



# CITY OF SILVERTON

SUMMER 2012

## Clouds on the horizon ...

Yes, those really are storm clouds on the horizon.

As a city, we have been spending our "rainy day" cash reserves – we did it last year and continue to do so in this year's budget. Honestly, we can't keep doing this much longer!



Mayor Stu Rasmussen

What was once a nice "savings account" to tide us over rough spots is now just barely enough to get us from July (when our fiscal year starts) to November when your property tax payments start coming in. Looking ahead one year, I think the 2013-2014 budget year will start out grim and just get worse, but by that time I hope everyone will realize we're in a "crisis" and cannot keep spending more than we make.

One thing that is going to be impossible to maintain without help after June of 2013 is year-around swimming pool operation. Our pool is a tremendous asset to the community, and in good times there'd be no discussion about economizing by cutting back on the operation. These are not good times. To stay open, the pool has some maintenance issues that must be handled and new money to operate it must be found. A swimming pool task force, headed by Councilor Kyle Palmer, is brainstorming ways to improve community support for the pool and keep it open year-round. One possible alternative is a bond or operating levy election to fund pool operation and maintenance. Contact Councilor Palmer if you'd like to help in this effort.

There are three initiative petitions currently being circulated to propose amendments to the City Charter.

The first proposed amendment would require public votes on any annexation to the city of more than two acres, unless state law requires the annexation. Currently, the City Council can annex any amount of property without a public vote.

The second proposed amendment would prohibit the City (or any city agency) from taking property by eminent domain if the intent is to sell or otherwise convey the property to a private party. There is a similar provision in Oregon state law, but it is not in the state constitution.

The final proposed charter amendment would

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## Recession Leads to Budget Challenges for Silverton

When the City Council adopted the 2012-13 budget on June 18 it marked the second year running that the city has had to use some cash reserves to balance the budget.

"Whenever you have to spend any part of your cash reserves, it's a red flag that we need to reduce expenditures or the budget is not sustainable," said City Manager Bob Willoughby. "The challenge this year is that for the first time in a number of years, the city's revenues have declined and expenses have increased to the point that it's not possible to balance the budget without using some of the reserves. We are going to have to spend some of the rainy day fund to balance the budget."

Looking ahead, Willoughby said that the city is considering several options for closing the gaps, including a continued city hiring freeze. City staff also has been asked to look for efficiencies and find ways to continue to reduce expenditures to make the budget gap as small as possible over the next 12 months.

Willoughby said that four of the city's funds in particular are being closely scrutinized. The general fund – which includes parks and the swimming pool – probably has the biggest gap to close, said Willoughby. The street fund, which does not have sufficient revenues to preserve and maintain the city's significant investment in streets, and the building fund, which has seen a decline in the number of permit applications are also being evaluated. The sewer fund, which is dealing with deferred maintenance and capital projects, cannot be balanced without a rate increase said Willoughby.

"We are going to have to make choices. Not because we don't value those things. But because some things can't be maintained without

additional revenues. They can't be solved by cutting something else," said Willoughby.

While Silverton's budget woes are significant, Willoughby said that the city remains in better shape than many other cities.

"It's not a financial crisis. It's an issue that we have to address and I'm confident we can do it over the coming months so it doesn't become a crisis like it has in some other cities and counties," he said.

One way he intends to address the issue is by preparing a five-year financial plan with the help of the budget committee and the Council. That financial plan will be the starting point for budgeting this time next year.

Willoughby points to several reasons

that the budget gap has become so pronounced. As property values have declined over the last few years, property tax revenue has increased at a slower

rate than some city costs. As well, some franchise revenues, which are important for the general fund that supports public safety and general administration, have declined.

"We understand that the community expects us to live within our means and solve the budget challenges by closing gaps on the expense side, not the revenue side," said Willoughby.

"However, it's unlikely that we will be able to solve the problem without some impact on programs and services. While we aren't in a crisis, for the first time since the recession started, Silverton is beginning to see the impact of declining revenues and increasing costs. Some cities have been seeing that impact for 2 or 3 years, but it is just hitting home here."



**"It's unlikely that we will be able to solve the problem without some impact on programs and services."**

- City Manager Bob Willoughby

# Homer Davenport Community Festival Offers Numerous Ways to Participate



Davenport races are a unique and popular part of the Homer Davenport celebration.

In the second year since a transition to operation by the Silverton Rotary Club, the Homer Davenport Community Festival (HDCF) continues to be a huge draw for our community and beyond. Last year's festival generated more than \$5,000 in direct grants to community organizations as well as the opportunity for thousands of dollars of revenue for non-profits associated with the event.

Live music in the park, a diverse food court, the popular Davenport Races, an arts and crafts fair, the 8K Homer Classic run, a tennis tournament and parade help make up three days of family fun starting on Friday, Aug. 3. The festival enjoys tremendous sponsor support from Silverton. *(Please visit the sponsor page at [homerdavenport.com](http://homerdavenport.com) and remember to thank sponsors by supporting them throughout the year.)*

This year's parade kicks off at 10 a.m. on Saturday, Aug. 4 and will feature the theme "Silverton's Sports History," tying in to the Davenport Project's spotlight on Homer's baseball cartoons as well as Silverton's former professional baseball team. Grand Marshalls of the parade will be a contingent of Silverton High School athletes who had success at the state level competition this year – and there are many!

