

Staying in Touch.....

By Mayor Dave Earling

One of the strong building blocks of any community is to stay in touch with itself. Compared to many other cities of our size, our community does an outstanding job.

We all have very busy lives trying to keep up with family affairs and schedules, business responsibilities, trying as best we can to stay abreast with international, national and local news and activities... not to mention a moment or two to clear our heads with a little "down time".

So, how do we in Edmonds stay in touch?

First of all we are blessed to have two creditable local media sources to keep us informed. Both The Edmonds Beacon and My Edmonds News do a great, objective, job of providing information to us. They attend council meetings, cover local events and provide special feature focus for important events and people throughout the city. Hats off to them!

We also have many gathering places throughout the city. In the last 15 years we have seen "coffee houses" become an important venue to meet with others and exchange current information. Regardless of the neighborhood, whether it's Perrinville, downtown Edmonds, Westgate, 5 Corners or Highway 99, we have meeting places in each of those neighborhoods where people can keep track of what is "going on" in our city.

Our many special events give us improved access to see one another and stay informed. Stop and think about how the Summer Market draws us together. Or the Taste of Edmonds, 4th of July, Edmonds Arts Festival, and the Center for the Arts performances, etc., all offer opportunities to learn more about Edmonds and to see people who you intend to talk to, but often haven't the time to connect.

Consider how the internet has changed the way in which we communicate over the past 20 years... we've come from what's the worldwide web, to going online every morning, noon and night to find current events, recipes, make travel plans, or read or watch our favorite news source. With our cell phones we are now connected all the time, any time, it's all "right there"!!! And of course telephone calls are not nearly as important with the advent of email.

In city government, we use many of the same tools to help us connect with the community, but we continue to try to grow our awareness of how best to communicate with you.

We have our city website, as well as having our council meetings live streamed and rebroadcast on our local municipal channels – 21 for Comcast users and 39 for Frontier users. We also provide news releases and a quarterly electronic newsletter. Besides our yearly "State of the City" presentation, last year we also began providing columns every couple of weeks to My Edmonds News and the Edmonds Beacon and holding quarterly Towns Halls.

Most recently we are about to launch our rebuilt city website www.edmondswa.gov (it will have the same address but the site will be revamped); we launched a promote Edmonds website, www.visitedmonds.com which provides a calendar of upcoming special events and highlights restaurants and tourist attractions; and we entered the social media world with our new City of Edmonds Facebook Page www.facebook.com/cityofedmonds.

I am often asked why the intense interest from our public in Edmonds? Why is your voter turnout in Edmonds so much higher than most of the other cities in Snohomish County? Why the overflowing crowds at some of the public meetings? The answer is pretty straight-forward – people in Edmonds care about their community, are proud of their community and stay connected with their community. It is a rare quality we have in Edmonds, one which needs to be preserved.