# QUARTERLY REPORT TO COUNCIL

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| Meeting Date: | March 18, 2026 |
| Prepared by: | Crystal King |
| Department: | Administration |
| Division: | Communications |
| Reporting Period: | December 2025 – February 2026 |
| CC: | City Administrator John Walsh |

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**1. General Operations (QUARTER/YTD)**

- **Press Releases:** 7/6
- **Social Media Posts:** 226/132
- **Newsletters:** 17/12
- **Media Request:** 26/26
- **Radio:** 0/0

Stats include reporting for all department/division support

**2. Staffing & Personnel**

- **Staffing support for other divisions**:
  - Ongoing Planning Commission coverage with associate planner vacancy
  - Provided City Recorder Division support while Deputy City Recorder was out of office; continuing to fulfill some public records requests
  - January and February City Council meeting coverage and special session coverage
  - Occasional front office coverage
- **Recent staff trainings:**
  - New Civic Plus website builder "super user" training for migration of City's website
  - WCAG 2.1 and Web Accessibility Overview through 3CMA professional organization
  - Winter Cybersecurity Learning Plan through CIS
  - Annual Respectful Workplace Learning Plan through CIS
  - Leading through the Noise: Practical Tools to Manage Stress in Public Service through 3CMA professional organization

**3. Projects & Initiatives***

**A. Key Projects**

- **TMDL Stormwater and Engineering presentations with Engineer Division at Columbia City RISE Afterschool Program and St. Helens High School:** Helping teach about the City's Mercury TMDL program and preventing stormwater pollution; part of DEQ required ongoing community education/engagement; additional National Engineers Week presentations at SHHS Physics class and Space and Earth Science class which included stormwater pollution prevention segments
- **Help Facilitate UB Rate Open House:** Create flyer, UB inserts, share info about meeting, run tech/record presentation during open house
- **Fulfill public records requests**
- **Library Stories by the River Festival promotion**
- **2026 Recreation Afterschool Program Promotions:** Promote increased program offerings due to CCLC grant funding

- **Miscellaneous Communications Tasks**: Winter weather countywide ops meeting, Columbia County Warming Center policy info shared, Project Arcadia mill sale press release, St. Helens GRO asset transfer, bi-monthly City newsletter, weekly Library newsletter, Weekly Roundup featuring tasks from each City division, length of service staff highlights; Christmas in the Plaza and Christmas Ships promotion, pics and video of event, after event highlight; power outages and trees down in roadway info out to public, St. Helens pictures sent to state urban renewal staff, Stories by the River Festival promotions, website migration clean up and training on new system, If I Were Mayor student contest, Law Enforcement Officer appreciation day; 2026 tourism events meeting, info to Treadway, and promotion of open call for vendors; Civic Explorer booklet work, press releases on PD felony sentencing cases, new McCormick Park wind phone promotion, website updates for various department requests, review of Scappoose to St. Helens trail PAC/TAC public engagement plan and flyer, McKenzie signage assistance for new police station, general fund flyer, employee of the year press release, help promote Recreation events, promote Library Adults and Crafts events, special Library Sesame Street Storytime, new Wee Wigglers storytime in collaboration with Northwest Regional ESD, Recreation CPR classes, Recreation youth basketball season, Recreation babysitting classes, print flyers for Recreation events

**B. Upcoming Projects**

- **Website Migration:** Duplication between old and new website during interim period, and copying over missing content from old to new website before go live date
- **TMDL Stormwater Pollution Prevention Video with Engineering:** Working with Engineering to produce an educational video for youth on stormwater pollution prevention; fulfills DEQ program requirements
- **TMDL Temperature and Mercury Communications Requirements:** Need to fulfill new TMDL temperature mandates from DEQ for communications and community engagement along with ongoing mercury TMDL requirements.
- **St. Helens Transportation System Plan Project:** Communications support for project milestones in the City's TSP update
- **Spring/Summer Event Highlights:** Promos leading up to events
- **Side by Side Ordinance Communications:** Build informational website, work with Engineering team on signage and communication needs
- **Budget Cuts Impacts:** Due to 32-hour work weeks (20% staff time reduction) and possible additional staffing reductions requiring support work for non-communications tasks, communications will need to pivot to immediate needs only. Completing projects with state or federally required communications mandates will take priority, along with essential/emergency communications during working hours. The following tasks and programs/projects will likely be impacted or discontinued/paused indefinitely due to time constraints:
    - **Emergency and community PSA information:** Delayed or no release of information to the public during a critical incident if outside 32-hour work window such as an infrastructure main break with a boil water notice, significant road closure traffic alerts due to a prolonged emergency incident, emergency water shut off for water main repair to a business or residential section of town, police incident with a shelter in place or avoid area, missing elder or youth, natural disaster, severe weather impacts, etc.
    - **Coverage of City community events:** No photography or video during events, no social media posts during the beginning of events to showcase activities happening, no after-event recaps shared with the community. This will impact

coverage of Community Day in the Park, Independence Day 250th Celebration, 13 Nights on the River, and St. Helens Christmas in the Plaza and Christmas Ships, with no Spirit of Halloweentown highlights targeted to St. Helens community.

- **City booths/entries in community events:** No City entries at community events. This includes our annual CCSO Trunk or Treat booth, Community Day in the Park booth, and Kiwanis Community Parade entry.
- **Cooling Center:** No City cooling center during extreme heat events due to minimum City staffing requirements and coordination time required with other agencies to secure supplies, call for volunteers, etc. The Communications Division has acted as the organizer/facilitator of the Columbia County inter-agency Extreme Weather Group which coordinates resources and communications during extreme heat events between the City, County, and other community organizations such as the Senior Center, CCMH, C.A.T., Care Oregon, United Way of Columbia County, etc. The group also meets to review Winter Weather resources and messaging. Due to the limited timeframe of how the NWS determines and declares extreme weather events before they happen, there will also be a large reduction in communications to the public regarding unofficial cooling location options or resources.
- **Media response:** No response to media inquiries after hours, on furlough days, or during weekends, holidays, etc.
- **St. Helens Civic Explorer Activity Handbook for youth:** On hold indefinitely. Booklet is 50% completed and was being created as an activity booklet to engage kids with hands on activities that teach them about City of St. Helens government services inspired by the NPS Junior Ranger program.
- **Weekly Library Newsletter: The Reading River:** Possibly placed on hold indefinitely.
- **Take Your Child to Work Day:** On hold indefinitely due to time constraints. Program previously organized through Communications Division as an enrichment activity for City employees and their children
- **Weekly Roundup:** Potential to be placed on hold indefinitely due to time constraints. For a year+, the comms team have been showcasing a weekly list of projects, trainings, collaborations, etc. on social media that highlights each City division on a rotating basis
- **Special event/meeting coverage:** No communications coverage after hours or furloughed hours, including community awards and presentations, proclamations, etc. at Council regular sessions; ribbon cutting ceremonies; community open houses or special sessions; Recreation or Library special program highlights

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