

City Bridges

FALL 2008

News to keep you connected to Albany City government

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Community Survey: Most Like Living in Albany

The Albany City Council commissioned a community opinion survey in March 2008, the first citywide survey of its kind since 2003.

Advanced Marketing Research, Inc., of Eugene, mailed the survey to 2,500 registered voters. Of those, 828 were completed and returned, a response rate of 35%.

Here are some highlights:

On a scale of 1-10 (poor-excellent) rating Albany as a place to live, the mean was 7.2. The 2003 survey mean was 7.4.

What people enjoy most about living in Albany is the small town flavor (26%); location (19%); parks and Parks & Recreation activities (14%); downtown, shopping, restaurants (11%); people and neighborhoods (9%).

What people would change about Albany: crime/homelessness/law enforcement (21%, up from 11% in 2003); more shops, restaurants, entertainment (15%); traffic issues (10%); less growth (9%); more economic development (8%); taxes/rates/fees too high (7%); streets and sidewalks need improving (7%).

Forty-nine percent feel the rate of growth in Albany is just right; 40% feel Albany is growing too fast.

Twenty-six percent feel economic opportunity has gotten better in the last five years; 23% feel it's gotten worse; 36% feel it has stayed the same.

Fifty-one percent said the quality of life in Albany has stayed the same in the last five years; 27% feel it has gotten better; 18% feel it has gotten worse.

Streets most in need of repair: Sixth Avenue (14%), Queen (13%), Water (11%), Waverly (10%), Pacific (9%), Main (8%), Jackson (7%), and Hill (7%)

Fifty-nine percent of respondents are "very" or "somewhat" likely to support increased funding for street improvements over the next several years, down from 71% in 2003, but most respondents didn't like any of the funding options listed in the survey: property taxes, fuel taxes, or monthly fees.

On the 1-10 scale (very dissatisfied-very satisfied), Albany's mean rating is 6.6 for satisfaction with the overall level of services provided by City government.

Who responded to the survey?

- 68% were age 45 and older
- 52% were female
- 56% had lived in Albany over 20 years
- 39% were college graduates and another 39% had attended some college courses
- Largest income group - those earning between \$50,000-\$74,999 (26%); 60% of the total reported annual incomes of \$50,000 or greater.

Other questions and answers:

Albany voters support the City taking an active role assisting businesses in

order to provide more jobs, though the level of support varies significantly depending on what form that assistance takes.

Seventy-six percent feel the City should provide problem-solving assistance to businesses for siting, permit, and development issues. Seventy-four percent feel the City should take an active role helping outside companies come to Albany to increase economic opportunities. Seventy percent feel the City should take an active role in helping local businesses create and retain jobs. Sixty-one percent feel the City should provide tax incentives to businesses creating new jobs. Forty-six percent feel the City should provide assistance with road, sewer, and utility costs to new and expanding businesses. Forty-four percent feel the City should provide financial support to businesses in targeted areas, such as downtown.

Eighty-five percent of respondents regularly use the *Albany Democrat-Herald* to keep informed on City government activities, 58% use the City of Albany Parks and Recreation Activity Guide, 50% use the *City Bridges* newsletter, 45% use local radio, and 17% use the City's website.

Eighty-two percent of respondents have internet access at home; 17% do not. Of those with internet access at home, 37% have broadband, 43% have cable, 12% have dial-up, 4% have DSL, and 1% use wi-fi. Two percent were unsure what type of internet access they have.

Find Election Information on the Web

Find information about the upcoming November 4, 2008, general election on the City's Web site.

Postings include links to the Oregon Secretary of State's Office for voter registration help; links to Linn and Benton County elections offices for voting results; and Albany City regulations for political signs.

On the home page, www.cityofalbany.net, look under the City Government tab. Click on Finance, then look for Election Information in the menu along the right-hand side of the page.

If you have questions about Albany city elections, contact Betty Langwell, City Clerk, at 541-917-7524.



