

# Renton NOW



Jan/Feb 2008

## RENTON, THE CENTER OF OPPORTUNITY

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Renton Hosts Community Organizations Active in Disaster

The City of Renton hosted the region's first-ever meeting of Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD). COAD is a partnership between government, businesses, schools, neighborhoods, nonprofits, and faith-based organizations to have a better coordinated disaster response and recovery and to engage the community in the process. Interested community organizations may contact Renton's Emergency Management Office at 425-430-7027.

#### Renton Wins Telly Award

The Renton Community Marketing Campaign has been honored with a "Telly Award" for its production of the Renton marketing video. The Telly Awards honor the very best local, regional, and cable television commercials and programs, as well as the finest video and film productions, and work created for the internet. The Renton video was produced to showcase the community as a fabulous place to live, work, shop, learn, and play. The award-winning video can be viewed on the city's website at [rentonwa.gov](http://rentonwa.gov).

#### February is Renton Heart Month

The Fire and Emergency Services Department is launching its community awareness campaign for a second year. City Council has designated February 2008 as Heart Month, and this year's campaign will inform citizens about heart attack risks and how to quickly and properly respond to warning signs of a heart attack.

#### Renton PD Accredited by National Agency

The Renton Police Department was recently accredited for a fifth time by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies. This re-accreditation represents the satisfactory completion of a continuous process of thorough agency-wide self-evaluation, concluded by an exacting outside review.



## A MESSAGE FROM MAYOR DENIS LAW

It is a great privilege to have the opportunity to serve you as the Mayor of Renton. I am honored to take my place in this community of extraordinary leaders, and I will do my best to foster a spirit of teamwork and cooperation that will keep us working together over the next several years.

Renton is poised for dramatic change. In the recent elections, citizens in the Cascade/Benson Hill communities have chosen Renton as their new home. These are exciting times – with this annexation we shall soon be a city of nearly 80,000 residents, a growth of over 30 percent. Today, I join the residents of Renton in welcoming our new neighbors into our fine community. Our city staff has worked hard to prepare for this growth and is well prepared to make this a smooth transition. And as we welcome new residents to our community, the city is committed to continuing its efforts to improve the quality of life for all of our citizens.

We all know Renton as

a city that brims with prosperity, livability and opportunity for all. We have worked hard to make our city a showplace for our region. We continue to see strong economic development in our city and look forward to several great projects coming to fruition – from the Seahawks headquarters and training facilities and the Federal Reserve Bank, to continuing success at The Landing. But we cannot take our successes for granted and have to work together to build on this tradition of pride and progress that has shaped our city's recent history.

We face lots of challenges but our strengths are great. Renton residents are blessed to have a city council and nearly 800 city employees dedicated to keeping our city moving in a positive direction.

I look forward to working with the council and our staff this year

as we continue to provide quality service to our residents while meeting these new challenges and opportunities.



## GREEN CITY RENTON

### Water Conservation

City of Renton residents are fortunate to have a plentiful supply of high quality water. Most of our water supply comes from groundwater supplied by five wells in Renton.

The city has established a strong water conservation program to save water, protect our environment, and help meet future demand. Recently, the city engaged the public in a process to establish goals for water conservation and water use efficiency:

- Reduce the distribution system leakage to ten percent by 2010.
- Limit peak day water demand to 16.5 million gallons per day.
- Continue reduction of average annual water use by one-half percent per year per connection.

The Renton City Council recently approved these goals as required by the new Washington State Municipal Water Law. For more information visit [rentonwa.gov](http://rentonwa.gov).

If you have any questions or comments on this program, please call Abdoul Gafour, Water Utility Supervisor, at 425-430-7210 or via e-mail at [agafour@ci.renton.wa.us](mailto:agafour@ci.renton.wa.us)

## PHOTO ENFORCEMENT CAMERAS INSTALLED

Speed cameras are being installed in January to catch motorists driving too fast near schools and through red lights. They are in front of Renton High School, Talbot Hill Elementary School, and McKnight Middle School, as well as at the following intersections: NE 3rd & Sunset N.; the 3-way intersection of Sunset N., Bronson Way N. & SR 169; S. 43rd & E. Valley Hwy; and Rainier S. and S. Grady Way. A warning period will be in effect prior to enforcement.

## WELCOME, BENSON HILL!

Renton is pleased to welcome 16,000 new neighbors to Renton as of March 1, 2008 – the Benson Hill Communities! Voters in the Benson Hill Communities approved annexation to Renton with nearly 66% “yes” votes on November 6, and the Renton City Council has set an effective date for annexation of March 1, 2008.

The Benson Hill Communities are located south and east of Renton’s current boundaries. Renton is making the transition now to serve the area while maintaining services to the whole city. The Renton City Council has authorized hiring 91 new employees to support Benson Hill and the existing city, a combined total of 80,000 people.

