

# City Bridges

SPRING 2009

News to keep you connected to Albany City government

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This issue of *City Bridges* features the Albany Police and Fire Departments

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## Safety Begins with Preparation

Albany Police responded to seven reported robberies in January 2009, a 75 % increase from the same month in 2008. These crimes were committed against financial institutions, small businesses, and individuals in the community.

Robbery is a crime of violence where something is taken from another person by force or threat of force. There are countless reasons why people engage in these criminal acts, but the fact remains that a robber wants something from another person or business (typically money or valued property) and cannot obtain the items through legitimate means.

Citizens, businesses, and financial institutions cannot prevent a predetermined event such as a robbery but can take steps to be better prepared to deal with this type of crime and be excellent witnesses to the events.

Personal safety is the first priority. Many businesses and financial institutions have an employee protocol if a robbery occurs.

### The following will help employees and citizens in the event of a robbery:

- 1) Unless you are being assaulted, do not fight with or try to stop robbery suspects. Leave the apprehension of robbers to law enforcement.
- 2) Comply with robbers' demands and get them on their way as fast as possible.
- 3) Be a good witness. Make mental notes of the robber's race, size, gender, hair/eye color, clothing, distinguishing features (moles, tattoos, scars), weapon (if used or threatened), vehicle description, accomplices, and their direction of travel.

Business buildings should be well-lighted; and vegetation around the business should be well-spaced, short, and neatly trimmed to provide fewer areas for suspects to hide. Surveillance cameras should be used in parking areas, at entrances and exits, and locations where money is stored, such as cash registers and vaults. Surveillance systems need to be routinely checked and kept in good working condition. New digital

technology has improved these systems, but poor lighting and distance still affect the quality of recordings or pictures. Have a reputable company install a quality system. If you install the system yourself, conduct performance checks in all different lighting conditions. Ensure that you and your employees know how to operate the surveillance and recording equipment.

Individuals can also take steps to be safer. Go out with another person or in groups, stay in well-lighted areas, and tell someone where you are going and when you will return. Check your surroundings and be aware of suspicious persons or activity around you. Have your keys in hand, ready to use when you reach your vehicle. In case of an emergency, activate your car alarm with your key fob.

Use common sense and report suspicious activity to police because you may keep someone else from becoming a victim.

## Library Open Sundays

With the move to the new building at 2450 14th Avenue SE, The Albany Public Library is now open from 1:00-5:00 p.m. Sundays. The Library Board and staff hope the additional hours will make the Library more convenient for families and that users who have been requesting Sunday hours will make good use of this opportunity.

## Charter Changes On May Ballot

**Updated 3/18/2009:**

The City of Albany's ballot measure to revise the city charter will not be put to voters in the May 19, 2009 election due to costs. The bill from Linn County was going to be \$8,000.

The charter revision measure will be on the ballot in May 2010; even-numbered years have primary elections which are conducted at no cost to us.

## Graffiti Removal Program Returns

Community livability is one of the highest priorities for the City of Albany. The Albany Police Department strives to provide "Excellence Through Service" by responding to the needs and safety of our community. However, our community has observed a significant increase in graffiti recently. It is important for property owners, businesses, and citizens to report graffiti and to take prompt action for removal if you become a victim.

Successful prevention methods include immediately removing any graffiti and adopting a community wide zero-tolerance approach. Allowing graffiti to remain, even in seemingly inconspicuous locations such as alleyways or on abandoned



buildings, communicates an acceptance of vandalism. The longer graffiti is allowed to remain, the more graffiti it attracts. Removing graffiti in 24-48 hours results in a significant drop in reoccurrence.

The Albany Police Department Graffiti Removal Program is designed to educate citizens and property owners on the importance of accepting responsibility for their own property and removing graffiti quickly. The program offers property owners information on how to remove graffiti effectively from a variety of surfaces as well as removal resources such as paint and graffiti remover if property owners are unable to remove the graffiti themselves.

Citizens are encouraged to report graffiti to the Albany Police Department at 917-7680. For more information about the Graffiti Removal Program, contact Carmen Westfall at 917-3206 or [carmen.westfall@cityofalbany.net](mailto:carmen.westfall@cityofalbany.net).

## Reminder The Big Pickup:

The City of Albany is looking for groups of volunteers to spruce up Albany's streets on Saturday, May 16, 2009, as part of The Big Pickup: Albany Community Action Day. Litter volunteers will be supplied with trash bags, gloves, and a map of the area that needs help. The goal is to work together to improve the community's appearance and establish ongoing efforts to build community pride.

