



NEWSLETTER

STRENGTH IN UNITY

Fourth Quarter 2023

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



As I reflect on 2023, I'm compelled to share my personal thoughts on my journey as the President of the Oregon Mayors Association (OMA). It has

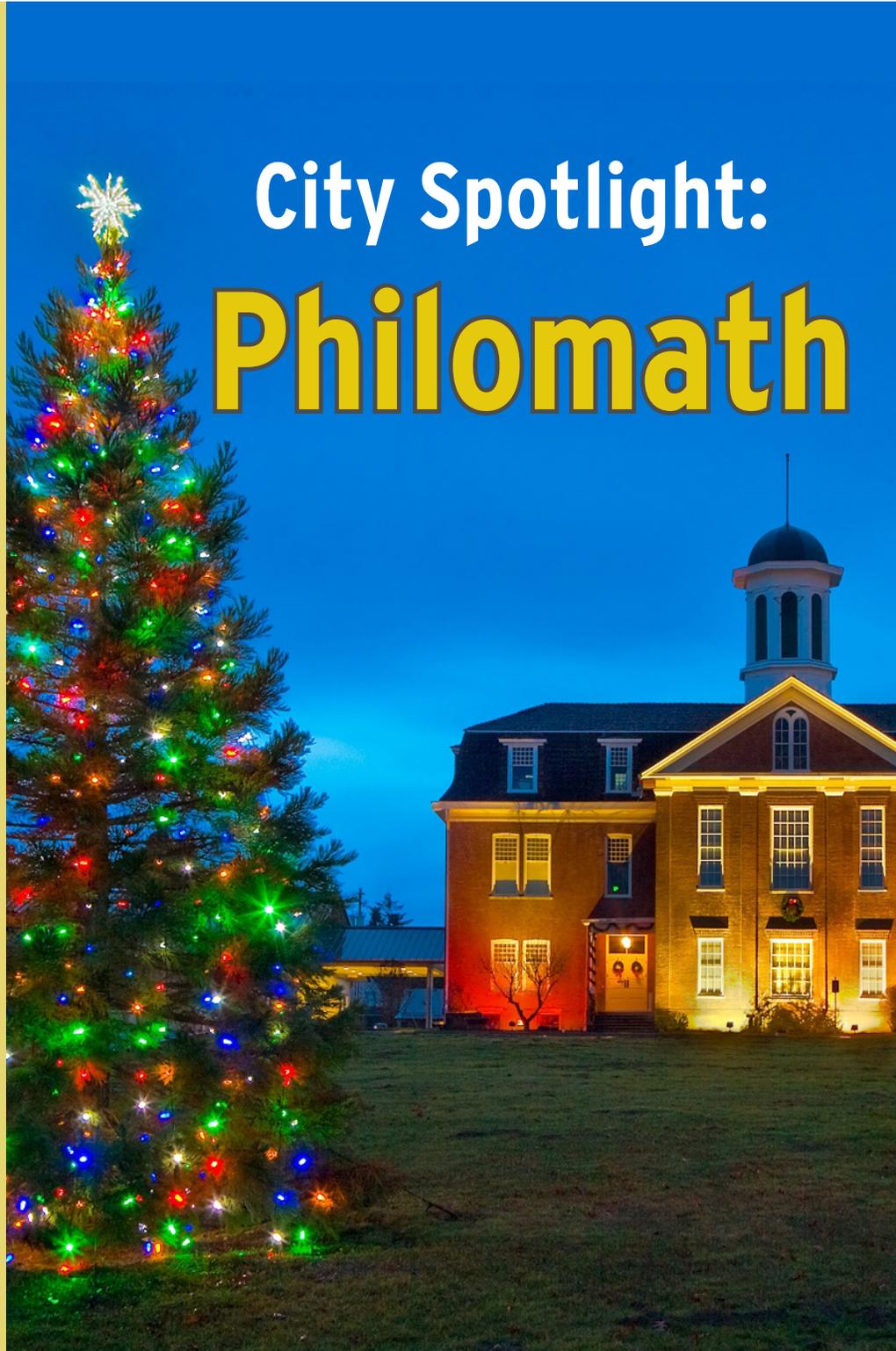
been a year marked by challenges, triumphs, and a profound sense of camaraderie that defines our shared municipal experience.

First and foremost, my heartfelt gratitude extends to the dedicated OMA Board of Directors and the Resource Committee. Their unwavering dedication and tireless efforts were pivotal in ensuring that each of the new and

continued on page 13

Inside This Issue

- City Spotlight: Philomath
- The Power of ChatGPT
- Housing: You Can't Build Without Infrastructure
- 2024 OMA Committee Solicitation
- Meet the 2024 OMA Board
- LOC Introduces Lobbying 101
- OMA "If I Were Mayor..." Student Contest Now Underway
- Save the Date: 2024 OMA Spring Workshop
- 2024 OMA Membership Drive Now Open!
- Save the Date: LOC Spring Conference
- LOC President's Regional Meetings
- 2024 Calendar of Events



City Spotlight: Philomath

CITY SPOTLIGHT: PHILOMATH

By Chas Jones, Mayor, Philomath

Since time immemorial, tcha Timanwi (“Place of the Spirits” in the Kalapuya language) has soared above the western skyline of Philomath (*fi-LOH-muth*), Oregon and the lands of the mid-Willamette Valley. As the tallest peak (at 4,097 ft. above sea level) in the Coast Range, the peak now known as Marys Peak was always a sacred place for the Champinefu band of the Kalapuya, who have always lived upon and cultivated lands along a quaint gravel bed stream now referred to as the Marys River. In the mid-1850s, most of the Kalapuya were forced to relocate to the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Indian Reservation and the reservation of the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians.

