

Friday April 8, 2016

Good Friday afternoon everyone! The record setting heat yesterday certainly changed our perspective on spring for a while. I am happy to see we will be returning to much more normal weather for the next week or so. Thank you all for attending Monday's work study session. I know that any time we have work sessions the room layout is a little awkward, but I think we had a great opportunity to update Council on issues related to vagrancy and the criminal element we see concentrating in certain areas. We will be providing Council with policy options to consider relating to these concerns in the fairly near future.

I attended a steering committee meeting for the grant that NeighborWorks Umpqua received on Arts Integration in the downtown area. As you might recall, our Economic Development Commission provided \$4,999 in funding towards the project. We recently received a technical assistance grant of \$5,000 from The Ford Family Foundation to complete the funding for this approximately \$25,000 project. The primary purpose for the program is to identify opportunities to infuse art, artists, artisans and cultural components into the downtown area and to entice and incentivize private investment in the area. The motivation is to enhance the economic environment in the core area and identify economic development activities that can be profitable downtown.

The Economic Development Commission met on Tuesday to discuss a couple of items. They first heard a presentation from the Wine Growers Association regarding the Economic Impact of the growing wine/viticulture industry in the central Umpqua Valley. Grape production continues to grow at one of the fastest paces in the State of Oregon and the number wineries continue to grow as well. There are now over 30 wineries in the Umpqua Valley. The Blue Heron Vineyard, located near Kruse Farms is one of the largest contiguous vineyards in the state (over 400 acres) and developers are in the process of acquiring and developing over 1,200 additional acres south of Roseburg. Winemaking and viticulture as a whole is becoming a significant employer in the area as well the major tourism attraction in central Douglas County. It is nice to know we are in the center of the attraction!

EDC also heard a presentation on the expansion of the Roberts Creek Enterprise Zone and E-Commerce overlay and recommended the expansion and overlay to Council. Resolutions relating to the Enterprise Zone and E-Commerce overlay area are on your Monday evening agenda. The purpose of the expansion is to include some properties in Douglas County, or owned by the County, as well as the City and City of Winston to incentivize additional development and provide other State incentives to businesses locating or expanding within the new boundary. Brian Davis included a memo on the

zone in your packet and would be happy to answer any questions you may have. Additionally, the EDC heard updates from the Partnership, the Roseburg Area Visitors Center and reviewed grant reports from prior recipients of EDC funding requests.

Thursday morning I pinch hit for Mayor Rich at the welcome and opening of a Sustainable NW Energy Workshop that was held at the Ford Room in the Douglas County Library. The workshop was very well attended. The purpose of the workshop was to introduce current trends in sustainable and alternative forms of energy production and usage from an economic development perspective. To the extent that energy users can utilize less expensive sources of energy or use less energy in general allows for a better return on their energy investments. Solar and Bio-mass were the two primary sources of energy being discussed during the time I was able to attend as well as partnership opportunities with Pacific Power, the Energy Trust of Oregon and additional Blue Sky opportunities.

As you may have seen in the media today, our Emergency Response Team, at the request of the City of Sutherlin, responded to a hostage situation in Sutherlin yesterday afternoon. We have a great working relationship with many of the other local governments in central Douglas County and we always try to work with them in difficult situations. Our ERT is highly trained group of professional public safety officers and have been deployed throughout the County over the years, and each of those local governments has in turn responded to our needs when called. I think it is essential that we work together at all levels of government to provide for our communities "public safety" and public service. I can't even begin to tell you how much help we received from agencies around the County after October 1, so it is important to me and our organization that we too can reach in when other organizations are in need. The ERT folks, alongside folks from OSP, the City of Sutherlin and the Sherriff's office were able to resolve the issue peacefully and without mishap. Great job!

And hey, it looks like the cooler, but dryer weather may hang around until Sunday so everyone have a great weekend. We will see you Monday night at Council.