

**Mayor's column for
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Spring has arrived in Edmonds...seems like it's been here since January! Flowering trees are popping with blossoms, daffodils are glowing bright yellow, and lawns need mowing.

With the arrival of daylight savings time, we have more light in the evening to get outside. We've seen bald eagles take over Sunset Avenue. Raccoons are making themselves home throughout many Edmonds neighborhoods. Coyote sightings are prevalent. And the latest visitors to Edmonds are gray whales seen frolicking near the ferry dock. Soon it will be time for juvenile bears to come to town. I can hardly wait!

But spring in City Hall means something less than enjoying Mother Nature. It's time for our annual visit from the State auditor. While the audit staff works for months to make sure that taxpayers' money is legally spent, our finance staff spends time gathering information that the auditors have requested. This year's audit is expected to cost the City about \$55,000.

Spring also marks the beginning of our two-year budget process. This will be the last budget I prepare as mayor and possibly the most difficult one. The economy is still so uncertain and the Council is discussing sending a levy to the voters to help bridge the gap between revenues and expenses. We won't know that outcome until after we have already created our budget. I am scheduled to present it to the Council on October 5.

And then throw in another spring activity—negotiating our labor contracts—and you have the perfect spring storm! The duration of our contracts is typically three years. And again, as we build our budget, we will more than likely not know the outcome of the negotiations until after the budget has been created.

The convergence of these events will keep us very busy through the end of the year. So spring is here in Edmonds, and it always makes me thankful that we live where we do.