



# THE FLASH

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An update from City Administration, Planning, Public Works and Police Departments

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## From the Mayor's Office

I recently attended an Electric Vehicle Social at the Talent Community Center hosted by Rogue Climate Talent. It was no coincidence that the event was held at the Community Center, because Talent just installed two EV chargers at that site. Powered by solar panels, these chargers were installed as another example of the City of Talent's commitment to "be the change," as it relates to the use of clean energy. It was an amazing event, so well attended by many people from out of town. Those out of town folks who came to Talent to hear about our efforts likely discovered Talent businesses. After the event, I found myself

spending at the Pump House Burgers and Brews, along with many other attendees. EV chargers are good for business!

Talent's recent Housing Needs Analysis demonstrates that the biggest deficit in housing is to cost-burdened households. When hard working families can't afford the cost of housing and are forced to leave Talent, it is a genuine housing crisis. If we are going to make even a small difference in Talent, we need to find and implement the tools that are already helping other communities. Housing in Talent is a key issue in 2018, as we seek to expand our urban growth boundaries with many acres of land for critically needed housing.

Now is the time to ensure that Talent's housing policies are perfected, to provide housing that will allow Talent to remain a home for working families. Talent is forming a Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) for an urban growth boundary analysis that will participate in housing decision making. Please consider joining this critically important discussion.

Another way to improve livability is by participating in Talent's recently formed Economic Development Commission, which will seek to improve the local economy and increase the median income in Talent. Or, if environmental sustainability is your interest, the CAC for the Clean Energy Action Plan is also listed on the City web page. Please consider these important efforts in Talent.

More information and applications for Committees and Commissions are available at [www.cityoftalent.org](http://www.cityoftalent.org) or by visiting City Hall. This is an excellent opportunity to join City government at the beginning stages of two very important recommending boards.

Please join me in thanking Jenica Faye and Kathleen Sharrar for reapplying to serve on the Parks & Recreation Commission. Thanks also go to Felicia Hazel and Dorian Hastings for reapplying for the Planning Commission. We are grateful for your service!

Grateful to serve,  
Mayor Darby Ayers-Flood

## Talent Urban Renewal Open House

Tuesday, March 6, 2018 • 6 p.m. – 8 p.m. • Talent Town Hall

What does the future hold for downtown Talent and the Gateway Project? Change is in air, and it's time for Talent to put the finishing touches on a design plan for the Gateway area that fits City goals and delivers economic viability. The March 6th open house will give residents, property owners and business owners another chance to weigh in on the shape of things to come. This open house is part of the Urban Renewal Board's design and economic feasibility process, led by the urban design and planning firm Walker Macy. Walker Macy will share illustrations of some options for the site's development and continue to receive feedback that will help refine earlier considerations into a final concept plan.

Residents, property owners and business owners will have the opportunity to comment on and critique the illustrations. Please join us March 6th to help shape Talent's future!

For more information on the Gateway, visit [www.cityoftalent.org/gateway](http://www.cityoftalent.org/gateway), or contact Zac Moody, Interim Urban Renewal Director at 541-535-1566 or [zmoody@cityoftalent.org](mailto:zmoody@cityoftalent.org).

## Oregon 99: Rapp Road to Ashland City Limits Project Update

This project modifies existing Oregon 99 lanes as well as upgrades the highway with new pavement and, depending on the section, new curb, gutter, sidewalk and bike lanes and defined (access controlled) driveways.

### Construction

Utility work will wrap up by March 1, 2018, with Knife River Materials scheduled to begin shortly after, in the spring. Work scheduled for last summer (2017) was advanced to Spring 2018, with completion by September 30, 2018.

### Additional Information

It modifies the existing highway at three distinct sections, each with bike lanes on both sides:

- Rapp Rd. to Creel Rd.: three-lane section with center turn lane, bike lane and sidewalks.
- Creel Rd. to Talent Ave.: three-lane section with center turn lane and bike lanes.
- Talent Ave. to South Valley View Rd.: one lane southbound and two lanes northbound. Northbound left-turn refuge onto Talent Ave.
- South Valley View Rd. to Jackson Rd.: five-lane section with bike lanes on each side.
- Jackson Rd. to Ashland City Limits: three-lane section with center turn lane and bike lanes. (This will match Ashland's existing North Main St. configuration.)

For more information about the project, please contact Gary Leaming at the Oregon Department of Transportation at 541-774-6388 or [gary.w.leaning@odot.or.us](mailto:gary.w.leaning@odot.or.us). Or, visit [www.oregon.gov/ODOT](http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT), click "Projects in Your Area," and search Talent.

## Talent PD Construction Zone Safety Tips

By Lieutenant Jennifer Snook

The Oregon 99 project will have a reduced speed limit and will be marked as a construction zone, meaning that fines double for traffic offenses within that zone. For the safety of the construction workers and motorists, please keep these driving tips in mind:

- Slow down, be alert, and pay attention to signs.
- Drive defensively; don't follow too closely.
- Expect delays; plan for them and leave early.
- Be aware that traffic patterns can change daily.
- Merge well before you reach the lane closures.
- Construction will occur day and night. Even if there are not any workers onsite, this is still a construction zone and caution should be taken.

Stay safe, and, if you have any questions, let us know.