An increasing number of people started settling the Marys River valley in the 1800s. One notable resident from Philomath’s past is Reuben Shipley, a black pioneer who earned his freedom from his slave owner and also paid for the freedom of his wife from the shackles of slavery. Mr. Shipley was the Philomath landowner that donated property for Philomath’s cemetery in 1961 with the agreement that he and his family would be put to rest in that cemetery.

In 1867, the Philomath College was founded in the Marys River Settlement five miles to the west of Corvallis in Benton County. The name of the school was derived from two Greek words meaning “lover of learning.” The city of Philomath was incorporated in 1882 around the college campus and by the 2020 census, the population had increased to 5,369.

Philomath has long been identified as a rural community and was historically recognized for its apple and prune orchards, its cattle farms, its grain mills, its timber industry, and its rodeo. Between 1916 and 1918, the Philomath Rodeo was one of the region’s largest attractions and brought in more than 10,000 spectators each year. Today, the Philomath Frolic and Rodeo is one of our city’s main attractions and brings in thousands of people each year from across the Pacific Northwest.

Philomath is also known as ‘the City of volunteers’ and for a very long time has had a scrappy culture of doing a lot of amazing things through volunteer efforts. Today, many of our activities that attract folks from across the region are planned largely by volunteers. Philomath happily boasts an incredible farmers market on Sundays that runs from May to October and features locally produced vegetables, honey, flowers, baked goods, artisan vendors, and wood-fired pizza. Our Chamber of Commerce hosts our Philomath Sip and Stroll



each July. There’s an annual street fair and concert hosted by Philomath’s own Dirt Road Brewery. Our local Police Foundation hosts their chili-cookoff. The Vinwood Taphouse and the Meeting Place regularly host live music from featured regional musicians. Our city’s Park Committee volunteers to host our summer concert series in our City Park on Sundays. Our Frolic Parade, our Marys River Grange Hall, our monthly Chamber of Commerce luncheons, and our monthly Rotary Club gatherings are also largely hosted by volunteers. Our October Open Art Studio tour highlights our local artists and their wares. Lilly’s Lope for Hope is 5km run/walk benefit to raise suicide awareness in memory of a young Philomath teenager who we lost in 2013. Philomath is a community that comes together.

Chas Jones is the current mayor of Philomath and a board member of the Oregon Mayors Association. His out of town friends often refer to Philomath as having some of the best restaurants in the mid-Willamette Valley. And there certainly

are some gems given our small rural footprint. We happily boast the amazing pastries and farm-to-table breakfasts and dinners (Dizzy Hen & Gathering Together Farm); an eclectic mix of Thai, Italian, and American foods (Woodsmen); a strictly gluten free restaurant with a special focus BBQ (Eats and Treats); pizza, adult beverage, and other foods (Dirt Road Brewery and Vinwood Taphouse); unique variations on Mexican cuisine (Ixtapa, La Rockita, and el Cruzero); Donuts (Sissi's); fresh vegan bread (Sunrise Bakery); coffee and associated wares (Timber Towne Coffee & Human Bean); or quick foods to go (McDonald's, Dairy Queen, Subway, and Figaro's). Or if you're in the mood to go wine tasting, we are in the heart of the Willamette Valley, you can visit any number of our local wineries, which include Compton, Pheasant Court, Lumos, Harris Bridge, Tye, and more. Or you can call in the robots.



ROBOTS? Did I forget to mention our small town robots? I guess that was because I had not yet gotten to our Philomath based industries. But yes, Philomath has its very own home-grown robotics company (Nova Dynamics), which produces the Daxbot. Dax is a "cute" delivery robot that runs around the streets of Philomath delivering food from several of our local restaurants. When you visit Philomath and are staying at our

motel or one of our Airbnbs, I highly encourage you to order food from Dirt Road, La Rockita, or TimberTown Coffee and ask that it be delivered by Dax.

Philomath is actually home to some pretty innovative companies. Both Alyrica and Pioneer offer telecommunications services, but we also have Lazarus 3D (3 dimensional printing of human internal organs that can be used for practicing surgical procedures) and GeneTools (I can't even pretend to understand the purpose of manufacturing morpholino antisense oligos, but that's what they do).

