

City News



Published for the citizens of
Philomath, Oregon
Summer 2006



Officer David Gurski poses with new four-legged department member, Ilox.



**POLICE
RECRUIT
CANINE
MEMBER**

"Meth can't survive in a community that cares..."

Retired Police Chief Walt Myers, Chairman of the governor's Meth Task Force.

The Philomath Police Dept. is proud to introduce its newest team member, Ilox, a 16- month old German Shepherd. (see photo above) Ilox will be specifically trained to detect drugs. Drug dogs have proven themselves invaluable in searching vehicles, buildings and persons.

Earlier this month, Officer David Gurski, who will be Ilox's handler, and Alex Fyfe from the Portland Police Bureau traveled to Riverside, California to choose a dog. Alex Fyfe is an experienced K-9 handler for Portland. Forty dogs had arrived the day prior from the Czech Republic. Thirty-five police agencies were on hand and they all were looking to find the perfect dog. After a day of testing, Officer Gurski selected Ilox.

The next step will be to get Ilox certified by the Oregon Police Canine Association. The certification will focus on narcotics detection and will require over 360 hours of training, followed by extensive testing. Ilox and Officer Gurski are expected to be working the streets of Philomath by the end of this summer.

The "Moms Against Meth" group are continuing their fundraising efforts. To date, they have raised over \$31,000.00. The total cost of this project is approximately \$50,000.00.

If you would like to help improve the quality of life in our community, please send your tax deductible contribution to the City of Philomath, K-9 Program, P.O. Box 400, Philomath OR 97370.

Improvements Underway for South 19th St.

South 19th Street began a major reconstruction June 12 to improve vehicular access and pedestrian safety. The project is a joint effort with Benton County and Philomath and will result in a fully improved street section that meets an urban, rather than the present rural/urban, standard.

This project has been a priority with the City for many years, but lack of funds and the fact that South 19th Street is a County rather than a City street had delayed progress on making the needed improvements. Funding for the approximately \$800,000 project will come from the Metropolitan Planning Organization, county road funds, and City Urban Renewal Agency funds.

The City Council and Transportation & Traffic Safety Committee worked closely with Benton County and Philomath School officials to create a final design that allows for the safe flow of both local and regional traffic and ensures that our school age children can get to and from school and PYAC.

City crews have completed the relocation of water lines in advance of the street work which should conclude in August. During construction, access will be restricted to local traffic only. As always, your patience is appreciated as these improvements are being constructed.

WE NEED TO HEAR FROM YOU!

In order to continue to receive this quarterly newsletter, please contact the City Recorder at 929-6148 with your mailing address or e-mail address if you prefer an electronic version. **Be one of the first 25 respondents to this invitation and your name will be entered into a drawing for a \$30 cash gift.** If you've already given us your preference, there's no need to do so again.



PEDESTRIAN SAFETY IS A PRIORITY

Looking out for the safety of those who must cross our streets is not only the right thing to do, it is the law. Please take a moment to learn what your responsibility is as a driver when you approach an intersection or crosswalk.

What's the Law?

A crosswalk exists at any public street intersection, whether marked with paint or unmarked. Crosswalks exist between intersections (mid-block) only if they are marked with white painted lines.

Under Oregon laws, a driver has specific duties to a pedestrian in a crosswalk, whether marked or unmarked. Here's what you need to know:

When turning at a traffic signal, drivers must:

- Stop and remain stopped for pedestrians until they have cleared the lane into which your vehicle is turning and at least 6 feet of the next lane.

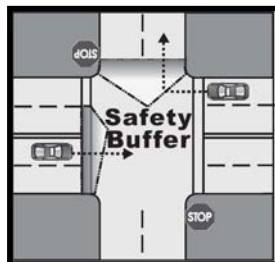
At any other crosswalks – whether marked with paint or unmarked – drivers must:

- Stop and remain stopped for pedestrians until they have cleared the lane in which you are traveling (or into which you are turning) and the next lane.
- Stop and remain stopped for students as you are directed by a crossing guard.
- Stop and remain stopped for a blind pedestrian using a white cane or a guide dog until the pedestrian is completely across the roadway.

If a pedestrian is in a safety buffer when the vehicle enters the crosswalk, the driver will be cited for a fine over \$200.



When turning at a signal, it's your lane plus six feet: Stop for the pedestrian, who must clear the lane into which the vehicle is turning and at least 6 feet of the next lane, before you proceed.



At any other crosswalk, it's your lane plus the next lane: Stop for the pedestrian, who must clear the lane in which the vehicle is traveling or turning and at least the next lane, before you proceed.

2006-07 BUDGET UPDATE: Once again, the City of Philomath has prepared, reviewed, and adopted a new budget for the coming year and once again the City finds itself in a very solid financial position.

