

THE *FLASH* OF TALENT

January 31, 2001

An update from City Administration, Planning, Public Works, and Police Departments.
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State of the City, 2001

Written by Mayor Telerski

The City of Talent could best be described today as having many works in progress, and having made plans and set standards for years of work to come. We have asked much from our employees, from our committees and commissions and from the City Council, from our newly hired administrator, Kelly Madding, and have received hard work and achievement in return. We are grateful for all the efforts of those who have brought us to this place of stability, direction and achievement.

Our biggest project is the Talent-Ashland-Phoenix (TAP) Intertie with the Medford Water Commission water supply. The groundbreaking in December marked the culmination of three years of planning and cooperation between our three cities, Talent, Ashland and Phoenix, made possible by the project management provided by the Rogue Valley Council of Governments. For those of us who has seen this project move from town hall meeting to funding to ground breaking, our gratification comes not just from how much we have achieved, but from how much we have achieved together. We were forced to halt growth and development during these three years of providing a solution to our water problem, but this period gave us valuable time to evaluate our policies and prepare for the lifting of the moratorium in the Spring of 2002.

Planning

During the last three years, our planner, Nancy Kincaid, the planning commission, the parks commission, public works department, the Architectural Review Committee and the City Council have all developed policies and long term plans that will insure responsible growth, protect our natural resources, and reflect the values and vision of our citizens. Some of these plans are the Master Plans for Water, Storm Drainage, a Transportation Systems Plan, Systems Development Charges to insure that future development will pay its share for parks, storm drain, water and transportation. We have also instituted utility fees to maintain and improve our streets and storm drain systems. We have control of our rights-of-way. Master plans for parks and for our greenway lands are in progress. We have inventoried the wetland and riparian areas and made provision for their protection. We have continued to work on the updating of the Comprehensive Plan.

Currently in progress are a revised subdivision ordinance, a Downtown Design Standards Plan, a downtown park, a transportation center, and consideration of our "Civic Center," i.e., where to expand the library, where to put a larger city hall. New playground equipment is being installed in Chuck Roberts Park. New playground equipment will be installed in Library Park in the spring, thanks to a citizen's generous donation. The Urban Renewal Agency continues working on two improvement projects: New Street and Main Street between Talent Avenue and the railroad tracks. Both projects are scheduled for completion no later than the summer of 2001. The Main Street project will tie together design plans for the Transportation Depot, the Downtown Park, and the West Main improvements as well. We are growing. We have done so much. These comprehensive work plans and inventories will enable us to provide for our future needs.

Finances

Less than five years ago the City budget was in the red. In an environment of shrinking resources and increasing costs it is very difficult to recover from such a condition and yet the City has, through conservative fiscal management. We anticipate that the financial picture will continue to improve. Our excellent fiscal management has been rewarded through receipt of the Government Finance Officer's Association award for outstanding financial reporting. Holly Haviland, our finance manager, deserves commendation for her achievement. Our goal is to maintain this standard of excellence.

Police

A well-trained and well-prepared police force provides real benefits to a small community such as ours. We have been able to offer a full range of services with police, reserves and Community Service Officers by focusing on individual areas of expertise. The helicopter program, SWAT training, self-defense, K-9 program, neighborhood watch, drug investigation, hostage negotiations, child abuse investigation, and property control are some of the skills our officers maintain. This year the Council realized its goal of increased code enforcement by hiring a code enforcement officer, Frank Falsarella. Our City Police Department initiated regional training program for reserve officer and emergency service providers from three counties and fifteen police agencies, using the fire house as a teaching facility.

Community Policing, an approach which encourages a close relationship between citizens and the police who serve them, has been a successful tool in assisting law enforcement efforts. Chief Kammel encourages citizens to refer to the police when something looks peculiar in their neighborhood. In his words, "If you think something looks wrong, it probably is." Our goal is to make Talent a safe and well-protected community. In working toward this goal, major crimes are reduced by 30% over the last two years. We look forward to increased public safety on Highway 99. This effort is jointly supported by citizens, Police and Public Works. Nancy Henderson's petition has been very effective in bringing official attention to the critical need to modernize this area for improved safety. This has been a long-term effort that will result in funding for modernization of portions of our highway with ODOT funding.

Public Works

The accomplishments of the Public Works Department are evident everywhere you look in Talent. Sidewalks, storm drains and pavement are complete for Phase I and II of the Main and Wagner Streets project. The Talent Avenue Enhancement project, from the Wagner Creek Bridge to Arnos Street, is underway, with the preliminary engineering completed. We will see more of these projects in the year to come. We have seen a greater level of care given to our parks this year, with the assistance of the County work crews.

The Department has inventoried the condition and needs of all our city streets, and prioritized a list for their repair and maintenance. In addition to the very evident street projects, employees have continued to train and cross-train, to accommodate themselves for the many needs of the department. Computers now monitor the water treatment facilities. The participation of the department head, Tim Dedrick, in the intertie project, in joint grant writing with the planning department, in the RVACT (Rogue Valley Area Commission on Transportation) adds a dimension of technical expertise and experience that has served to strengthen our accomplishments as a political entity.

Regional Activities

Our participation in regional decision making bodies has increased over the past two years. We continue to participate in RVACT for decisions and fund allotment in transportation issues. We recently joined the Regional Problem Solving group, mandated by the State to reach local decisions about future land use in the Rogue Valley. This can only serve to enhance our ability to provide services to our citizens and make more informed decisions on their behalf. It also establishes our partnerships with our neighbors, making us all responsible for the future of our region.

We have accomplished a great deal in the year 2000. We have faced many significant challenges and overcome them; we have lost and replaced key staff members and yet we have seen the performance of our departments steadily improve. We have been fortunate to have a Council that was unwavering in its devotion to excellent service and to listening to the voices of the citizens of this City. We have a new Council in 2001, committed to the challenge of carrying out the plans and projects that will provide for our future needs, even in the face of growth and change.. We thank you, our citizens, for your confidence and support, and ask your continued participation in all aspects of your government. This is what continues to make us successful.

City Council Agenda Item February 7, 2001 – 6:45 p.m.

New Business:

Discussion of voluntary contribution to the League of Oregon Cities for attorneys' fees for Ballot Measure 7.

Presentation of Urban Renewal projects – improvements to Main Street and New Street.

(Complete agenda packets available for review at City Hall, 204 east Main Street)

Talent's City Council wants to hear from *you!*

The Talent City Council will be meeting in the month of February for their annual goal-setting session. Before their meeting, they would like to hear from you. This is your chance to express what goals you feel should be of importance to the City of Talent.

Please take time to list your top three goals or concerns for the City. After you fill out this form, please return it to City Hall, 204 East Main Street. If you would like to send your comments electronically, e-mail our City Administrator at talent@cityoftalent.org. Thank you for your time – your comments and suggestions are greatly appreciated.

Council Goals

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Optional:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____