



# NEWSLETTER

STRENGTH IN UNITY

Third Quarter 2022

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



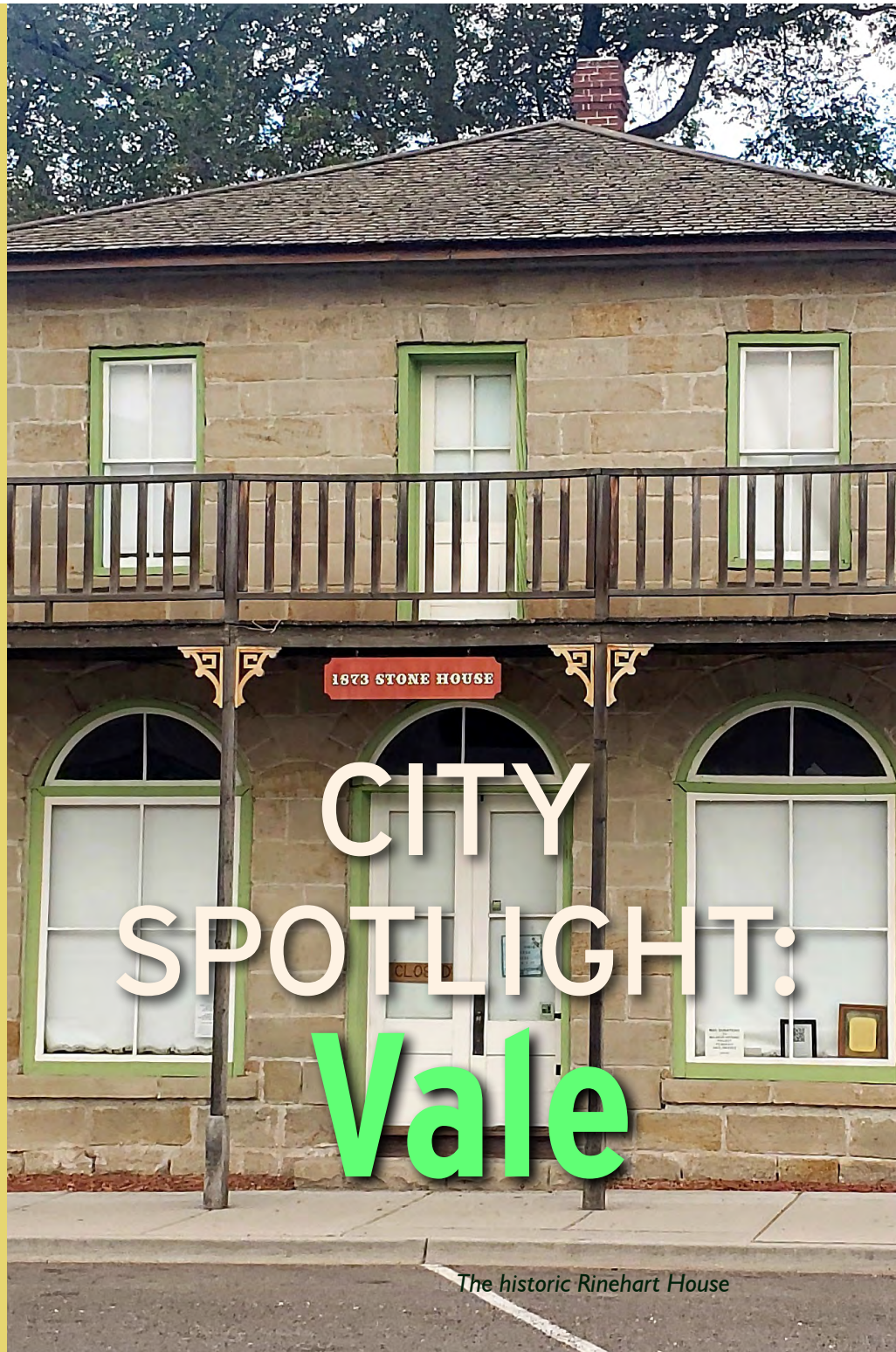
It was great to see all who made it out to Newport for our summer conference. I hope everyone enjoyed the training and found it valuable. After talking with many there I've

heard that many mayors, including myself, are being challenged by extremists. With such a polarized agenda I hope you all can stay the course and bring Oregon back to a more balanced state of governing. We have a lot of many good projects coming up and I am looking forward to seeing those through. I hope to see you all at the LOC conference in Bend this fall, good luck in November to those who are running.

