

Canby Herald Newspaper

**Mayor delivers State of the City address**

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STATE OF THE CITY - JANUARY 7, 2009

It is my pleasure to share the State of the City in Canby for the year 2008 and in the process take a look back, a look forward, and even a look inside the progress, programs and challenges taking place in Canby. There are four things I believe citizens expect from elected officials: Leadership, Vision; that they establish goals to meet the community's needs, and that they deliver on those goals. Another way to phrase it would be, "that we deliver on our promises."

We will have new leadership in Canby when Randy Carson, Teresa Blackwell and Paul Carlson step down on Jan. 7. They've given a collective contribution of service to the community, of 20 plus years as City Councilors and we owe them a large and very public thank you. I can honestly say we're a better place because of them, and I've enjoyed working with each of them. Robert Bitter, John Henri and Jason Padden will join Walt Daniels, Wayne Oliver and Tony Helbling on the Canby City Council.

We also have regional leadership changes with 3 new County Commissioners, Bill Kennemer as our State representative, Kurt Schrader replacing Darlene Hooley in the House of Representatives, and a State Senator who as of the date of this letter has not been appointed. We will work closely with these new and returning leaders to stay abreast of issues affecting Canby.

I've outlined the Leadership affecting Canby for the next few years, and now let's explore our vision. The vision provides the focus for developing goals, and one of the key steps toward creating it for the community, is consistent and reliable input from the community's members. Here's how we've "checked in" with our citizenry for their input on our progress in pursuit of the vision in 2008.

Surveys - The Planning and Building department conducts an annual user survey, where users provide input to questions such as how long did your permit take - how well did staff explain your process. This helps us monitor and improve customer service and make changes to better the delivery of this service.

The Economic Development arm of the department conducted surveys that developed inventories of the entire business sector in Canby, including home based businesses. These surveys will aid our efforts to strengthen existing companies and entrepreneurs by highlighting the gaps in our business inventory that if filled, could sustain and even increase our economic business community health.

Elections - Elections are a narrow but very specific form of citizen input. This year, voters provided election based input that passed a County Library District, selected new leadership, but declined a police facility construction bond and City charter revisions. We conducted a post election citizen session regarding charter changes, and it is my intention

to request we engage citizens regarding a proposed police facility as well. Then, the Council and I can evaluate what, if any what next steps should be.

Neighborhood Associations - They are valuable citizen input conduits of information to and from the neighborhoods. This year, two additional associations formed and asked to be recognized by the City: the Southeast and Southwest join the Riverside and Northeast groups.

Stakeholder Meetings and Task Force meetings - Man7 were held this year for the express purpose of exchanging information, ideas and comments around the question for each of these subjects: "What is the Vision?"

When we added the Leadership and development of the Vision in 2008, it brought about our City Goals. Each year, I refer to our City goals because it is the single most important thing we do as policy makers. It identifies and focuses our collective will, and our organization's resources around citizen and policy maker driven objectives. The current goals document contains ten goals and under each are a variety of specific projects, or service statements, or programs we commit to producing in one or multiple years.

Time forbids reviewing them all, but they're located on the city website, at the library or city hall. I'll touch on a few to illustrate their progression from a "vision" developed from our community and staff input, into city accomplishments in 2008: 1. Continue to implement and refine the City's Economic Development Strategic Plan. 2. Maintain a strong and responsive law enforcement presence to curtail crime and vandalism. 3. Provide proactive financial reporting, analysis and recommendations. 4. Plan, upgrade and maintain the city public infrastructure: wastewater, streets, sidewalks, facilities, parks, to meet demands of population and community use.

**Finally, the City's leadership's goals were combined with elected official and staff commitment and the result was a productive and exciting year in Canby.** *To begin with, Canby is a more vibrant city.* 1. We capitalized on location, location, location (we're poised strategically between I-5 and I-205) and product (the available land with infrastructure), added a terrific working relationship with local property owners, the County and State governments and again can report Canby has a true economic development success story going on. Here are some of the details: " American Steel formally opened a 192,000 square foot facility on 10 acres last October. They provide 80 jobs and there are plans for adding additional employees. " Wilco opened their 35,000 square foot facility on 5 acres with an additional 7,200 square feet of available retail. " Kendal Floral opened their facility on six acres in November with 120 employees. " With projects on the drawing board, this brings to a total 50 acres and 383,000 square feet of new industrial development in 2008. Out of the original 325-acre industrial park, 165 acres remain currently for sale or lease. 2. In 2009, Project Popcorn will move from the seed to a full blown kernel! It is my pleasure to announce for the first time the name of the 8-plex theater, Canby Cinema 8. This project is one of the lynchpin developments by the Urban Renewal Agency (URA is made up of Mayor and Council members) as a demonstration of continuing commitment to downtown Canby. It will encourage

shoppers and visitors, and motivate new and complimentary development in downtown businesses. Let me give you an example. Early economic studies demonstrated that Canby loses \$2M each year in ticket sales and support business by not having a movie theater and based on a survey, there was 94 percent community support to build one. Sincere thanks go out to the Cutsforth family for land donations, and for a generous gift from the estate of Alice Klohe in that project area that made this vision a reality. *And Canby continues to stay, evolve into an attractive, livable community.*