The Big Pickup includes two deeper neighborhood clean ups, the semiannual Down by The Riverside stream cleanup and Allied Waste's annual recycling roundup.

### Want to help out?

Contact Marilyn Smith at: [marilyn.smith@cityofalbany.net](mailto:marilyn.smith@cityofalbany.net) or 917-7507 or Lynn Hinrichs, [lynn.hinrichs@cityofalbany.net](mailto:lynn.hinrichs@cityofalbany.net) or 917-3208.

## Know it now: Sign up for FlashAlert

Are you interested in getting emergency or nonemergency news from the Albany Police and Fire Departments at work or at your home? The City of Albany can make that easy.

To help you to stay better informed about what is happening in Albany, you can receive news releases the moment they go out through FlashAlert.net, a Web-based news service that the City of Albany and local school districts use to distribute important information to the news media quickly.

Individuals can subscribe to FlashAlert

to receive the same information by e-mail, RSS feed, or as a text message on your cell phone. Subscribing to FlashAlert is free, though your cellular service may charge for text messages.

### Here's how to sign up:

- Visit <http://www.cityofalbany.net>, the City of Albany home page.
- In the green sidebar on the right of the page, scroll to "Recent News Releases" and scroll down to "Other FlashNews Alerts." Click there.
- You're now on the FlashAlert page. Click on Police & Fire. The next page

will show Albany Police and Albany Fire Department listed separately.

- Click on one to sign up for emergency and or nonemergency releases, then enter the e-mail address where you wish to receive notification. Follow the prompts to receive notification at more than one e-mail address or via cell phone.
- Go the FlashAlert home page to find out about using RSS feeds as well.
- Sign up for news from City Hall, the Albany School District, Linn-Benton Community College, or agencies in other areas.



Albany Community Action Day

City of Albany Directory

**Mayor**

Sharon Konopa 926-6812

**Ward I Councilors**

Dick Olsen 926-7348

Floyd Collins 928-2961

**Ward II Councilors**

Bill Coburn 928-0649

Ralph Reid, Jr. 928-7382

**Ward III Councilors**

Bessie Johnson 791-2494

Jeff Christman 926-0528

**City Manager**

Wes Hare 917-7505

**City Hall Phone Numbers**

General Information 917-7500

Ambulance Billing 917-7710

Building Inspection 917-7553

City Council Message 917-7503

City Manager 917-7500

**Downtown**

Carnegie Library 917-7585

Economic Development 917-7639

Engineering 917-7676

Finance Office 917-7500

Fire Department 917-7700

Human Resources 917-7500

Main Library 917-7580

Mayor's Message 917-7502

Municipal Court 917-7740

Parks & Recreation 917-7777

Planning and Zoning 917-7550

Police Department 917-7680

Public Information Office 917-7507

Senior Center 917-7760

Transit 917-7667

Water and Sewer Billing 917-7547

Water/Sewer/Streets 917-7600

**Emergencies**  
(Fire, Police, Ambulance)  
**Dial 911**

**City Bridges Info**

City Bridges is published by an editorial team from the City of Albany. Questions and input about this newsletter can be directed to the City Manager's Office, 333 Broadalbin SW, P.O. Box 490, Albany, OR 97321-0144.

**Contributors**

Sadie Bernt • John Bradner • Debbi Buchert  
John Burton • Sandy Hammersley  
Heather Hansen • Tom Henke • Doris Hicks  
Jeff Hinrichs • Adam Schneider • Deb Keehn  
Lynn Kauffman • Marilyn Smith • Don Schlies  
Diane Moody • Brad Liles • Darrel Tedisch  
Carmen Westfall • Steve Westling



333 Broadalbin SW, Albany, OR 97321  
[www.cityofalbany.net](http://www.cityofalbany.net)

# What Can Your Fire Department Do for You?

Most people understand that if your house is on fire and you call 9-1-1, a fire engine arrives to put out the fire. Most people also understand that if they have a medical emergency and call 9-1-1, an ambulance and possibly a fire engine will arrive to take care of them and transport them to the hospital if needed.

That was a typical picture of the fire service in the past. Today's fire service has had to change with increased demands for service and the growing needs of our communities. The Albany Fire Department's mission is to "prevent and protect from harm." We seek first, to prevent your emergency by providing fire safety inspections of business and industry, home safety educational programs, car seat installation instruction, bike helmets, and loaning of chimney cleaning supplies and life vests for water safety.