Jeff Gowing  
Cottage Grove Mayor  
OMA President

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*The historic Rinehart House*



## CITY SPOTLIGHT:

### VALE

## A Historic Oregon Trail City



Hello and welcome to the City of Vale, Oregon! Vale is the county seat of Malheur County, and is located in the southeastern portion of the state, about 12 miles west of the Idaho border. The community was incorporated by the Oregon Legislative Assembly on February 21, 1889. Originally incorporated as the Town of Vale, it became the City of Vale in 1905. In 1887, Vale was named the

first Malheur County seat.

Vale is a historic Oregon Trail city, as it was the first stop in Oregon along the Oregon Trail. Vale has multiple historical buildings that bear witness to the western migration of immigrants. Many of these buildings are embellished with 31 murals depicting the Oregon Trail and the history of this wonderful area. Each mural has a brief story of a period of time in Vale's past. One of these murals called, "The Trappers," brings to life the old story of mountain men camped along the banks of the Malheur River trading furs with Native Americans.



Another town favorite is a mural called "Added Horsepower," picturing a former service station and the transition from horse and buggy to the automobile. There have been many times that travelers have stopped to look



at one of the murals only to find that there are many more to be seen. When deciding to stay and view the murals these visitors also get a chance to visit our local businesses, which helps economically and lets them see what a great place Vale truly is!

The historic Rinehart House was the first permanent building in the area and gave Vale its original name: Stone House. This attractive sandstone building, located on the Oregon Trail, was completed in 1872 for the owners Lewis B. and Amanda Rinehart. They purchased the site from Jonathon Keeney who first settled the area and welcomed travelers to a small log dwelling he had on the south side of the Malheur River. The Rineharts opened the Stone House on New Year's Day in 1873 with a Grand Ball. The upstairs ballroom soon became the desired location for weddings and various social functions. Rinehart's Stone House became the nucleus around which the community of Vale developed. The Stone House was a wayside stop for weary travelers until the turn of the century. It was also a haven for settlers during the Bannock Paiute uprising of 1878. In 1972 the Rinehart Stone House was listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Today,





the Rinehart Stone House is open to visitors and is used to exhibit displays of period relics, interpretive exhibits about the Oregon Trail and crafts by local artisans.

Our great schools are known for their academic and athletic achievements. We are a community that is rich in Vale Viking pride! This pride is evident by the many Viking posters and paintings hanging in business windows and on sidewalks along our city's streets and homes. With one school at each level: elementary, middle and high school, you're always a Viking! Sports in Vale foster an amazing sense of community and pride!

We have the only municipal swimming pool in Malheur County, drawing generations of families for swim lessons, summer birthday parties, and water aerobics. In addition, Vale boasts many other outdoor recreational opportunities like hunting, fishing, hiking and prospecting that serve as great family adventures. Bully Creek Reservoir provides a scenic spot for camping, boating, and reunions.

Each year during the week of the 4th of July, Vale is bustling with people enjoying the rodeo and Oregon Trail Days events. This year the rodeo completed its 107th year while Wadleigh Park played host to vendors, exhibits and a car show. As always the 4th of July Parade was a great time for everyone who lined the streets, caught candy and shared in the patriotic event!

Last year the City of Vale and the Vale Community Coalition organized a Patriot Day event in remembrance of the 20th anniversary of the September 11th attack on the Twin Towers in New York. The event honored the fallen and also honored the current first responders of our area and military members. The Vale American Legion Post # 96 presented the colors while the National Anthem was beautifully sung. A BBQ was enjoyed by all with the fire department providing water entertainment for the kids. The event received high compliments and as a result, it has been tapped for a second year. The Vale community appreciates

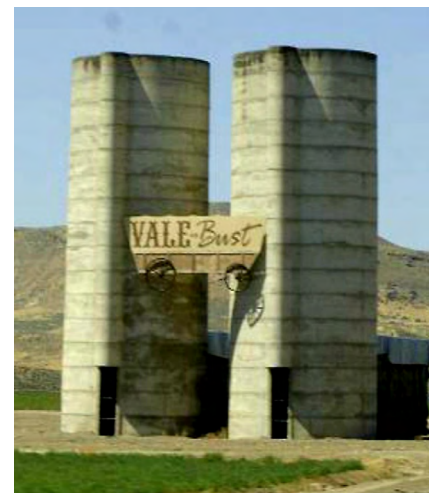
and supports the first responders of our area, as many are volunteers!

