

# SAMMAMISH

ISSUE 100

CITY NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2010

## Proposed budget shrinks city staff

### DOWN ECONOMY REDUCES WORKLOAD IN SOME DEPARTMENTS

Although city finances would have allowed the retention of all city employees in 2011, City Manager Ben Yazici says the downturn in the economy has left Sammamish overstaffed in some areas.

Noting that land development and the need for development-related work inside City Hall has dropped dramatically, Yazici's proposed biennial budget for 2011/2012 reduces budgeted employee positions from 75 to 67.5.

(NOTE: When the economic downturn began a couple of years ago, the city chose not to fill all of its 75 budgeted positions. The current staff number is 71.5. The proposed drop to 67.5 would result in the layoff of four current employees.)

"To their credit, a number of employees asked if we could keep everybody on board through some kind of shared sacrifice," Yazici said. "They asked about furloughs or salary re-

*See BUDGET, pg. 4*



*The vehicle on the right approaches a new bridge as it travels along 244th Avenue Northeast. This view, looking south, also captures some of the associated road improvements.*

## Missing link opens along 244th

### NEW CONNECTION WILL TAKE TRAFFIC OFF 228TH

The morning and evening commute along 228th Avenue and Sahalee Way is a bit lighter now that drivers are beginning to use a newly opened north/south link along 244th Avenue.

The mile-long link between Southeast Eighth Street and Northeast Eighth Street features road improvements, two new roundabouts and an

800-foot bridge across a wetland. Prior to completion, drivers heading north or south on 244th Avenue had to detour around the wetland by heading over to 228th Avenue.

"This will lighten the traffic on 228th Avenue, especially at the inter-

*See MISSING LINK, pg. 3*

**MAYOR'S MESSAGE**

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**SUSTAINABILITY**

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**BARRICADES**

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## Charge it in Sammamish!

### GET READY FOR THE VERY ELECTRIC FUTURE

In previous Mayor's Messages I have expressed concerns about the vulnerability of Sammamish citizens to the inevitable next oil crisis. With minimal transit options and some of the longest commutes in the Puget Sound area, most of us are critically dependent on our autos.



*Don Gerend  
Mayor*

Recently I attended a conference at Puget Sound Energy headquarters on the impending arrival of mass-produced electric automobiles. Many people have waited for many years for this new era in transportation propulsion to materialize.

This fall, Nissan is releasing the first of its electric autos, the Leaf, in a select few metropolitan areas, with Seattle being one of them. The first allotment is all spoken for, but next year will bring more Leafs (or should we say Leaves?), and an electric, three-door Ford Focus hatchback.

The Leaf, with a range of about 100 miles per charge and a top speed of 90 mph, will sell for about \$32,000, but the federal government is providing a \$7,500 tax credit to purchasers. The Focus should be significantly less expensive.

In addition to these pure electric autos, there will be an extensive choice of plug-in hybrid autos (electric motors plus a small gas engine) such as

the GM-Volt coming on the market shortly.

Right now in Sammamish you might have seen one of the locally owned Tesla electric sports cars, the awesome, more than \$100,000 limited production roadsters that have a range of around 200 miles.

All of the major auto manufacturers have plug-in vehicles either in production or in the design and development stages. In China, where there are already around 100 million electric bicycles, there are reputed to be 80 auto companies building cars with electric plug-ins.

The era of internal combustion engines is coming to an end. In autos, only about 10% of the energy from the fuel contributes to getting you to your destination. With electric motors the transformation from electricity to mechanical energy is on the order of 90%.

With gas at \$3 per gallon, you now travel some 8 miles for \$1. With an electric auto, and our reasonably low electric rates, you would be able to travel over 50 miles for one dollar.

Gas will continue to get more expensive, while battery technology and mass production should actually lower the overall cost of electric propulsion traveling. The paradigm shift is happening now and we must prepare for it.

Sammamish is working with its other partners in the C-7 New Energy Partnership (Bellevue, Issaquah, Kirk-

land, Mercer Island, Renton, and Redmond) on projects planning the rollout of infrastructure for home and business electric vehicle readiness. Regional cooperation and planning is a key to this new technology, with PSE and the other power companies being integral participants in the process.

