

CITY MANAGER'S UPDATE—September 10, 2019

Prepared for Mayor and Councilors. Please contact Steve Powers, City Manager, for additional information.

At Your Service!

A team of City employees will be attending and managing information tables and providing tours at Salem's first City Open House/Hispanic Heritage Month Event on Friday, September 13 in the atrium at City Hall.

Upcoming Issues

The October 10 meeting regarding the North Santiam River sewer project will be a Marion County Board work session only. The Salem City Council and Linn County Board are invited to attend and ask questions. We will notice the meeting to avoid any public meeting issues and will note that the Council is attending the meeting as guests of Marion County and will not be deliberating or joining in any deliberations with Marion or Linn counties. Marion County is working with the COG on publication of a request for qualifications for an engineer to complete the North Santiam sewer project design, engineering master plan and wastewater treatment plans.

Safe Community

The City has launched a **#2weeksReady campaign**. September is National Preparedness month. Through this campaign residents are encouraged to gather enough supplies necessary to survive for two weeks without assistance. In the event of an earthquake or other major disaster, it is estimated it will be a minimum of two weeks before residents will have access to assistance, and months before power, fuel, cell reception or other resources are restored. The campaign includes a week-by-week Red Cross prepare calendar that provides shopping lists and task lists in affordable and easy-to-do weekly chunks, encourages people to [sign up for community alerts](#), has City employees as Prep-Leaders on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#) and on the City website at [City of Salem Emergencies & Disaster Preparedness](#), and offers a sign up for weekly emails with success tips and helpful reminders to stay on track.

Management

The two graffiti abatement positions have been filled and the team is responding to graffiti complaints.

Good Governance

The City's financial condition is reviewed periodically by independent rating agencies. The agencies rate state and local governments to determine their creditworthiness for repaying long-term borrowed money, such as the general obligation bonds used to fund the police station and library retrofit projects. The

better the rating, the lower the government's borrowing costs. Bond ratings provide an overall opinion of the City's credit worthiness and financial management. One of the rating agencies, Moody's Investor Services, completed a review in August of the City's financial condition by analyzing the strength of Salem's economy, revenue and expense trends, available fund balance, outstanding debt, and strength of financial policies. Moody's is maintaining the City's Aa2 rating. Aa2 slightly exceeds the median rating for cities nationwide and is two ratings below the highest available rating of AAA. The key credit factors cited by Moody's include Salem's large tax base, a satisfactory community wealth and income profile, and an adequate financial position. Moody's also commented on Salem's affordable debt burden and somewhat elevated pension liability. Moody's commented on the City's fund balance being below the national average for cities.

Welcoming and Livable Community

Upcoming opportunities for public participation in Our Salem are at open houses:

- Wednesday, October 16: 6-8 p.m., Pringle Hall, 606 Church St SE
- Thursday, October 17: 6-8 p.m., Crossler Middle School, 1155 Davis Rd S
- Friday, October 25 (**in Spanish only**): 6-8 p.m., Chemeketa Community College, Building 8, 4000 Lancaster Drive NE

Partnerships

In March 2019, City Council adopted changes and enhancements to the Utility Rate Relief Program. Working with the Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency, the City has 327 newly qualified customers for the Utility Rate Relief Program, joining the 193 customers who have been receiving the discount. For Salem residents, the discount is \$11.80 per month. The discount is applied to the account without the need for action by the account holder. The City will continue to work with MWVCAA on opportunities to qualify new customers and on additional outreach and promotion.

Thanks for reading,
Steve