The Albany Fire Department picture also includes hazardous materials response equipment, specialized rescue equipment, water rescue boats, and countless specialized tools to deal with a wide range of local and regional emergencies. Albany firefighters are trained in structural and

wildland fire suppression; emergency medical care; hazardous materials mitigation; swift water rescue; SCUBA diving; confined space rescue; trench rescue; urban search and rescue; and vehicle extrication. Firefighter/paramedics train continually throughout their career to stay current with existing and new technologies and to address new hazards to prevent and protect the community from harm.

**Here are a few examples of emergency services outside of fire or medical response by the Albany Fire Department:**

- If you smell an unusual odor in your home and call 9-1-1, firefighters would respond with specialized equipment to determine the cause of the odor and assist you in alleviating a potentially larger problem.
- If a local industry has a hazardous chemical release, firefighters would respond with specialized equipment to address the chemical release, assist possible patients, and plan for minimizing the potential impact to the community.
- If a car crashes into your home, firefighters would respond with specialized

equipment to stabilize the vehicle and structure, remove occupants, and provide emergency medical care.

- If a downtown historic structure collapses, firefighters would respond with specialized equipment to stabilize the building, locate and remove trapped victims, and mitigate other potential hazards.
- If Albany had another winter flood like the one in 1996, firefighters would respond with specialized equipment to evacuate citizens from areas threatened by rising waters, rescue trapped motorists from high water areas, and assist the community with sandbags and other efforts to minimize flood-related emergencies.
- If you are in a serious boating accident with a potential drowning, firefighters would respond to the river, locate victims using divers and specialized equipment, and provide emergency medical care and transportation to a hospital.

The Albany Fire Department has evolved to meet the needs of the community and will continue to do so. If you have any questions about any of our programs or services, please contact us at 541-917-7700.

## Albany Fire Department Recruits Complete Training

Five new Albany Firefighter/Paramedics and a new Deputy Fire Marshal II are on the job after completing a six-week recruit academy that began in December 2008.

Firefighter/Paramedics Jon Mang, Chris McNeese, Leon Eichler, Ira Dorn, and Aaron Huyck were among more than 100 applicants for the five positions. They began testing for the jobs in September by completing a written application, physical agility test, written test, pre-employment screening; and an interview before a panel.

The academy was coordinated by Apparatus Operator/Paramedic



All recruits at graduation ceremony, including DFM II Chris Riffle.

Levi Lindsey, who was also the primary instructor, and supervised by Training Chief Larry Allen. The academy consisted of over 200 hours of didactic and practical

firefighting education, including working in all types of winter weather and live fire training at the Gresham Fire Department Training Center, part of a fire behavior class.

The five recruits and Deputy Fire Marshal Chris Riffle completed the training and were honored in graduation ceremonies after the year-end holidays. The event also formalized promotions for Assistant Chief Shane Wooton, Battalion Chief Scott Cowan, Deputy Fire Marshal III Don Schlies, Lieutenant Steve Lehman, Training Lieutenant Tom Henke, and Apparatus Operator Darin Ferguson.

## Patrol Districts

The Albany Police Department Patrol Division is responsible for providing emergency police services seven days a week, 24 hours every day. Patrol duties include but are not limited to:

- Responding to emergency and nonemergency calls for service
- Traffic enforcement
- Criminal investigations
- Warrant arrests
- Security checks
- Crime deterrence

Patrol teams work 12-hour shifts. The patrol division works in four teams that typically consist of a sergeant, corporal,

and five to seven officers. Members of each team are assigned to specific geographic areas during their shift. Currently, Police divide the city into four quadrants roughly using 12th Avenue and Hill Street as the dividers between Northwest, Northeast, Southwest, and Southeast. After assigning officers to each area, other officers are assigned as roving cars that work an overlap between two to four areas. Officers mainly respond to calls and patrol inside their geographic assignment, but they are allowed to venture outside those areas as needed.

Using area assignments ensures that all

parts of the city have equal coverage and decreases the response time when calls for service are received. Police handle approximately 450 activities during each 24-hour period; the four areas are divided fairly equally based on activities and calls for service.

