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City of Orting

NEWSLETTER

Our Mission: Making Orting a better place to live, work, play and do business, while preserving our strong sense of community.

Issue #12
April 2026



Mayor Drennen's Monthly "Trailside" Report - Finding a New Purpose for Old City Hall

Hello Trailside friends of Orting,

The Old City Hall at 110 Train was once the thriving center for Orting's government. The city's most influential leaders and its worst criminals have passed through its doors. This building has been a vital part of our city's history, serving first as a Town Hall and later as City Hall when we incorporated in 1989. Over the years, it has housed our Police Department, jail, Fire Department, library, and even a Public Works facility. Built in 1927, this unifying structure has been a place for countless community gatherings and will celebrate its 100th anniversary this year.

A Century of Memories

If these walls could speak, they would tell stories of late-night council meetings packed with concerned citizens. The former Council Chambers hold the memories of our city's great leaders navigating uncertain times and change. We remember late-night sessions with Mayor Harmon and meetings so crowded that people spilled into the hallways, whispering moment-to-moment updates to one another. The bonds that tie us together were built from these meetings filled with passionate debates that sometimes divided us but ultimately made us a stronger and more united community.

Originally starting as a Town Hall, police station, and jail, the building expanded in 1937, 1947, and the early 1970s as our city grew. In 1937, the Fire Department became the first major addition. It served as our city's fire headquarters and housed our restored 1927 Chevrolet fire engine, affectionately known as "Jenny."

New Hope on the Horizon

Today, the vacant building stands as a humble reminder of our past, slowly succumbing to time and the weather. But there is new hope on the horizon, and we are inviting you to be part of it.

A movement is underway to renew our history and repurpose the building so it can serve Orting once again. We are exploring all options to save this treasured landmark. By seeking a public-private partnership, we can cost-effectively invite new business use while dedicating a section of the building for a museum. This museum will provide a permanent home for Jenny and ensure our rich history carries forward into the future.

How You Can Help

I invite you to support our effort to repurpose our beloved former City Hall as it celebrates its 100th birthday this year. Together, we can preserve our memories and create a vibrant new space for our community. Please reach out to me by email at sdrennen@cityoforting.org with ideas.

View a photo of Old City Hall on the next page!
Old City Hall is located behind the library at 110 Train St. SE

Community Update: Lahar Evacuation Drill Traffic Impacts

by Police Chief Devon Gabreluk, Orting Police Department

On April 23, 2026, the City of Orting will participate in the Regional Lahar Evacuation Drill—an important preparedness exercise involving local schools, emergency responders, and partner agencies. While this drill is critical to ensuring our community is ready for a real emergency, it will have temporary impacts on local traffic that residents should be aware of.

Beginning at approximately 9:30 AM and continuing through the late morning hours, significant traffic restrictions will be in place throughout the city, particularly along key evacuation routes. The most notable impacts include:

- **West Calistoga Street:**
 - The eastbound lane will be completely closed to all vehicle traffic for the duration of the drill.
 - The westbound lane will remain open for vehicles exiting town.

- **No access to downtown Orting from the Orting Kapowsin Highway.** Northbound vehicle traffic heading into Orting will be stopped at 188th Street East and turned around. There will be no vehicle access to Orting over the Puyallup River bridge from the area of 188th ST E/Leach Road.

- **Orting Kapowsin Highway / Calistoga Corridor:**
 - Portions of this route will be closed to vehicles to allow for large numbers of students walking the evacuation route.
 - No vehicles will be permitted in designated pedestrian lanes during the exercise.

- **Neighborhood Traffic Flow:**
 - Residents in the southwest portion of the city should expect detours and directional traffic restrictions, requiring travel east and north to exit town via the Calistoga bridge.

- **Residents living on Coe Lane SW or Kansas St SW between the 400 block - 700 block** will not be able to get to their homes via vehicle during the drill. If you live in one of these areas and need to get to your residence during the drill, you must park and walk. Nearby parking will be available outside of the old public works facility located at the intersection of Calistoga Street West and Kansas ST SW.

During the drill, thousands of students will be walking evacuation routes, and many will travel the route twice as part of the exercise. For this reason, road closures will remain in place until all students have safely cleared the area and an “all clear” is given.

We ask all residents to plan ahead, expect delays, and use alternate routes where possible. If you must travel during this time, please drive cautiously, follow posted signage, and comply with directions from officers and traffic control personnel.

This drill is one of the largest of its kind in the country and plays a vital role in keeping our community prepared. Your patience and cooperation directly contribute to the safety of our students and the success of this exercise.