The parade is run for HDCF by the Silver Falls Family YMCA to raise funds for the many youth activity scholarships available throughout the year. Parade applications can be downloaded at [homerdavenport.com](http://homerdavenport.com). Winding through town, south on Water Street to Oak Street, then north on First Street to the end near Roth's, the parade promises to provide a great sense of community involvement – both for participants and spectators. Those wishing to watch the parade should plan to line up on both sides of the parade route starting at Water and Brown Street, and continuing to First and D Street. *(For liability reasons, candy should be handed out by those walking along parade entries, but no question – there will be candy!)*

Participant awards will be given in each category, plus a "Sponsor's Choice" award and one award for the best use of theme (which is not required). For more information about the parade or the festival in general, visit or call the Silverton Visitors Center at (503) 873-5615.

## Help Keep Streets Free of Pet Waste

A recent informal survey of 18 tree wells in the downtown area showed that over half were polluted with dog waste. Business owners, residents and visitors to Silverton deserve better. Please remember to pick up after your pooch. In

fact, it's the law. Pet owners are required to clean up after their dogs in any public area, including streets, sidewalks, and parking strips, or risk a fine. We appreciate your help keeping our community clean and attractive.

## Kids Get Creative at Silverton Art Camps

Local children can enjoy art, science, nature, music, and movement this summer with art camps at the Silverton Art Association. The programs are led by professional artists and educators, and offer art activities for children age 5 to 12; camps are also available for preschoolers.

Most of the camps are week-long 2-hour camps, but new this year is the Big Art Week, comprising five, four-hour days with four different instructors celebrating the art of sculpture, painting,



drawing, performance and more. Also new are Scrap Camp, Art of the Pioneers, Jurassic Art, Art on the Water, Garden of Art, and Art

that Works. Returning for a repeat performance are Da Vinci Kids and Playing in the Mud Clay Camp. A Preschool Sampler for parents trying to decide if their child is ready for preschool, or those interested in trying out the Park House Preschool, will also be offered.

Camp scholarships are available. For more information visit [silvertonarts.org](http://silvertonarts.org) or email the Association's education department at [education@silvertonarts.org](mailto:education@silvertonarts.org).

## Want Info?

The City of Silverton's website is [www.silverton.or.us](http://www.silverton.or.us) Check out what it has to offer including calendar items and news flashes.

Residents are invited to submit favorite photographs of Silverton to the Photo Gallery.

# Silverton's Streets To Be Assessed

With summer underway, street repair season is in full swing. And while the fair weather provides ideal construction conditions, budget gaps hinder what can be accomplished in terms of local street repair, said Public Works Director Gerald Fisher, who points out that only a fraction of the street fund budget is available for actual maintenance and repairs.

It's a common misconception that property taxes are used to support public works projects City Manager Bob Willoughby said.

"But 100 percent of what people pay in property taxes actually goes to public safety. Zero dollars are available for any other purpose," he said.

In the case of the City's street fund, which is the account that funds street repairs, all of the revenue comes from unused funds from prior year budgets and the state highway apportionment, otherwise known as the gas tax.

During the 2011-2012 fiscal year, the apportionment portion of the street fund's budget was \$380,000. The bulk of this figure is used for administrative aspects of the fund, from personnel costs to debt service and mandatory contributions to fleet replacement set-asides. After those costs are covered, the amount available for maintenance and repair is only a fraction of the fund budget, Fisher said, who points out that the street fund's prevue extends far beyond repair.

"The street fund pays for basically everything on the streets, from replacement of street signs to signal operation and maintenance, street cleaning, disposal of debris, mowing of right-a-ways, and maintenance of the 26 miles of lines in the storm-sewer run-off system and catch basins," Fisher said. "And when it comes to our personnel, there is a whole myriad of things that we do, from picking up dead animals and litter to removing dropped freight from the roadways."

But the city's transportation system plan, adopted in

2008, recommends that the city's streets are maintained, Fisher said.

In an effort to close the budget gap and move to a more sustainable model for financing the maintenance of Silverton's streets, Fisher said that one of the recommendations in the Transportation System Plan is to create a street utility fee. A street utility fee will be assessed only if it is approved by the City Council. If a fee is not supported by the Council and the community, Fisher said, the City will have to get by with less to maintain Silverton's streets. It's not something that can be imposed by City staff.

The first step in this process will be implemented during the

2012-13 fiscal year, when Fisher has budgeted for a pavement condition index project. As part of the project, each street that the city is responsible for maintaining will be assigned a rating grade from 0 (poor/unusable) to 100 (brand new street).

"The index will tell us what condition our roadways are in and assign a dollar amount to fix them. This will help us determine how much money we need to generate above the state gas tax in order to maintain our streets," Fisher said.