There are plenty of other local businesses, but I'll mention two others. Moku chocolates is a Philomath-based artisan chocolate manufacturer that produces sustainability harvested chocolate in a way that directly benefits the cacao farmer. The other unique local business that we are incredibly proud of is the *Philomath News*. Most small communities lost their local news paper long ago, but this hyperlocal news source was founded in 2020 by a local reporter and is funded through voluntary donations. To date, the *Philomath News* is available daily online and the community is very thankful to have it.

We also have an amazing collection of nonprofits and social service agencies that support families and persons in need.

We are incredibly grateful especially to those that are based in Philomath such as, Philomath Community Services (food-bank, gleaners program, and more), Maxtivity (arts programs for youth and families), Philomath Youth Activities Club, Strengthening Rural Families, Benton Habitat for Humanity, and others.

A few of Philomath's long-term priorities include traffic speeds (we are on Hwy 20/34), drinking water supply, local jobs, economic development, affordable housing, and getting a local grocery store. In 2023, we are actively addressing a number of these priorities and "Under Construction" could probably have been used as our city theme this year. In partnership with ODOT, the state highway is being reimagined and reconstructed in 2023-24. In conjunction with the highway project, the city has also been working on its Streetscapes project, which is a city beautification and economic development project. Simultaneously, we recently kicked off our façade improvement grant program for local businesses. We have also initiated construction on a new water treatment plant and storage reservoir for drinking water.

Regarding affordable housing and attracting a grocery store, the city has identified both as priority topics in our strategic plan. We expect to see additional infill of housing in the coming years and any additional construction will continue to provide relatively affordable housing to our residents.

With regards to that grocery store, with our current population, our thriving sense of community, and available commercially zoned lands, if anyone knows of someone looking for a ripe economic opportunity? If so, please send them our way!

From my biased perspective, Philomath is one of Oregon's hidden gems among our small cities. Our tight knit community is worth visiting and spending some time exploring. So please consider checking us out and give me a call before you do. I'd love to offer my guiding services to any of Oregon's mayors when you come to town.

The Power of ChatGPT

By Jessica Engelke, North Bend Mayor

Recently, along with my IT husband Steven Ryan, I had the opportunity to present at the Chamber of Commerce on the topic **“Unleashing the Power of ChatGPT for Your Business: A Game-Changer in AI Technology.”** This presentation highlighted how ChatGPT, a leading-edge AI tool developed by OpenAI, is transforming business operations and customer interactions. Recognizing the importance and relevance of this topic for a wider audience, I have distilled the top tips and insights from that presentation into this article, aiming to share these valuable perspectives with the Oregon Mayors Association. Here, we explore ChatGPT's functionalities and its multi-faceted role in enhancing business processes.

In the dynamic world of business technology, ChatGPT emerges as a groundbreaking tool, reshaping the way companies interact with customers, process data, and conduct daily operations.

Understanding ChatGPT

Developed by OpenAI and released on November 30, 2022, ChatGPT operates on advanced AI technologies like GPT-3.5 and GPT-4, offering versatile solutions via its large language model. Accessible at chat.openai.com/chat, it's a leap forward in AI-driven communication and data analysis.

Embracing AI in Business

In an era where AI like Siri and Google Assistant is ubiquitous, ChatGPT stands out by augmenting human potential, not replacing it. It serves as a digital assistant that enhances efficiency and creativity.

Dispelling AI Myths

A common misconception about AI like ChatGPT is that it possesses human-like consciousness or emotions. However, ChatGPT operates on data analysis and pattern recognition, devoid of real-time internet access, emphasizing the need for human oversight in verifying its outputs.

Top 10 Business Applications

ChatGPT's versatility shines in various business functions:

1. Customer Service: Offering 24/7 response to customer inquiries.
2. Market Analysis: Analyzing consumer data for market trend insights.

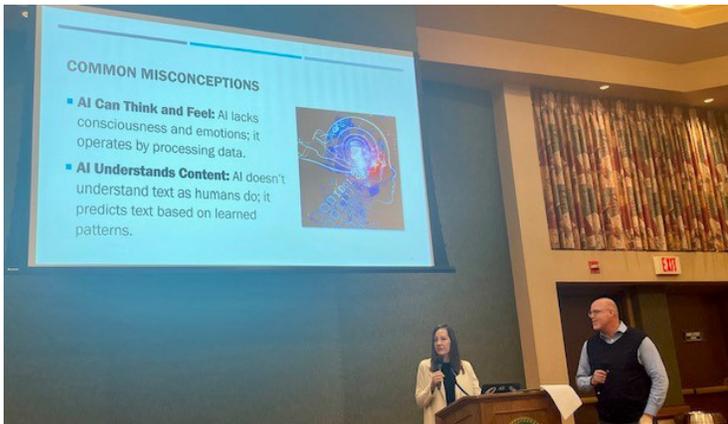


3. Content Creation: Crafting diverse content for blogs, social media, and websites.
4. Email Management: Automating email drafting and scheduling.
5. Product Recommendations: Providing personalized consumer suggestions.
6. Social Media Management: Helping in post scheduling and follower engagement.
7. Language Services: Aiding in translation and cultural localization.
8. Recruitment Support: Streamlining the hiring process.
9. Employee Training: Developing training materials for continuous learning.
10. Event Coordination: Managing schedules and providing reminders.