Patrol teams work every day: weekends, holidays, nights, during storms, floods, and all events. Whether you are working, sleeping, on vacation, or out for dinner, a dedicated team of Albany police officers is on duty patrolling the city, making every effort to keep you and your family safe!

## Telephone Reporting Officer: TRO

The Albany Police Department includes a Telephone Reporting Officer who is stationed in the reception area at the Police Department to handle calls for service that do not usually require field follow-up. This officer works during regular business hours when community need for this service is the greatest.

The Telephone Reporting Officer helps people who come to the Police Department and answers phone questions that require the expertise of an officer. The most notable asset of the position is that citizens

don't have to wait for an officer to be called in from field duties to help them or to return a phone call. It allows field officers to remain on patrol and available to respond to emergency calls.

The TRO can quickly determine how best to help a person who comes to the station. If the situation is a civil matter, the officer can provide information on how to proceed. A TRO is well-versed in community programs and resources and can direct citizens with almost any need. The TRO can also provide educational information

about home and business security and crime prevention and answers to general questions.

Typical calls that the TRO handles include sex offender registrations; runaway/missing person reports; stolen vehicles; identity theft; harassment; warrant arrests; fraud; traffic complaints; threats; civil disputes; found property; neighborhood disputes; subpoena service; Municipal Court transports; and crime reporting.

# Recruiting and Hiring at Albany Police Department

A job as an Albany Police Officer starts with recruitment through the City of Albany Human Resources Department. The Police Department then tests and selects applicants to fill job vacancies within the department. The most common vacant positions are Police Officer and Police Telecommunicator. Positions open less often in administration, records, community education and community resource.

Most Police employees are Police Officers; the department currently has 63 sworn positions including patrol, command officers, sergeants, corporals, detectives, and school resource officers. Thirty-two non-sworn positions support the daily operations of the department through personnel working in dispatch, records, property and evidence, the community resource unit, and administration.

All APD positions have minimum requirements to pass application review for employment; employment as a Police Officer has additional requirements set by the state of Oregon:

- the applicant must be at least 21 years of age,
- a United States citizen,
- possess a high school diploma or GED,

- pass a background investigation to establish moral fitness, and
- successfully complete psychological and medical evaluations.

Applicants who meet minimum requirements are invited to participate in testing. Applicants must pass the Oregon Revised Physical Abilities Test (ORPAT) in less than 5 minutes and 30 seconds. Applicants who pass the ORPAT take a standardized written examination, "Front-Line Video," designed specifically for Police Officers from ERGO Metrics Company. The applicant watches a scenario-based video and answers 54 multiple-choice situational questions, completes a reading test, and prepares a written report describing what they saw on the video.

Applicants who receive a passing score by ERGO Metrics Company are invited to a formal interview which is evaluated by a captain, sergeant, administrative supervisor, and field training officer for overall performance. Applicants who successfully complete the interview are placed in a background pool and are selected for a conditional offer of employment when a position becomes vacant and before a background investigation can begin.

The background investigation requires the applicant to submit information about their personal history, verbally and in writing, to a department background investigator. A criminal history check and other checks are conducted to establish moral fitness and character. Upon successful completion of the background investigation, the applicant has two medical evaluations: one by a qualified psychologist and one by a qualified physician. If the applicant is deemed qualified by both medical evaluators, the applicant is given a formal offer of employment.

During the first two to three weeks of the Officer's employment, they will be orientated to the department, City, and other governmental agencies. By City Charter, the Officer will also receive the oath of office from the City Recorder or designee and will become a sworn Police Officer for the City of Albany in the state of Oregon.

After orientation, the new Officer is assigned to a patrol team and a Field Training Officer. The new Officer spends around 17 weeks in five phases of a field training and evaluation program (FTEP) and is evaluated by several experienced field training officers and sergeants. The

new officer attends the 16-week academy at the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training sometime during the FTEP phases. After completion of the basic police academy, the Officer returns and completes the remaining phases of FTEP.

The application review process can take weeks and sometimes months to complete depending on the number of applications needing review and how many applicants qualify for testing. Once the testing process begins, with the ORPAT and written exam usually on the same day and an interview following a week or two later, a background investigation can usually be started within a week after that. Background investigations usually take four or five weeks to complete. Medical exams are set two or three weeks after that. If everything runs smoothly from the initial testing date, it generally takes around eight to nine weeks before a successful applicant receives a formal offer of employment.

Over the last nearly three years, the Albany Police Department has hired approximately 26 people to fill various positions, conducted numerous testing processes, administered written tests to several hundred applicants and interviewed more than 100 applicants.