Sammamish is looking to get some help with grant moneys available for installing charging stations. Sammamish is preparing to submit applications to install Level Two charging stations (240 volt), at City Hall and potentially other locations, and is evaluating the feasibility and cost of electric vehicles for the city fleet.

Metro has 14 charging stalls at the Issaquah Highlands parking garage already. The west coast states and British Columbia are working on a network of Fast Charge facilities (higher voltage and amps, taking only 20 to 40 minutes to recharge) along the I-5 corridor to facilitate longer range for the first generation electric vehicles.

You commuters of the future will hop in your small electric cars and buzz over to a park and ride center where you can join other commuters going to your destination, in an electric van that was charged up overnight at the transit center.

Sammamish is uniquely vulnerable to the next oil crisis, and it makes sense for us to be proactive and prepare now as best that we can through leading by example and through public education.

So, be prepared Sammamish, and get ready to "charge it!"

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Don Gerend". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "D".

## Sustainable Sammamish

A PAIR OF SEPTEMBER MEETINGS  
FOCUSED ON “SUSTAINABILITY”

Following a very productive September, both city residents and city staffers know a lot more about what the word “sustainability” means in Sammamish.

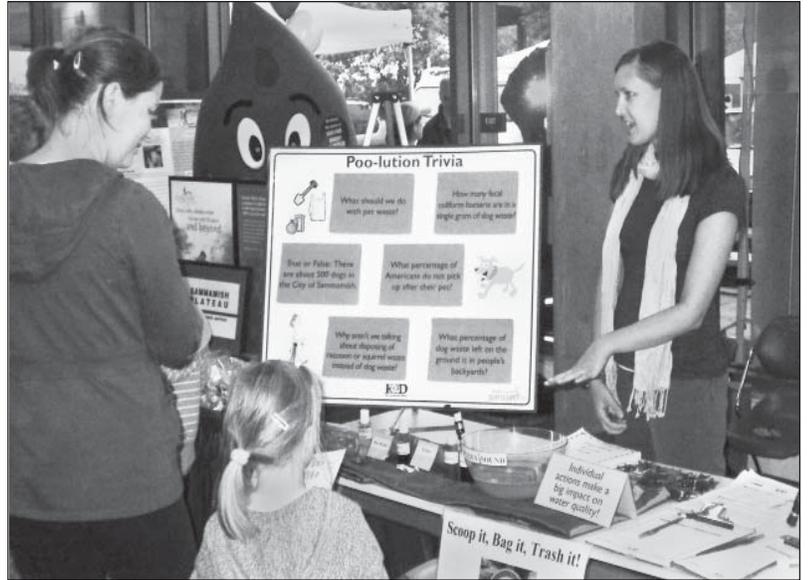
A double helping of information exchange began on Sept. 15 during the “Sustainable Sammamish” event, an open house at City Hall that allowed residents to mix with vendors and experts alike. The event, sponsored by the Sammamish Chamber of Commerce, featured products, techniques and information intended to help reduce the impact of human activity on the environment.

Thanks to a grant from the King Conservation District, for example, kids were able to visit a booth that shared information on how to keep pet waste – or “Poo-lution,” as they called it – out of our waterways.

Then on Sept. 30, the city held a public meeting, also at City Hall, that featured a workshop and other activities intended to bring the community’s sustainability priorities further into focus.

The two events last month followed an extensive, multi-layered, five-month outreach to the community on the topic. Now, the Planning Commission and City Council will review all the input, refine a strategy, and then adopt a “sustainability” program sometime next year.

For more information, go to the city website ([www.ci.sammamish.wa.us](http://www.ci.sammamish.wa.us)) and click on the “sustainability” tab, or contact Kathy Curry ([kcurry@ci.sammamish.wa.us](mailto:kcurry@ci.sammamish.wa.us) or 425-295-0527).



*A youngster learns how to keep “Poo-lution” out of our waterways.*

## Home energy reports

Some Sammamish residents will soon find out how much gas and electricity they’re using compared to similar-sized homes in their neighborhood.

Thanks to a year-long program funded by Puget Sound Energy and a federal grant, 4,000 randomly selected city residents will shortly receive a free “Home Energy Report.”