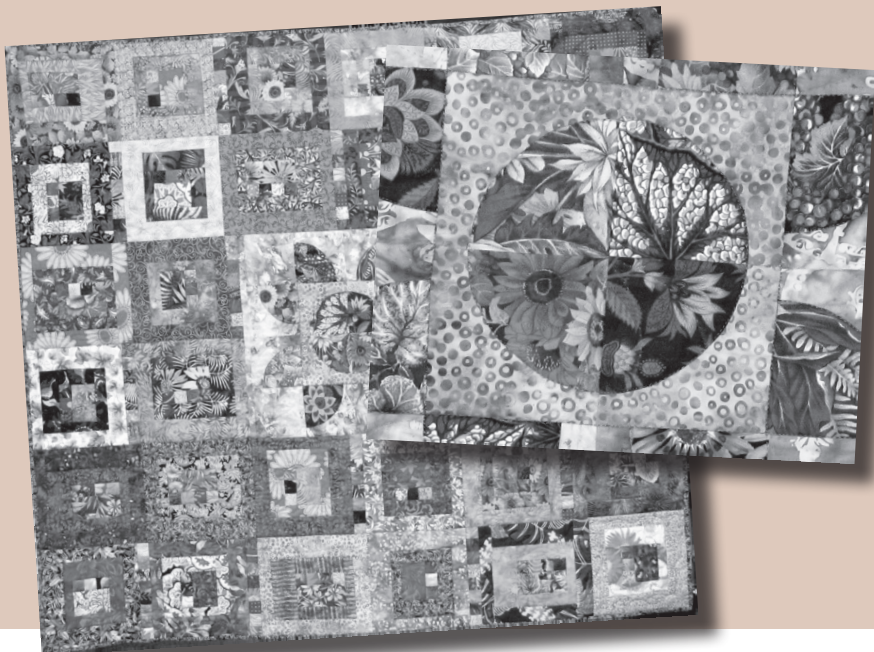
Quilt Raffle Part of Library Fundraising

The Friends of the Albany Public Library are sponsoring a quilt raffle as part of their effort help raise money for furnishings for the new library building.

Anita Upenieks made the quilt, titled "Floral Rhapsody." Upenieks is a lifelong quilter and a Library employee.

Raffle tickets are available at the Main Library, 1390 Waverly Drive SE, for \$2.00 each or three for \$5.00. Only 5,000 tickets will be sold. The drawing for the quilt is scheduled at 2:00 p.m. Friday, December 19, 2008, at the Main Library.

The raffle is part of a \$2 million campaign to furnish the new Library building, 2450 14th Ave. SE, where renovations are currently underway. The building is expected to open in January 2009.



Plan Ahead to Clean up Your Neighborhood

Albany Mayor Dan Bedore, foreground, and volunteers from Oxford House take a break during the May 10, 2008, cleanup in the Hackleman neighborhood southeast of downtown Albany. The cleanup event brought out Ward I City Councilors Floyd Collins and Dick Olsen, along with the Mayor, about two dozen Hackleman residents, a high school leadership group, and the Oxford House volunteers. Working with City staff and employees of Allied Waste, the volunteers filled two 30-yard Dumpsters with yard debris, junk furniture and other trash, and filled a flatbed trailer twice with appliances and other metal to be recycled.

The Hackleman cleanup was the first in what the City Council hopes will become a city-wide annual cleanup day. If your block, street, subdivision, or neighborhood wants to organize a cleanup in the spring of 2009, City staff can help. Contact Marilyn Smith at 917-7507 or marilyn.smith@cityofalbany.net; or Lynn Hinrichs, 917-3208 or lynn.hinrichs@cityofalbany.net.

