



City Manager's Monthly Report, Merlin MacReynold

March 2008

It has been more than very busy since the December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2007 flood disaster. The recovery has provided a great many challenges as we continue to provide services to our businesses and residents in Chehalis. Working closely with the citizen group One Voice, Lewis County, the City of Centralia, and our state legislative delegation for the 20<sup>th</sup> District has also been intense and productive as it appears that the state will be providing \$50 million for flood control efforts and \$2.5 million for establishing a Chehalis Basin Flood Control District. Additionally, it appears that the state will cover the twelve and a half percent local match for the FEMA funding. Of course, nothing is for sure until the session is over next week and the Governor has signed the budget.

Until the flood control district is formed the Chehalis Basin Executive Committee has been reestablished by the county and their first meeting is this Friday, March 7<sup>th</sup>. At the meeting representatives will proceed in seeking to get the district formed and begin planning. I am sure I will be providing updates as they continue their work over the next few months.

The city council will be holding three special sessions this month. The first is this coming Monday, March 10<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 p.m. in the basement conference room of City Hall, and will be the kick-off meeting of the Chehalis Renaissance process. The second will be on March 17<sup>th</sup> at 5 p.m. in the Council Chambers at City Hall, and will be a briefing by Bill Hillier and Michael Golden on creating the Chehalis Basin Flood Control District. The third is on Monday March 31<sup>st</sup> at 5 p.m. in the Council Chambers at City Hall, and is a briefing by Bart Gernhart, Wash DOT, concerning the I-5 corridor projects that are in the works and update on current projects. It is going to be a very busy month with these special Worksessions in addition to the regular council meetings on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Monday.

The police department is completely moved into the second floor of the New City Hall. We are about ready to close the project and we continue to be under budget by a few thousand dollars for the New City Hall. All in all, I am very please with how the New City Hall has turned out and the fact that we did it all without going to the voters for a levy and we brought it under budget and within our schedule. When the library moves out of their temporary space in the basement we will need to revisit how best to utilize that space for the future.

The new Library on the Chehalis Commons is clearly underway with the walls starting to go up this week. Good progress is being made and we are still on schedule to open in the fall

of this year. I have gotten asked repeatedly if there are two floors and the answer is no. It will have a mezzanine, but the high walls have to do with the traditional Carnegie library design. The landscaping design for the Commons is well underway, but I have significant concerns about the possible cost of the landscaping. As we administratively continue through our process over the next couple weeks I will know more.

Peggy Hammer has been hired as our new Human Resources Administrator. Peggy brings a wealth of human resources experience with her from Seattle City Light. Additionally, she has a lot of risk management experience which will be a significant help. Peggy's office is at the 13<sup>th</sup> and Market offices. If you are in the area please stop by and introduce yourself. We are very lucky to have Peggy join our city team.

I am very pleased to inform you that the IAFF Local (Fire Fighters) and the City have reached a three year agreement. Good job to the negotiators on both sides and a special thanks to Bill Kolden, the former General Services/HR Director.

Last, but certainly not least, trout fishing season is just around the corner and I am hopping that I will have some time this year to do some fishing on the Cowlitz and Chehalis. The fishing has been great on an unnamed river, but it is time to expand my horizons a bit locationally. If you have any suggested locations please do not hesitate to let me know.