Although no specific homes will be identified, the bimonthly report will let recipients know how they compare with many of their neighbors, and provide them with tips on how to better control their energy costs.

For more information, go to:

**[www.pse.com](http://www.pse.com)**

Enter “Home Energy Report” in search window.

### *MISSING LINK, from pg. 1*

sections with Southeast Eighth and Northeast Eighth,” Project Manager Jed Ireland said. “And, of course, it will give many drivers on the east side of town a more direct route north to State Route 202.”

Now, in addition to 228th Avenue and the East Lake Sammamish Parkway, Sammamish drivers have a third north/south arterial to use if they want to exit or enter the city at

the northern city limits.

“It’s going to be especially useful to residents of Crosswater, Vintage, Montrachet, Windsor Green and other nearby neighborhoods,” Ireland said. “Heading north to Redmond is going to be shorter and simpler now.”

The \$9.3 million construction project, though open to vehicles, is not yet completely finished. Additional landscaping, wetland mitigation work, and the usual punch list still remain to be done.

In addition to the bridge and two roundabouts, other improvements along 244th Avenue include sidewalks and bike lanes on both sides, a landscaped median, and planter strips next to the curb.

“When people hear the word ‘connectivity,’ I hope they’ll think of this new link on 244th,” City Manager Ben Yazici said. “The new connection is going to shorten trips, reduce traffic on other roads, and let us all get around more easily.”

## *BUDGET, from pg. 1*

ductions, but I had to tell them that this isn't a financial issue. We have the money. What we don't have is enough work to keep certain positions busy."

Since its inception in 1999, the city has followed a lean staffing policy, keeping the number of city employees low while contracting with outside agencies for fire, police and other services. The city also hires consultants on a temporary, as-needed basis rather than hiring permanent staff to handle all engineering, planning and other duties.

"Up until now, that approach has saved us from the big layoffs other cities have implemented," Yazici said. "But this downturn has been so prolonged, with so little indication that it's going to lift soon, that I've had to propose this staffing adjustment.

"We used to handle over 400 new single-family home permits per year. This year, so far, we've only issued around 100."

Although the layoffs were not driven by immediate financial considerations, other elements in the pro-

posed budget do reflect the impacts of a sour economy.

For example:

- Several capital projects are being delayed
- All in-house departments have been instructed to submit reduced or "no increase" budgets
- The same is being requested for fire (Eastside Fire & Rescue) and police (King County Sheriff's Office) contracts.
- Given that the region's cost of living index has dropped by half a percent, the budget proposes a half percent reduction in all city employee salaries.

These and other changes would push the much-talked-about "cross-over point" out beyond 2016. The 2009 financial model, based on the last biennial budget, had placed that pivotal moment in 2013. The cross-over point will arrive when operating expenses exceed operating revenues, a circumstance that may require either a reduction in services or an additional revenue source.

"Per state law, the increase in our

property tax collections is limited to one percent," Yazici said. "Unfortunately, there's no similar limit on inflation, or the cost of fire, police and other services we pay for.

"That means the community may eventually have to indicate what approach it wants to take. Does it want to continue the lean approach and live with limited city services, or does it want to raise more revenue through a utility tax or some other revenue option?"

"Fortunately, we have time to make a sensible decision that reflects the community's priorities. Our City Councils have always been fiscally prudent and kept us in great financial shape."

The largest new expenditure in the proposed budget reflects a frequently expressed desire by residents for a community center. In 2011, the proposed budget contains \$6.3 million for land acquisition, feasibility studies and other preliminary steps.

More information on the budget process is available on the city website ([www.ci.sammamish.wa.us](http://www.ci.sammamish.wa.us)) by going to the "Departments" tab and clicking on "Financial Services."

## Parkway, Phase 1B, will cost more due to soil problems

Construction of the new bridge on East Lake Sammamish Parkway, along with associated road improvements, will wrap up in November, but due to poor soil conditions, the price tag is going to exceed the \$3.5 million in federal stimulus money the city will receive for the project. To handle the additional costs, the City Council last month approved the expenditure of \$650,000 in city funds.

