

**Albany Human Relations Commission
Annual Report (January 2009 – December 2009)**

The Human Relations Commission was established in 2007 “to promote harmonious relations among citizens of Albany” through recommendations of “programs, activities, ordinances, expenditures and other appropriate governmental activities which will serve the goal of maintaining respectful interactions within our community.” (Ord. 5671 § 1, 2007; Ord. 5665 § 1, 2007).

A brief review of Commission activities during 2009 is set forth below. A history of Commission membership and attendance is attached to this report.

January: To honor the birthday of Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., the Commission and Linn-Benton Community College hosted a **panel discussion on diversity and cross-cultural understanding** at LBCC. Approximately two dozen attendees heard three panelists from various backgrounds from Linn-Benton towns speak on their life philosophies and experiences as a people of color living and working in our area.

February: To promote mental health awareness and wellness in Albany, Greater Albany Public Schools (GAPS) Superintendent’s office identified 20-30 key GAPS professionals to attend a **three-hour session on working with youth around mental health wellness** with the director of the National Mental Health Wellness Campaign, Ross Szabo. Speaker funding was secured by a HRC member and provided by Oregon State University.

Note: An article in the winter issue of *City Bridges* discussed Mr. Szabo’s upcoming presentations at OSU.

May: Partnered with Linn County Mental Health as a poster sponsor for Mental Health Month.

Summer: Used the summer issue of the *City Bridges* broad circulation to publish an article on the positive ways in which to **care for the mental health wellness of children** in recognition of Children’s Mental Health Awareness Day.

July: Following the death of former Mayor Gene Belhumeur, Mayor Konopa discussed the history of Everybody’s Neighborhood Day and invited the Commission to prepare a proclamation honoring August 26 as Everybody’s Neighborhood Day. The Commission drafted a proclamation, which Mayor Konopa read at the August 14, 2009, City Council meeting. This discussion also began planning for the Commission to host a National Night Out event that would include recognition of Everybody’s Neighborhood Day in 2010.

August: In order to increase community awareness of the Commission and its purpose and to increase the Commissioners’ understanding of citizens’ experience, the Commission sponsored a public forum at Ray’s Food Place Community Room in North Albany. More than 200 pieces of promotional literature were distributed through Neighborhood Watch leaders, businesses, churches, and personal contact, reading “*Come, Talk, Listen! The Human Relations Commission wants to hear about YOUR experience living in Albany!*” Posters were hung at City locations including the libraries, Senior Center, and City Hall.

Information was broadcast on radio and published in the *Democrat-Herald*. Thirteen community members attended the forum and spoke in response to questions that included:

- Why would you, or why would you not, recommend Albany as a good place to live?
- Have you attended a community event or activity in the past year? If yes, talk about the experience. If not, why not?
- How easy is it to get around in the city? What if you use a walker, wheelchair, or stroller?



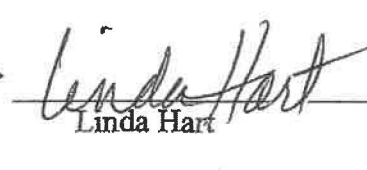
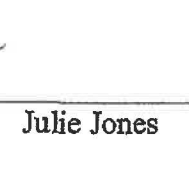
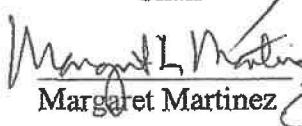
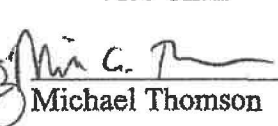
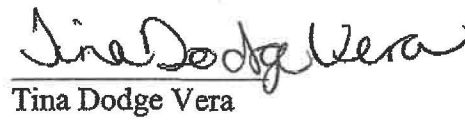
Participants shared examples of both positive and negative aspects to Albany life and shared information about resources and gaps in local services.

October: Initiated involvement with the Hispanic Advisory Council of Linn/Benton Counties. A member of the HRC attends monthly meetings to bring appropriate information and topics to the Commission.

Partnered with Linn County Mental Health as a poster sponsor for Mental Illness Awareness Month.

Conclusion: Looking back, the Commission is grateful for the opportunities available to further its purpose. It is especially grateful for the support and assistance of staff, including City Manager Wes Hare, Public Information Officer Marilyn Smith, and Administrative Assistant Diana Eilers; and of its collaborative partners, including Linn-Benton Community College, Greater Albany Public Schools, Linn County Mental Health, and Oregon State University. It is also grateful to City staff members who attended meetings to share information and answer questions, including Melanie Adams, Building Official; Lisa Bennett, Disability Access Coordinator; Jim Delapoer, City Attorney; and Stewart Taylor, Finance Director; and to Laura Hyde, Executive Assistant to the City Manager, for her work on preparing the Commission history that is attached to this report. We look forward to continuing these and other positive activities in the future.