City of Albany Directory

Mayor

Dan Bedore 812-1426

Ward I Councilors

Dick Olsen 926-7348

Floyd Collins 928-2961

Ward II Councilors

Sharon Konopa 926-6812

Ralph Reid, Jr. 928-7382

Ward III Councilors

Bessie Johnson 791-2494

Jeff Christman 926-0528

City Manager

Wes Hare 917-7505

City Hall Phone Numbers

General Information 917-7500

Ambulance Billing 917-7710

Building Inspection 917-7553

City Manager 917-7500

Downtown

Carnegie Library 917-7585

Economic Development 917-7639

Engineering 917-7676

Finance Office 917-7500

Fire Department 917-7700

Human Resources 917-7500

Main Library 917-7580

Mayor/Council 917-7503

Municipal Court 917-7740

Parks & Recreation 917-7777

Planning and Zoning 917-7550

Police Department 917-7680

Public Information Office 917-7507

Senior Center 917-7760

Transit 917-7667

Water and Sewer Billing 917-7547

Water/Sewer/Streets 917-7600

Emergencies (Fire, Police, Ambulance) Dial 911

City Bridges Info

City Bridges is published by an editorial team from the City of Albany. Questions and input about this newsletter can be directed to:

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Since you asked...

Besides asking a lot of questions, the community survey left space for respondents to make comments or ask questions of their own. Nearly every survey form that was completed included some additional comments, ranging from simply, "I love Albany," to three single-spaced typed pages of complaints, compliments, suggestions, and rhetoric. You can read the comments in full on the City's Web site, <http://www.cityofalbany.net/citymanager/2008-community-survey/2008-Albany-Survey-Report.pdf>

City staff have read all the comments. In this piece, we'd like to clear up some misinformation, misconceptions, or misunderstandings. And, always, if you have other questions or comments about Albany City government, please contact us at info@cityofalbany.net or call Public Information Officer Marilyn Smith at 541-917-7507.

Comment: "I feel the City Council needs to allow for more freedom of speech, more open forum. There is too much controlled conversation on opinions. Discussion has a lid on it. The Council needs to get out on a regular basis and have input from everyone. Schedule meetings with the public for 2-3 hours at various locations 3-4 times a year and not just an hour here and there and definitely include some evenings. Some people can't get away at 3 or 4 p.m. or in morning meetings. Let the public see who they are. At least the public would be able to talk and not be shut down as happens at council meetings."

Response: All Albany City Council meetings include time to hear from anyone who wants to address the Council on any topic. The Council meets about four times each month - in regular meetings at 7:15 p.m. on the second and fourth Wednesdays in City Council Chambers, and in work sessions on the Monday before the regular Wednesday meeting, at 4 p.m. in the Municipal Court Room at City Hall.

The Wednesday Council meetings are shown live on the City's Web site and are rebroadcast on Comcast Cable 28 on Sundays at 7:00 p.m. and Mondays at 8:00 p.m.

The Council also holds joint meetings with the Albany School Board twice a year. Those meetings are held in the evening, one at the school district offices and the other at City Hall.

All of the City Councilors have published telephone numbers and can be reached via e-mail. A list of their phone numbers is on page two of every issue of *City Bridges*, and is posted, along with email addresses, on the City's Web site.

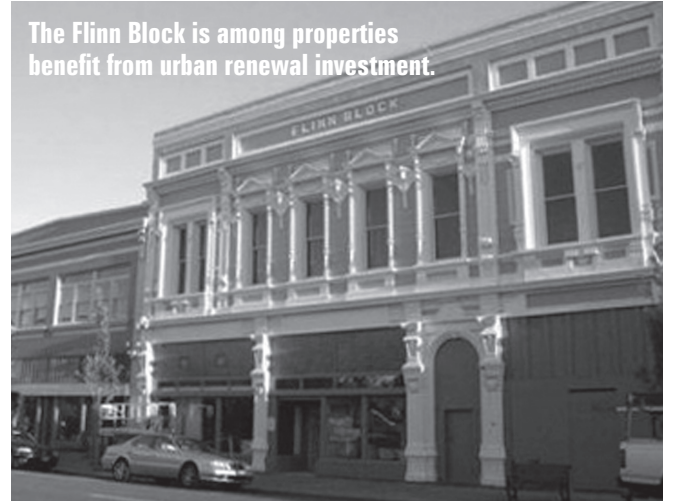
Comment: "Five Republican Linn County Commissioners is too many."

