



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Photo Credit:** League of Oregon Cities



Left to Right: Tim Slater, League of Oregon Cities Vice President and North Bend City Councilor; Gail Merritt, Prineville City Councilor; Steve Uffelman, Prineville City Councilor; Betty Roppe, Prineville Mayor; Eric Klann, Prineville City Engineer; Steve Forrester, Prineville City Manager.

### **City of Prineville Receives Award for Excellence from the League of Oregon Cities**

*Award Recognizes Crooked River Wetlands Complex*

**(PRINEVILLE, Ore.)**—The City of Prineville has received the 2017 Award for Excellence from the League of Oregon Cities. The award acknowledges the innovative approach the city took to responsibly expand its wastewater capacity, while at the same time it lowered residential and business System Development Charges (SDCs), stabilized monthly wastewater rates, improved



riparian and instream conditions in the Crooked River, and created a new public trail system and gathering place.

### **Project Description**

Faced with increased residential growth in 2004-2005, the City of Prineville learned that it needed to replace its wastewater treatment system with a mechanical treatment plant at a cost of \$62 million. Options to raise the funds were to triple Wastewater SDCs for future developments and to double homeowners' monthly wastewater utility rates. With already some of the highest rates in the region, the city was reluctant to do this as high rates were already hindering residential and commercial/industrial development. Instead, the city began to look for different and more cost-efficient approaches to expand wastewater capacity. In 2011, the City Council embraced the plan for a 120-acre wetlands complex rather than a traditional mechanical solution.

### **Benefits of the Crooked River Wetlands Complex**

- Construction costs were reduced from \$62 million to \$7.77 million. These savings will stabilize future rates and attract new business to Prineville.
- More than 5.4 miles of new walking, running and hiking trails were created, 3.25 miles of which are paved for year-round use.
- Thirteen colorful kiosks, with design help from local students, present topics ranging from the Crooked River Watershed to macroinvertebrates, providing education and information along the trails.
- While constructing the 120-acre watershed, more than two miles of riparian improvements were made, lowering river temperatures and benefitting many species of fish and wildlife.

In announcing the award, League of Oregon Cities Interim Executive Director Craig Honeyman said, "The League congratulates the City of Prineville for this achievement. Our awards committee carefully analyzes all submissions for the Award for Excellence to ensure that the winning city is one that truly shows innovation in its effort to provide service to the public. This was certainly the case for the City of Prineville."

"It took a lot of courage for Prineville leadership to look for an alternative to a traditional mechanical treatment plant," said Prineville City Manager Steve Forrester. "It took persistence to seek out the appropriate funding and commitment to stay focused on a more innovative solution. The result – the Crooked River Watershed Complex -- has created many benefits for the community while also saving significant money for homeowners and business interests."



## **Milestones**

- 2004-2005: City of Prineville determines it will need to expand its wastewater treatment capacity.
- 2005: Prineville raises SDC from \$3,800 per home to \$9,147 per home, three times higher than neighboring communities.
- 2008: City began to explore alternatives. A \$75,000 grant from the Economic Development Association funded several groundwater studies and constructed two small wetland test plots.
- 2011: Prineville City Council shifted from the traditional mechanical solutions to the proposed 120-acre wetland complex plan. As a result, the Council reduced SDCs from \$9,147 per home to \$3,875 per home making Prineville once again competitive for development.
- 2012: Grants from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board and Pelton Fund allowed project design to begin.
- 2016: The city broke ground on the construction of the Crooked River Watershed Complex.
- 2017: The City of Prineville celebrated the Grand Opening of the Crooked River Watershed Complex.

For more information on specific funding mechanisms, contact Eric Klann, City Engineer, at 541-848-72184.

## **About the City of Prineville**

Located east of the Cascade mountains in Oregon's high desert, the City of Prineville is a resurgent rural community that has preserved its small-town, ranching roots and Western lifestyle, while embracing smart growth in a business friendly environment. With a population nearing 10,000 residents, the county seat of Crook County attracts a diversity of business and lifestyle interests, including tech giants Facebook and Apple, recreational enthusiasts, and a thriving agricultural industry. Incorporated in 1880, City of Prineville operates the oldest continuously running municipal shortline railway in the U.S., as well as a public golf course, and airport. Prineville boasts numerous recreational assets, including the Ochoco National Forest and Crooked River, and remains a popular destination for anglers and hunters. For more information on City services and programs visit [cityofprineville.com](http://cityofprineville.com).

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