

You Spoke and We Listened!

BY ANNELEAH JAXEN, CEO, TUALATIN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

It has been an exciting five months in my new position as CEO of the Tualatin Chamber of Commerce. I have endeavored to introduce myself, shake as many hands as possible, listen to perspectives and opinions, learn history, and get to know our city leaders, other Chamber CEOs and the Tualatin Chamber operation, as well as Tualatin businesses, members, and volunteers.

I have learned about the “Before Covid” era for the Tualatin Chamber and the Crawdads that were a big part of it! And I have studied the “After Covid” era and the strange business landscape that is the aftermath of not just an economic freeze, but of societal trauma. My goal as the leader of this Chamber is to be relevant at all times, so in June, the Chamber Board of Directors and I sent out a professional survey to directly ask Tualatin businesses their insight and opinions. We genuinely wanted to know how to be a stronger and better support.

On the positive side, the survey told us that the members like the “in-person networking events” and community outreach opportunities. They appreciate the staff and wonderful team of Ambassadors who have been active, friendly, and helpful to them. That didn’t surprise me, because Tualatin Chamber has the most incredible Ambassador Committee I have ever seen, and it is obvious to me that this team of business professionals was the glue that held the Chamber together through more than one difficult transition in the past two years.

When asked in the survey how they were doing post covid, business owners and leaders said that they were challenged and needed help with employee recruitment, retention, and training. It became clear that Tualatin Chamber was going to need to find more ways to assist in immediate employee recruitment, retention efforts and employee training, while also continuing to be supportive of #Workready with Linda Moholt and Tualatin Together with

Cyndy Hillier, who are actively building resilient youth who can become part of Tualatin’s workforce someday. We have also convened a new “Engagement Committee” that will be working with me to create and coordinate educational seminars, lunch and learns and job fairs.

Over the past few months, while talking with various citizens and members, I learned that most of our members and business leaders were unaware of the Tolling planned for Oregon Freeways. Very few people knew the facts, some thought it was a short-term toll to fix one bridge, others thought it was just a rumor, and still, others didn’t know anything about it. I brought this information back to Susan Noack, Chair of the Tualatin Chamber’s Business Advocacy Committee, and, though they had addressed this topic in February with a Business Town Hall, we set about coordinating a Key Leader’s Breakfast to bring Washington County Commissioner Roy Rogers, and Clackamas

County Commissioner Paul Savas, to educate and inform our members once again on the facts. They spoke of exactly what is being planned today and how to have a voice in the process. One hundred ten people attended this event, including the business community, elected officials, political candidates and citizens, on Thursday, September 8th and gained a valuable education. Information is power, and we will follow this issue as it unfolds.

You spoke, we listened. Please continue to support and invest in the Tualatin Chamber, because we intend to support and invest in you.



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COUNCIL CORNER

BY COUNCILOR BRIDGET BROOKS

Last Issue, I focused on the importance of our actions, and the difference in the severity of outcomes depending on if and how we act. Devastating community outcomes are anticipated if we don’t take action – i.e., a large increase in very hot days (>100F), severe flooding of the Tualatin River, and serious, even deadly, health problems.

Our CAP is community driven. It’s important we have a shared understanding of what climate is, so we can communicate and work together to improve our community’s resilience.

Try asking yourself and others these Climate 101 questions.

How do we know Climate Change is really happening?

The average temperature has risen over the last century, far beyond anything we’ve seen before; evidence includes melting polar ice caps and earlier bird migration.

What is Greenhouse Gas (GHG)?

GHGs are any of a number of gasses that trap heat in the atmosphere, causing the greenhouse effect-produced two ways.

Naturally: carbon dioxide (CO₂) and methane (CH₄) are released by humans and animals, and also through human activity: burning wood/coal releases CO₂ and decomposition in landfills releases CH₄. FYI, burning fossil fuels such as coal and natural gas accounts for 85% of human-caused CO₂ emissions.

Synthetically: hydrofluorocarbons and other fluoridated gasses are used in industrial processes and refrigerants. Although CH₄

and synthetic gasses make up less GHG than CO₂, they can trap heat and impact much more easily.

What is causing Climate Change?

It’s caused by increased CO₂ and other GHG emissions. When coal, oil, or gas are burned, they release CO₂ into the atmosphere that has been trapped underground for millions of years – in concentrated amounts.

How does the Greenhouse Effect work?

The atmosphere is a thin layer that extends about 7 miles off the surface of the Earth, allowing light from the sun to pass through it. On Earth, light is converted to heat, which does not pass through the atmosphere but bounces around, trapped. The more CO₂ (and other greenhouse gasses) in the atmosphere, the more heat is prevented from escaping, and the hotter things get.

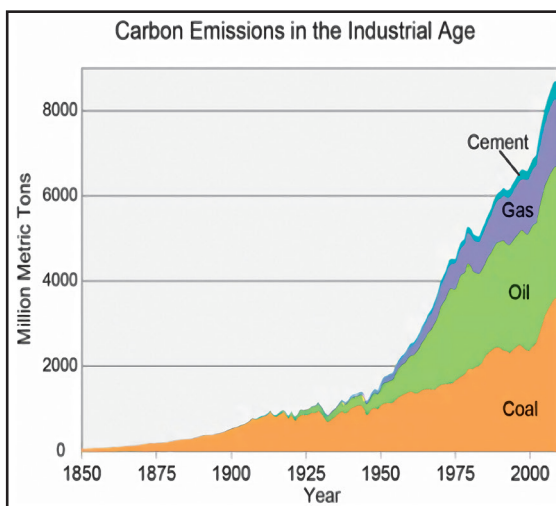
Haven’t CO₂ and Temperature Always Bounced Around? What Makes Now Different?

CO₂ has gone up and down throughout human history, but never as high as it is now. During all of human history, CO₂ levels were dramatically lower –between 200-300 parts per million. In the last 70 years, the concentration of CO₂ in the Earth’s atmosphere increased to 415 parts per million. The last time we had this much CO₂ in the atmosphere was 4 million years ago!

Global temperatures are higher than at any time during the history of civilization, going up faster, and the full effects of increased greenhouse gasses will continue to unfold for centuries. Without climate action, we’ll inhabit a much hotter and more hostile world.

How Could People Possibly Affect the Big, Huge Atmosphere So Fast?

The atmosphere is only a thin layer- imagine a piece of cling film wrapped around a basketball.



What is the Difference Between Climate and Weather?

Climate is the general pattern affected by long-term factors like latitude – i.e., rain in winter. Weather changes day to day, affected by short-term factors like wind.

Doesn’t the Earth Regulate Itself? Shouldn’t the Plants Pull in the CO₂ and Bring Everything Back into Balance?

Ideally, yes, but our actions have added too much CO₂ for the Earth to reabsorb. The processes that decrease the amount of CO₂ are “sequestration” – the oceans can consume some, and so can forests and plants; however, we must reduce our emissions before the natural systems can keep up.

Is it hopeless?

No, by switching to carbon-free electricity and fuels and employing strategies such as carbon sequestration to draw down the greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere, we can avoid the worst effects of climate change. If we act now, we can improve our quality of life and preserve our future.

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