

Message from the Mayor
#60 01-15-2010

I would like to wish you and your family a happy 2010. This is actually the first article I have written this year even though we are almost halfway through the month. For some of you, it has been a pleasant start and to others of you, I'm sure it has been a challenge to see a lot of positive effects so far. I know we all share the same hope that by the end of 2010, our lives will get much better. If we don't take some control of our own situations and use our own abilities to make our lives better, I can just about guarantee you that you will not see a great amount of change. As for me, I am going to exert my Pollyanna attitude and viewpoint as far as I can. I intend to make 2010 a positive year.

Speaking of positive, this certainly is. Recently, three young men came to talk to me about the possibility of starting a Boys and Girls Club in Trenton. This would be a place where young people could go after school to do homework and receive tutoring, do character building activities, learn the importance of positive attitude, just have fun and many more things. They would be learning the negative effects of a life of drugs and gangs and realizing that a good education puts you on a direct road to success. Does all this sound too good to be true? What would it personally mean to you if we could have such a place in our city? I think it would be more invaluable than you could imagine. In the future, if you are asked to help, don't turn a deaf ear.

As I have talked about several times in the past, the city has been involved in a state municipal audit because of monies that were found to be missing from our police and court department in 2008. The state has determined that monies were taken and how it was accomplished. It seems monies had been taken for a few years. The state auditors have turned their findings over to state legal authorities to see if indictments can be brought against those responsible. Since we discovered the missing monies, personnel changes have been made and steps were taken to insure that these actions would stop. We have not had any missing funds since November of 2008. I will disclose any information I receive and the State Department of Municipal Audit will present a finding at a City Council meeting sometime in the future. Anyone interested in hearing the details will be invited to attend the meeting.

A problem we have in Trenton involves people who live outside the city limits bringing their trash (not recycling) into the city and depositing it in dumpsters belonging to businesses and apartment complexes. It has become such a problem lately that some apartments have asked their tenants not to put their garbage in the dumpsters because they are overflowing.

It is a violation of city ordinances for anyone who does not pay city sanitation fees to dispose of their trash in the city. The city also has to pay the extra weight charges and disposal fees on trash that was not generated here. We are asking that if you see anyone disposing of trash in the city that is a city resident, that you write down their license plate number and turn it in to the police department, the sanitation department, or my office at City Hall. Your name will not be mentioned and your help will be appreciated. We will accept recyclable materials from out of town, but they must either take it to the ROC (recycling operations center) or put it in a green bag and leave it in front of someone's house who will allow them to do so. No green recycling bags should be placed in a dumpster. The county residents are provided with trash pick-up and it is their responsibility to use it.

I'm sure you would not be surprised if I told you that the city is experiencing the same tax revenue shortfalls that the state has experienced. In running comparisons from December 2010 against December 2009, we are approximately \$220,000 behind where we were a year ago. Property tax revenues have picked up since the first of the year but Local and State sales tax is way down and I'm afraid will not catch up to the levels we need to generate the monies we need. The Budget Committee, which starts meetings in February, will have to make some tough decisions in order to come up with the funds it takes to provide the existing services the city now offers. An example of how things are going right now is a comparison of our January 2009 Local Option Sales Tax (\$90,000) with January 2010 (\$80,000). I don't think it is a Shop Trenton issue as much as it is the lack of money in the economy. With that being said though, it makes it even more important that if it is at all possible, people need to spend as much locally as they can.

As I hear on the news about the tragedy in Haiti, I realize I have so much to be thankful for. We all do and many times we forget just how blessed we are. Certainly, we all go through difficult and painful times in our lives and when they hit, it sometimes seems our worlds are ending. I believe that if we take the bad times and learn from them, it makes us stronger. We may not ever get over the pain but we get stronger. Our lives will get

better if we want them to and ask God for guidance. Until then we will keep pushing forward because we know Trenton isn't perfect but we're working on it. Till next time, God Bless Trenton.

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