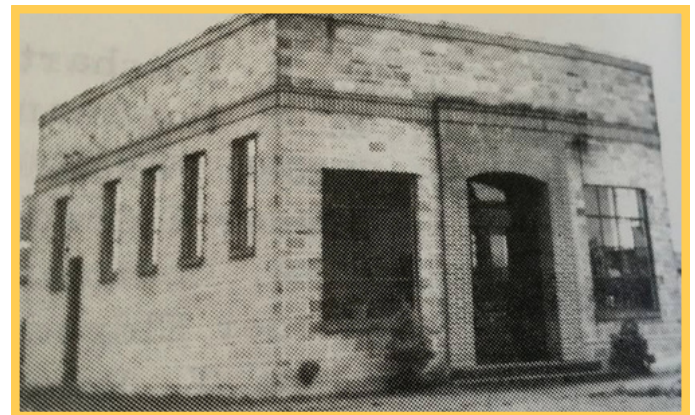
For more information about closures and a map detailing traffic flow, please visit: <https://cityoforting.org/detour>



Students evacuate along the levee during the 2022 Lahar Drill.



Old City Hall circa 1925 courtesy of the Orting History Facebook page. “Jenny” drives past Orting’s “new” City Hall while participating in the Red Hat Days parade.



Upcoming Important Dates & Events

- April 29th - Study Session 5:00pm & Regular Meeting 6:00pm
- May 4th - Planning Commission Meeting
- May 9th - Mother's Day Farmers Market, 10:30am-2:30pm
- May 13th - Study Session 5:00pm & Regular Meeting 6:00pm
- May 15th - Orting Valley Farmers Market season begins, every Friday 3-7pm
- May 20th - Committee of Whole Meeting, 2:00pm

Helpful Links & Information



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Daffodil Princesses pose with local Girl Scouts. Princesses enjoy a complimentary dinner in the MPC.



A Golden Day in Orting: Celebrating the 93rd Annual Daffodil Festival and Parade

On April 4th, thousands of residents and visitors gathered in downtown Orting under beautiful, sunny skies to celebrate the 93rd Annual Daffodil Festival and Parade. The City of Orting proudly sponsors this cherished tradition, which brings our community together for a day of fun, food, and beautiful blooms.

The Daffodil Festival began in 1934 as a tribute to the local agriculture industry. While the golden flowers remain a proud symbol of our region's history, the true heart of the festival is the people. The event thrives on the spirit of diverse Pierce County communities sharing their talents and connecting with one another.

This year, the festivities took over Main City Park from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Over 50 vendors lined the Foothills Trail, offering a wide variety of goods. We enjoyed fresh mini donuts, hot dogs, baked treats, and the highly anticipated return of the Orting Lions Club's signature BBQ

chicken dinner. Families also had a blast testing their aim at the inflatable ax-throwing station.

At 5 p.m., the Daffodil Grand Floral Parade made its way down Washington Avenue. Over 60 participant groups marched the route, showcasing stunning floats decorated with thousands of live daffodils, marching bands from local schools, classic cars, mounted horses, and more. We loved seeing local groups like our Girl Scout troop and the Orting Junior Cardinals Football and Cheer organization proudly representing our town. The Orting High School and Middle School marching bands had the community dancing to great music and cheering loud during the high school's fight song. We are also thrilled to announce that the Orting Community float took home an award for its excellent design!

This unforgettable day would not be possible without the hard work and dedication of the City's Public Works team and the Orting Police Department. We thank them for keeping the event safe, clean, and enjoyable for everyone. We look forward to creating more wonderful memories with you at next year's festival!



Welcome New Employee Hope Mbugua

Emergency Management Coordinator

We would like to extend a warm welcome to our new Emergency Management Coordinator, Hope Mbugua. Here's a little bit of information about her:

I was born in Nairobi, Kenya, raised in North Carolina, and moved to Washington State about a year and a half ago.

My passion for emergency management started through my volunteer work with the American Red Cross and my desire to empower people with knowledge to build resiliency in the community. In my free time, I enjoy taking care of my plants and sewing. I'm excited to get to know everyone and work together to build a strong, prepared, and resilient Orting!

Mayor Drennen’s Monthly Trailside Tribute - Kelly Cochran

This month’s Trailside Tribute honors Kelly Cochran for her dedication to shaping and preserving Orting’s cherished “Small Town Feel.”

Kelly moved to Orting in 1980 with her husband, Mike Cochran, and their three sons after falling in love with the city. Orting reminded her of the small town she grew up in —Avondale, Georgia.

