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Creswell State of the City Address
Mayor Bob Hooker
February 13, 2012

Welcome everyone to the 2012 Creswell State of the City Address. I would like to start by thanking the council members for their time and energy in 2011. I would especially like to thank the city staff for all their hard work throughout the year. Special thanks to all the commissioners and committee members who have taken the time to serve. And what would Creswell be without our volunteers? Hundreds of citizens and businesses who donate precious time, money, products and services to keep Creswell the best small city in the state. They deserve the biggest thank you of all.

Remember why we are all doing what we do. To ensure that the community we are passionate about today is the community we can be proud to leave our children tomorrow.

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Passion and pride. Two words....two very powerful words. Two words that have both positive and negative meaning.

Passion..... A positive word that as an emotion exhibits enthusiasm and zeal. However, some passions through negative actions can also mean obsession and craze. This city needs citizens with passion, but passions need to be tempered with respect for others who may not have quite the same intensity for that passion. Passions need to be expressed with finesse, facts and solutions. They need to be thought through and presented in an appropriate manner. The old saying that you can catch more flies with honey than vinegar is absolutely true.

Pride..... It means satisfaction and gratification. Two very powerful positive feelings. However, when arrogance, conceit and smugness are the defining characteristics, pride can be a nasty emotion. All of us who volunteer in Creswell can be proud of what we accomplish year after year through hard work and respect for those around us.

One of Creswell's biggest passions and sources of pride is our 4th of July Celebration.... and 2011 was no different. In fact, we attracted so much attendance that there was a traffic back up on I-5 at the Creswell exit that made the news. I understand there is a committee already meeting to address some of the traffic issues we experienced last year. Once again, behind the scenes work that many of us are never aware of and take for granted. Thank you to the members of South Lane County Fire & Rescue, the Creswell Chamber, the Creswell Kiwanis and all the other volunteers for a truly fun and patriotic day.

In an effort to develop programs to serve the community at the Cobalt Building, we continue to move forward in our partnerships with the Creswell School District and Willamalane Parks and Recreation District. We know that with the experience that both of these organizations have working with youth, we will be able to develop some great programs. This past summer, the city partnered with Willamalane and Ray's Food Place to provide the Movies in the Park program. This was a fantastic program that I know was enjoyed by many throughout the summer. We plan to do that again this year.

As our city population has grown, now to 5031, so has our city wide cleanup grown. This year we collected the most tonnage ever during our one day cleanup. My thanks to all of the city staff that put this event together, the public works department for their hard work, not just the day of, but also many days leading up to the event, the Creswell Kiwanis and the many other community volunteers who assist and finally, thank you to Sanipac. They have provided tremendous assistance with this event since becoming the city's solid waste hauler.

Another exciting project that may be coming to the Creswell area is a new golf course. Although the course will be located outside the city limits, our negotiations with the private developer and the University of Oregon Alumni Association has great economic potential for Creswell. In exchange for the use of the city's grey water from the wastewater plant, which will be used to irrigate the golf course, the developer has agreed to place the entrance for the course near Creswell. This high end course has the potential to bring large tournaments to our community which will provide employment and economic development for our businesses.

I would now like to address a subject that has come up repeatedly through 2011, not just in Creswell, but throughout our country....and that is poverty. Let me focus on the poverty level in Creswell. The 2010 census statistics put the poverty level in Creswell at 16.9%, which is 2.9% higher than the state of Oregon as a whole. If you look at all the statistics combined for Creswell which include age of population, income, home ownership, etc., Creswell is at the same level as the rest of the country; meaning, the economic downturn has affected every household in the United States in some form or another. The most common measure of poverty in the United States is the "poverty threshold" set by the U.S. government. This measure recognizes poverty as a lack of those goods and services commonly taken for granted by members of mainstream society. The federal government's definition of poverty is based on total income received. For example, the poverty level for 2011 was set at $22,350 (total annual household income) for a family of four. Sadly, most Americans....58.5%....will spend at least one year below the poverty line at some point between the ages of 25 and 75.

Can we do more for our own community? Always.

