

2010 Mayor State of Montesano Message

I have come to the half-way point of my term as Mayor in Montesano. We just completed 2 years, and have another 2 years to look forward to. It has been an honor to serve the citizens of Montesano. The city staff and the City Council here have been outstanding to work with.

What specifically have we done in the last two years? This list reflects “OUR” accomplishments, and is not viewed to be my accomplishments.

- Resolved the outstanding union contracts with all unions, as well as exempt staff. That was major.
- Improved staff moral, productivity and accountability.
- Conducted a competitive hiring process for the Clerk/Controller.
- Conducted and produced a detailed Comparative Cities Study of seven comparable cities, the services they provide, their staffing, salaries, revenues, rates and facilities.
- Supported and participated in the Planning Commission project to define new downtown development standards and direction.
- Implemented and produced quarterly city newsletters.
- Defined and implemented sustainable, new utility rates that are beginning to cover expenses.
- Consistently provided updates to keep the city website current.
- Represented the city at various organizations: Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority, E-911 Board, Economic Development Council, and Columbia Pacific RC & EDD and Council of Governments.
- Participated in annual city celebrations: Festival of People, Historic Car Show, Fall Harvest Celebration, Farm/City Dinner, Awards Banquet, Chehalis Basin Watershed Festival and Festival of Lights.
- Provided support and participated in local organizations: Montesano Chamber of Commerce, Montesano Lions Club, Montesano Kiwanis Club, Montesano Senior Center, East Grays Harbor Rotary Club, Historical Society and Grays Harbor Mayors.
- Initiated Annexation discussions.
- Assisted in the successful resolution of three outstanding lawsuits, the hearing complaint for Council Chambers and one PERC grievance.
- Initiated the development of a City Strategic Plan.
- Developed the Annual City Water Taste Test for the Chehalis Basin Watershed Festival.

- Initiated fundraising (almost \$10,000 to date) and completed the plan for Bryan Park.
- Participated in the public-private creation of almost 3 actual acres of field space at Beacon Park.
- Participated in local efforts to keep Lake Sylvia State Park open.
- Replaced three seats of resigned Council members.
- Initiated and developed Monte Trails Appreciation Day the first Saturday in May.
- Assisted in the creation and distribution of a new Montesano Tourism brochure.
- Began work on a City Capital Facilities Plan.
- Produced seven Press Releases to local newspapers.
- Discussed and created the City Administrator/Finance Director position.
- Closed the Parks & Recreation Department within the city.
- Encouraged the completion of the 10th Street paving project.
- Helped Mary's River Lumber address flooding issues and keep them located here.
- The old "new" ambulance interfund loan was paid off.
- The transfer of \$150,000 back in 2004 for Beacon Park was paid back with interest to the Cumulative Reserve.
- A new BIAS accounting package was purchased and operative.
- The city first began to offer and accept credit card payments.
- The city has made on-line payments and account information available on our website.
- The city has made automatic payment deductions available.
- A new, 2010 Ambulance was purchased for \$145,000, with supporting equipment, and paid in full.
- \$37,000 was used to complete the Swiss Meadows Development roads after the banks and developer bailed out.
- Repeated flooding in the Medcalf-Beacon area was resolved with a Stormwater project and loan from the Cumulative Reserve of \$300,000 which will be paid back over time.
- Cash flow for ambulance collections was brought current.
- Ambulance billing software has been purchased.
- Discussions have begun and progressed for the formation of a local Regional Fire Authority between the City of Montesano and Fire District #2.
- New sidewalk along Simpson connecting 3rd Street with the new Simpson Grade School.

The 2010 Goals and activities that I am excited about as Mayor, and plan to participate in and support are as follows:

- Participate to change, improve and update the City Website.
- Coordinate to make the City Administrator position successful.
- Continue to represent the City as needed on the Chehalis Basin Flood Authority, E-911 Board, Economic Development Council and Columbia Pacific RC & EDD or Council of Governments.
- Continue to support and participate in all local city celebrations: Monte Trails Appreciation Day, Awards Banquet, Historic Car Show, Fall Harvest Celebration, Farm/City Dinner and Festival of Lights.
- Participate in discussions with Weyerhaeuser about future timberland purchase by the City.
- Work with the Grays Harbor Mayors to resolve local funding concerns for all municipalities for streets and stormwater.
- Assist Chamber of Commerce with new City Map for tourism.
- Assist and participate with the Planning Commission in the development of new downtown design standards.
- Participate in completion of the infrastructure, planting and monuments at Bryan Park.
- Participate in plans and funding for a new Public Works Facility.
- Support and move ahead to get a new Water Reservoir completed.
- Continue to produce quarterly newsletters for citizens.
- Pick up and continue annexation discussions and progress.
- Begin 2011 Union Contract negotiations with all staff.
- Coordinate yard waste & debris recycling partnership with Grays Harbor County, Fire District #2 and the Clean Air Agency.
- Initiate Departmental Expense Reviews.
- Initiate a community statue program of some kind.
- Initiate a Farmers Market program of some kind.

We are in the business of providing services to Montesano – fire protection, emergency care, public safety, parks, cemetery, streets, court, sidewalks, water, sewer and stormwater. It is all of these things that add up to making the quality of life here good.

It ends up being a balancing act, and being fiscally conservative can create areas of conflict in good times, but in tough times like now there is a real benefit. There is a pattern that hard times create. They foster solidarity. When there's a crisis or storm, people hunker down and work together.

We are putting ourselves in a position to benefit as the state and national economy recovers. Government agencies are struggling now, but Montesano is working to maintain services, personnel and quality of life issues. We were not fat or over-staffed to begin with, so staffing has not been a huge issue. We reduced the recreation program staff and budget, so one full time and many part time staff were lost. However, we also have honored our contract promises with the rest of staff, which is consistent with our values, and I believe speaks well for our overall management.

The current quality of life in Montesano didn't just happen. It has been thousands of decisions made over the years by many councils, mayors, staff, businesses and volunteers. We have kept our small town flavor and historical roots, while dealing with growth related issues. It has been our stated mission and it still is.

Participating in community service organizations, and actively participating in all of our community events helps keep us aware of the issues our City is facing. What really makes Montesano quality of life high is the people who live here, and the rich and varied texture of life created by city government hand-in-hand with volunteer organizations and businesses.

The City's budget and fund structure is complex and made up of many different components. It is my hope that as we move into the future that we provide good leadership with well-defined vision and a sustainable strategic plan for those that follow. Thanks for being a part of the current team.

Sincerely,

Ron Schillinger
Mayor