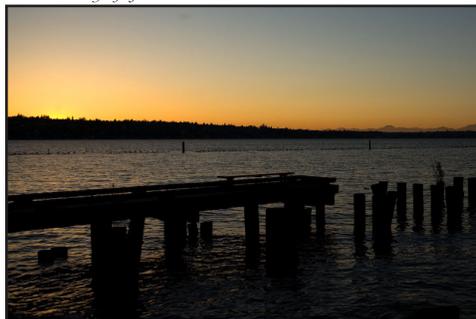
Between January and March, King County will continue to provide local services to Benson Hill, including police, court services, land use and permitting, and local parks. Beginning in March, properties and responsibilities formerly belonging to the county will transfer to the City of Renton, which will become the provider of those services.

Renton will also now be responsible for fire and library services. While other governments provide those services today, Benson Hill residents will still be able to use both library systems, and the level of fire and emergency response services to the area will remain the same as today.

The Mayor, City Council, and city departments are looking forward to welcoming Benson Hill area residents to the city in 2008.

Watch for upcoming information about city services of Renton and opportunities to meet with city representatives

*Photo courtesy of John McCormick*



## ENROLL IN THE CITIZEN’S ACADEMY

The next session of the Renton Police Department’s Citizen’s Academy begins on February 13th. The Academy lasts twelve weeks and will meet on Wednesday evenings from 7 to 9 p.m. Police employees will speak on a variety of topics ranging from patrol operations to hostage negotiations. Academy participants will have the opportunity to ride along with a patrol officer and tour the jail, the dispatch center, and the police department.

Citizen’s Academy is designed to foster better understanding and communication between citizens and the police through education. Participants must be at least eighteen years old. Applications will be accepted until February 1, and priority may be given to those who live or work in Renton. Class size is limited to 25 people.

Apply by calling 425-430-7520 or download an application from the city website at [rentonwa.gov](http://rentonwa.gov).

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Renton’s Community Services Department has many events planned to celebrate Black History Month. If your group or organization is planning a community celebration this winter or spring for Black History Month, Women’s History Month, or Asian Pacific Americans Month, let us know. Contact Community Services at 425-430-6600 or at [CelebrateDiversity@ci.renton.wa.us](mailto:CelebrateDiversity@ci.renton.wa.us).

# UTILITY, TRAFFIC IMPROVEMENTS ON DUVALL AVE.

Residential use and freight traffic has increased considerably on the Duvall/Coal Creek Pkwy Corridor, which is now a major through route between Renton and Bellevue. This project, along with the recently completed Renton Sunset/Duvall project and improvements to Coal Creek Parkway in Newcastle, will improve safety and ease congestion from Renton to Bellevue.

The project includes a widening of Duvall Ave NE to five lanes (including a center two-way left-turn lane) from the Sunset (SR 900)/Duvall Ave NE intersection to the northern city limits at NE 23rd Street, and adding curbs, gutters, sidewalks and bicycle lanes on both sides of Duvall Ave NE. The project will also convert overhead power lines to underground, enhancing safety especially during storms and emergencies.

## Road closure and construction scheduled to impact traffic for least amount of time possible

The Renton City Council recently approved a closure of Duvall Avenue NE/Coal Creek Parkway to through traffic between Sunset and SE 95th Way beginning in early 2008 and lasting for approximately twelve months. This option allows the construction to be completed in the least amount of time and prioritizes safety during construction by minimizing the impact to the surrounding neighborhood. The city and project team will be doing its best to minimize disruption and impacts. That said, there will be some disruption and inconvenience during construction. Main detours for traffic will be via Sunset, 148th Ave NE and May Valley Road east of the project area, and via Sunset and Union Ave NE west of the project area. Staff will work hard to reduce impacts and provide regular project updates to the community, including weekly updates of planned construction activities. A website has been dedicated for this project. For more information go to [duvall.rentonwa.gov](http://duvall.rentonwa.gov) or call

James Wilhoit, project manager, at 425-430-7319 or at [jwilhoit@ci.renton.wa.us](mailto:jwilhoit@ci.renton.wa.us).

## Utilities Improvements

The City Utilities Systems Division will be installing a water and sewer line project along Duvall Avenue NE between NE 8th Street and NE 12th Street beginning on December 3. During its three-month duration, this project will require reduction of the travel lanes from four to two (one in each direction)

in the excavation area. All four lanes will re-open to traffic each day at 5:00 p.m. Our traffic numbers indicate that even with the reduced lanes, the street should have enough capacity to prevent significant traffic backups during the lane closures. If you have any questions or comments on this project, please call Mike Benoit, project manager, at 425-430-7206 or at [mbenoit@ci.renton.wa.us](mailto:mbenoit@ci.renton.wa.us).

## MEET THE COUNCIL

January is the beginning of another term for several councilmembers, including two newly elected members. Meet this term's councilmembers below.



**Terri Briere** has been on the Council since 2000. She chairs the Community Services Committee.

**Randy Corman** has been on the

Council since 1994. He chairs the Transportation/Aviation Committee.

