



Where Life is Sweet

Mayor and Members of the City Council

STAFF REPORT

For the Meeting of September 14, 2026

Title/Subject

Recognition- Building Inspector Heaven Doherty Earns Building Inspector of the Year Award

Summary and Background

On an average day at work, Heaven Doherty's pedometer hits 12,000 to 15,000 steps. Easy.

By 7 a.m., the City of Hermiston building inspector is already on the move, heading to new construction sites and remodels across the city to make sure projects are built safely and up to code. With Hermiston's same-day inspection service, every request submitted before 7 a.m. lands on Doherty's to-do list for the day.

That can mean anywhere from 25 to 50 inspections before the day is done.

It's a demanding pace driven by Hermiston's continued growth. In 2025 alone, 130 new homes were built in the city and more than \$200 million in building permits were filed.

Doherty's work keeping pace with that growth — along with her role in educating and supporting the next generation of building professionals — recently earned her recognition as the [Oregon Building Officials Association's](#) Building Inspector of the Year.

The award recognizes both Doherty's work for the City of Hermiston and her leadership through Chemeketa Community College, where she earned her degree and served as president of the [International Code Council \(ICC\) Chemeketa Chapter](#). She is also vice president of the [Eastern Oregon Building Officials Association](#).

For Doherty and building inspectors like her, every inspection ultimately comes down to one priority: Fire, Life and Safety.

Whether she is walking through a new home, apartment complex, commercial development, data center, or remodel, she is checking that what was designed on paper is built correctly in practice. That includes ensuring occupants have safe exits, buildings have appropriate air quality and ventilation, and structures have the integrity necessary to protect people, especially if a natural disaster were to put them to the test.

The work requires technical knowledge, attention to detail, and the ability to work productively with contractors, developers, and property owners. In a city experiencing significant development, it also requires efficiency.

Hermiston's commitment to same-day inspections helps keep construction projects moving ahead. Behind that service is a city Building Department tasked with balancing a growing workload with the responsibility of making sure homes and businesses built today will be safe for decades to come.

Doherty knew she wanted to work in a building department, and three years ago she took a crucial step by enrolling in the building inspection program at Chemeketa Community College, and is now helping strengthen the profession that gave her a new career in her work with the ICC.

That effort comes at an important time. The building inspection trade is facing a looming wave of retirements, with industry estimates projecting that as many as 80% of building inspectors will retire within the next five years. That makes recruiting and preparing new inspectors increasingly important for communities like Hermiston, where continued growth means the need for qualified building professionals is only increasing.

Through her involvement with Chemeketa and organizations that support building officials, Doherty is helping connect students and new professionals with an essential public-service career. Her Building Inspector of the Year award puts some well-deserved attention on that work.

Every new home, business and development in Hermiston represents more than just an investment in the community. Before anyone moves in or opens the doors, someone has to make sure it was built safely.

For dozens of projects on any given day, that person is Heaven Doherty. And she usually has another few thousand steps left to go.

Tie-In to Council Goals

Growing & Prosperous, Housing, and Strengthen Internal Operations

Fiscal Information

NA

Alternatives and Recommendation

For Recognition Purposes Only.

Submitted By:

City Manager Byron D. Smith