



*The City of Ilwaco is an
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Covid-19 and the State of the City

The year two thousand and twenty (2020) will go down into history as the year that was unforgettable and unrecoverable. Our community has never experienced anything like since the Second World War and with the nation suffering the loss of over 360,000 American lives.

I have not personally experienced an event like this since the fall of 1957, when the Asian flu outbreak spread across the globe and killed over 70,000 American citizens. As a 10-year-old I do remember my classroom thin on students, all sick with the flu and the school was finally closed as flu ran rough shod through the teachers, staff and students.

The Covid-19 pandemic virus had economic impact on the city that was compounded by the foreclosure of Jessie's Fish. The Port of Ilwaco is the heart and soul of the city's business community and Jessie's is the largest employer and water user within the city. The loss of Jessie's or any of the other fish processors, would have an economic ripple that would spread throughout the city and affect the city's ability to provide services to the city's citizens.

The pandemic forced local business closures and with this loss of revenue, the future looked bleak and the city had to tighten its financial belt. I had to furlough employees and restrict their hours of work. This was hard on me because I had concerns on how the restrictions would affect the staff and their families. Let's just say that I had a few sleepless nights. I tossed and turned thinking how would Ilwaco survive? Could Ilwaco still provide the services, as we had done prior to the pandemic? Would our citizens be able to pay for those services? The City Treasurer had predicted a possible revenue loss of 20 percent and would Ilwaco still be able to match its obligations that are required for the grants? Could Ilwaco survive as a city?

We did!

Thanks to outstanding citizens and businesses of Ilwaco who paid their bills in a timely manner and a good salmon season brought on by the lessening of business restrictions brought in badly needed revenue.

I want to give a special thanks to Ilwaco's City Treasurer, Holly Beller, who's hard work, dedication and budget solving lessened the financial hardships to the city and to Billing Clerk Samantha Baker, who processed the water bills and was the voice you heard when you called the City Hall and who provided answers and helpful assistance to our citizens. I am so grateful to both of them and their abilities.

Also, I like to give a "well done" to the city's public works crew who worked hard to keep the city's services working despite the short work hours. Thank you, Scott Corsi, Brian Brooks, Kyle Alden and Brian Smith. And to the city's water plant operators who are tucked away in the

forested outback among the wooded hills at the Ilwaco's Indian Creek Water Plant. Many thanks to Operator's Shane Grant and Eli Sheaffer who have been working hard to give Ilwaco good quality water. And let's not forget the Ilwaco's Wastewater Plant and Plant Operators Tim Pfeifer and Jimmie Fero who strive to meet the State's ever-changing discharge standards.

And to all of the Ilwaco volunteers, who roll out bed at ungodly hours to help their fellow Ilwaco citizens. Thank you, Fire Chief Tom Williams and all the volunteers of the Ilwaco Fire Department.

And finally, I give a salute to Police Chief Flint Wright and his Officers who patrol the streets and keep Ilwaco citizens safe, thank you.

I also want to give a tip of the hat and a grateful thank you to the Ilwaco City Council, who during these times of the city's financial hardships, gave up their wages, fought hard to keep the city afloat. The council had some tough decision to make and these decisions were not made easily. Thank You, Councilmembers Dave Cundiff, Missy Bageant, Jon Quittner, Matt Lessnau and Kristen Mathison.

The city's future looks promising now with a new owner of Jessie's Fish, Safe Coast Seafood. We are looking forward to them getting up to full processing capacity and bring commercial fishing vessels to Ilwaco. And also, at the Port of Ilwaco the new Deconstruction Facility will offer more employment opportunities and bring customers to the Port businesses. In the Old Business District, on First Avenue, the Dupes Building is moving forward and will offer commercial space on the ground floor and much needed rental apartments in the city. Also, on Spruce Street, near the stop light and just across the street from Dupes is Josh Phillip's, Spawn Fly Fish. Josh is helping to bring businesses back to Ilwaco. Welcome to Ilwaco, Safe Coast Seafood and Spawn Fly Fish, may you grow and prosper in Ilwaco.

This year, I am looking forward to some of our upcoming projects, like the replacement of the asbestos cement water lines on Whealdon Road. Which includes a new water booster pump station and the paving of Whealdon Road. Also, included in this project, is the much-needed repairs to the old steel reservoir, and the installation of two seismic valves on both city center reservoirs. The Indian Creek Water Plant will also be receiving some structural repairs to the plants steel beams under this same project. A storm water project is scheduled this year at the Port of Ilwaco. The Port will be managing this project which will help reduce contaminates from Port activities and improve the city's ability to filter of storm water before reaching Baker Bay and the Columbia River.

I want to thank the citizens and the businesses of Ilwaco who have suffered through this pandemic for everything they have done to keep themselves, their employees and this city healthy. Let's make the year 2021 a better year than 2020, and please, take a moment to think of those families that have lost love-ones, friends and co-workers to Covid-19.

Thank You, Gary Forner, Mayor of Ilwaco