## Meet the Marshals



FIRE DEPARTMENT



Don Schlies



Chris Riffle



Bob Brooks

With the addition of a third Deputy Fire Marshal this winter, the Albany Fire Department Fire & Life Safety Division is fully staffed and out in the community to assist business, industry, and other building owners in creating fire-safe workplaces, retail space, and multi-family housing.

DFM Chris Riffle joined the team in October 2008. Riffle is a former DFM with Salem Fire Department and brings to Albany more than 17 years in fire service including two and a half years of inspection experience and certification.

DFM Bob Brooks has been an Albany fire inspector for almost four years. Brooks has 33 years of fire service experience and certification. He worked at the State Fire Marshal's Office before coming to Albany.

Deputy Fire Marshal Don Schlies is the Lieutenant for the Fire & Life Safety Division. Schlies has served the citizens of Albany since 1992, with over seven years as a DFM. He brings 33 years' fire service experience to the job.

The Deputy Fire Marshals have begun implementing a new inspection and compliance program called "MobileEyes" a pen-based computer inspection program that is paperless and transfers information from field laptops to a central database for retrieval. The system allows thorough follow-through on annual inspections and re-inspections and allows tracking of much more information about building occupancies. Albany Fire is currently the only department on the West Coast using this method of inspection to save time and tax dollars.

Each Deputy has been assigned an inspection district within the city and its associated fire districts. Over the course of a year, each Deputy will complete required inspections, answer citizen referrals or questions, and may assist or lead fire investigations to determine the fire's cause and origin.

Please welcome the Deputy Fire Marshals into your business or occupancy; they are there for your safety.

## Prepare Your Pets for Emergencies

Your pet is an important member of your household. Along with the humans in your home, you want your animals to survive an emergency -- a fire, a flood, an earthquake -- with you. You can increase the chances of getting through it together with advance planning.

Some of the things you can do, such as assemble an animal emergency supply kit and develop a pet care buddy system, can apply in an emergency. Whether you decide to stay put or evacuate to a safer location, you need to plan in advance for your pets. What's best for you is typically what's best for your animals.

If you must leave your home, take your pets with you if possible. If you are going

to a public shelter, animals may not be allowed inside. Plan in advance for alternatives that will work for both you and your pets.

Make a back up emergency plan in case you can't care for your animals yourself. Develop a buddy system with neighbors, friends, or relatives to make sure that your pets are cared for if you are unable to do so. Be prepared to improvise and use what you have on hand to get by for at least three days or longer.

You can find the Community Pet Preparedness Toolkit at [http://www.ready.gov/america/toolkit\\_pets/index.html](http://www.ready.gov/america/toolkit_pets/index.html)

More information is available at [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov).

## Library Hosts New Reading Group

The Albany Public Library is starting a monthly reading group with discussions led by a librarian.

A reading group is a great forum for discussing what you've read. People join reading groups for many reasons: the reading of good books and the discussions they inspire, exposure to new ideas and differing viewpoints, and an opportunity to socialize with other book lovers.

The Library reading group's first book was "Stubborn Twig" by Eugene author Lauren Kessler. Ms. Kessler discussed her book on March 4, 2009, as one of the first

programs in the Library's new home.

"Stubborn Twig" is the true story of three generations of a Japanese-American family, spanning the 20th century in Hood River, Portland, and Eugene. The book was also selected by the Oregon Reads committee. Oregon Reads 2009 is a community reading program that will take place in nearly every public library and every county in Oregon during the state's sesquicentennial.

If you're interested in joining the Library reading group, call the Library at 541-917-7580.

## RFID

With the move to its new building, Albany Public Library becomes the second public library in Oregon to use Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) to streamline inventory and checkout for better customer service.

RFID starts with a tiny radio circuit and memory chip embedded into a two-inch square label inside each library item. When a patron checks out an item, he or she will use their library card to activate a computer screen and then place up to five items at a time on the RFID antenna. The

computer program will check the materials out to the patron and the patron may take them to use.

Since November, more than 90 volunteers -- Scout groups, honor students, and Friends of the Albany Public Library, among others -- have contributed more than 920 hours to the RFID project -- 183 hours in tagging items at the Downtown Carnegie Library and the rest in tagging Main Library items. Without their help, the project would not be where it is today.