Vale is a great place to live, work, play, raise a family, and do business. We are one of the safest communities in the nation, and the City government is efficient, effective and fiscally sound.

When visiting Vale, it would be difficult to miss the influence that agriculture has on our town and its people. Many of Vale's residents own, operate, or work on farms and cattle ranches in the area. This way of life breathes values of hard work, loyalty, and the importance of family and friends into the community. The cattle business generates the most revenue in Malheur County due to expansive and open range land for cattle grazing. Not far behind in farming are our onions. The Treasure Valley furnishes 30% of the world's onions- the highest percentage of onions produced in any area of the world! Every year it is amazing to see the success and outcome of our farmers' diligence as truckloads carry harvested crops to their destinations.

One of the greatest things about Vale, and the thing I love most about it, are the people. I am constantly amazed

at how different individuals can work together to create shared values and the vision for this wonderful place, the place they have chosen to call home. All that Vale has become and all that Vale will be is rooted in their talents, dedication, and hard work, and I couldn't be more proud to serve as their mayor.





# 2022 OMA Summer Conference

*By Meadow Martell, Cave Junction Mayor and OMA Board Member*



The 2022 Oregon Mayor's Association was held this year in Newport, at Agate Beach Inn. This was my first OMA conference, and I was looking forward to being at the coast, having an opportunity to meet other mayors around

the state, share experiences, and maybe pick up some new tricks. I was not disappointed. The cooler weather, after a spate of high temperatures in southern Oregon was appreciated and the proximity to historic Nye Beach was refreshing. That was just the beginning.

OMA staff worked with the city of Newport to put together a showcase of optional activities including a golf tournament, nature walk, the Great Amazing Race Scavenger Hunt, a Marine Discovery Tour, and Newport city tours highlighting Urban Renewal Districts and a working bayfront including Newport's marine science industry and the Hatfield Marine Science Center.

The conference started with a social gathering at the Oregon Coast Aquarium, a delightful and interesting place to hang out, meet, and greet. The highlight was a silent auction featuring gift baskets brought by mayors from all over the state. Funds raised went to the OMA scholarship fund.



Let me assure you, an OMA conference is not all play and no work. The conference was well balanced with a mix of statewide mayor updates, a keynote address from Mayor Jake Spano from St. Louis Park, Minnesota and a session previewing some expected initiatives in the 2023 legislative session. Break out sessions to choose from included using social media effectively, how to successfully impact State and Federal legislators, responding to the homelessness crisis, bringing city councils together, barriers to serving as a local government leader, opportunities and



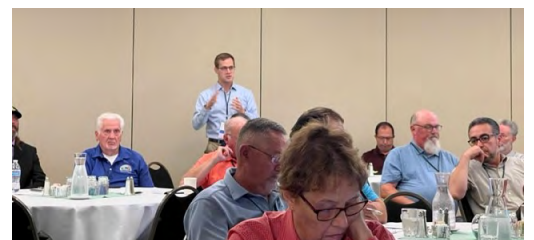
limitations of financing city programs and services, and how the Oregon Army and Air National Guard can help communities respond to natural disasters, pandemics, civic unrest, emergencies, and much more. There were round table opportunities to meet with mayors from small, medium, and large cities and plenty of time during breaks, luncheons, and dinners to socialize and meet new friends. It was stimulating and exciting to be with over 100 mayors from around the state. I brought a collection of new ideas and connections back home with me.

One of my most inspirational and inspiring experiences was the luncheon for the 2021-2022 statewide "If I Were Mayor..." contest winners. It was moving to meet the winners and see their entries. Depending on the age group there was a poster, a written piece, or a digital media submission. They remarkably captured the best of what it means to be a mayor.

