

Message from the Mayor #36 02-05-2009

In my world of local government recently, all the talk has been about President Obama's Stimulus Package and what it will mean to Tennessee, Gibson County and Trenton. There has been much speculation and very little information about how we as a small city will be able to benefit from the monies that we hope will be made available. I really feel that the Congress will pass some type of a stimulus package eventually, but in what form, is not clear. I have contacted all of the agencies that we have at our disposal to assist us in grant writing and loan appropriation and they too are perplexed on how this will all play out. The one fact that we hear over and over is that they will be looking for "shovel ready" projects or in laymen's terms, projects that have had all the engineering and studies done. These would be projects that could be started and could provide jobs now. The city has two such projects "shovel ready" and hopes to have some others set on go when these monies become available.

The first of these projects is a sewer rehabilitation grant through a Community Development Block Grant or CDBG. This is a continuing effort to replace sewer lines that have been in the ground for several years. The next segment will affect the east Lexington Street area and possibly a few smaller streets in the city. Secondly, we have our Downtown Renovation Grant through the Tennessee Department of Transportation or TDOT. This will start a 3 phase project to spruce up the downtown area around our courthouse. Both of these projects are in the works and if monies were made available, we could get started.

Other projects that we will work to get up and running are a Parks and Recreation Grant that actually won't be awarded until 2010, a Safe Passage to School sidewalks grant that would allow us to repair old sidewalks in the Elementary School area, something that we would never have enough money to do without a grant, and a water line project similar to the one we just completed on South College. We are also anticipating that some of the incentive monies will be made available through grants and loans to police and fire departments.

Of course, I totally agree with Senator Finney's suggestion in last week's newspaper concerning the finishing of Hwy. 104 between here and Dyersburg. That is a project that not only provides new jobs in road construction but opens the possibility of contributing many more jobs later when new industry comes back to Trenton.

As always I am optimistic about the future and I pray that some of these funds will come available to us to use to really help people. I am not naïve enough though to realize that the possibility major urban areas such as Memphis, Nashville, Knoxville, and

Chattanooga could end up with the lion's share and smaller municipalities such as ours will again be put on the back burner. We will hope and pray and then wait and see. This recession has become mostly about jobs or the lack thereof. Gibson County has an 11% unemployment rate and whatever we can do to fix it, we must.

I don't know how many of you listen to the weekly radio show on AM 1500 that Sherry Vaughn and I host, but we have a lot of fun and try to dispense useful and newsworthy information to the citizens of Trenton each week. We have been taping the show a week in advance but something great is happening. Starting last week, we are broadcasting "Tidings from Trenton" live on Friday mornings from 11 to 11:30. This gives you the opportunity to call in and ask any question you would like. We try to have special guests from time to time to talk about events of interest that are upcoming in the area. If there is someone you would like to hear from on the show, let me know, and in the meantime listen to "Tidings from Trenton" on AM 1500 every Friday morning at 11:00.

Do you know someone who has been a big influence in your life or you think deserves some much needed recognition? I have the answer for you. Why not honor them with a leaf on the tree of life at Gibson General Hospital? You might want to honor them for their birthday, retirement, graduation, career change, anniversary or baptism. The leaf may be placed in memory of a loved one who has passed away. It is a great honor to have a leaf on the tree of life. The Gibson General Healthcare Foundation sponsors the tree and a leaf is \$300. If you are interested, contact 731-855-7900 for more information.

There are numerous events going on in Trenton over the next few weeks. Don't forget to go see Nite Lite Theater's production of "Harvey" this weekend. It features many local actors such as Joe Hammonds, Lanny Poteet, Jennifer Petty, Hugh McClanahan and Katie Madden, under the direction of Kathi Burriss. Performances are Thursday, Friday, and Saturday night at 7:30 and Sunday afternoon at 2:00. The Carl Perkins Center for the Prevention of Child Abuse will host their annual Dinner and Auction on February 21st at the old Plastech Industrial Building. Call the center at 731-855-4884 for ticket information. It's a great night out in the city. You know, if you can't find something fun to do in Trenton, it's your own fault.

Lastly this week, I must note the passing of former Trenton and Gibson County Mayor, Ronnie Riley. Ronnie was a community minded man, who spent the majority of his life serving the public. I haven't been Mayor that long, but in the time I have been, I know he had to love people to do this kind of work. I never ran into Ronnie that he did not shake my hand and ask how I was doing. He helped me with a couple of projects since I have become

Mayor and he was always gracious and kind. Trenton and Gibson County are a better place today because of him. My prayers go out to his wife Diana and his family. As much as he loved Trenton, he knew like all of us, Trenton isn't perfect, but we're working on it. Till next time, God Bless Trenton.