

# SUTHERLIN

## Playground Upgrades & New Splash Pad

The city of Sutherlin has earned bragging rights for having the best newly-upgraded park in Douglas County. As the second largest city in the county, Sutherlin sports brand new, bright playground equipment that is quite varied for different ages and abilities. Now, one of the biggest attractions is the new splash pad. It's the only one so far in Douglas County, and seems to draw children and parents from one end of the county to the other. On most any day, 80-100-plus kids and adults can be counted at the playground area.

This project was in process for slightly more than two years and broke ground in early June. The playground measures 14,000 square feet and the splash pad is just over 1,000 square feet. The splash pad features three large different color rings which are approximately 6 feet high and spray, water mists along with jets blasting from the ground. One of the most popular features is the bulldog, which represents the Sutherlin High School mascot; it sits in the northeast corner and water shoots out of its mouth.

Some of the playground features include a popular climbing web, swings for all ages, spinners, six slides and monkey bars which are attached to one of the playground's two larger features. The city council and city staff are thrilled to bring this to the Sutherlin citizens and their children.

But it didn't come easy. The city applied for a \$289,000 grant, which would have covered most all of the costs, but was turned down. Staff didn't let the rejection dim their vision though, and neither did Sutherlin City Manager Jerry Gillham, who encouraged employees not to give up on the project. A team of city staff then presented their plan to the Sutherlin Parks Advisory Committee for their approval to move forward with a recommendation to the city council. That decision was made August 26, 2016. Sutherlin received a grant in the amount of \$25,000 from Ford Family Foundation, which is located in Roseburg. Along with the grant, the city used internal funds, including parks system development charges and a 3 percent transient room tax, to help pay for the project.

At a city council meeting on September 12, 2016, a three-year loan was approved to pay for the playground equipment. The city plans to repay it using transient lodging tax dollars, which total around \$60,000 per year. The city also budgeted \$325,000 to buy and install the splash pad and the playground equipment, a process that was overseen by Community Development Director Brian Elliott.



To save funds, staff from the Sutherlin Public Works Department, lead by Superintendent Aaron Swan and Supervisor Gary Fugate, put the equipment together, saving the city approximately \$35,000. Despite temperatures that reached as high as 108 degrees, on any given day work crews could be seen working on the project as time and duties allowed.



For city staff, the best outcome is seeing the excitement and hearing the squeals from the children who use the play area. Just outside the playground perimeter are picnic tables for the parents and grandparents to watch from, but many are out on the playground with the kids. On almost a daily basis, quality family time is being enjoyed on this new community attraction.

Submitted by: Debbie Hamilton, CMC, Sutherlin Community Relations Director ■