

Message from the Mayor #43 05-15-09

It's time for our Budget Committee to get serious about the 2009-2010 budget. Before July 1st, we have to complete the budget and the City Council has to pass two readings. We have actually been working on the budget since February and have most of it completed. As you may expect, we have had to cut back on spending where we could without cutting back on essential services such as Police and Fire protection. On the whole, I think the committee has done such a great job, some of you will hardly notice any changes. But some of you might notice a few minor things here and there.

One of the places we are really losing money is the area of sanitation pick-up. We do not want to raise the current sanitation rates this year, although some time in the near future it will have to happen. We are going to have to be more efficient in the way we collect your waste. We still will pick-up your trash one time per week as we always do and we will still offer curbside pickup for your limbs, refuse, etc... at least a couple times per week, but if you are a business and you are paying the minimum charge, you will only get a once a week pickup as you should have been getting all along. If you need extra pickups during the week you will be charged an extra fee for each one. Most businesses won't be affected, but a few will. This is just an effort to be fair to everyone and also help us to be more efficient.

Also if you notice, most streets in town have a street light on every other pole. This provides enough light to keep areas lit up and safe. There are places in the city though where there is a light on every pole. This costs the city tens of thousands of dollars per year to operate. Some of you are going to notice some of the lights on your street will be turned off. We still will operate on the every other pole theory which will provide plenty of light.

There are other places we will have to cut but most of that will be expenditure cuts in the operation of city government. We value your tax dollar and try to spend them in ways that are beneficial to you and your safety. We are aware many of you are out of work, without benefits and it would not be right for us to waste the monies you provide.

I don't write enough about our schools and I should do more. Yes, I know I have a bias toward our school system, but rightly so, we have excellent schools in Trenton. I know a small few get upset from time to time with some aspect of the schools (I have a theory about that) and some complain about the money spent to educate our children (I have a hard time thinking of any better way to spend money) but when the day is done, we have schools in Trenton we can be very proud of.

Soon, another class of Seniors will leave Peabody High School and step out into the world. I am heartbroken that I do not have a thousand reasons for them to get an education and come back home to live. I am all too aware of the lack of job opportunities in Trenton and Gibson County during this time. My challenge to them is to get an education and come back with an idea or a dream and make it happen right here. It might be to open a plumbing or electrical business or it might be a way for us to recycle. It could be a retail opportunity or maybe an industry to fill one of our empty buildings. Talk about hometown heroes. We have many hometown heroes now but we can always use more. If you know a Senior or someone in college or trade school, encourage them to come home and help us grow this city.

It has been tremendously wet lately and our street department is behind on slated projects. We don't want to make bigger messes, so when it dries up, we will be getting caught up on jobs that we are behind on. Please bear with us.

You won't want to miss the dedication of the Oakland Cemetery gazebo on Monday, May 25th at 10:00.

A state grant allowed us to renovate the historic structure to its original condition and it really looks great. We will also honor the Hight family, who played an integral part in the gazebo's construction and renovation. It will be a good way to celebrate Memorial Day and remember those who made it possible to enjoy the freedoms we enjoy today.

I haven't said this enough lately and I never want to let you forget to SHOP TRENTON. I know gas prices were allowing us to venture out again to spend our money in foreign lands, but they are back on the rise. The merchants in Trenton want to serve you and if you can't find something in their stores, encourage them to stock it. I understand you can't get it all here yet, but if you need something on a regular basis, ask someone to get it in stock for you. That way, they know what you want and you save yourself a trip. If you don't tell them, they will not know. If we want Trenton to work, we have to work together.

I went to an event Thursday evening that was truly delightful and enjoyable. It was the inaugural night of Open Mic at the To the Last Drop Coffee Shop. The effort was initiated by Kashaun Fields and a group called New Beginnings. People read poetry, sang, read stories and just shared their creativity with the audience. It was a great evening. I don't know when the next one will be but watch for it and come and participate or just enjoy. My thanks to Kashaun and his group.

I love it when people try new things. That means we are growing. Yes, I know we wish it would be new jobs that were growing but that time will come. Hard work always pays off and there are

those working hard to make jobs happen. In the meantime, Citizen Action groups, art co-ops and places for people to exhibit creativity will help make us a community that will attract others. What are you doing to help us grow? I know many are working hard. There are committees in the city that are planning Saturday night on the Square events, the creation of a downtown city park, a new art co-op on the square, the beautification and preservation of Oakland Cemetery, a Merchant's Alliance, the continuation of our Teapot Festival, and many others. All these people believe in Trenton and the capabilities we possess to become a city all of us can be proud of. I hope you are on board. We have big challenges to face and together we will and we will succeed. You know, it wouldn't hurt to pray for help and guidance. No matter how much we love our city, Trenton isn't perfect but we're working on it. Till next time, God Bless Trenton.