All in all, the conference was a rewarding and energizing experience. Not surprisingly, mayors are a smart, fun group of people to hang out with!



# OREGON MAYORS ASSOCIATION



# 2022 Mayors Leadership Award & Award of Merit Recipients Recognized

*By Beth Wytoski, Dayton Mayor and OMA Past President*



The OMA Summer conference brought lots of highlights including great sessions, fun networking events, and incredible weather to enjoy the beauty of our state. One of my favorite events, though is always the awards banquet. It is so rewarding to watch recipients express genuine joy and gratitude at being nominated for celebration by their own communities and being confirmed by their colleagues around the state. The mayors who make the award determinations have a difficult job, choosing from many deserving applicants, who will receive the applause, when we know we all work so hard for our communities. The Leadership Committee this year included Mayor Rod Cross of Toledo, Mayor John McArdle of Independence, Mayor Lucy Vinis of Eugene, Mayor Jeff Gowling of Cottage Grove, and myself, Mayor Beth Wytoski of Dayton. Each of us, having previously received the award, are keenly aware of what the acknowledgement means and how selections impact the winners.

The Leadership Award, the ultimate award for the Oregon Mayors Association was established in 1993 to recognize the contributions Oregon Mayors make to their communities year after year. Leading our cities requires years of dedication and commitment; time and energy. This all comes at a personal sacrifice as the hours we spend working for our cities are generally volunteer and take away from time that could be spent on our careers, families, or selves. And incredibly, I don't think Mayors ever regret the time poured into the places and people we love. Within the Leadership award, three categories have been established to make access to awards more equitable. The competition is divided into small, medium, and large cities. The committee can also select a recipient

of the Award of Merit, which may be a newer mayor, an outgoing mayor, or a mayor who has created local change and is still working on broader regional networking.

For considering the 2022 awards, there were thirteen nominations, and all were qualified. I had the great honor of presenting the Small City Leadership Award to the incredible Mayor of Fossil, Carol MacInnes. Carol has been a longtime resident of Fossil and has worn many hats throughout her years of service. She spent more than 20 years on the county budget committee. She has volunteered with youth including 4H, cooking, cheerleading, and Sunday school. She worked to form the Northeast Wheeler County Health District to save a local health clinic, improving access to resources for her neighbors and beyond. The clinic survives still today. She served with the Special Transportation Project and ambulance service as a 24/7 volunteer first responder for more than 23 years and still pitches in. She also held a school board seat and actively worked to recruit staff and other resources to improve education outcomes in the district. And of course, on top of all of the other duties, Carol was elected as Mayor in 2015 and has aggressively pursued resources to address infrastructure needs including a wastewater project. Currently, the City, with the benefit of her work, is working on an ASR (Aquifer Storage and Recovery) project to improve the water supply and reduce the need for restrictions.

Mayor MacInnes even pitches in at City Hall to work toward special projects or even cover staffing gaps, sometimes for months at a time, to guarantee the city's forward momentum. As Mayor, Carol



became involved in the Oregon Mayors Association and has served on the Board of Directors since 2019, providing a valuable perspective of Eastern Oregon priorities, challenges, and rural experiences. Her steady, compassionate leadership including home checks and calls to residents throughout the pandemic to ensure household



supplies and needs were met. Her staff summed her up by stating that “this community knows their Mayor cares.” During the awards ceremony, Carol was joined by her husband, children, and granddaughter who all shared in her joy and gratitude.

Congratulations Mayor MacInnes!

