



CITY OF SELAH

115 West Naches Ave
Selah, WA 98942

P: 509-698-7328
F: 509-698-7338

Mayor's Monthly Newsletter January 2025

Hello Selah Community and welcome to 2025! This is a year filled with great possibilities.

We have two brand new employees as of January 2nd. They are Danae Merritt and Steve Zetz. Danae is our new Court Clerk/Administrator of the Municipal Court and comes to us with prior work in Phoenix, Snohomish County, Yakima County, and the City of Snohomish. Steve is our Community Development Supervisor and comes to us from the City of Prosser, having worked in Sunnyside, Mabton, and Granger prior to that. I am confident they will both be strong assets to Selah. Stop by and meet them—Danae at City Hall and Steve at Public Works.

At the first Council meeting, all Councilmembers were assigned to committees for 2025. Check these out on the City website. Public Works was authorized to purchase one snow plow and a sander to keep our streets clear. Let's hope they don't get overworked this year. It was also announced that our annual workshop (retreat) would be scheduled for March this year. More to come next month when the dates are confirmed.

At the second Council meeting, they approved the annexation of the Hilltop Development into the City and zoning it Residential Low-Density (R-1). This area is south of Hillcrest and north of Southern Ave.

Continuing my program of recognition, I presented two "Selah Community Pride Awards." The first went to Selah Middle School student Daphne Templet for participating in the national "Patriot's Pen" contest sponsored by the VFW. She won first place in the Yakima Valley at District and placed fourth at the state competition. The theme of the essay contest was "My Voice in America's Democracy." She had to examine the concept of democracy and determine how she could embrace it as a young American citizen in 300 to 400 words. Each time, she won prize money and had to orally present her essay to an adult audience of primarily Veterans. Congrats, Daphne! The second recipient was Norma Smith for a lifetime of service to the Selah community. This was read aloud at the Council meeting and then presented at her 90th birthday party at Tailgaters on January 31st. She has truly set an example for all generations of how to enrich the lives of others through community engagement. We love you, Norma!

Improvements to the Civic Center are currently underway. We are closed for a couple of months during the construction, but you can anticipate reopening in March. There will be additional changes once we identify some funding sources to complete the makeover.

You can look forward to road grind and overlay projects on 1st, 3rd, and Fremont as the weather allows. There will also be work on the Hillcrest water main improvement project. I will keep you posted as these projects get closer to construction.

This month, we have had a team of staff and Councilmembers visiting some alternative methods of construction for a new Police/City Hall building. The plan would still be to construct the facility without raising taxes. I would be happy to sit down with anyone and explain this concept for achieving one of the Council's top priorities over the next couple of years. Yes, we did buy the existing police building just a year ago, but at the time, we very clearly said it was not a long-term solution—only a stopgap measure intended to save the high cost of rental and maintenance fees. There is still solid financial reasoning for having purchased the current building, which can either be repurposed or sold once the new one is built.

We remain hard at work on securing Selah's fair share of state and federal dollars through meetings and lobbying efforts with agencies and legislators. Multiple conversations are ongoing with our legislators—Senator Nikki Torres, Representatives Chris Corry and Jeremy Default—who all remain extremely supportive of the needs of Selah. We have an excellent team in Olympia.

I attended this month in Olympia the AWC Mayor's Exchange, where I was able to meet with some of them and a couple of state agencies. Our Legislative Committee will attend next month's City Action Days event, where we have scheduled appointments to meet with all of them. In addition, we will be traveling to Washington, D.C., later this year to ask for federal support for Selah's needs.

I am in the office almost every day and willing to meet with citizens to discuss your concerns and ideas for improving Selah. Please call to schedule an appointment if you want to make sure I am available at the time you will be here, or stop by and take your chances that I'm not tied up.

That is all for this month. I look forward to giving my next month's update.

If you wish to be added or removed from the Mayor's Monthly email please send a message to michelle.damron@selahwa.gov

Roger Bell, Selah Mayor