## Help Wanted!

### Community Tree Nursery

Several years ago, tree lovers in Talent created a nursery where we raised donated seedlings in pots on City property, near the Public Works facilities.

We cleared the area, arranged for water, purchased a shed for tools and, as a result, have given away more than one hundred small trees to members of our community.

Over time, there have been fewer people willing to spend time caring for the trees and the nursery. Now, we are at the point where the future of the nursery is in doubt without a new cadre of committed volunteers.

Are you interested in continuing the nursery? Contact Sharon Anderson at [scanderson1@charter.net](mailto:scanderson1@charter.net).

### Food & Friends

The Meals on Wheels and Senior Meals programs are currently looking



for volunteers to help end senior hunger. Volunteers are needed to help serve hot meals to local seniors on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays at the Talent Community Center. Volunteer Home Delivery Drivers are also needed to deliver hot meals and a smile, Monday through Friday, to homebound seniors living in the Talent area.

To learn more about volunteering with Food & Friends, please contact us today at 541-734-9505, ext. 4, or look us up at [www.rvcog.org/what-we-do/food-friends-meals-on-wheels](http://www.rvcog.org/what-we-do/food-friends-meals-on-wheels).

## Recycling Plastic Bags

By Jamie Rosenthal, Talent Zero Waste Team (TZWT)

It's all too easy to accumulate a sizable plastic bag collection. It'd be great if there were a place you could confidently take your plastic bags to be recycled. In stark contrast to the ease with which curbside recycling is handled, the very few markets for these bags primarily operate in foreign countries where it's not clear how the material is recycled. In some cases, bags are recycled by impoverished people as highlighted in the recent documentary, *Plastic China*. This documentary gives a sobering glimpse into the lives of families who compromise their health every day to melt plastic films into plastic beads that can be resold. We probably wouldn't feel so good about dropping off our armfuls of plastic at a community collection point (like a local grocery store) if we understood the entire lifecycle of this process.

Here at home, bags that are mistakenly placed into curbside recycling bins have to be removed by hand in the material sorting process. Even with safeguards in place, bags continue to get tangled up in machine gears along the sorting line. This eventually grinds the operation to a halt, increasing sorting costs while also creating a potentially dangerous situation as worker intervention is required.

One domestic company named Trex has found a niche in turning plastic bags into long-lasting composite decking, park benches, fencing and railings. While this is a noble example of domestic recycling, it doesn't address the over-consumption problem (and our society's social conditioning) that lands us with these bags in the first place. For instance, it is commonplace for a shopper to be offered a plastic bag at check-out when they are buying a bag that would hold their items.

As consumers, we should politely decline the plastic bags offered by cashiers and remember our own reusable bags or containers. We can also find second uses for the bags we already have, such as garbage can liners. Fossil fuels are being used to generate these plastic films and we should be more aware and respectful of the roles we play in the conservation of our environment.

The Talent Zero Waste Team (TZWT) is a group passionate about waste reduction. This group strives to inspire and foster a community without waste in Talent. We meet **every third Thursday of the month, at 2:30 p.m. in the Talent Public Library**. The next two meetings will be on **March 15th** and **April 19th**. Please join us as we develop educational materials, sponsor reuse and recycling events, and promote zero waste at City-sponsored events.

Jamie Rosenthal is Recology Ashland's Zero Waste Specialist, a City of Ashland Conservation Commissioner, and a Jackson County Master Recycler. For more information about the Talent Zero Waste Team, please email Sharon Anderson at [scanderson1@charter.net](mailto:scanderson1@charter.net).

## Turn That Light Off

By Connor Shields, Energy Efficiency Coordinator

As Pacific Power puts it in their *Bright Ideas* guide to energy savings, thermostats are the gatekeepers to your heating and cooling systems. If you want to save significantly on your utility bill (and energy use), scheduling your daytime and nighttime temperatures can be one of your first strategies this year. Scheduling can either be done manually (older "mechanical" models) or by programming (newer "programmable" models). Scheduling for your thermostat means that you have a default temperature setting for separate times of the day, week, or year. According to the US Department of Energy and Pacific Power, you should set your daytime temperature to 68°F or lower when you are home and down to 60°F when asleep or away this time of year. Remember, the less frequently you change the temperature (yes, even 1 degree) the less energy your system uses. Consistency with your schedule is key—so much so that it is more important than having your temperatures set to specific values. Unless you keep it at 77° in the dead of February. In that case, maybe you should relocate to Tucson. The move might be expensive but your energy savings just might pay off...eventually!

Not all thermostats are created equal and neither are HVAC systems. Programmable and smart thermostats are

similar devices but the smart setup is compatible with your smart-phone. That increased IQ means you can adjust your schedules from anywhere in your home with a couple swipes on your phone. In October of 2017, Consumer Reports reported its list of the Top 5 affordable smart thermostats. Makes and models included the *Honeywell Lyric T5* for \$130 and the *Ecobee Lite EB-STATE3-01* for \$170. Programmable models offer the same performance but less convenience. Hop online and start researching models and prices if you don't already have one of these devices in your home.

Know your HVAC system well before you begin shopping! Older systems have different wiring configurations from newer ones and, likewise, some thermostats on the market aren't compatible with certain systems.

Now set that schedule, and please turn off that light. It's really not necessary this time of day!

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