



City of North Bonneville Newsletter ~ March 2011



A Message from the Mayor's Desk

March is certainly coming in like a lion; the big question is whether or not it will go out like a lamb. Speaking strictly for myself, warmer weather would be a welcome relief but maybe that's just me.

One area we do expect to see change beginning in March is the frequency of our city utility bills. We tried going monthly in an effort to soften the impact of our recent water rate increase but a couple of factors have convinced us it would be better to go back to bi-monthly (one bill every other month) billing. We will be discussing this issue at the city council meeting on March 8th.

The primary reason is the fact our Public Works crew reads the meters every other month and estimating usage accurately has proven to be more difficult than anticipated. This results in our bills fluctuating more than we expected from month to month. With all the other duties Ray and his staff have on their plates it doesn't make any sense to double the number of meter readings, so going back to bi-monthly billing will result in more consistent bills. Of course, those who wish to pay on a monthly basis are welcome to continue doing so. We have also listened to feedback from our residents and it is running right at 50-50 on whether the change to monthly billing is a good thing or not. While we'd like to make everyone happy all the time, this change should at least please half of us this time.

While we're on the subject of utility rates, I want to mention our sewer rate increase was passed at the last City Council meeting and will take effect this month. In the past our sewer rate was a flat rate based solely on the customer type, e.g., residential or business. Beginning this month the sewer charges will be based on usage. There is a more detailed explanation of the new structure inside this newsletter and we will be happy to answer any questions that we have not addressed to your satisfaction.

To discuss utility rates or any other concerns or suggestions you may have, please contact me here at City Hall at 427-8182 or via email at don@northbonneville.net.

March Meetings at City Hall

1st & 15th - Planning Commission 6:00pm

5th City Council Retreat 12:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

8th & 22nd - City Council 6:30 pm

Agendas are posted on the window at city hall.

Payments for Water, Sewer and Cable TV service are due the 20th of the month. You must have the bill paid in full or make payment arrangements with the city (call 427-8182) by the due date or you will be charged a \$10 late fee.

Please contact Jennifer at 427-8182 or jennifer@northbonneville.net with any news, events, and/or suggestions for the monthly newsletter.

Notes From Your City Administrator / Clerk / Treasurer / Dog Catcher / Janitor

The big news is that we passed new sewer rates at the February 22nd council meeting; they will go into effect on April 1st. Like the water rates, the new sewer rates include a base rate plus a usage rate. The base rate is \$20 / month and the usage rate is \$3.37 per 100 cubic feet of water. To avoid making you pay for water that isn't going into the sewer system (because of watering the lawn, washing the car, etc) we will base your usage calculation on winter-time averages, recalculating each March 1st. For those of you who have no history or are gone in the winter, the rate will be the city-wide average (about \$40 this year).

Next on the list are our Cable TV Rates. We will be holding a hearing on March 22nd to discuss raising cable TV rates as well. We have a lot of work to do on this issue – investigating upgrades to the system, discussing the possibility of closing the system, and discussing the possibility of rate increases. Please join us and give us your thoughts!

To avoid raising taxes and fees any more than we absolutely have to, we continue to look for cost-saving measures. The most recent cost savings we have identified is the cancelation of our yard-debris chipping program. Having cut back on personnel costs, our public works crew just does not have the time to provide this service any more. Among your alternative options are to haul your yard waste to:

Hood River Garbage – 541-386-2272 (currently about \$10.30/cubic yard)

Peterson (North Bonneville) – 509-637-5523

Triangle Resources (Washougal) -- 360-834-7253 (currently about \$7/cubic yard)

County transfer station (yard waste treated as garbage and charged accordingly).

Among other recent developments at the city:

- We were sad to lose our city attorney services when Wyers, Haskell, Davies and Dunn resigned on 2/16. We are glad, however, to welcome back Ken Woodrich as our city attorney!
- On recommendation from your parks and recreation committee, your City Council voted to form a committee to make a plan for building a community garden on Lot 3 (by the ball fields). If you are interested in helping with this exciting endeavor, please give us a call at city hall! We need help in estimating costs, planning the garden, identifying infrastructure needs, identifying community interest, etc.
- Our main city park has no name. Efforts have been made in the past to give it one, but to no avail. We decided to give it one more shot. Do you have ideas? Please give us a call.

Thank you to the **North Bonneville Hot Springs Resort** for providing the beautiful accommodations to allow the city to hold a council retreat at no cost! A special Thank you to Marfa Scheratski for coordinating the event.

Columbia Gorge Interpretive Center Annual Dinner & Silent Auction is Saturday, March 12, 2011 at 6:00 p.m.

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Friends of the Library Annual Book Sale is March 17 - 19 at the Stevenson Library.



Library News

Did you know there are many opportunities to use the North Bonneville Community Library inside City Hall?

From 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays in the lobby, you can pick up your items on hold, and use the computer to order and renew books, print tax forms and check the weather. You can access Mapquest, car repair information, genealogy resources, medical sites, online magazine articles and archives. Our resource databases will help you find addresses, print maps, and more.

Tuesday through Thursday, the library is open from 1 to 5. Browse the "Did you miss this one?" collection, which included a number of items on current best-seller lists. These items normally are on long waiting lists, but this special collection allows people in rural communities to get a "first shot" at newer titles. You may check out up to two best-sellers at a time from this group.

Browse our other collections as well - we bring in new children's books' DVD's and CD's fro all ages, "homework help" items and many new titles for adults on gardening, cooking, travel and more. We also subscribe to a wide variety of magazines. Internet access is available during the afternoon open hours.

Family storytime is Thursday, March 10 at 2 p.m. Everyone is welcome to enjoy stories, songs and more.

Watch for the bookmobile, which visits North Bonneville at various locations every other Saturday. Take a moment to step inside and have a look at the wonderful collection.

Call the North Bonneville Library at 427-4439, or the Stevenson Library at 427-5471 for information or assistance.

Come on in and check out your local library!

-- Chris Hughey, Librarian

Bookmobile Schedule

Sat, March 5 & 19

Celilo 9:00-9:30

Windsong Estates 9:45-10:15

Hamilton 10:45-11:15

For your convenience there is a drop box at city hall where you can leave water/sewer/cable TV payments. City Hall is also a collection site for PUD payments. You can drop those payments off with city hall staff or use the outside drop box. The drop box is located just to the left of the city hall front doors.

Did you know?

Washington is the only state with a green flag.

North Bonneville Fire Department

If you wish to become of member of the N. Bonneville Fire Department, attend a meeting or pick up an application at city hall. The fire department meets Monday nights at 7:00 p.m. No experience necessary.

SPRING FORWARD

Daylight Savings Time begins Sunday, March 13th and the first day of Spring is Sunday, March 20th!