**Marcie Palmer** has



been on the Council since 2004. Marcie is the Council President.

**King Parker** was just elected to the City Council. He was

previously on the Council from 1996 through 2003. He chairs the Planning & Development Committee.



**Don Persson** has been on the Council since 2000. He chairs the Finance Committee.

**Greg Taylor** was just elected to

the City Council and chairs the Public Safety committee.

**Vacancy:** Following the resignation of Dan Clawson in December 2007, City Council position #2 is currently vacant. City Council will fill this vacancy for the remainder of the unexpired term as per Council policy.



## Farewell to Council President Toni Nelson



Toni Nelson served on City Council for 20 years and retired at the end of 2007. Toni contributed to the Renton community in many enduring ways. She was honored with a proclamation by the mayor during her final Council meeting in December.

## CITY CONTACTS

Area Code 425

General Information.....	430-6400
Mayor .....	430-6500
City Council .....	430-6501
Municipal Court Judge .....	430-6550
Chief Administrative Officer .....	430-6500
City Clerk.....	430-6510
Code Enforcement.....	430-7373
Community Services .....	430-6600
Economic Development, Neighborhoods, & Strategic Planning .....	430-6575
Emergencies .....	911
Finance & Information Services .....	430-6850
Fire/Emergency Services....	430-7000
Human Resources & Risk Management .....	430-7650
Planning/Building/Public Works .....	430-7200
Police .....	430-7500
or <a href="http://epolice.rentonwa.gov">epolice.rentonwa.gov</a>	
Utility Billing .....	430-6852

### RentonNow Feedback

[RentonNow@ci.renton.wa.us](mailto:RentonNow@ci.renton.wa.us)

[rentonwa.gov](http://rentonwa.gov)

# OUT IN THE COMMUNITY

- Wednesday, January 23.** 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. **Neighborhood Grant Workshop.** City Hall, 7<sup>th</sup> floor.
- Tuesday, February 5.** 6:30 - 8 p.m. **Preschool Information Night.** Renton Community Center. Explore preschool options for your child. Free. 425-430-6729.
- Saturday, February 9.** 11 a.m. **Tales of Folks and Folktales (An Underground Railroad story).** Renton History Museum. 425-255-2330.
- Sunday, February 10.** 4 p.m. (Ages 6-10), 5 p.m. (Ages 11-14). **Renton Hoop Shoot.** Renton Community Center. Free. 425-430-6729.
- Tuesday, February 12.** 4 p.m. **Lecture about four historical African-American artists by Susan Noyes Platt.** Renton History Museum. Adults \$3. Children under 7 \$1. 425-255-2330.
- Thursday, February 21.** 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. **Play It Safe Festival.** Renton Community Center. Kids 12 and under with parent or guardian, join the Renton Police Department, Valley Medical Center, ValleyComm/911, and others. 425-430-6729. **Reptile Man** 10:30 a.m. Renton Community Center. Live reptiles from around the world. Free.
- Saturday, February 23.** 7:30 pm. **Hip-hop/R&B performance by Choklate.** Carco Theatre. Live band plus DJ. \$10. 425-430-6751.



## COUNCIL ADOPTS 2008 BUDGET

On December 10, the Council adopted the 2008 budget totaling \$234,628,924. Of that total, \$63,351,567 represents the capital budget for 2008; \$90,812,783 the General Government budget; and \$80,464,574 the budget for other operating funds.

### Budget Highlights

- **Additional Staff Resources:** The 2008 budget adds eight new positions from the General Government Fund, 7.7 positions from the Utility Fund, and 91 new positions to accommodate the Benson Hill annexation.
- **Affordable Housing:** The budget includes funding to develop a program that provides affordable housing.
- **Public Safety:** The budget of Fire & Emergency Services adds four employees

to fire response staffing and includes funding for Police Department communications, an expanded fleet and an innovative police cadet program. There will be additional staff to help implement the city's photo-enforcement program and an increase in the City Prosecutor's and the Public Defense budget.

- **Economic Development:** Dedicated funding for the Small Business Development Center. Additional staff to coordinate the Farmers Market and special events downtown.
- **Basic Services & Utilities:** Adds a street maintenance worker, additional customer service staff at Renton Community Center, a custodian for Community Services, and funding for HR services and the Information Technology Strategic Plan. Adds two

maintenance workers, an engineering technician, and an industrial instrument technician. Includes a modest increase in utility rates for maintenance and capital improvements that has already been adopted by Council.

- **Increased costs:** Costs increased by 25.4% for the city in 2008. The cost of the city's employee-managed health care plan has also increased by 10% for 2008.
- **Annexation:** The budget also addressed the Benson Hill annexation and includes a detailed plan. The annexation budget adds staff and related funding for a total cost of \$10 million.

For more information on the budget, please visit [rentonwa.gov](http://rentonwa.gov).