"Based on soil testing before construction began, we anticipated that the entire project would be covered by

the federal grant," City Manager Ben Yazici said. "But as sometimes happens on major projects, there were some surprises underground."

Among other things, costs were driven up by:

- Support pilings that had to be driven deeper than engineers' estimates
  - Drilling that encountered more rock than expected
  - Poor soil that required more work for the reconfiguration of driveways
- "Fortunately, this additional expenditure is more than covered by

the savings we've had on two other projects," Yazici said. "The sidewalk and bike lane work on Southeast 20th Street benefited from a low bid, and construction of Phase 1A of the parkway project was easier than expected. Between those two, the savings amounted to more than \$1 million."

More information is available on the project website at [www.ci.sammamish.wa.us/projects/elsp](http://www.ci.sammamish.wa.us/projects/elsp), or by contacting Project Manager Jeff Brauns (425-295-0561, [jbrauns@ci.sammamish.wa.us](mailto:jbrauns@ci.sammamish.wa.us)).

## Strong feelings emerge at barricade meeting

If there was any doubt that barricades bring out strong feelings on both sides of the issue, the city's Sept. 23 open house on the S.E. 32nd Street barrier certainly put that to rest.

As they looked at information easels and talked to city staffers, many residents who live near the barricade expressed frustration, and said the city's process appeared to be leading to a removal of the barrier. Citing concerns over safety and the character of their neighborhood, many spoke passionately against removal as they gathered in small clusters throughout the meeting room at Sunny Hills Elementary School.

One display showed that in 2016 more than a thousand vehicle trips per day would pass through the barricade location if it was removed. The data, from the city's computer traffic model, also showed that the removal would reduce traffic on some other nearby road sections.

"This is a difficult issue," City Engineer Laura Philpot said. "It's easy to understand why neighbors are concerned about increased traffic, but it's just as easy to understand why other residents don't want the barricade deflecting traffic into



*Public Works Director John Cunningham (second from left) listens to residents.*

their neighborhood."

The meeting was the first test of some carefully developed criteria the city will use to decide the fate of numerous barriers in the community. Attendees were asked to weight the importance of the criteria items when applied to the Southeast 32nd Street barricade.

After further public process and a thorough review of resident input, the City Council is expected to make a decision on the Southeast 32nd Street barricade early next year.

## Spills: Who you gonna call?

Oil, gas, paint, chemicals – these are just a few examples of spills that can seriously harm human life and our environment when they go down storm drains and enter our waterways. Fast reporting can really help. If you see a spill, call 425.295.0500 or, if the discharge is a direct hazard to human life, call 911.

"Spills often happen when there is improper disposal or handling of hazardous products like oil, paint, gasoline, household chemicals, pesticides, fertilizers or wash water," said Stormwater Engineer Eric LaFrance. "Even car-washing, home repair and pressure washing can unintentionally allow pollutants to enter the storm drains and our water system."

Storm drains in Sammamish flow to many different waterways, such as streams and ponds, before they reach our lakes. Each day, 143,000 pounds of toxic chemicals are carried into the Puget Sound. About 75 percent of that is carried by stormwater that runs off paved roads, driveways, rooftops, yards and other developed land. These harmful pollutants cause damage to our local waterways long before they reach the ocean.

## 520 tolls begin in spring

Sammamish drivers, like everyone else, will begin paying tolls this spring when they cross the 520 bridge. The money will go toward the construction of a new and safer bridge.

Tolls will be collected in two ways. As vehicles drive under an electronic sensor, the toll will be automatically deducted from a prepaid account. Or, if the driver does not have a prepaid account, a photo will be taken of the vehicle's license plate and a bill will be sent to the registered owner in the mail.

For more information on the the new tolling program, go to [www.goodtogo520.org](http://www.goodtogo520.org). Or you can leave a phone message at 1-888-424-9736 and a customer service representative will return your call.

## 4th Annual Sammamish Art Fair

CITY ARTS COMMISSION BUILDS A CULTURAL TRADITION AND A POPULAR EVENT AT CITY

Art aficionados will experience a high point on the community calendar this month when the 4th Annual Sammamish Art Fair is staged at City Hall on Saturday, October 9, and Sunday, Oct. 10, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on both days.