Response: Linn County voters would probably agree with that. Linn County has only three commissioners.

Comment: "I'm getting tired of subsidizing "Downtown Albany" redevelopment. (Property tax districts reduce taxes to the rest of the city.) We've spent a lot and still have only government, banks, and antique stores. Give it up."

Response: Albany's downtown urban renewal district, the Central Albany Revitalization Area (CARA) has been in place since 2001. The money that CARA uses to revitalize the Central Albany area comes not from a new or additional tax but from taxing districts agreeing to forego any increase in assessed value from properties in the area since 2001. Linn County measured the assessed value of the properties within CARA in 2001. Those

The Flinn Block is among properties benefit from urban renewal investment.



funds continue to flow to the taxing districts throughout the life of CARA. CARA receives a portion of any increase in the assessed value on those properties as we move forward. The reason the taxing districts are willing to forego these funds for a time is that they believe that investing those funds into CARA properties will create a substantially higher tax base in the end.

CARA has funded a variety of projects, many of which are downtown. Others are along our waterfront, and some are economic development projects that have brought businesses and jobs to our city. The ultimate goal is to not just create vitality in the downtown core, but to better utilize the Willamette waterfront and create a vibrant and diverse Central Albany which is ultimately good for everyone. If you haven't been downtown lately, now is a great time to visit. With new restaurants and boutique shops opening, you may be surprised at what you find!

Comment: "Have police concentrate on "real" crimes, not seatbelts. Hello-o-o-o."

Response: The Albany Police Department is focused in many directions throughout the year while trying to meet the diverse needs of our community. As time and staffing allow, we concentrate on drug enforcement, metal theft, shoplifting, neighborhood issues, domestic violence, traffic complaints, burglaries, animal complaints, and sex crimes, for example. All of these and more are important and need various amounts of our energy and our budget.

In addition to the City's General Fund, the State of Oregon and the federal government occasionally provide grants for specific efforts such as seatbelt enforcement. The State provides dedicated overtime funds to pay local police officers throughout Oregon to enforce the seatbelt law. Statistics have shown that injuries and deaths are reduced in traffic crashes when people wear seatbelts. When the number of injuries and deaths are reduced, insurance costs, disability claims, emergency personnel, and hospital costs are also reduced. If Albany declined these special grants, our services would be limited to what the General Fund budget would support.

We will continue to provide the most comprehensive public safety services possible with the resources provided by the citizens of Albany, the State of Oregon, and the federal government.

City Council Agenda Packets Available Online

Albany City Council agenda packets are now available electronically on the City's Web site.

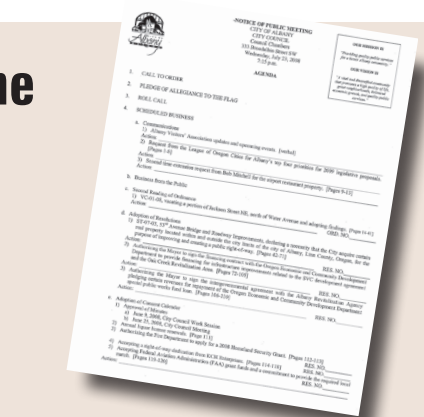
At the request of Mayor Dan Bedore and Ward III Councilor Jeff Christman, City staff began converting Council agenda materials to portable document format (pdf) and posting the full packets on the Web site in late March 2008. Christman and the Mayor received the packets on portable hard drives for a few months as a test of how the packets are organized and the ease of using the electronic files.

Agenda packets can be viewed online or downloaded. Viewers may print copies of memos, reports, ordinances, maps, and other documents included in the packets. Be prepared - some of the packets contain several hundred pages of information

and not all will be in standard 8.5-by-11 format. Some documents may be in color.