1. A major reconstruction of SW 13th street provides pedestrian safety and improved surfaces and bike lanes, and even sports a unique art component. The project is immediately adjacent to two schools, near several housing developments and was on the original city-wide list of projects selected by citizens for traffic calming and pedestrian safety.
2. A large sidewalk renovation project occurred in the commercial and residential areas of North side Canby thanks to a government grant - the first significant sidewalk reconstruction we've seen in the community in many years.
3. Lighting, bleachers and restrooms were added to one of our oldest and finest North side parks, Maple Street. Restrooms, landscaping and play areas completed the new Southeast Park, Legacy. We acquired 34 acres of land just off Territorial road for future expansion of our wastewater treatment plant and for open space park and wildlife purposes.
4. Gang related calls are down, 357 calls in 2008 compared to 415 in 2007 and mark a 14 percent decrease in gang crime. Total calls for service to the police have decreased, down from 16,872 in 2007 to 15,687 citizens and businesses calling for local police in 2008.
5. The Detective division was involved with several large drug related search warrants and arrests, including a significant Meth Lab investigation in November that seized glassware and chemicals capable of producing up to 50 lbs of methamphetamine.
6. Canby citizens joined with County residents to pass a County library district levy. Beginning shortly after the new budget year of July 2009, this gives significantly expanded operating hours and services, and purchases of new books and materials. And -- we have a one-time \$1 million fund infusion for a Canby Library capitol project to plan for. Congratulations to you all on this decision, and thank you for supporting libraries. *We are in an even more stable position financially due to both conservative budgeting practices and citizen approved investments in our assets.*

1. In July of 2008, the city's then adopted \$26,738,123 budget focused on holding the line with no new programs or levels of service that could not be paid for within existing revenue. Given the sharp decline of the housing market, and problems in banking institutions and financial markets, this was a prudent decision.
2. The City's financial audit report again garnered The Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting by the National Government Finance Officers Association recognizing the "highest standards in government accounting and financial reporting."
3. State collection of the local .003 cents per gallon gas tax began in August and local city street maintenance fee billing has begun. Just to recap, over maintenance schedule of 20 years, your support of this funding package is expected to bring up to par as well as maintain 70 percent of the city's streets. It is a moderate approach deemed more affordable and acceptable by the community than the much higher price tag attached to all City streets. An interesting fact -- the City has 54 miles of street pavement and to give you an idea, repair and replacement of them would cost approximately \$52 million dollars. So although I mention this as a fiscal responsibility, it definitely qualifies a mention in the just discussed "livability" category as well. *We continue to become a*

*better planned for community.* We are responding to the need for changes in our transportation system, our building, sign and development codes and processing a variety of "visions." 1. We've received several grants, including: " A Transportation Growth Management (TGM) grant for updating our Transportation System Plan (TSP). This includes refining industrial park traffic due to growth and changes in the park. A current TSP updates existing and future road intentions, and outlines the fair contribution of funding by development and others for future construction. " A Code Assistance Grant for developing new low impact standards for subdivisions to include safe routes to schools, bike and pedestrian friendly streets, innovative storm water design (which continues to plague the flat terrain of Canby) and suggestions for green streets initiatives. " A Quick Response grant to develop a "vision" for the Railroad property along First Avenue. It will include First Avenue traffic and street connectivity, feasibility of a building upon the railroad property, the concept of relocating community treasures like the depot museum or the original water tower as downtown attractions, and even a pedestrian plaza on First Avenue where the annual farmers market resides. 2. Code changes were adopted to dramatically improve business sign and architecture design requirements. This is an exciting period in the business sector growth of our city and it makes good planning sense to update the decades old code so new designs fit into the vision of a future Canby landscape. 3. The City staff we loaned to the Canby Area Parks and Recreation District (called CAPRD for short) to conduct strategic planning, brought stakeholder meetings and tours of other recreational district's facilities and community centers. Now, this Canby area district, run by a separate elected regional board, is ready to pursue their next steps phase based on the community's vision. *We are even a little bit larger city* because citizens voted to add 20 acres of low to high density residential housing in north Canby. *And now some of the Challenges & Trends we'll be watching in 2090 and beyond:* 1. The economic health of our State and Country. What will be its effect on local businesses, jobs, schools and housing? Already, residential permits have declined 42 percent and new single family home starts have gone from 201 starts in 2006, to just 15 in 2008. 2. There has been a significant increase in property crime (defined as Burglaries, Thefts, Vandalism, Motor Vehicle Thefts, Unlawful Entry into Motor Vehicle and Robberies), up 48 percent over last year. There were 413 in 2007 and 611 in 2008. 3. How will the loosely formed partnership between the City, School District and the volunteer based organizations (Canby Kids and others) evolve, or change to meet the needs of parks and recreation in the next decade?