The fair will feature some of the best jury-selected local artists on the eastside, and give attendees the opportunity to discuss the artistic process with the talented creators of the art.

The pieces, which will also be for sale, will include original paintings, jewelry, mixed media, encaustic art, ceramics, wood carving, textile pieces

and a variety of glass art.

In the adjacent Sammamish library, performance artists will please younger fans with puppets, dance, theatre and book readings. There will also be hand-on children's art activities during the weekend.

The big event is sponsored by the city, the Sammamish Arts Commission, and 4Culture. Admission is free, and there will be live music and light refreshments available.

For more information, and artist previews, please go to the arts fair website at [www.sammamishartfair.wordpress.com](http://www.sammamishartfair.wordpress.com).

## Veronique LeMerre exhibit begins Oct. 11

The work of French-born artist Veronique LeMerre will be on display at City Hall from Oct. 11 to Nov. 12.

A "Meet the Artist" reception will also be held at City Hall on Monday, Oct. 15, from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

LeMerre's art, which features bold colors, simple shapes and intricate detail, captures the complexity of life in both urban and wild environments.

**Sammamish Arts Commission**  
on  
**Facebook**

To find the latest news, just go to Facebook and search for Sammamish Arts Commission.

## Please don't park on sidewalks

According to the city ordinance, sidewalks are for walking. Not for parking your car, and not for anything else that blocks pedestrian traffic.

"We've been getting more complaints lately about cars on sidewalks," said City Engineer Laura Philpot. "Maybe we're seeing more of it because of



*Not cool; not legal.*

the low, rounded curbs that became popular a few years ago."

Whatever the reason, the cars not only block pedestrians, they also damage sidewalks.

"Sidewalks are not designed to hold the weight of a car," Philpot said. "We've been seeing quite a bit of damage."

Residents are also being encouraged to put their trash containers on the edge of the road, when possible, to keep the sidewalk clear.

"Our police department is going to make clear sidewalks a point of emphasis," Philpot said. "They won't be handing out tickets, but they will be letting drivers know about the rules."

## Ecology holds SMP hearing at City Hall

After approving the Shoreline Master Program (SMP) Update one year ago, the city submitted its regulations to the state Department of Ecology (DOE) for approval. As part of that process, DOE is holding a public hearing Oct. 7, at City Hall. The SMP is a state-mandated, periodic update of shoreline regulations that all cities must produce.

The event features an open house at 5 p.m., a presentation and Q&A session at 6 p.m., and then testimony from the public at 7 p.m. The public will also be able to submit written comments to DOE until Oct. 28.

It's not unusual for the DOE to request changes before giving final approval to an SMP. If the changes requested are not too substantial, it's expected the city's SMP will receive final approval in the first quarter of 2011.

# CITY CALENDAR

## OCTOBER

### Monday, Oct. 4

5:30-6:30 p.m., City Council Office Hours

### Tuesday, Oct. 5

5-6:15 p.m., Finance Committee Mtg  
6:30 p.m., City Council Meeting  
6:30 p.m., Parks and Rec Comm. Mtg

### Thursday, Oct. 7

5-8:30 p.m., Dept. of Ecology Shoreline Master Program Meeting & Public Hearing, City Hall  
7-9 p.m., Front Porch-American Cycle "The Scarlet Letter", Samm. Library

### Saturday, Oct. 9

10 a.m. - 5 p.m., Art Fair, City Hall  
1:30-2:30 p.m., Book-It: "The Prince of the Pond", Sammamish Library  
3-4 p.m., Draw with Wendy Wahman! Sammamish Library

### Sunday, Oct. 10

10 a.m. - 5 p.m., Art Fair, City Hall  
1:30-2:30 p.m., Thistle Theatre: "Dance Around the World with Jennifer" Sammamish Library  
3-4 p.m., Thistle Theatre: "Mrs. Periwinkle and Possum" Sammamish Library

