

# Montesano Update

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## A review of 2016—and a preview of 2017

Transition years are usually difficult. Changes take time and 2016 was no different. But there were major accomplishments in 2016 that have put the City of Montesano on a good track to charge into 2017.

How did we do it? By working together.

What makes 2016 golden are the partners I had to work with. Montesano is comprised of people who care and follow that up with action. And we searched out partners locally and state wide who wanted to work with us to make us a better community. I sit here in gratitude to those people.

There is a danger in making lists and that is that you inevitably leave someone out. My apologies.

### City Staff

There are more than 30 full-time public servants and 30 part-time workers, all teaming up to make sure that your needs are being met. Each day they come to the city and do more than expected. They all do their best to make Monte shine. Clerks, court, public works, firefighters, police officers and volunteer firefighters all perform unique and vital roles. They make the city work.

And it wouldn't function without the leadership and sacrifice of department heads. *Thank you.* I'd like to give special recognition to Chief Financial Officer

Doug Streeter, who in this city's time of need, stepped up to put us on a solid financial road.

### Bringing back jobs at our mill

Mary's River closed its doors mid-year, which meant a lot of our neighbors lost their jobs. The city did its part in going down all possible paths, holding discussions with many possible suitors.

Nothing would have happened without Terry Smith's tireless work to court every buyer possible. He could have packed it in and done fine personally but he dug deeper than any other person involved. I'm happy to report jobs are coming back to the mill under new owner, Fox Lumber.

### The City Council

Mayors and Councils have a constant tug of war in leading a city. But the councilmembers with the city all year—Skaramuka, Hutchings, Cope, King, Trimble and Wood—have worked hard to improve our community. And now we welcome a bright new councilmember in Tony Chung. Our success as a city starts with teamwork at the top and a true appreciation of varying viewpoints. Those different ideas and experiences make us stronger.

### Building a more perfect Union

Jim Pea is the Teamster's business agent, and 2016



presented the city and the union with two major problems: bad morale coming in and a worse financial situation which led to layoffs. For the first six months of this year, it felt like I was in daily contact with this man.

He is a strong advocate for staff and a sounding board who can be trusted to walk with the city through a difficult time. It could have been different. I could not have had a better union partner to work with. This year has forged bonds of trust and respect which serve this city.

### **Tom Fredrickson**

How can I help? Tom uttered these words every time we talked. He created the 75th anniversary video of the forest and provided excellent photos for the city to use. Thank you not only for the stuff you do but for your Montesano-first attitude.

### **Friends everywhere**

Our Parks and Rec were in disrepair and we didn't have a lot of money in the budget. Anyone can find problems and criticize but it takes dedication and purpose to find ways to solve those problems.

To honor Larry Quinn, many donors along with volunteer crews from **Lakeside Industries** made our new basketball courts possible on Simpson.

**Montesano Youth Soccer Club** raised \$30,000 and developed Beacon to playable fields.

**Girls Fast Pitch** put in new fencing at Crait and **Little League** continued its dedication to Nelson. These are all volunteers, striving to make a better place.

Superintendent Dan Winters is working to find solutions with the city as to Vessey Park, which has a long history of issues. Through negotiation with the city, the school district is expected in January to enter into a user agreement for the park which allows enough capital for the city to address those issues.

### **Girl Scout Troop 43724**

These girls already hold a warm sport with me as they did the flag ceremony at my swearing in. But they are mentioned here because they saw a problem and decided they would fix it. Kelsey Park needed TLC, but had no funding in the 2016 budget. In early 2016, these young residents decided they would raise money for what was needed. They raised over \$1,000, gave it to the City and worked side-by-side with the City—showing all adults what Montesano bred know-how and can-do Girl Scouts are capable of. They inspired me.

### **The Montesano Chamber of Commerce**

Local businesses & chamber leaders upped their game this year when they started the Saturday Morning Markets at Fleet Park and the new Fish & Brew Fest and Salmon Derby. Angie Brown helped organize the weekly Market while Donna Albert/Stone Soup organized the music for the events.

### **Closing thoughts**

Being city staff, council member or mayor can mean late nights, early mornings and weekends. But it's worth it, because life isn't about fame or fortune. It's about serving others.

It has been my honor to be your mayor this past year and to help lead this fine city. I look forward to 2017 with hope and excitement on how we can reach higher and be better.

On the next page, you'll find exciting news for 2017 about a brand new entrance to our city.

#### **2017 Save the Dates**

**Jan. 1st:** First hike at Lake Sylvia, meet at 1 p.m.

**Feb. 11th:** 'Run Montesano' planned trail run in city forest: 10k, 25k, 50k!!



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# An entrance worthy of our beautiful city

*I can't change the direction of the wind, but I can adjust my sails to always reach my destination.*

~Jimmy Dean

When you exit the highway to the main entrance to Montesano, our beautiful downtown isn't far.

But it doesn't feel like Montesano at the off-ramp. The city sign is old and battered, and the small grassy area on the right is tiny.

Our town deserves a better front door—a main entrance that welcomes people to our city, Monte-style.

We also need to do something about the growing traffic here. More than 10 million people travel through the intersection of Highway 12, with people going right to our downtown, straight to Monte Square and left onto Highway 107 to Raymond.

How can we tackle these issues? On the back of this page, you'll see a preliminary design by local architect Will Foster.

## Why a roundabout?

Overwhelmingly no one wants a stoplight here. We're proud of being a one-stoplight town, and a second stoplight infringes on our identity.

For me, the stoplight stops traffic which impacts business. A roundabout would let traffic flow while giving us a main entrance at the center, a water feature visible from all directions, Welcome to Montesano signs and promotion of an outdoor recreation theme that reflects our city: fishing, hiking and biking.

## What to do with the field and parking lot?

Right now, the empty parking lot is supposed to be a park & ride, but it's mostly used for recycling and as a place for the city to put bark and construction debris.

This plan transforms the field and parking lot into a unified entrance park. It would be a park and rec rest stop, multi-modal (bike tourism) with restrooms, electric car charging, information about outdoor recreation and local businesses, bike sharing and walking paths through native plants.

## Why an outdoor recreational rest stop?

There isn't a single rest stop on the westbound side of the Highway 12 from Olympia to Ocean Shores or Westport.

The only rest stop on the highway is eastbound at Elma. That means the millions of people going to our ocean beaches have no place to pull over and use the restroom. Every day, you can see desperate people pulled over and using the bushes.

The city's retail tax base has been stagnant for at least the last 5 years. This means less money in your pocket to just maintain what we have.

This plan helps anchor an expansion of a business district by bringing potential customers to the doors of those businesses. We are competing for the tourist dollar with Elma's new development and Aberdeen's on-going development. But anything we do has to be done in a way that protects the character of our town.

A place which celebrates and features local outdoor recreation allows this on our terms. The amenities: free Wi-Fi downtown, electric car charging, a rest stop and a place to walk your dog right off the highway helps steer more of those millions of people to stop in our beautiful little town.

## What's next?

We're just starting and things can change. We need your help to do this right. What are your dreams for our city's main entrance? Please let me know at [vsamuel@montesano.us](mailto:vsamuel@montesano.us).