Respectfully submitted,

 Kim Whitley, Chair	 Nancy Greenman, Vice Chair	 Linda Hart	 Julie Jones
 Margaret Martinez	 Michael Thomson	 Tina Dodge Vera	

Human Relations Commission

Commission Established

Council adopted Ordinance No. 5665, March 28, 2007, creating Albany Municipal Code Chapter 2.25, establishing the Human Relations Commission (HRC).

Council adopted Ordinance No. 5671, May 9, 2007, amending AMC 2.25.020 *[commissioners must reside within the Albany city limits]* and 2.25.030 *[initial terms to be staggered according to the appointee's surname beginning with three-year terms for those closest to the beginning of the alphabet]*.

Purpose: The Human Relations Commission was established by the Albany City Council to promote harmonious relations among the citizens of Albany. It is created to recommend programs, activities, ordinances, expenditures, and other appropriate governmental activities which will serve the goal of maintaining respectful interactions within our community.

First Commissioners

Name	Appointed By	Appointment Date	Term Expiration Date	Comments
Rafael Palacios	Mayor Doug Killin	07-25-2007	12-31-2007	Resigned 08-08-2007; he relocated to California; Blanca Ruckert appointed as replacement.
Blanca Ruckert	Mayor Doug Killin	08-08-2007	12-31-2007	none
Jodi Nelson	Councilor Dan Bedore	07-25-2007	12-31-2007	none
Rick Hammel, Jr.	Councilor Dick Olsen	07-25-2007	12-31-2008	none
Delia Guillen	Councilor Ralph Reid, Jr.	07-25-2007	12-31-2008	none
C. Jeffery Evans	Councilor Sharon Konopa	07-25-2007	12-31-2009	none
Marian Anderson	Councilor Jeff Christman	07-25-2007	12-31-2009	none
Anna Anderson	Councilor Bessie Johnson	08-08-2007	12-31-2009	none

First Meeting/First Officers

HRC's first meeting was Tuesday, September 25, 2007. At the second meeting [October 23, 2007], the first Chair and Vice Chair were elected. C. Jeffery Evans was elected Chair and Blanca Ruckert as Vice Chair.

Subsequent Commissioners

Resignations/Reappointments/New Appointments

- Blanca Ruckert was reappointed 01-07-2008 by Mayor Killin; new term expires 12-31-2010.
- Jodi Nelson was reappointed 01-09-2008 by Councilor Bedore; new term expires 12-31-2010.
- Anna Anderson resigned 08-13-2008; Councilor Johnson appointed Kim Whitley on 08-27-2008, as her replacement for the term expiring 12-31-2009.
- Delia Guillen resigned 09-09-2008; Councilor Reid appointed John Hartman on 10-22-2008, as her replacement for the term expiring 12-31-2008.
- Margaret Martinez was appointed 01-14-2009 by Councilor Reid replacing John Hartman, whose term expired 12-31-2008. Margaret's three-year term expires 12-31-2011.
- Nancy Greenman was appointed 01-14-2009 by Councilor Olsen replacing Rick Hammel, Jr., whose term expired 12-31-2008. Nancy's three-year term expires 12-31-2011.
- Blanca Ruckert resigned 04-22-2009; Mayor Konopa appointed Michael Thompson on 06-24-2009, as her replacement for the term expiring 12-31-2010.
- C. Jeffery Evans resigned 06-24-2009; vacant term expired 12-31-2009. Councilor Coburn appointed Linda Hart on 06-23-10, for a new three-year expiring 12-31-2012.
- Marian Anderson resigned 09-09-2009; vacant term expired 12-31-2009. Councilor Christman appointed Tina Dodge Vera on 02-10-2010, for a new three-year expiring 12-31-2012.
- Kim Whitley was reappointed 01-13-2010 by Councilor Johnson; new term expires 12-31-2012.
- Jodi Nelson resigned 06-10-10; vacant term expires 12-31-2010. Councilor Collins appointed Julie Jones on 07-14-2010, for the term expiring 12-31-2010.

Current HRC Roster (as of July 14, 2010)

Name	Appointment By	Term Expiration Date
Julie Jones	Councilor Floyd Collins	12-31-2010
Michael Thomson	Mayor Sharon Konopa	12-31-2010
Nancy Greenman	Councilor Dick Olsen	12-31-2011
Margaret Martinez	Councilor Ralph Reid, Jr.	12-31-2011
Linda Hart	Councilor Bill Coburn	12-31-2012
Tina Dodge Vera	Councilor Jeff Christman	12-31-2012
Kim Whitley	Councilor Bessie Johnson	12-31-2012

Visit who have attended an HRC meeting in 2009

Sharon Gisler
Michael Thomson
Mayor Sharon Konopa
Gerald Gisler
John Phillips
Margo Coleman
AliceFitzpatrick
Donna Copeland
Bill Root
June Hemmingson
Larry Eby
Penny Miltenberger
Dan Miltenberger
Phillipa Meehan
Dick Owen
Rosa Plascencia
Tina Dodge Vera

Visitors who have attended an HRC meeting in 2010

Clifford Hartman, Linn County Mental Health
Jim Bell, LBCC
Mary Zelinka, CARDV
Linda Hart