I believe that Parks and Recreation services becomes the next livability challenge that the community must focus upon in the next five years and here is why. The current partnership provides and maintains fields and operates recreational programs but in my mind, there is uncertainty that this arrangement is prepared to tackle maintenance, acquisition of land for future facilities, or operation of programs into the next two decades. That's why two years ago as one of the mayor and council goals, we offered staff and strategic planning support to the CAPRD Board. As you'll recall, CAPRD is a voter approved district formed 10 plus years ago, without the voter approved funding to operate a recreation district. Legally, while this district exists, no other parks and recreation district - whether operated locally by the city, or regionally by Clackamas County - can operate within it.

In our minds, the current district issue needed to be explored and resolved in order to get to the Vision question for Canby and simply put, this is it: Should there be an operating budget for the existing district (CAPRD)? Should it be disbanded, and some other plan pursued, such as Clackamas County's regional parks/recreational program or an expanded local City program? And to add to that - what are the details, the programs, the facilities, the future expansion plans for the entity selected should the community wish to pursue this next vision? In discussing parks and recreation, we have to add the existence of the Canby Swim Center levy. For 40 years, the Canby Swim Center has been serving our community, with over 1.5 million swims and lessons to more than 15,000 area children. The current operating levy ends in 2010 and the outdated and small facility is on land that is not even owned by the City. Should the levy be renewed, or folded into the larger recreational district question I've just referred to?

Whatever, the outcome, I want to thank the CAPRD board who have been working tirelessly on their district's progress in an area that is totally vision and process driven at this point. The Council and I will keep you posted, and involved on this topic as we move through the process. 4. What is Canby's place in the region? Metro is charged with implementing the state law planning for future urban and rural reserves. Simply put, for the next 50 years - urban reserves would be designated areas for future urban development, and rural reserves for future preservation.

On the present study area map, Canby is surrounded by rural reserves - which would essentially lock in that boundary precluding it from development. Many citizens favor a green space rural preserve around the city but should this be the community's wish (which will be explored in future processes), the devil is in the details. Just how tightly this preserved area is compressed around our current urban growth boundary will directly affect potential growth (even should the community at some future point desire some level of business or residential growth) for a 50 year period.

I want to emphasize that this is a study area only at present that we are watching closely. We strongly feel that Canby needs to be as much as possible the master of their own destiny, so to speak, about the future development and preservation directly surrounding our community. We will aggressively participate in the process ahead to ensure our community's interests are represented and accounted for.

You can see we have work ahead, but we have an enthusiastic elected leadership group and a skilled, professional City staff you can be proud of. And in closing, I'd like to tell a little story that reflects my sentiments on our professional staff. Charles Plumb was a US Navy pilot during the Vietnam War. He flew 75 missions, until one day his plane was destroyed by surf-to-air missiles. He ejected from the plane and parachuted into enemy territory. He was captured, spent seven years in a communist prison camp, survived and today lectures on the lessons he's learned in life.

He and his wife were sitting in a restaurant one day when a man came up to them and said, "You're Plumb - you flew jet fighters, were on the Kitty Hawk and shot down!" Plumb was surprised to say the least but responded, "How did you know that"? The man

smiled proudly and said, "I packed your parachute. I guess it worked!" Plum smiled right back as he answered, "It sure did and I wouldn't be here if it hadn't". Today, I'd like to officially thank the men and women of Canby, who pack my parachute. I can tell you I wouldn't be here to tell the tale of Canby's accomplishments in 2008, if they hadn't packed this chute so well.

Thanks to all of you, the community of Canby for your individual contributions toward making Canby the wonderful place it is, to live, to work, and to play. Have a good year in 2009, and God bless you all.

**Melody Thompson Mayor - City of Canby**