Broadening Horizons

Apart from business, ChatGPT excels in educational support, health and wellness advice, and even assists in creative fields like writing and cooking.

AI's market growth is undeniable, with projections showing a rise from \$58.3 billion in 2021 to \$309.6 billion by 2026. The surge in AI adoption, reduction in customer service costs, and enhancement of business productivity underscore the transformative impact of AI in the corpo-



- Educating employees about ethical AI use and its implications.
- Engaging stakeholders in discussions about AI deployment and its impact.
- Developing a framework for ethical decision-making related to AI.

By prioritizing these ethical considerations, businesses can harness the power of AI like ChatGPT responsibly, fostering trust and advancing innovation in a socially conscious manner.

Just the Tip of The Iceberg

As many of us recall the transformative moments of adapting to technologies like VCRs, cell phones, and the internet, we stand on the brink of another such pivotal shift with ChatGPT and similar AI applications. In the near future, we'll likely reminisce about the days before AI integration, recognizing the profound impact these technologies have had on our professional and personal lives. Just as we mark time with 'before' and 'after' the internet, we may soon find ourselves referencing the era 'before' and 'after' ChatGPT became an integral part of our business toolkit, signaling a new chapter in technological evolution.

The most crucial advice Steven and I shared during our presentation is simple yet essential: keep reading and keep learning. The technological train, exemplified by innovations like ChatGPT, is moving at an unprecedented speed, surpassing any advancements we've witnessed in our lifetimes. Embracing this journey is essential; those who hesitate risk not just falling behind but also placing their businesses at a significant disadvantage in an increasingly AI-integrated world.

rate world.

Fostering Critical Thinking

Contrary to the belief that AI might diminish critical thinking skills, technologies like ChatGPT actually provide a foundation for enhanced analytical and evaluative thinking. It's vital to engage critically with AI outputs to make informed decisions.

Adopting ChatGPT or other AI technology is a step towards harnessing a transformative power that drives innovation and efficiency. However, it's crucial to interact with AI-generated information thoughtfully, ensuring our critical thinking skills are not just preserved but continuously developed. Readers are encouraged to explore ChatGPT and witness its potential firsthand.

Ethical Considerations

As we embrace the transformative potential of AI technologies like ChatGPT, it's imperative to address ethical considerations and responsible use in business settings. Central to ethical AI deployment is the commitment to privacy, security, and fairness. Businesses must ensure that AI systems like ChatGPT protect user data. This involves adhering to data protection regulations and implementing robust security measures to prevent data breaches. It's crucial to use AI in a way that respects customer privacy and trusts. AI systems should be fortified against potential misuse and cyber threats. Regular updates and security audits are essential to maintain the integrity of AI tools and safeguard sensitive information.

Best Practices for Implementation

Responsible AI implementation includes:

- Regularly reviewing and updating AI systems to align with ethical standards.





Housing: You Can't Build Without Infrastructure

By Henry Balensifer, Mayor, Warrenton

Governor Kotek has an ambitious plan for increasing housing development statewide to 36,000 housing units per year. This is a laudable goal and while I hope it happens, the idiosyncrasies of “the Oregon Way” are now rearing their stubborn heads to stymie that goal. Achieving Gov. Kotek’s goal is not simply a matter of available builders and funding—although those are challenges. It absolutely is not just a matter of permitting costs, although in some jurisdictions that can be a factor. It’s going to boil down to the availability of sufficient infrastructure to connect and sustain that housing: water, sewer, stormwater, and roads. For the purpose of brevity, I’ll stick with sewer and water.

As Mayors it is our responsibility to be aware of these challenges. Most cities have significant needs for updating water treatment and wastewater plants regardless of the needs of new development. Aging infrastructure or simply just new standards is forcing the hands of many cities. In some Central and Eastern Oregon cities, the availability of water can be more of a concern than the ability to treat it, and not every city has a major industrial constituent to fund community infrastructure. For small cities, this can be an existential issue. While most grew up when Oregon was a land of plenty, many cities must now reckon with issues of scarcity.

Inflation is also causing an affordability crisis. Oregon’s property tax laws cap general fund tax revenue growth to around 3% if you don’t have major development going on. Add several years of inflation much greater than that, and cities find themselves in a veritable quandary. How do you pay to keep the level of service and treatment you have now, while affording to meet not only expanded capacity needs, but a higher level of service/treatment required now and in the future? In addition, the federal cost-share of water utility capital investment has fallen from 62.77% in 1977 to less than 10% in recent years when adjusted for inflation. Passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) represents a step in the right direction, but the cost-share decline presents serious challenges.

Understanding your water rights and how many years that will give you water availability at what growth rate per year is important for strategic planning. If you know

you will run out of water rights at your current growth rate in even 20 years—that means you have 20 years to update your water master plan and begin finding alternative sources and implementing conservation efforts to buy more time. If you have upgrades to your plant you are planning, have you considered where treatment requirements are headed, and not just the current standards? Will this require a new facility or equipment? These are questions to ponder now—not when you are facing shortages or the end of usable life on the treatment facility.