The City's annual operating budget, of approximately \$4 million, comes from property taxes, franchise fees (charges to utility companies for using the city streets for transmission lines), court fines, building permits, state taxes (liquor, cigarette, highway), grants, as well as water, sewer, and storm drain fees. In turn, the funds are used to manage and plan the city, provide the police and courts, maintain our parks and streets, and provide water and sewer services to homes and businesses. After having paid off all bonds last year, the city will once again only assess the permanent tax rate of \$5.30 per \$1,000 of assessed property value for the 2006-07 budget year, the lowest rate in years.

Meanwhile, in addition to providing for the everyday operation of the city, Philomath continues to complete major capital improvements, including updating the main water line through the city, paving or upgrading several streets, improving storm sewers, and more. Most notably, the city did these projects **all from cash reserves** that we have been saving over the past several years - there has been no need to go to the taxpayers for new bond measures to fund these projects. In fact, the city currently holds more than \$1 million in these funds for planned future projects.

As it is legally obligated, the city continues to live well within its annual budget (a lesson our legislators in Washington need to learn), while saving for the future capital needs of our growing city. Just one more reason Philomath is a great place to live.—*Tom Klipfel, Budget Committee Chair*



Living in a Small Community!

By Mayor Chris Nusbaum

Wow! Keeping up with the accomplishments of our City's youth has become a full time job. It has become commonplace to see Philomath represented in regional, state and national competitions ranging from Logging to Baseball. Our kids are also taking championships in academics, sport competitions, scouting, robotics, intramurals, agriculture and the performing arts. It has become obvious that in addition to providing academic instruction, our school system is teaching our kids how to be healthy, vibrant, and involved in their community. Families of our community continue to instill decent small town values providing the foundation for our children's success. A new sense of optimism has encompassed our town and I am extremely proud to be a Philomath Citizen. We have, and will continue, to overcome all challenges.

I love living in a small town and those of you who I talk to share this feeling. I am happy to report that we can continue our small town lifestyle if so desired. Philomath is in a financial position to choose our rate of growth options. Our Budget Committee

and City Council recently adopted this year's budget. In summary, we are healthy!

Our roads and infrastructure continue to be fixed and upgraded. We have zero bond debt and the citizen members of our Budget Committee want to keep us this way.

I want to make sure that all residents understand their rights in regards to deciding on the size of our town.

Some have asked the question, why does our Planning Commission and City Council keep forwarding annexation requests to the voters? The answer is simple. Our City Charter guarantees that Philomath Citizens have "final say" on any annexation requests in a "clear and transparent" setting.

The city's role in an annexation request is to ensure that infrastructure and resources can accommodate growth requests should the voters want to grow. The decision to send annexation requests for voter review is neither an endorsement nor rejection. That is for you to decide. As a Philomath resident I am very pleased that annexation requests have to be approved in this fashion.

We unfortunately have a few naysayers trying to keep annexation requests out of voter hands. Fear of citizen review has resulted in activists attempting to sidetrack annexation requests focusing on our drinking water supply. I personally do not like the fact that in Philomath, they have tried to portray your governing body as insensitive and uneducated on water issues.

I have said it before and I will say it again, our Council has studied water issues intensively. Philomath has a three member Public Works Committee, a seven member Planning Commission and seven member City Council that all review annexation requests. This is in addition to City staff and engineers painstakingly reviewing the parameters of each request. All is done in a very public procedure. Any decision to move annexation requests forward for voter review will always be in conflict with no growth special interest groups who have their own opinions. While any group or citizen is entitled to their own opinions, they are not entitled to their own facts. I can assure you that your Council is completely confident in the ability of our electorate to make annexation decisions that are in Philomath's best interests.

I have faith that Philomath Residents will do the right thing in determining the size of our community.

I am disappointed by any statement or signage that carries an "angry shout" regarding what is good for Philomath.

Such messages imply we cannot govern ourselves. Rest assured that your household, your neighborhood and your city will take appropriate action without having to endure scare tactics from anybody.

City Hall is always an open resource for any resident seeking more information on any issue. Please feel free to contact us anytime should any of you have any questions regarding your municipality.



ATTENTION BIKE RIDERS!

Each year the Philomath Police Department comes into possession of bicycles that it cannot return to their owners. Some have been stolen and others are found abandoned and still in good working condition.

In 1987, the City established a bicycle licensing process with the idea that lost bikes could be returned to their owners by matching the license to its owner registration information. The PPD will be checking those bike riders who use City streets to see if they have secured their license. As an incentive for bikers to get their bikes registered, the City will waive the license fee until August 31. After this date, the usual \$5 fee for a two-year license will be charged.

In order to get your license, you will need to visit the new PPD at 1010 Applegate Street and bring your name, address, make, model and serial number, if any, for each bike that will be licensed.

Would you like more information about your city? Want to know what the city council is up to or what happened at their last meeting? Are you interested in the different city departments, permits the city offers, which parks take reservations? What about how to prepare for an emergency? For all this and more, check out the City of Philomath website at www.ci.philomath.or.us.

INSIDE: MAYOR'S ADDRESS "LIVING IN A SMALL TOWN"