The Medium City Leadership Award was presented to Mayor Cecilia Koontz, of Monmouth. Cec has served her community in a variety of capacities on top of Mayor including City Councilor, Treasurer of the Monmouth-Independence Community Foundation, Finance Committee of the Monmouth-Independence Chamber of



Commerce, Monmouth Economic Development Commission, and the Western Oregon University Board of Trustees. Mayor Koontz was also an original participant and subsequently a trainer for Ford Family Foundation Leadership work. Cec's leadership extends from City Hall into local schools, businesses, philanthropic organizations, and her neighbor's lives - which are directly improved

because of the work she does. The multiple letters that nominated Cec referred her critical contributions in many areas including the All-Hands Leadership Team that was formed when it became clear that the growing crisis from COVID brought changes that needed to be addressed collaboratively. Even as participants and topics have evolved, this development changed the way local governments and agencies work together. Mayor Koontz helped lead the charge to initiate a social distancing campaign later followed by a vaccine campaign. She also worked especially hard to protect disproportionately affected communities with tougher access to healthcare including the provision of proven strategies to the Governor's Office for connecting the Latino community to programs for testing, contact tracing, and vaccine education. The Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments recently honored the team with its regional cooperation award, recognizing the collaborative efforts and efficacy of Mayor Koontz. But that's not all! Cec has also been a key player in efforts by Monmouth and Independence to increase healthcare resources and improve accessibility, including mental health services - which many of us know saves lives. Nominating letters lauded Mayor Koontz with praise regarding engagement

of regional leaders, state and federal lawmakers, and other agencies to benefit her city and the region. They also commented on her respect and care for her constituents and colleagues. One letter said “all you need to do is ask and Cec will help... she is someone you can count on to always be there.”

Congratulations Mayor Cecilia Koontz!

Mayor Keith Mays was joined by his family as he received the Large City Leadership Award. Keith has dedicated 24 years of his life to serving his community through leadership roles with the city of Sherwood, regional associations, and the State of Oregon. He has been a planning commis-

sioner, council president, and mayor. But he didn't just show up locally. Keith has always worked to support other leaders, better other Mayors, and engaging with broad partners and stakeholders to bring about positive movement for his community. He has also taken leadership with the



OMA and the LOC, including during tough organizational moments where his strength and reliability were critical. A prime example was Mayor Mays' presidency of the LOC during the pandemic, during which he listened to diverse messages, opinions, and experiences from around the state to find common ground and a path forward. In local work, he has always focused on making Sherwood a great place to live and pursued meaningful results that would help the lives of his neighbors. Under his tenure, the population of Sherwood doubled! From 10,000 people to 20,000 people and as the city grew and changed, it was Keith's focus on the positive that protected the community from turmoil, as is often seen when there are growing pains. Mayor Mays championed many projects that have visibly and invisibly improved lives in Sherwood and will protect its livability into the future. Some of these projects included: a new city hall and library, new parks and improvements including the addition of a splash pad, the installation of the first skate park, rebuilding the veteran's memorial, management of two Urban Renewal Districts, and funding improvements to local trails, roads, and bridges. Additionally, Keith was praised for his leadership during the pandemic. Early on, Keith championed a local eviction protection to keep families and businesses in

their rentals. Later, with Keith's help, the city was able to offer one of the first COVID businesses grant programs to help keep the economy afloat. When there were more applicants than resources, Keith doubled the size of the program to avoid leaving deserving applicants out. And most impressively, these programs were stood up before CARES or ARPA funding was made available. Keith has been a tireless advocate for his city and community, as one of his nominators stated, "Keith always leaves things better than when he starts."

Congratulations Mayor Keith Mays!

Our final award for the evening was awarded to former Mayor Scott Hill of McMinnville, who left his post and the OMA to be in Utah to support extended family. Scott's elected service was long and productive, starting with his City Council election in January of 2005 after many years on the budget committee. He became Mayor in December of 2016 when his predecessor resigned to take another elected position. He stayed in that role for more than 5 years and oversaw some major accomplishments including a McMinnville Urban Renewal District, a transportation bond to overhaul the city streets, construction of a civic center and police department building and, vitally for home availability, expansion of the urban growth boundary. Mayor Hill has not limited his influence, though, to his elected seat and city work as his activity list reads like a who's who list of community action. He has served the Downtown Association, the Library Foundation, United Way, the Lung Association, and the Oregon Partnership. He's advocated for advancement of the Newberg-Dundee bypass project and helped facilitate funding for ongoing progress, testifying in Salem and Washington DC about the importance of the work. Mayor Hill was appreciated for often praising the efforts of staff, who are commonly overlooked when credit is distributed.

Congratulations to Scott Hill!