The same goes for sewer. Are you building a plant that meets current standards or are you moving towards newer technology and how that will likely create new standards for treatment? It’s widely considered that the direction standards are moving is to treat pharmaceuticals and other chemicals that are not currently being treated in most municipal sewer plants. At this point, does it make sense to spend millions on upgrades or new facilities to treat your wastewater to current standards—or to set your city up to be compliant as new standards come out? These are strategic questions you should be asking now so you can start considering these costs as you set next year’s and the long-term future of utility rates.

These questions and conversations aren’t on the top of most people’s minds. Many councilors and most constituents take the function of basic infrastructure for granted. But these conversations are vitally important to have now. It’s also important to be aware of these issues so that when state-level officials question what you’re doing to meet the goals they’ve imposed on you, you can provide them the basis for why they will need to invest in your city more.

In positive news, and in large part thanks to mayors’ advocacy, there is growing awareness in the legislature of the importance of infrastructure. With the housing crisis driving most policy discussions these days, there is opportunity for the fund local infrastructure projects that support new housing developments. It will be critical for your local legislators to understand both the needs and opportunities in your communities. Now is the time to reach out and share your expertise (and infrastructure needs) with state partners.



2024 OMA Committee Solicitation

The OMA Board of Directors is soliciting OMA members who are willing to serve on an OMA Committee in 2024. The Board will make 2024 committee appointments during their January Board meeting. A list of committees and their objectives is below.

Please complete and return this form **by Friday, January 19, 2024**, if you are interested in serving on one or more committees beginning February 1, 2024.

Name:

City:

Email:

Cell Phone:

Check one or more	Committee
	CONFERENCE PLANNING Plan the annual summer conference held July 18 – 20, 2024. In addition, determine scholarship recipients to attend the conference. This committee typically meets 3 – 5 times via Zoom between February – June.
	MAYORS LEADERSHIP AWARD The Mayors Leadership Award recognizes the valuable contributions made by mayors throughout Oregon in their communities. This committee reviews nominations and determines recipients of the award. This committee typically meets once or twice via Zoom in May/June.
	NOMINATING Review applications and recommend a slate of candidates to serve on the OMA Board of Directors for calendar year 2025. This committee is comprised of five persons, consisting of the Immediate Past President, two past presidents who still serve as mayor, and two OMA members who are not serving on the Board and who are not past presidents of the Board. This committee typically meets 1 -2 times via Zoom in September.
	STUDENT CONTEST SELECTION The student contest is announced at the summer conference with local submissions due to the OMA by April 5, 2024. This committee is responsible for determining statewide winners for each of the three categories: poster (grades 4- 5); essays (grades 6 – 8); and digital media presentations (grades 9 – 12). This committee typically meets once via Zoom in May.
	CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS This committee’s purpose is to review and propose changes to the OMA’s governing documents which include the Constitution, Bylaws and Policies. These changes must then be approved by the OMA board and membership. This committee is ad hoc and only meets as needed.
	RESOURCE This committee’s purpose is to assist the Board in fulfilling its responsibilities to serve as a resource and point of contact for new Oregon mayors. The committee will assist with planning the new mayor orientation program hosted in conjunction with the LOC’s Elected Essentials training, while also seeking to identify ways in which the OMA can be of better assistance to new mayors. This committee is expected to meet 2-3 times via Zoom between April and September and then as needed.

I am flexible and would like for the OMA Board of Directors to assign me to _____ (# of committees) that have the most need.

Return completed form by January 19, 2024, to Angela Speier at aspeier@orcities.org.

Meet the New OMA Directors



Mayor Cathy Clark, Keizer

Mayor Cathy Clark was first elected to Keizer City Council in 2006 and served two terms as a Councilor before being elected as Keizer's 6th mayor in 2014. She has worked in local and regional transportation planning and policy and is chair of the Salem Keizer Metropolitan Planning Organization. Since 2016, Mayor Clark has worked with regional partners in tackling housing and homelessness. She serves on the Board for the Mid-Willamette Valley Homeless Alliance, the Marion-Polk Continuum of Care. A former board member for League of Oregon Cities, Mayor Clark has served on LOC transportation and community development policy committees and currently is a board member for the LOC Women's Caucus. She also is a board member and former chair of the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments.

Cathy and her husband Kevin, a retired fire chief and a member of the Keizer Fire District Board of Directors, enjoy spending lots of time with family, particularly having fun with their four grandchildren.



Mayor Tom Vialpando, Vale

Mayor Vialpando served in the United States Air Force for 8 years as a firefighter and crew chief. He received a bachelors degree in Sociology and associates degree in Criminal Justice from Idaho State University. Since graduating from college, he has held various positions in social service and governmental fields, including working in mental health and veteran services.