### Monday, Oct. 11

8:30 a.m.-5 p.m., Art Exhibit: "Urban Jungle" by Veronique Lemerre City Hall

### Tuesday, Oct. 12

6:30-10 p.m., City Council Study Session

### Wednesday, Oct. 13

6-7 p.m., Sammamish Youth Board Mtg

### Thursday, Oct. 14

6:30 p.m., Planning Commission Mtg

### Saturday, Oct. 16

10 a.m.-noon., Sammamish Walks  
Soaring Eagle Park

### Monday, Oct. 18

5:30-6:30 p.m., City Council Office Hours  
6:30 p.m., Arts Commission Meeting  
6:30 p.m., City Council Study Session

### Tuesday, Oct. 19

6:30 p.m., City Council Meeting

### Thursday, Oct. 21

4-5 p.m., Public Safety Cmte Mtg  
Location TBA  
6:30 p.m., Planning Comm. Meeting

### Saturday, Oct. 23

9 a.m.- noon, Parks and Rec Volunteer Opportunity  
Illahee Trail

### Monday, Oct. 25

7-8:30 p.m., "Urban Jungle,"  
Meet the Artist, City Hall

### Thursday, Oct. 28

7-8 p.m., Comedy Night,  
Jet City Improv, City Hall

## NOVEMBER

### Tuesday, Nov. 2

5-6:15 p.m., Finance Cmte Meeting  
6:30 p.m., City Council Meeting

### Thursday, Nov. 4

6:30 p.m., Planning Comm. Meeting

### Tuesday, Nov. 9

6:30 p.m., City Council Study Session

### Wednesday, Nov. 10

6:30 p.m., Parks and Rec Comm. Mtg

### Thursday, Nov. 11

Veterans Day  
City offices closed

### Monday, Nov. 15

6:30 p.m., Arts Commission Meeting  
6:30 p.m., City Council Study Session

### Tuesday, Nov. 16

6:30 p.m., City Council Meeting

### Wednesday, Nov. 17

6-7 p.m., Samm. Youth Board Mtg  
6:30-8 p.m., Art Exhibit Reception,  
Winter Fiber

### Thursday, Nov. 18

6:30 p.m., Planning Comm. Meeting

### Saturday, Nov. 20

9 a.m.- noon, Parks and Rec Volunteer Opportunity, Lower Samm. Commons

### Saturday, Nov. 20 - Tuesday, Nov. 23

9 a.m. to noon each day, Volunteer at Lower Commons Northwest Garden

### Thursday, Nov. 25

Thanksgiving Day, City offices closed

### Friday, Nov. 26

Thanksgiving Holiday, City offices closed

## PLEASE NOTE:

All meetings and events at City Hall, unless otherwise noted. Times, dates and locations are subject to change. Please consult the city website for the most current information.



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*Nancy Whitten  
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*Mark Cross  
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*John Curley  
Councilmember*



*John James  
Councilmember*



*Tom Odell  
Councilmember*



*Michele Petitti  
Councilmember*

**Skyline marches again on Oct. 22**

This year's Skyline High School homecoming parade – the eighth annual – will march up 228th Avenue on Friday, Oct. 22. The parade, which starts at Discovery Elementary School, will begin its journey north to the Skyline High School campus beginning at 5 p.m.

As in years past, the north-bound lane of 228th Avenue will be closed to traffic between 4:30 and 6:30 p.m. To maintain two-way traffic on the city's main arterial, however,

the southbound lane of 228th Avenue will be split in half, allowing vehicles to travel in both directions. During the parade, access from driveways and roads on the east side of 228th Avenue will be limited between Southeast 24th Street and Southeast Eighth Street.

This year's array of bands, cheerlead-

ers and floats will be augmented by the presence of youth football players and perhaps some other guests.

Traffic control for the event will be provided by police and city staff.



*Homecoming parade in 2009*

**CITY OF SAMMAMISH OFFICES**

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- Pete Butkus Deputy City Manager
- Kamuron Gurol ComDevDir/AsstCityMgr
- Lyman Howard FinanceDir/AsstCityMgr
- John Cunningham Public Works Director
- Jessi Richardson Parks & Rec Director
- Mike Sauerwein AdminServices Director
- Melonie Anderson City Clerk
- Nathan Elledge Police Chief
- Lee Soptich Fire Chief
- Bruce Disend City Attorney
- Tim Larson Communications Mgr