# Preparing for the next flood

Upstream of Albany, the Willamette River watershed drains approximately 4,840 square miles of mostly mountainous timberland.

Development in the watershed can increase the magnitude and frequency of flooding. As fields and forests are replaced by pavement and buildings, the development changes the way the water is stored and how it moves through the watershed.

## Causes of Flooding in Albany: Albany is subject to two types of flooding:

- Riverine flooding is the overbank flooding of rivers and streams. In Albany, those include the Willamette and Calapooia rivers; Oak, Periwinkle, Cox, Burkhart, and Truax creeks, and the Santiam-Albany Canal.
- Urban flooding results from an unusual and rapid accumulation of storm water that temporarily exceeds the capacity of the local storm water drainage system.

**Past Floods:** Flood records for the city of Albany indicate no regular pattern in which floods occur. Heavy rains that saturate the ground and fill rivers and creeks coupled with warming weather that melts heavy mountain snow created the major flooding that Albany has seen over the last 150 years. The last major flooding since the dams were built on rivers upstream took place in 1964 and 1996.

The February 1996 flood was the highest in recent memory but was considered less than a “100-year flood,” which means that it has a 1 in 100 (1%) chance of happening any given year. The record flood of 1861 had almost three times the volume of water in the Willamette River as measured at the Albany gauge. The 1964 flood would have rivaled the 1861 flood without the flood control dams.

**Flood Insurance.** Flood insurance protects you from the financial devastation caused by floods. If you don’t have flood insurance, talk to your insurance agent. Even a few inches of water can bring thousands of dollars in repair and restoration costs. Most homeowners’ insurance does not cover flood damage, and disaster relief funds cover only a small portion of flood damage. FEMA has the latest information about flood insurance policies and premiums at <http://www.floodsmart.gov/floodsmart/>.

If you are in the floodplain, odds are that someday your property will be damaged. You can purchase a separate flood insurance policy because Albany participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The premiums are discounted because Albany also participates in FEMA’s Community Rating System program, which requires floodplain management activities above and beyond minimum NFIP standards.

Coverage applies whether flooding results from heavy or prolonged rains, snow melt, blocked storm drainage systems, levee dam failure, or other causes. To be considered a flood, the waters must cover at least two acres or affect at least two properties. Flood insurance is available for properties within and outside of floodplains. Your property’s flood risk is shown on flood hazard maps. Different types of policies are available depending on your flood risk:

- If you live in a high-risk area, you will need a Standard Policy. Most mortgage



lenders will require that you have such a policy before they will approve your loan, including refinancing.

- Outside of high-risk areas, flood insurance is also available, usually at lower cost. A Preferred Risk Policy covers both a home and its contents. While you aren’t federally required to have flood insurance in a low-to-moderate risk area, it doesn’t mean you won’t ever need it. Large floods often extend beyond the boundaries of high-risk areas and smaller floods occur outside high-risk areas as well. In fact, about 25% of all flood insurance claims come from low-to-moderate risk areas.

## Floodplain Function and Regulation:

Here are some suggestions and information for understanding how floodplains function and how the City regulates the floodplain to protect property and lives while affording city residents the ability to obtain flood insurance:

- Do not dump or throw anything in ditches, creeks, or drains: A plugged channel cannot carry water, and when it rains, the excess water must go some where. Trash and vegetation dumped into drainageways degrades water quality and contributes to flooding. Dumping is a violation of the Albany Municipal Code. If you see dumping or debris in ditches, creeks or drains, contact the Public Works Department at 917-7600.
- Obtain a floodplain development permit and/or building permit, if required: Always check with the Building Division (917-7553) before you build on or alter your property and check with the Public Works Department (917-7676) before you grade or place fill on your property. A permit may be needed to ensure that projects do not cause problems on other properties. If you see construction work without a building permit posted, contact the Building Division at 917-7553.
- Recognize the natural and beneficial-functions of floodplains: Flooding in streams is a natural process. Understanding and protecting the natural functions of floodplains helps reduce flood damage and protect resources. Vegetation serves as a natural filter, trapping sediments and capturing pollutants; it also anchors stream banks, reducing bank erosion, and providing shade, which helps reduce water temperatures. In most cases, removing vegetation near a watercourse is a violation of the Albany Municipal Code.
- Reduce risk of damage: Practical and cost-effective methods for reducing or eliminating the risk of flooding are available. Techniques include preparing a household evacuation plan; elevation of the home; relocating the home to higher ground; constructing floodwalls or berms; flood-proofing the structure; having a licensed electrician protect

utilities and electrical components; having a licensed plumber install backflow valves or plugs to prevent floodwaters from entering drains, toilets, and other sewer connections; and storing important documents and other irreplaceable items where they are unlikely to be damaged.