Mayor Vialpando was elected the mayor of Vale in 2020 and is a Business Advisor at Treasure Valley Community College Small Business Development Center. His current community involvement includes serving on the Executive Boards for the Malheur Council on Aging and Community Services, Community in Action of Malheur/Harney Counties, Housing Authority of Malheur/Harney Counties, and Secretary of the Vale Chamber of Commerce. He is also an active member of the Vale Lions Club, Vale American Legion post #96, Vale Community Coalition, and Vale Alumni Association. Working to advocate for the local area, and making connections with people from different agencies and groups around the state has been an area of specific interest to Mayor Vialpando. Collaboration is key!

Mayor Tom Vialpando was born and raised in Southeast Idaho. He has been married for over 22 years to his wife, Jessica, who works as a speech-language pathologist at the Malheur Education Service District. They have 2 children, Zach and Savanna. In his spare time, he enjoys being with his children and grandchildren, camping, and recreating in the great outdoors.

Continuing OMA Directors



Rod Cross
OMA President
Mayor of Toledo



Henry Balensifer
OMA President-Elect
Mayor of Warrenton



Teri Lenahan
OMA Past President
Mayor of North Plains



Patty Mulvihill
Secretary-Treasurer
LOC Executive Director



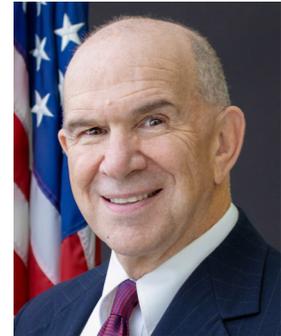
Chas Jones
OMA Director
Mayor of Philomath



Tamie Kaufman
OMA Director
Mayor of Gold Beach



Meadow Martell
OMA Director
Mayor of Cave Junction



Rich Mays
OMA Director
Mayor of The Dalles

Thank you departing board members



Jeff Gowing
Mayor of Cottage Grove
OMA Past President



Jim Trett
Mayor of Detroit
OMA Director

LOC Introduces Lobbying 101 Toolkit

The League of Oregon Cities (LOC) is introducing a new Lobbying 101 Toolkit, the purpose of which is to help city officials in Oregon effectively communicate with and lobby their state elected leaders for needed policy reforms and supplemental funding. Within the Lobbying 101 Toolkit, which will be released on the LOC website in late December, city officials will learn:

- The basics of the Oregon Legislature, including how to find your legislator, how to track a bill, how bills and their amendments should be read, and information on the importance of committees in the legislative making process.
- How to build relationships with legislators, key staff members, and committee chairs.

- The difference between lobbying for substantive policy reform, versus lobbying for needed supplemental revenue, and how to do both successfully.

This Toolkit will be comprised of short training videos, frequently asked questions, sample documents, and a host of other written tools that will help city officials more effectively engage with their state leaders for the betterment of their local communities.

If you have questions about how to work with state elected officials or agency staff, please know that the LOC lobbying team is here to help. Mayors can contact any of the LOC lobbyists for assistance.



Jim McCauley
Legislative Director
Direct: (503) 540-6593
jmccauley@orcities.org
Oversight of League's legislative program; transportation, wildfire



Ariel Nelson
Lobbyist
Direct: (541) 646-4180
anelson@orcities.org
Advocacy issues: Land use, housing, homelessness, eminent domain



Lindsay Tenes
Lobbyist
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Advocacy issues: finance and taxation, economic development



Michael Martin
Lobbyist
Direct: (971) 382-2069
mmartin@orcities.org
Advocacy issues: Water, wastewater, environment, natural resources, solid waste



Nolan Pleše
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Direct: (971) 382-2069
nplese@orcities.org
Advocacy issues: Telecommunications, broadband and cable, energy, environment, cybersecurity



Scott Winkels
Lobbyist
Direct: (971) 428-7275
swinkels@orcities.org
Advocacy issues: Ethics, public safety, community corrections, courts, personnel, PERS, collective bargaining, public contracting, and public records and meetings.

OMA “If I Were Mayor...” Student Contest Now Underway

The OMA “If I Were Mayor...” Contest can take place any time during the school year—as long as the winning entries reach the LOC by the **April 5, 2024** deadline.

Here is how it works:

- Your city has a local contest (can be announced at city council meetings, promoted through newspapers, newsletters, at youth organizations, etc.)
- One winner from each category of local contests can submit their entries to the state contest for a chance to win a cash prize and recognition.
- First place winners of the state contest are invited to the OMA Summer Conference luncheon for presentation of the prizes.

This fun and educational contest can be incorporated into your school year’s curriculum by reaching out to your

local schools, youth organizations, and home-school organizations. Please consider giving your students the chance to learn more about public service and local government, and a chance to voice their ideas. They come up with some GREAT ideas that mayors have taken back to their cities.

All the information you need to promote your contest can be found at: www.oregonmayors.org/StudentContest. This includes entry forms, flyers, as well as information about the services cities provide and what a mayor does. Another great tool to help educate students about local government is the Civic Education Toolkit produced by the Oregon City/County Management Association.