The e-packets are another step in making the City Council's business more widely available to Albany residents. While hard copies of the agenda have always been available at City Hall and both branches of the Albany Public Library, public review has been limited to weekday business hours. The online packets are available at the viewer's convenience, 24 hours a day. Packets are generally posted on the Friday prior to the meeting and will remain online for a year.

Packets currently available electronically include Council work sessions and regular meetings, the City Audit Committee, Central Albany Revitalization Area Advisory Board, CARA subcommittees, Albany Revitalization Agency, and the



Human Relations Commission.

The City Council's regular meetings, beginning at 7:15 p.m. on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month, continue to be streamed live on the Web site, with an archive copy on the City Council page for later viewing. The recording is rebroadcast on Comcast Cable Channel 28 on Sundays at 7:00 p.m. and Mondays at 8:00 p.m.



Construction of new walkway began in August.

North Albany Students Get Safer Route to School

Students who walk to North Albany Elementary or Middle schools from homes north and west of the schools will have a safer route this fall.

The City of Albany contracted for about 450 feet of sidewalk to be built along the east side of North Albany Road south of the roundabout to Quarry Road. The work is scheduled to be complete by the end of August.

A second phase of the walkway is planned between Quarry Road and the

traffic signal at the schools' driveway. That portion of North Albany Road does not have enough public right-of-way for a standard sidewalk. The City is working with Benton County, which has jurisdiction over North Albany Road, to find a solution and hopes to finish this second phase this fall.

The pedestrian improvements are a direct result of the City's partnership with the Albany School District in the Safe Routes to School program. North Albany parents

requested the new sidewalk, which will be funded by transportation system development charges. Cost of the first phase will be about \$60,000.

A pending Safe Routes project will provide a pedestrian path along Gibson Hill Road to Scenic Drive.

Safe Routes also sponsors the annual Walk + Bike to School Day. This year's event will be Wednesday, October 8, 2008. Contact your school to find out about participating.

Fire Department Treasure Hunt October 4



The Albany Fire Department's annual Treasure Hunt will be held on Saturday, October 4, 2008 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Each of Albany's four fire stations will be open to the public with different activities scheduled during these hours.

Mark your calendars now and watch for more Treasure Hunt news as the date gets closer.

Rethink Your Home Emergency Kit

Do you need to rethink your home emergency preparedness kit? Do the clothes in your kit still fit? Is your water/food past its "best-by" date? Are all of your emergency phone numbers still good? How about the tools? Have you recently removed one for a quick project and forgot to put it back in the kit? What about the toilet paper you borrowed from your kit? Have you replaced it yet?

Seriously, this is a good time to take moment to really think through emergency planning. A starter kit needs six basic things: do you have them all and can you still really use them?

Water – The kit should include enough to provide each person in your home with a gallon a day for 3-10 days.

Food – The kit should include 3-10 days' supply of non-perishable food. Check the expiration dates on what you have stored.

First aid – Home emergency supplies should include some type of basic first-aid kit.

Clothes and bedding – Include a change of clothing and shoes for each person in your home. Make sure the clothes fit comfortably. Blankets or bedding should be kept where you can get to them easily when you need them.



Tools and other emergency supplies – Duct tape is one of the most useful tools on earth. Where is your roll? Make sure to keep sanitation supplies, such as soap, bleach, and personal hygiene items, handy as well.

Medications and medical equipment – If you wear glasses, your kit should include a spare pair. Keep a list of the medications used by yourself and your family members. Have you considered and planned for the special medical needs of your loved ones?

It is just six basic categories. Take the time to go through and make sure what you think you have is actually what you've got. Replace the items that are about to expire and use the ones you remove.

Remember, your kit should be customized for your needs and should work for you and your family. If you have questions about what should be in your kit, visit the City of Albany's Web site www.cityofalbany.net or call the Albany Fire Department Administration office at 541-917-7700.