• City floodplain information services: flood maps and flood protection references are available at the Albany Public Library, on the City’s Website, and at the Community Development Department on the second floor of City Hall. If you live in the city limits and find that your property is located within a floodplain, Community Development staff can provide information such as a FEMA elevation certificate, if one is available for your property. They can also help you estimate the risk of flooding to your home; find ways to reduce or prevent flood damage to your property; make site visits to review flood, drainage and sewer problems; or provide tips on how to select a contractor. For more information, check the City’s Web site [www.cityofalbany.net/comdev/floodplain](http://www.cityofalbany.net/comdev/floodplain).

**Flood Warning System.** A warning of potential flooding is conveyed to the community through the Emergency Alert System. Regular programming on radio and television will be interrupted to describe the nature of the flooding, the locations likely to be affected, and what protective action citizens in the area should take. Emergency services personnel will also conduct door-to-door notification when flooding is imminent. You should heed these warnings and take appropriate action to safeguard your life and property.

## Flood Safety Tips:

- Do not walk through flowing water: Drowning is the No. 1 cause of flood deaths, mostly during flash floods. Currents can be deceptive; six inches of moving water can knock you off your feet. If you walk in standing water, use a pole or stick to ensure that the ground is still in front of you.
- Do not drive through a flooded area: More people drown in their cars than anywhere else. Don’t drive around road barriers; the road or bridge may be washed out.
- Stay away from power lines and electrical wires: The No. 2 flood killer is electrocution. Electrical current can travel through water. Report downed power lines to your electric utility (Pacific Power & Light or Consumers Power) or the county Emergency Management Office.
- Shut off gas and electricity and move valuable contents upstairs: Be prepared in advance with a detailed checklist because warning of an impending flood may provide little time for preparation prior to evacuation.
- Look before you step: After a flood, the ground and floors are covered with debris including broken bottles and nails. Floors and stairs that have been covered with mud can be very slippery.
- Be alert for gas leaks: Use a flashlight to inspect for damage. Don’t smoke or use candles, lanterns or open flames unless you know that the gas has been turned off and the area has been ventilated.

## TraQing Property and Evidence

The Albany Police Department has been using a bar code system for tracking property and evidence for the last year. APD Property and Evidence Specialists say this is the year their job goes paperless.

The TraQ system assigns a record number and tracks every movement of or change to an item of property or evidence. For example, if someone changes the weight of seized narcotics, the software will record the change, who changed it, and when. If an item has been stored as evidence longer than the statute of limitations allows, the computer will remind Police staff so that the case can be reviewed to determine the best way to dispose of the evidence.

TraQ records who, what, when, and where for every piece of evidence, from the time the data is first put into the system through checking out evidence for court appearances to final disposition, establishing a permanent chain of custody. Bar codes increase security for the property room. When someone checks items out, an electronic signature required, is recorded; and stored for future reference. The system makes property and evidence specialists more efficient and allows officers to submit more detailed information regarding victims, suspects, and the property or evidence being processed, improving the flow and consistency of handling property.

The TraQ system generates property and evidence reports for administrators, letters to owners for release of property, and memos to officers to remind them about disposing of property. Using the bar code system has eliminated redundant letters and documents. When submitting evidence or property on a case that is already in the system, staff does not have to reenter existing data such as names or addresses.

## Backyard Burn Season Rules

The spring open-burning season, which includes backyard and barrel burning, began March 1 and continues through June 15. The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality determines whether burning is allowed each day. To find out, call the DEQ daily burn message line at 541-451-1904 after 8:30 a.m. for burning hours.

### Before you light an open fire, remember these requirements:

- Burn dry materials only to reduce smoke
- Never use gasoline to start a fire
- A responsible person must constantly attend a fire until it is extinguished
- Keep an attached water hose or a 4A fire extinguisher and extinguishing tools available
- Make sure that the fire is a size that you can manage
- Required separation from structures:
- Burn barrels – 15 feet
- Burn pile three feet in diameter by two feet high – 25 feet
- Uncontained piles – 50 feet

Be respectful of your neighbors when you conduct any type of open burning.