Wildfire Preparedness**, April 21, at Carpenter Hall
 - **Ashland Wildfire Protection Plan Open House**, May 4, at The Grove
 - **Protect Your Home & Yard**, virtual Event on May 14
 - **Evacuation Planning & Practice** at the Historic Ashland Armory, July 16**Information on the series will be available at ashlandoregon.gov/BetterPreparedSeries.**
- The **joint EOC (Emergency Operations Center)** continues with monthly meetings and trainings. The EOC is a collaboration between the **City of Ashland, the Ashland School District and Southern Oregon University**. In January, a **research team from Boise State University (BSU)* led a regional tabletop wildfire exercise**. Representatives from multiple organizations/jurisdictions in Southern Oregon took part, and included Fire, Police, Schools, Security, Technology and Communications.

The BSU, "Household Response to Wildfire," research project will include a community survey that will go out to a random selection of residents in the cities of Ashland and Talent. The survey will be launched toward the end of March.
- **Jackson County** is working in coordination with the City to update and improve our emergency messaging platform, Everbridge. As part of these updates, the local name for Everbridge/Nixle will be changed to *Jackson Alerts*, previously known as *Citizen Alert*. All existing accounts and prior opt-ins will be retained. On **March 3**, Jackson County Emergency Management, in cooperation with Ashland, Talent, Medford and Central Point, will launch a media campaign to announce the new name. Residents will be encouraged to review their existing accounts, make any necessary updates, sign up if they haven't already and learn about the Jackson Alerts system in our region. The City will follow up with additional coverage in March and April.



City Manager's Report

- **Jackson County Emergency Managers** met in late February as part one of two annually scheduled meetings to review the **NHMP (National Hazard Mitigation Plan)** and discuss grant opportunities to update the plan in 2027.
- **Office Hours at City Hall:**
 - **Councilor Jeff Dahle** – 3rd Monday of each month from 2 to 3:30 p.m.
 - **Councilor Bob Kaplan** – 1st Monday of each month from 1 to 2:30 p.m.
 - **Councilor Gina DuQuenne** – 1st Thursday of each month from Noon to 1:30 p.m.
 - **City Manager Sabrina Cotta** – Thursday each week from 8:30 to 10 a.m.
Office hours exclude holidays.
- The **March 2025 City Newsletter** will be available by Friday, February 28, at ashlandoregon.gov/CityNewsletters.
- **Website analytics** for the City of Ashland for February 2025 – The storm in February increased website traffic by approximately 8 to 10%. *The figures below are as of February 26.*
 - Total Users: 24,554
 - Top 3 search terms:
 - Power Outage
 - Snowplow Routes
 - Live Webcam
 - Top 3 page views:
 - Home page at 9,597, ashlandoregon.gov
 - Live Streams at 6,309, ashlandoregon.gov/LiveStreams*
 - Utility Billing at 3,358, ashlandoregon.gov/UtilityBilling

*The top live stream viewed was the Downtown Plaza Cam with:
7,200 views (3,100 in Jan)
1,000 watch hours (448.8 in Jan)

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

- The Community Development Department has expanded its **Citizen Self Service** permitting portal to include online submission of One- & Two-Family Dwellings/ADUs/Commercial Tenant Improvements/Change of Use/Tree Removal Permits/ and Type I Land Use Actions. The Citizen Self Service portal provides access to 29 different building, planning, public works and fire permits, allowing users to conduct business with the City 24/7. Through Citizen Self Service, residents and business owners have real time access to their project's status, including the latest updates, next steps and online inspection scheduling. Learn more at ashlandoregon.gov/OnlinePermits.



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FINANCE:

- **Budget Process...** Received department budgets, reviewing and working through each of them.
- Finalizing the Finance Department, "**Work from Home Policy.**"
- Continuing to review **Payroll Software** options for process automation.
- Payroll staff are in the process of completing **BOLI (Bureau of Labor and Industries) Training.**
- Purchasing Specialist **Keanna Khlafallah** has been accepted to **Oregon Procurement Group.**

FIRE:

- After 32 years of dedicated service to Jackson County, including the past seven with Ashland Fire & Rescue, Chief **Ralph Sartain** announced his retirement, effective March 31. Details at ashlandoregon.gov/Fire (see the News Flash section).



Chief Ralph Sartain

- Fire & Rescue have the following employment opportunities: **Single Role EMT, Single Role Paramedic, Firefighter/Paramedic** – Apply at governmentjobs.com/careers/ashlandor. The deadline to apply is April 4.

INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY (DoIT):

- **City Crews Remove Defunct Satellite Dishes...** In late February, crews from the Electric Department, Ashland Fiber Network (AFN) and the Streets Division worked together to remove eight defunct satellite dishes from City property. The dishes were originally installed in the late 1990s and used for cable TV service, which is no longer provided. With the removal complete, the newly cleared space is expected to be reconfigured for ongoing storage and expanded employee parking, improving efficiency and site utilization for city operations. **This effort reflects the City's commitment to maintaining functional and well-organized infrastructure while adapting to changing service needs.**



City Manager's Report

- **Upgrading VPN** to mitigate cyber-attacks.
- **Computer lifecycle replacements in process...** 20 computers immediately and 60 to 80 by June 1, 2025.
- GIS staff are working closely with the Wildfire Division on a **wildfire risk analysis** for the whole city that considers a range of factors such as vegetation, ladder fuels, slope, aspect and proximity of buildings.
- **GIS Management Team (Lea Richards, Chad Sabotka, Mariane Berry)** will represent the City of Ashland at the ESRI CIO Summit mid-March. This summit is hosted by ESRI, our GIS software company.
- In February, **Dena Adame**, celebrated 25 years with the City! She was also voted Employee of the year, representing Innovation & Technology in 2024. She has been an invaluable asset to the AFN (Ashland Fiber Network) Team and is beloved by both her co-workers and AFN customers.



Dena Adame

PARKS & RECREATION:

- As of February 17, the **Ashland Rotary Centennial Ice Rink is closed for the season**. The rink will reopen in November 2025.
- The first **PROS (Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Senior Services) strategic plan survey is open** through March 15. **The PROS kickoff meeting will be April 8**, at the Ashland Senior Center. Parks & Recreation staff are currently scheduling focus groups and neighborhood meetings to capture as much citizen input as possible.
- **Staff continue to clean up from the storm in early February**. All parks are now open. The Lithia Pickleball Courts sustained fencing and light pole damage and will remain closed until repairs can be made.



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- A huge shoutout to the incredible **Parks Operations crew** for their hard work during the recent snow event. Braving harsh conditions, they cleared snow from parking lots and sidewalks, applied sand and ice-melt to especially icy areas, kept restrooms open, clean and accessible, and removed downed trees from roads and parks—sometimes working alongside the Electric Department. They also installed signage and caution tape to warn the public about high winds, hazardous leaning trees and hanging branches. As access improves, the **Open Space and Trails Team** will conduct hazard assessments on the trail system, reopening trails once they are deemed safe. With the extensive damage to parks and trails, the work is just beginning. Thank you to our Open Space and Trails Team for helping keep Ashlanders safe while they recreate!

POLICE:

- Participated in a **DUI Training** with other agencies at the Jackson County Sheriff's Office.
- Assisted an out of State agency in the **apprehension of a wanted fugitive**.
- Re-established a fully staffed **Records Team**.

PUBLIC WORKS:

- The **renovation of Pioneer Hall is on schedule** and should be completed by spring 2025. Finish work is ongoing with a target completion date of early April. Completion date is driven by the delivery of longer lead items including cabinetry and doors. As such, there is some risk to completion date if currently forecast delivery dates are not met.



- Pioneer Hall



- Pioneer Hall



City Manager's Report

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- The **renovation of the Community Center** is slowly starting to be worked on again as the team takes the direction provided by the MAC and City Council and updates the design and contract to reflect the new work scope. This includes continuing to find new discovered work which needs to be dealt with (the latest has been weak soils and a high water table under Community which has required updated foundation design). The current forecast for completion of Community is late Summer, early Fall 2025.

WHAT'S COMING UP?

- **SHOW ME THE MONEY –April 2 through May 21**
If you are over the age of 50, register for the City's OLLI course, **Show Me the Money: Finances of Local Government**, to learn about the City of Ashland's fund structure, revenue streams, major expenses and what the City can and cannot spend money on. Register at sou.edu/olli, starting March 17. Classes will take place via Zoom on Wednesdays, from 1 to 2 p.m., beginning **April 2 and ending May 21, 2025**. For those who can't attend, video recordings will be posted on the City website.
- **ROGUE VALLEY BIKE SWAP**—April 26, Noon to 2:30 p.m.
The **33rd annual Rogue Valley Bike Swap** will be Noon to 2:30 p.m. on Saturday, April 26 at The Grove, 1195 E Main St., Ashland. *Admission to the swap is free! Buy, sell or donate* a bike, parts or accessories at this festive event. Register your bike with the Ashland Police Department, learn about bike events and advocacy efforts in your community, and engage in a youth bike rodeo at 12:30 p.m. *A portion of each sale will go to fund youth bike education programs in local public schools.* **For details on selling, donating, volunteering and more, visit RVTD.org/bikeswap.**
- **Ashland–Sviatohirs'k Aid Project (ASAP)—March 30, 2 p.m.**
In 2023, the City Council unanimously approved a new sister city partnership with Sviatohirs'k, Ukraine. This special relationship supports humanitarian aid and fundraising efforts within the Ashland community to help the residents of Sviatohirs'k overcome the devastation caused by the Russian occupation. Mark your calendars for the next ASAP event, a **benefit concert and informational gathering scheduled at the Ashland High School Mountain Avenue Theatre on Sunday, March 30, 2025, at 2 p.m.** Don't miss this opportunity for world-class entertainment and to show support for our Sister City, Sviatohirs'k. View **ASAP's accomplishments** since 2023 and learn more about our Sister City Program, which includes Guanajuato, Mexico, at ashlandoregon.gov/SisterCities. **"We are Better Together!"**
Details for these and more City events can be found at ashlandoregon.gov, see the Events calendar and the Senior Events calendar.