Contact: Angela Speier, Project and Affiliates Manager – aspeier@orcities.org



SAVE THE DATE

OMA Summer Conference

July 18-20, 2024

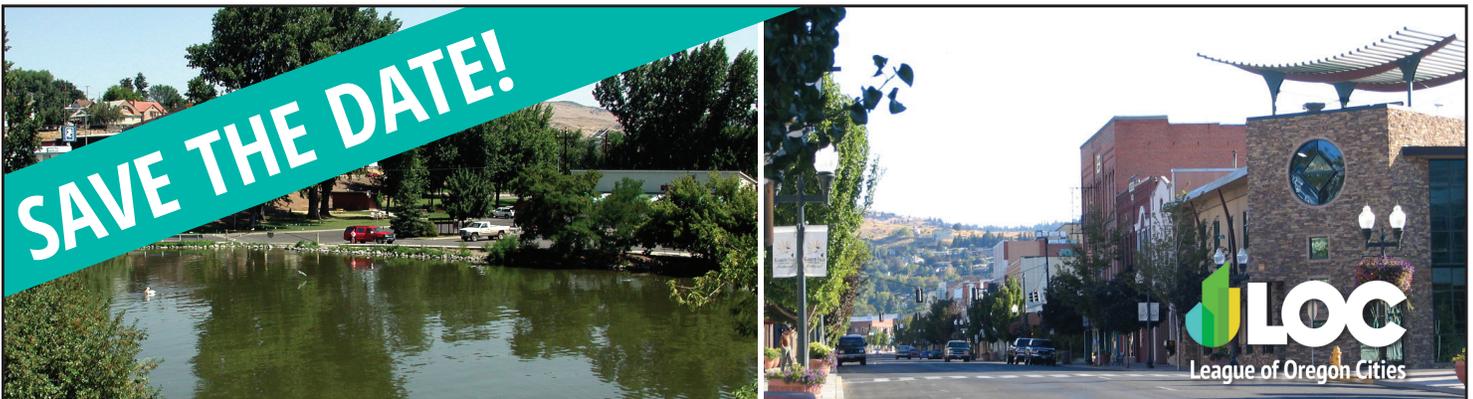
Running Y Ranch,
Klamath Falls



2024 OMA Membership Drive Now Open!

The Oregon Mayors Association (OMA) is now accepting registrations for 2024 membership. Make sure you renew your membership and encourage your neighboring mayors, especially those who have been in office for a short time, to enroll if they are not already members of OMA. It's their opportunity to join over three-quarters of their fellow mayors in Oregon in making the OMA a strong voice for their city and a collaborative resource for mayors. Remember, one of the most valuable benefits of the OMA is the opportunity to meet and network

with your fellow mayors. Sharing ideas, problems and issues with others can lead to solutions that work for your community. Members have access to the OMA app which includes an up-to-date directory with the contact information for all 241 mayors and also have access to the OMA listserv which allows mayors to quickly receive advice from peers. Membership forms must be submitted by **January 31, 2024** in order to retain your listserv access. Find forms online at www.oregonmayors.org.



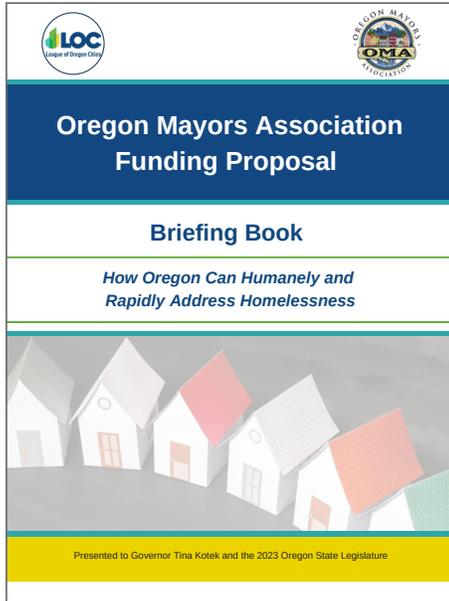
Local Government Spring Conference

April 25-26, 2024 in Klamath Falls

The LOC's 2024 Local Government Spring Conference will be held at the Running Y Resort in Klamath Falls. This two-day event will be a great opportunity for public officials from around the state to network and learn about issues impacting all cities. Registration opens **February 2024** at www.orcities.org.

President’s Message *(continued from page 1)*

returning mayors had the tools and resources they needed to approach their roles with the utmost professionalism, compassion, and accuracy.



Download the OMA Homelessness Taskforce Briefing Book from the OMA website at www.oregonmayors.org/oma/page/oma-taskforce-homelessness

to express my gratitude for Ariel, Angela, Jim, and Patty (and all LOC staff, I know I’m missing many names here) for helping us navigate this past year. All the meetings, the press conferences, the speeches, the Zoom calls and the hand-holding were SO appreciated! What a team!

I urge each of you to continue to press your legislators to address the funding gaps that impact our unhoused individuals and the organizations supporting them.