**THE NEW ROOM SUITS HER.
THE BUILDING PERMITS PROTECT HER.**

Nothing's more important than your family's safety. Getting construction permits before you build or remodel helps protect your loved ones from potentially deadly mistakes. Faulty work can cause house fires, flood damage and structural instability. But with a permit, a certified inspector will examine your project to make sure it's safe and up to code. So you and your family can rest easy, avoid costly repairs down the line and preserve your biggest financial investment – your home.

Permits... they protect what matters most.

ThinkPermit
Protect your home. Protect your family. ThinkPermit.com



River Rhythms 25th Season a Success

The 25th season of the popular River Rhythms concert series wrapped up on August 14 with a performance by the Grass Roots. Over 32,000 people attended the six concerts at Monteith Riverpark. Donations, which go toward supporting the 2009 series, totaled \$12,842.08 or about \$0.39 per person. Look for information on the 2009 lineup at the series Web site at <http://www.riverrhythms.org> in January 2009.

Pictured above are four photos from one of this year's blanket runs. The area in front of the stage is reserved for blankets only and opens at 5:30 p.m.

Trees in bags?

The City of Albany uses tree watering bags in the summer months to establish new trees for the first two or three years after they are planted in rights-of-way where irrigation systems aren't installed and there are no adjacent private property owners to care for them. City staff fill the watering bags once a week during the summer. Each bag holds 20 gallons of water and provides deep-root saturation over a 9-12 hour period to ensure that the tree absorbs the water. In most cases, property owners are responsible for watering street trees adjacent to their properties. For more information about Albany's urban forest, contact Craig Carnagey, City Forester, at 541-704-2303 or craig.carnagey@cityofalbany.net.



Getting to Know Your City of Albany Staff

The City of Albany's Strategic Plan, as adopted by the City Council, includes the value of being "a humane and diverse organization." The Strategic Plan states: "We value the cultural and social diversity that is reflected in our community, and we welcome the changes and new perspectives that diversity brings to us." One way that we honor that value is by continually striving to attract and retain a staff which reflects our region's demographics.

Currently, Albany City employees are:

- 65% male,
- 35% female,
- 93% white,
- 2.75% Hispanic or Latino,
- 2.0% Native American or Alaskan,
- 1.5% Asian or Pacific Islander,
- 0.75% Black or African American

A quick look at current Linn County civilian labor force demographics, as reported by the Oregon Employment Department, shows that the City staff meets or exceeds the labor force percentages in black, Asian, and Native American representation. The City of Albany staff falls short in the numbers of women and Hispanic employees.

The City invites qualified applicants from all backgrounds to apply for jobs through our Web site at www.cityofalbany.net. While the totality of qualifications is always the primary consideration in hiring decisions, we do keep an eye on how well we are meeting our goal to attract and retain a representative work force. Interested parties may view our Recruitment and Selection Process policy and our Affirmative Action Plan under the Human Resources link on the City Web site.



Follow the Rules for Garage Sales

Does it seem like every other Albany resident has held a garage sale this summer? If you plan a garage sale and use signs to advertise it, remember that the City of Albany has rules for how to do it right.

The Albany Municipal Code prohibits putting notices, posters, or other devices intended to attract the attention of the public on lampposts, utility poles, shade trees, public structures, or buildings.

You can sell household items to the general public at a residential address no more than three times in a calendar year

and for no more than three consecutive days each time.

Items for sale cannot be displayed or stored in the public right-of-way, in an area where they will restrict the vision of passing traffic, or on another person's property without that property owner's permission.

If you use signs to advertise your garage sale, you are limited to two on your property and two at other locations. The signs can not be more than four square feet per face and no more than four feet high. Signs cannot be posted more than a week before the sale and

shall be removed no more than a day afterward.

Violations of the sign ordinance or the time limitations on frequency of garage sales are infractions.

Garage sale signs posted illegally on utility poles and elsewhere tend to proliferate during sale season, creating an unsightly mess. City crews have and will continue to remove signs that are illegally placed in the public right-of-way.

For more information, contact the Public Works Department Operations Division at 917-7600.

