

Message from the Mayor
#75 08-13-2010

I always like to start these bi-monthly articles with something positive. This week I'd like to congratulate the GED students who recently graduated with their equivalent high school diplomas. The ceremony was held at Trenton Rosenwald Middle School on August 1st and even though only about 20 graduates came to participate in the ceremony, the class consisted of approximately 80 who earned their certificates. That is 80 people who spent the time to start the process of becoming a more qualified workforce member. 80 people who have come one step closer to fulfilling their dreams. 80 people who see the need to be more educated.

How important is their accomplishment? Well, a state senator, a state representative, TSSD administrators, and local government leaders were on hand to witness their success. Even some people who were also past GED earners were present, as was the case with a certain Mayor's wife who earned her GED and went on in life to get an Associate's Degree in Business, a Bachelor of Science in Accounting, is a Legislative Auditor 3 with the Comptroller's Office, Division of County Audit for the last 28 years, a Certified Government Financial Manager and a Certified Fraud Examiner for the State of Tennessee. An education is one of the most powerful tools you can possess. It can get you places that you can only dream about. I have a great respect for these 80 graduates who have added another tool to their toolbox. I wish them much good luck in the future.

As most of you know, the levee on the north end of town suffered a tremendous amount of damage in the recent floods. The City will be partnering with USDA/NRCS (The US Department of Agriculture/Natural Resources Conservation Service) and the West Tennessee River Basin Authority to repair the levee through an Emergency Watershed Protection Grant. These two agencies will combine to cover 100% of the cost to remove all vegetation, reinforce and widen the levee, and sow it down so it will be easy to maintain. My sincere thanks goes to Carter Andrews with USDA/NRCS and David Salyers with the WTRBA in helping secure the grant. Although we pray that we never have to use it again, we will feel a little better knowing it is fixed. Work will start at the end of August and continue through October.

Some people have asked why we have not done any more work on the Downtown Pedestrian Park. Well, there are a couple of reasons, the most important being that we don't want to build anything in the park that might be torn up or changed during the Downtown Revitalization project. There is no need to place infrastructure if it might have to be torn out because of construction in that area. Also, we want to tie the park in with the surrounding improvements to downtown. When the downtown improvements are made then we will get back to the business of completing the park.

Round 3 of our THDA Neighborhood Stabilization will be happening in the next 30 to 60 days. There are 5 condemned residential properties and 2 commercial properties on the list. The structure you will notice more than any will be the old Hockaday Building at the corner of College and 1st Street. The other commercial site will be the old Long Lumber Shed at the end of West 1st Street. Both of these buildings are greatly distressed and if for no other reason than safety their demolition is necessary.

Over the past two and one half years the City has razed 60 blighted structures at the request of their owners. We will continue to do so even when the THDA Grant expires later this year. The City is committed to making our neighborhoods cleaner, safer, and more livable.

Some of you have heard that the City has been offered the car dealership property located on Eaton Street that was once Phelan Ford. The City Council has agreed to accept the property after a Phase I Environmental survey is completed. The plan is to offer a reasonable lease to a car dealer or other interested party to open a business that will benefit Trenton in some way. There has been concern that tax money would have to be used, but we feel that will not be necessary as we use the lease money to curb any expenses the City would incur. If a business comes in and finds success, then they might be interested in purchasing the property at a good price since we will have little invested in it. The sole purpose is to try to bring a business opportunity into town. It is better to try and fail than to not try at all. Our intention is to not fail.

Let me ask a favor of you. When mowing the grass and weeds on your property, please try to mow out to the street and all the way to your neighbor's property line. It makes your place and neighborhood look so much better. Also, any ditch, either in front, behind or on the side of your house is the responsibility of the property owner. Ricky Bailey, the City Council, your neighbors, the other residents of Trenton, and I will be grateful. The condition of your property reflects on your surrounding neighbors, not just you. When you have

neighbors who take great care of their property and you do not, it is not fair to them. Whether you own or rent, it is your responsibility to keep all of your property free of debris and properly mowed.

Speaking of Ricky Bailey, he does a great job for the City. He is not only the Building Inspector for Gibson County but he works as Building Inspector and City Planner for Trenton. He is very concerned with the condition of property in the City and helps me in many ways. Like me, he knows Trenton isn't perfect, but we're working on it. Till next time, God Bless Trenton.

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