My mayoral journey began seven years ago with a vision of unity and proactivity in my city. I had no idea the path would lead to this group, the OMA, and I love that I have friends in Cave Junction, Vale, Cottage Grove and beyond.

I also want to give a monumental shoutout to the invaluable collaboration of the OMA Homelessness Taskforce and frankly, all mayors who advocated with our state leaders. Although we did not secure our ask, we have secured a rightful seat at the table (and I’m not talking the kids’ Thanksgiving table) where critical conversations are happening. I also want

Serving as your OMA President has been a rewarding blend of strategic moves and personal growth. The first half of this year, particularly in navigating the intricacies of the homelessness proposal, tested not only my professional mettle but also my personal resilience. The true game-changer throughout these challenges was that I could rely on my OMA community to listen, to share your stories, exchange challenges and impart your wisdom. Thank you!

Looking ahead, the OMA remains committed to fostering discussions on diversity in leadership. In an era where understanding and collaboration are pivotal, these conversations will play a crucial role in shaping the future of our association. If you haven’t done so, I encourage you to step up and get involved with the OMA by being on a conference program committee or act as a mentor to a new mayor.

As the curtain falls on my tenure as the OMA President in 2023, I am humbled by the tapestry of victories, challenges and the resilient community we’ve collectively built. The torch now passes to Mayor Rod Cross in 2024, a leader whose commitment to OMA unity sets the standard for us all. I am confident that under his guidance, our association will not only endure but flourish. As we look ahead to our next summer conference in Klamath Falls, let us not merely maintain, but fortify our interconnectedness. It is through this unity that we draw strength to foster passion and purpose, ensuring the continued betterment of our diverse and vibrant communities. Until we meet again, may the spirit of collaboration guide your endeavors, and may the OMA continue to be a beacon of progress and unity for mayors across Oregon.

Best Regards,

Mayor Teri

2024 Calendar of Events

Date	Event	Location
January 31	OMA Board Meeting	Virtual
April 24	OMA Board Meeting	Klamath Falls
April 25	OMA Spring Workshop	Klamath Falls
April 25-26	LOC Spring Conference	Klamath Falls
July 18-20	OMA Summer Conference	Klamath Falls
July 21	OMA Board Meeting	Klamath Falls
October 16	OMA Board Meeting	Bend
October 17	OMA Fall Workshop & Annual Membership Meeting	Bend
October 17-19	LOC Annual Conference	Bend
December 2	OMA Board Meeting	Virtual



2024 All-America City Award

Strengthening Democracy through Local Action & Innovation

The National Civic League seeks to identify communities that are finding innovative ways to equitably engage community members in activities that strengthen democratic processes, like making it easier to vote, engage in community affairs, and serve in leadership roles.



Join these All-America Cities from Oregon!

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Albany (1984, 1985) | Independence (2014) |
| Cornelius (2019) | Lane County (2017) |
| Cottage Grove (1968, 2004) | Milton-Freewater (1961) |
| Eugene (1969) | Portland (1980) |
| Grants Pass (1986) | Salem (1960, 1983) |

Now accepting applications and letters of intent!
Letters of intent due 12/14/23, applications due 2/13/24.

[Learn more: www.nationalcivicleague.org/america-city-award/](http://www.nationalcivicleague.org/america-city-award/)



Trivia Question:

Philomath is in Benton County;
how did Benton County get its name?



Join the LOC for 2024 President's Regional Meetings

Please join LOC's 2024 President, Mayor Dave Drotzmann of Hermiston, as he leads a discussion on the difficulties cities face in maintaining sufficient and stable revenue sources and the work LOC is doing to try and identify solutions to bring cities needed relief in maintaining their fiscal health. For the majority of cities within Oregon, property taxes remain the primary source of consistent revenue to fund basic and needed services. Unfortunately, Oregon's current property tax structure does

not provide enough funding for cities to meet even the most essential needs of its residents and business owners. As cities look to alternative resource streams, the LOC will be discussing the successes and failures from across the state. Please join President Drotzmann and your regional colleagues in a statewide conversation looking for solutions that may bring beneficial relief to you community.

All meetings will be 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. Registration opens in January at orcities.org.

Columbia Gorge (Region 8)

March 21 – Location TBD

Central Oregon (Region 9)

March 22 – Fossil

Eastern Oregon (Region 12)

April 17 – Location TBD

Northeastern Oregon (Region 11)

April 18 – La Grande

North Coast and Columbia County (Region 1)

May 3 – St. Helens

Central Coast (Region 5)

August 21 – Lincoln City

South Coast (Region 6)

August 22 – North Bend

Southern Oregon (Region 7)

September 12 – Ashland

South Central Oregon (Region 10)

September 13 – Location TBD

Metro (Region 2)

September 18 – Gresham

Northern Willamette Valley (Region 3)

November 7 – Jefferson

Southern Willamette Valley (Region 4)

November 8 – Coburg



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Trivia Question Answer:

Benton County was named after Senator Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri. Senator Benton was a champion of westward expansion by the United States, a cause that became known as Manifest Destiny.