While our motto is "strength in unity," that only stands up because our incredible organization is made up of individuals like these - people willing to serve sacrificially, put others before themselves, and share greatness so that we may all do better and be better.



## Trivia Question:

How did the Farewell Bend State Recreation Area get its name?

*Answer on back page.*



# Recognizing the 2021/22 *If I Were Mayor* Contest Winners

**By Teri Lenahan, North Plains Mayor and OMA President-Elect**

Each year, the members of the Oregon Mayors Association partner with local school districts to promote the *If I Were Mayor* contest. The contest provides an opportunity for all students in grades 4 through 12 to learn about local government through the eyes of a mayor. By learning about local government in their communities, students are encouraged to share their creative ideas about what they would do as mayor of their city. (Spoiler alert, students from St. Helens rocked this contest this year!)

Students in grades 4 and 5 are asked to submit their ideas via a poster. For students in grades 6 through 8, they are asked to submit their ideas via an essay. High school students must create a digital media presentation which explains what they would do as mayor.

First place statewide winning students in each of the three categories won \$500 and were acknowledged at the awards luncheon held during the OMA Summer Conference in Newport, OR. Second and third place winning students won \$300 and \$100 respectively and received their prizes at local city or school presentations.



For this year's elementary school category, 23 students submitted posters describing what they would do as mayor. The elementary school winner was Ellie Luke from Yankton Arthur Academy in St. Helens. Second place went to Lilianna Anderson from Imlay Elementary in Hillsboro, and third place went to Daytona Ramirez from Oakridge Elementary School in Oakridge.

The middle school category saw 20 students who submitted essays explaining what they would do as mayor. First place went to Taylor Rose Parsons from Columbia Co. Christian School in St. Helens. Second place went to Nola

McGreer from Wheeler High School in Fossil and Third place went to Mikayla Chaffins from North Albany Middle School in Albany.



In the high school category, 2 students submitted digital media presentations identifying what they would do as mayor. First place went to Jacqueline Pena from Four Rivers Community School in Ontario and Second place went to Hayden Stram from St. Helens who is home schooled.



These students are our future leaders, and their families and mayors are very proud of them. The OMA mayors want to congratulate each student who took the time to share their thoughts and ideas about what they would do, in each of their cities, if they were mayor.

By engaging our youth in civics and public service opportunities, we can provide them with the space to be meaningfully involved in activities that affect them personally and their communities.

# ENGAGE THE STUDENTS IN YOUR COMMUNITY! PARTICIPATE IN THE 2022 - 2023 “IF I WERE MAYOR...” STUDENT CONTEST

The “If I Were Mayor...” Student Contest has started! Each mayor is encouraged to promote a local contest by the same name over the course of the school year so that local entries can be submitted to the statewide competition in April. The OMA Board of Directors encourages you to speak with your local school district and youth to encourage students to submit entries in three different categories:

- Elementary School (grades 4-5). Students in these grades are encouraged to submit posters detailing what they would do as mayor.
- Middle School (grades 6-8). Students in these grades are encouraged to submit essays detailing what they would do as mayor.
- High School (grades 9-12). Students in these grades are encouraged to submit a digital media presentation (formats allowed include: MP4 or online video format) detailing what they would do as mayor.

Submissions to the statewide competition are due April 7, 2023. Only one submission in each of the three categories is allowed per city.

Mayors should have received a packet of information on how to participate via email. To assist students in creating their entries, the OMA Board of Directors created educational materials outlining the role of a mayor and listing the services typically provided by cities in Oregon. These materials, along with an entry form for use in local contest, can be found on the OMA website at [www.oregonmayors.org](http://www.oregonmayors.org).

Judging for the statewide competition will take place in May. First-place winners will be invited to attend the awards luncheon held during the OMA Annual Conference in Hood River on August 12, 2023.

For more information and examples of previous entries, please visit [www.oregonmayors.org](http://www.oregonmayors.org). Questions about the contest can be directed to Angela Speier at (503)540-6599 or [aspeier@orcities.org](mailto:aspeier@orcities.org).

