



College Place in Review

VOLUME 22, ISSUE 11

NOVEMBER 2015

Quick Fact:

City Water Usage

September 2015
56,972,000

September 2014
59,731,000

YTD 2015
374,659,000

Total 2014
429,267,000

Your City Representatives Mayor

Julie L. Scott

Council Members

Adam Keatts
Marge Nyhagen
Loren Peterson
Greg Tompkins
Heather Schermann
Larry Dickerson

City Administrator

Patrick H. Reay

MAYOR'S MESSAGE

In addition to our 40 or so full-time employees, many part-time and on-call employees, and citizen volunteers, the City of College Place also gets the chance to get acquainted with and become a training ground for student interns. I met one of our interns last summer, a fresh new face in city hall. I talked to Erica Aamodt, our engineering intern, a senior civil engineering major at Walla Walla University in a recent interview.

Me: Erica, please tell me how long you've been working for the city, and what you've been doing...

Erica: Since August, I have been working in the annex building with our city engineer, city planner, and several other very nice gentlemen, when I am not out looking at the streets of College Place.

What I am doing is collecting road information to update our Geographic Information System (GIS) database. Our GIS is coordinated by the county for several smaller cities like ours, but someone has to document the details on the ground, and that someone is me.

Me: So what have you noticed?

Erica: I have been noting details such as sidewalk width and condition, ADA (American Disability Act) ramps at corners, and the location and existence of storm water catch basins. I am recording these features so we can add more detail to our aerial maps which will help us comply with Federal Law, and plan for where we need improvements.

I also look for and record the placement of our stop signs and other road signs – all of these details can't usually be seen in our overhead photography.

Me: I have walked around College Place a bit and would guess that there is a lot of variation – will we ever get it standardized?

Erica: We will someday, but compliance and consistency is a challenge for a small town that people have been living in for over a hundred years. We weren't a city until the mid-twentieth century, and a lot of houses, roads, and sidewalks were built when there weren't any guidelines. So area by area we have to work to improve our roads and sidewalks – the information I am collecting and recording is the first step.

City Hall
625 S. College Ave
College Place, WA 99324

Municipal Building Hours:

Monday through Thursday
8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Friday
8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.



NEW Phone Numbers:

Utilities/Finance—394-8509
HR/Administration—394-8508
Accounts Payable—394-8510
Building—394-8522
Fire Department—394-8600
Fire Chief—394-8605
Public Works—394-8526
Planning—394-8524
City Engineer—394-8525
City Shop—394-8653
Police —394-8550
Dispatch—527-1960

Me: What else have you learned by working for the City?

Erica: I have gained a lot of insight into how complex it is to run a small city. Since I grew up here, I know it is easy to just sit back and be annoyed at things you think need to get fixed, but what I have learned is how many things have to go together to keep and get things updated. I realize people already know this, but I have learned how important it is to be patient.

Me: So do you think you would like to be a City Engineer when you are through with your education?

Erica: I may, but I am also considering going on to graduate school in architecture – I will be taking some extra coursework in that subject at the University of Washington after I graduate to see if it is something I would like to pursue.

Me: I know your father is an engineer, is that why you chose that major?

Erica: In part, but I also had some experience in high school with the WWU chapter of Engineers Without Borders. Also, in one of my classes we took a trip to the Wapato Reservation where we were asked to build a wheelchair access ramp. Three of the four of us pre-college students became engineering majors after that trip – it was great to use our skills to help people.

Me: Thank you Erica, for taking time to talk with me about your work. We are grateful.

Robert Gordon, our city engineer, adds that Erica has been “wonderfully thorough and conscientious in her job,” and added that her work “will dramatically help in planning for infrastructure improvements and preparing grant applications.”