

## **The Linking Letter**

### *A City Briefing*

by Anne Scheck *to Neighbors in Independence, Oregon*

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**Preface:** It's been nearly five years since the city of Independence initiated – and ultimately prevailed – in its litigation over a skeletal building still known as “Independence Station,” which was to have been a *state-of-the-art* green-energy project that housed both retail stores & condominiums. The city filed suit against the development to collect hundreds of thousands of dollars it allegedly was owed, eventually clinching a settlement. As the city embarks on a hoped-for tourism center by the river -- the centerpiece a hotel at the old Valley Concrete Site -- some members of the public have been asking the following question ...

**Inquiry:** Will the new venture go more smoothly than the past one?

The question is a difficult one to answer because the economic boost that probably will help increase the chances for success of the riverside development is already increasing some expenses. For example, the grading by the city to prepare the parcel for sale was budgeted to be \$150,000.00 -- but the lowest bid came in at \$237,845.00. The recovering economy has caused some cost creep, according to city planning.

Nor does economic recovery seem to have helped two businesses acquired from the city. Both *Mecanico*, a tavern abutting Riverview Park, and *Family Treasures Marketplace*, in the old city hall building by the US Post Office, are finding it difficult to meet payment obligations. Councilors heard reports from the city manager at several meetings this summer about the situation of these two properties: by the end of the summer, foreclosure was deemed necessary for *Family Treasures Marketplace*; The City Council is now considering financial proposals by *Mecanico* that would restructure the open-air pub's agreement with the city, perhaps allowing it to enter into a new payment plan for current debt.

In the same series of City Council sessions, councilors grappled with city financing for next year, eventually setting forth in their new strategic plan the “number-one goal” to “establish and maintain financial stability.” They approved a budget next year of \$18,388,688.00 for forecasted appropriations of \$17,399,923.00.

*Ending note:* Over the course of the summer, the city also determined it needed to upgrade its water-processing facility. In a special report on this issue, you'll be receiving a "Linking Letter" in September about the technology tentatively affirmed for water-treatment in the city.

Till next time ... *Anne Scheck*, your neighbor in Independence.