How do we, as an organization known as a city do that? While serving as your mayor, I am proud of the efforts that we as a city council have taken on numerous issues that will have long term affects on our community. It is so important to build partnerships with other governmental and nongovernmental agencies to accomplish many of the multifaceted projects we find ourselves involved in. The foundation of these partnerships has been the city's partnership with the University of Oregon and with AmeriCorps and the Resource Assistance for Rural Environments (RARE) program. Following the RARE theme of working to increase the capacity *of* Oregon's rural communities to improve economic, social, and environmental conditions, the city has worked to develop projects that fit the RARE mission. Now working with the city's 4th RARE member, the many projects that have been developed are the Annual Earth Day Celebration where the city partnered with the Creswell School District, the Coast Fork Watershed Council and many other organizations throughout Lane County to acknowledge the

environment. A highlight at last year's celebration was the city's acceptance as a Tree City USA.

Again, working with the Creswell School District, our efforts to get students more involved in city government and to give the youth of the community a voice was very successful with the creation of the Creswell Youth Advisory Council. Although that program has slowed down this year, our current RARE Intern Steve Dobrinich is working with the high school to reenergize the students and the program.

Continuing our partnerships, the city has been a strong supporter of bringing social services agencies to Creswell in an effort to assist those in need. We are now working on a regular basis with Community Sharing of Cottage Grove, Women's Space, Centro Latino Americano, Senior and Disabled Services and The Relief Nursery. At the beginning of December, the city, in partnership with the City of Cottage Grove and Community Sharing, began the "Help to Others" or H2O Program. The purpose of this program is to assist families to pay their water and sewer bills. Every donation to this

program directly benefits a family in Creswell who is struggling to pay their bills.

I am happy to report tonight that the city, in partnership with the Creswell School District and the Lane County Sheriff's Office just received an Alliance for Community Traffic Safety Mini-Grant for $5,000.00. These funds will be used to bring the Sheriff's "Every 15 Minute Program" to the Creswell High School and bike and pedestrian safety classes to the elementary and middle schools. My thanks to our City Administrator Mark Shrives, City Planner Denise Walters, Creswell School District Superintendent Todd Hamilton and Deputy Aly House for their work in obtaining this grant for our community.

I have discussed how a city can help through establishing partnerships and programs, providing office space, providing staff support, help with advertising and providing information regarding these programs. So how can YOU as citizens help? By donating your time volunteering at many of the charitable organizations that provide assistance and meals to our citizens; or if you are able, by

donating funds to your preferred charity. Either way, every little bit by each of us can make a big difference.

On a personal note....I would just like to say that 2011 was very painful and disappointing for me and my family because of personal attacks and false allegations of misconduct. My wife and I both have careers outside our volunteer work in the Creswell community and my wife volunteers extensively outside of Creswell. It is with pride and support from family members and my employer that I serve as the Mayor of Creswell. To be the mayor of any city is an enormous responsibility and decisions that are made can affect a community for years to come whether they are good decisions or bad. Being the mayor of a city is not for the faint of heart or for those who think it is some kind of club. It takes dedication and the willingness to put aside your political views and work toward a common goal. Liberals and Conservatives must be willing to meet in the middle. Neither side can have it all, and if we continue to be unyielding in our collaborations, the only people who get the short end of the stick are the people we are serving because nothing will ever get accomplished.

In closing.....I want to thank again all those who have given so much to this city. In particular, I would like to take a moment to express special thanks to Councilor Bill McCoy and his wife, Verlean. Bill and Verlean have resided in Creswell for 17 years and Bill has been a city councilor for 7 years. They are both very active in the Creswell Community. Bill has served on the Lane Library District Board of Directors, he has donated his time as a member of the Creswell Historical Society Board of Directors, volunteered for the neighborhood watch program and has served as a precinct chairman for elections. Both Bill and Verlean have donated so much to our community. As many of you know, Bill has been battling cancer for some time and I know I can speak for all of Creswell when I say we, as a community, extend our prayers, hopes and best wishes for a full recovery.

Thank you all for coming this evening and I look forward to a successful 2012 for the City of Creswell.