The work will take about two months to complete, with the help of a consultant. Once the project is completed, the annual dollar amount necessary to maintain and repair local streets will be determined.

If a street utility fee were established, Fisher said, every rate-payer in the city would be assessed a road utility fee, measured based on trip generation models.

"We have a significant investment into our existing infrastructure," he said. "It will require an investment by the community to maintain the streets. It's cheaper to maintain the streets than to rebuild them."

**"The index will tell us what condition our roadways are in and assign a dollar amount to fix them. This will help us determine how much money we need to generate above the state gas tax in order to maintain our streets."**

- Public Works Director Gerald Fisher

## Do Your Part To Be Prepared

You can sign up to receive timely information about emergencies and other important community news through the City of Silverton's Emergency Alert Program. This emergency notification system enables the 9-1-1 Center to provide you with critical information quickly in a variety of situations such as severe weather, unexpected road closures, missing persons, and evacuation of buildings or neighborhoods. Messages are sent wherever you specify, such as a home, cell, or business phone, email, text message, hearing impaired receiving devices, and more. You pick where, you pick how. Go to [www.silverton.or.us](http://www.silverton.or.us) and click on the Emergency Management tab and then click on the Citizen Alert Logo to sign up.

## Mayor *continued from page 1*

change the way city councilors are nominated and elected. Instead of all council positions being elected "at large" the amendment proposes dividing the city into four geographic districts, and four of the six council positions would be nominated and elected on a district basis. Two councilors and the mayor would still be elected "at large." Thank you again for the opportunity to serve you as Mayor of our community. Has it been 24 years as an elected official? How time flies, and yet there's so much more to do!

## Silverton City Council



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# Summer

## JULY

**July 4 – Old Stuff on Main Street, An American Antique Fair;** 9 am to 4 p.m. downtown Silverton

**July 6 – First Friday;** 7 to 9 p.m. downtown

**July 7 - Mid October – Farmer’s Market;** Saturdays 9 a.m. to noon  
Town Square Park on Main Street

**July 14– Gordon House Summer Bird Count;** volunteers participate in counting birds on the grounds of Gordon House. 8 to 10 a.m.; Frank Lloyd Wright’s Gordon House, 869 W. Main St. 503-874-6006

**July 14-15 – Historic Silver Falls Days;** Silver Falls State Park; Admission Free; \$5 per vehicle day use fee. 503-873-8681 ext. 21

**July 14-15; 21-22 – Canterbury Renaissance Faire;** Whitewind Farm, 6118 Mt. Angel HWY. Dance, shopping and fun set in the Elizabethan Era. 803-873-3273

## AUGUST

**Aug. 3 – First Friday;** 7 to 9 p.m. downtown

**Aug. 4 - Mid October – Farmer’s Market;** Saturdays 9 a.m. to noon  
Town Square Park on Main Street

**Aug. 3–5 – Homer Davenport Community Festival;** Parade, Fun Run, Art Show, Food, Music and more. 503-873-5615

**Aug. 11 – Silver Falls Star Party;** 9 p.m. to Midnight at the Silver Falls State Park’s Old Ranch; Admission Free; \$5 per vehicle day use fee. 503-873-8681 ext. 21



OLD STUFF ON MAIN STREET - A 4th of July tradition

**Aug. 12 – A Taste of Wright –** 3 to 6 p.m., The Gordon House, 869 W. Main Street.; Food and farm festival to benefit The Gordon House. \$30. Reservations: 503-874-6006

**Aug. 18 & 19 – Silverton Fine Arts Festival;** 10 a.m. to dusk in Coolidge – McClaine Park

**Aug. 24 –Celebrate Families Picnic;** Sponsored by Silverton Together and others, the free picnic and games welcome everyone. 5 to 7 p.m. at Coolidge-McClaine Park; 503-873-0405

## SEPTEMBER

**Sept. 1 - Mid October – Farmer’s Market;** Saturdays 9 a.m. to noon  
Town Square Park on Main Street

**Sept. 7 – First Friday;** 7 to 9 p.m. downtown

**Sept. 13-16 – Oktoberfest in Mount Angel.** 2012 theme: Come Join the Harvest Dance. 503-845-6882

# City Calendar

Complete agendas are available at City Hall or the Silver Falls Library five days prior to the meeting.

## JULY

**July 2 – City Council Meets** 7 p.m.

**July 4 – HOLIDAY;** All City offices closed

**July 10 – Planning Commission Meets** 7 p.m.

**July 17 – Historic Landmarks Commission Meets** 7 p.m.



## AUGUST

**Aug. 6 – City Council Meets** 7 p.m.

**Aug. 14 – Planning Commission Meets** 7 p.m.

**Aug. 21 – Historic Landmarks Commission Meets** 7 p.m.

Meetings are held in the Silverton City Council Chambers, 421 S. Water St. unless otherwise noted.

## SEPTEMBER

**Sept. 3 – HOLIDAY;** All City offices closed

**Sept. 10 – City Council Meets** 7 p.m.

**Sept. 11 – Planning Commission Meets** 7 p.m.

**Sept. 18 – Historic Landmarks Commission Meets** 7 p.m.