

Mayor's Report September 2017

The City Council was back to work in September after its August recess. First order of business was a public hearing to discuss how to use the transient room tax (tourist tax paid to hotels) which is growing. Many ideas were brought forward, including beautification of downtown, increased public transportation, creating a Tourist Advisory Committee, and a change in marketing direction.

How this money is spent is dictated by Oregon Statute. Currently, The Dalles **must spend** 50.2% on tourism promotion. The current City budget actually designates 60% of that revenue to tourism promotion or tourism related expenditures. The balance goes into the general fund. Over the past 3 years, the Council has designated general fund revenue to improve our streets. The Council will meet on October 16 to discuss the ideas brought forth at the September 18 work session.

The Mid-Columbia Council of Government board has voted to disband that organization. That means programs such as Area Agency on Aging, public transportation, work force and building permits will have to find new homes. The city and county are currently discussing how their two planning departments could be combined with building permits to provide one stop shopping for builders and developers.

Request for Proposals have been advertised for Airport management, Fixed Base Operator, and for dealing with the Gitchell Building which is the oldest building in town. The Corps of Engineers is considering new housing sites in Washington for Native Americans.

The city has hired Morgan Mills as its new safety director to continue emphasis on reducing on the job accidents. As a result of improved safety, the City received a dividend check of \$88,000 from SAIF and projects it will be back to an optimal level by next year.

I attended two important meetings in September. On the 28th, I attended a Gorge wide meeting with Union Pacific and Burlington Northern to discuss improving communication and ensuring safety measures. I also attended the League of Cities conference in Portland which emphasized homelessness, tax reform and transportation funding. I also learned from the Governor, she will be establishing a committee to deal with any substantial economic hardship as a result of the Gorge fires.