In the early 1990s, Orting faced unprecedented growth as farmland was being converted into residential housing. In May 1991, Kelly decided to step up during this critical time by volunteering to serve on the Planning Commission. Partnering with her long-time friend, David Inge, she spearheaded an effort to preserve the small-town charm that Orting residents treasured. Drawing inspiration from their past, they envisioned a design ordinance that would not only protect Orting’s unique character but also foster a thriving economy with a distinct identity.

From the start, the odds were stacked against them in passing such an ordinance. Kelly and David worked tirelessly with the Planning Commission and the City Council to share their vision. They also engaged with local businesses to highlight the value of a historical “Turn-of-the-Century Western/Victorian” aesthetic and the benefits

it would bring to the community. Despite skepticism, including concerns from the city’s legal team that the ordinance might not withstand legal scrutiny, a miracle happened: in April 1993, the City Council adopted the Architectural Design Code. This code required all new businesses to undergo a design review by the Planning Commission.

Nearly 40 years later, Kelly continues to serve on the Planning Commission. Her contributions are evident and appreciated by everyone who visits or lives in Orting. Her efforts were instrumental in shaping the city’s first Comprehensive Plan, a state-mandated framework for managing growth and preserving open space. Together, these plans have guided Orting through decades of change while maintaining its beloved “Small Town Feel.”

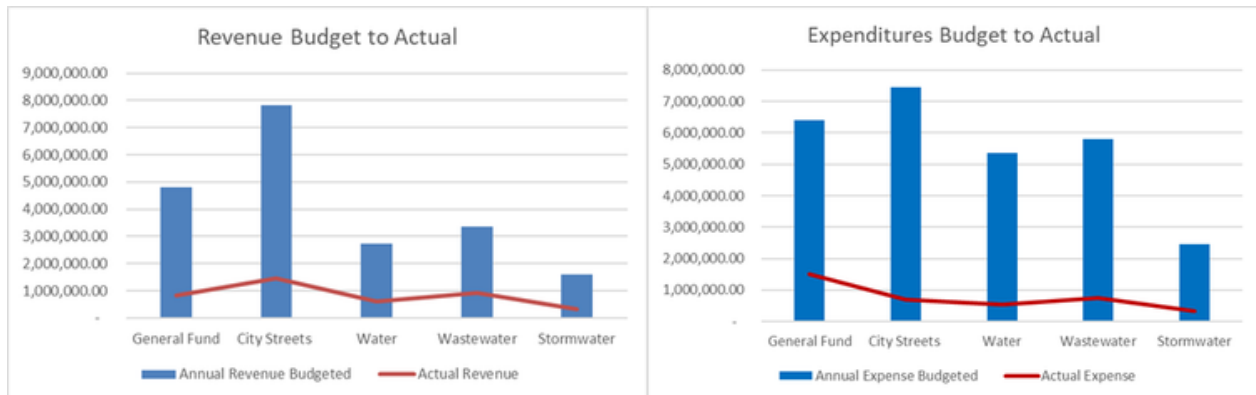
I want to express my deepest appreciation and gratitude to Kelly for her unwavering commitment to making Orting the wonderful place it is today—a great community to live in and visit.



Monthly Financial Report

Major Revenues and Expenses include:

- **General Fund:** Budgeted at \$4.8 million; revenues collected through March total \$828 thousand.
- **City Streets Fund:** Budgeted at \$7.8 million; revenues collected through March total \$1.4million.
- **Parks Fund:** Budgeted at \$17.7 million; revenues collected through March total \$61 thousand.
- **Water Fund:** Budgeted at \$2.7 million; revenues collected through March total \$599 thousand.
- **Wastewater Fund:** Budgeted at \$3.3 million; revenues collected through March total \$918 thousand.
- **Stormwater Fund:** Budgeted at \$1.6 million; revenues collected through March total \$330 thousand.



- **General Fund:** Budgeted at \$6.4 million; expenses through March total \$1.5million.
- **City Streets Fund:** Budgeted at \$7.4 million; expenses through March total \$704 thousand.
- **Parks Fund:** Budgeted at \$2 million; expenses through March total \$87 thousand.
- **Water Fund:** Budgeted at \$5.3 million; expenses through March total \$552 thousand.
- **Wastewater Fund:** Budgeted at \$5.7 million; expenses through March total \$740 thousand.
- **Stormwater Fund:** Budgeted at \$2.4 million; expenses through March total \$338 thousand.