## 16th Annual Silent Auction – Another Record-Breaking Year

The Oregon Coast Aquarium served as the location for the 16th Annual Silent Auction as part of the OMA Summer Conference in Newport. Staff with the city of Newport and the aquarium deserve a huge thank you for their hospitality and serving as gracious hosts during the event. Attendees were able to wander through the aquarium and place their bids on 45 different baskets. Each basket was donated by cities from across Oregon. After the last auction table closed, a total of \$6,350 was raised. This was \$40 more than last year and coupled

with the \$342 raised from the 50/50 raffle means the OMA will have \$6,692 to place in their OMA Conference Scholarship Fund for 2023. The funds help mayors attend educational events and programs. Six mayors were provided full or partial scholarships to attend this year's Annual Conference.

Thank you to the generous mayors and their communities who provided the amazing baskets this year and a giant thank you to the bidders who purchased baskets.



# Turnover means more work, but also new opportunities

**By Henry A Balensifer III, Warrenton Mayor and OMA Board Member**



In this upcoming 2023 session a third of state representatives in the legislature will be either new or still in their first term, there will be 5 new senators, and new leadership in the senate. On the federal side, mayors in the 4th, 5th, and newly created 6th Congressional Districts will also have new representatives in Congress. This doesn't even

account for how many people are up for election, which means the turnover could be even greater. Overall, that's a lot of change!

Many mayors are going to see a "reset" in our influence in the legislature and congress as members familiar to us leave and new members come in. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but it does mean we have our work cut out for us. We must be on the forefront of cultivating both relationships and influence with our congressional delegates and our state legislators. At the OMA Summer Conference, the question of how to do this came up more than once. The answer is we must reach out and invite the members and their staff to our cities. Don't wait for them to schedule a townhall in your area, don't wait for the 30 minutes right before they visit to schedule a meeting—proactively reach out and show them your community.

Some strategies include reaching out to candidates and see if they have an hour to get in your car and show them around, you'd be surprised how many will jump at the opportunity. Most candidates worth their salt will try to meet with you and visit the community to understand the issues that will potentially come up in the campaign. Post-election, bring the winner out for further orientation of the issues. Show them your challenges, needs, and projects you aspire to have in your community. Follow

up emails or letters are important as well. Establishing a relationship before the legislature starts session is best practice and will make working with the member once session starts much easier.

A perhaps extreme example is what I am organizing in my town. We are working to get a group of legislators (not just my district) to tour our houseless camps that pose serious community safety risks with police escort to ensure they understand what is happening on the ground and why we need more resources. We'll then show them bodycam videos of dangerous encounters in the wooded camps and then meeting with local social workers so they can appreciate the difference in experience between service providers and police. I'm showing them the appalling condition of ODOT's ROWs in our city and how their "fixes" to road wear only makes conditions worse. Then they will tour our levees and tidegates and we'll brief them on how important it is for infrastructure funding to repair them. Then we will finish with positive notes, showing them the location of our future fishing and crabbing pier to ensure our disabled and non-boating residents can affordably access fish and crab. And finally, we will do a short walk on the our nature trails and have some frequent trail users walk by and talk about how much they appreciated state investment in the trails.

You don't have to be as elaborate as what I've just described, but the point is to make an impression and build a relationship. These are often easier to do with new people who aren't as familiar with the people and places than it is with those who are. If you can't get the elected to visit—don't pass on having their staff visit. More often than not, staff can become your advocate and get more done for you than the member.

As the election nears, OMA is working to better position mayors to have a deeper hand in setting policies beneficial to our cities.

## ***Applications to serve on a 2023 OMA Committee to be accepted in December***

*Beginning in December the OMA Board of Directors will be soliciting OMA members who are willing to serve on an OMA Committee in 2023. Committees perform vital functions for the OMA, from planning its annual conference to selecting recipients for the prestigious Mayor Leadership Award, OMA committees are what ensures the OMA is successful and meaningful. OMA has six committees, five of which are standing committees and active each year. OMA staff will send an application to OMA members via email and the OMA listserv.*



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## SAVE THE DATE



### **OMA Summer Conference**

**August 10-12, 2023**

**Best Western Plus Inn, Hood River**

#### **Trivia Question Answer:**

The Oregon Trail travelers said “goodbye” to the river!