

**Message from the Mayor  
#39 03-19-2009**

I don't know about you, but I am glad Spring is here. It has been a long winter and the recent warm, sunny days have been a welcome relief. My only regret is that I have been so busy I have not been able to get out in my yard like I would like to. But much to my pleasant surprise, many of you have and the city is really starting to look great again.

The City Building Inspector, Ricky Bailey, and I try to get out once a week and take a look around to make sure that there are no property ordinance violations such as trash or debris collecting in yards, abandoned cars and later on grass that needs to be mowed. On our most recent trip, we were amazed at the number of people who had been out, cleaned up and spruced up and were getting their properties ready for spring and summer. My thanks go out to all of you who understand and realize what a clean and beautiful city means to us.

I know I hammer this point to death but not all of us have caught on. A clean, beautiful city attracts people who can economically benefit us. What tourist wants to visit a World's Largest Collection of Night Light Teapots Museum, discover Civil War Heritage Trail Sites and learn about a pivotal West Tennessee battle, tour an Historic Home District, fish in one of the great bass lakes in Tennessee, peruse a future Arts on the Square studio, or celebrate a week long Teapot Festival in a dingy, dirty city? What industrial or retail opportunity wants to move to an unkempt city? You know that we are fighting against the reality that much of our infrastructure and many of our buildings are old and need a facelift. This will be a problem we will fight for many years to come and my congratulations and gratitude go out to those of you that are revitalizing some of our older structures. I appreciate that 90% of us have the concept and are doing a wonderful job, but 10% of us are not on board and it really upsets me when one of those 10% complain to me that all we are trying to do is make it hard for them to do business when they are struggling now. They do not understand that the more attractive your business is, the better your business will be. Cleaning up is a positive investment in the future of your business.

As far as residential goes, having a neat and clean yard sometimes motivates your neighbors to do the same, raises your property value and sometimes influences the people who move next to you. But maybe the most fulfilling thing that comes out of keeping your property up is that it makes you feel really good about yourself. From the looks of Trenton over the past couple of years, there are a lot of people that really feel good about themselves. Thanks for your help.

Okay, so you're saying to yourself, "what industrial and retail opportunity"? Your point is well taken. But I want you to know that even as bad as things are at this point, we are still working to attract every economic option we can. Not only is the Trenton Industrial Board meeting regularly but we also work with the West Tennessee Industrial Association, the Tennessee Economic & Community Development Council and TVA who alert us to potential business and industrial projects and help us market our buildings. Better times are on the way and we will be prepared when the opportunity arises.

Another group who I meet with quarterly that is concerned with Gibson County's welfare is the Joint Economic and Community Development Board here in Gibson County. The JEDC is made up of all the mayors of the 10 towns and cities in the county, the county mayor, the Chamber of Commerce directors, utility department heads, and other community leaders. We monitor and initiate the Three-Star Program that has meant so much to our county and develop 1 and 5 year plans for Gibson County. One of our major efforts recently is to promote cohesiveness and coordination within our county. Our motto has been what is good for one of us is good for all Gibson County.

Are ya'll ready for some music and fun? We have had some meetings about Saturday Night on the Square and it looks like we are going to host our first event in May probably on the 16<sup>th</sup>. If you'll remember we had one event last August and it was a huge success. This year we plan to have one per month throughout the summer with not only music, but food vendors, arts and crafts vendors, art organizations, and more. Combine that with just some good old fellowship and it sounds like one fine time. I'll have more info later. Dust off your lawn chairs.

Are you making plans to visit the Celebrate Gibson County event on April 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> at the Gibson County Fairgrounds? The event is being sponsored by the Gibson County Tourism Association and will feature a campground set up by the 19<sup>th</sup> Alabama Infantry Regiment. They are looking for city and town participation, as well as, business and group participation. This is an effort to pull the county together to promote tourism as a way to bring income into Gibson County. Their slogan is "Explore Gibson County and Find the Unexpected". I sincerely hope that all of us will support the Association's efforts.

Tourism is a new concept to us. Many of us are not sold on the idea that we can be a place that people want to come and spend their money. I am here to tell you they do and they will but we are going to have to rewire our thinking. I had a list of tourist options above that were just Trenton options. Look what the entire county has to offer. We can make Gibson County a "destination" for families looking for a way to vacation. It's a new mindset but we have the attractions and now we need to market them. If we want this to work then we need to support and get behind all our efforts to draw people here. So many of the programs and efforts we have initiated over the past year and a half have been directed at giving us another opportunity to grow our economy through tourism. Let's gather up some energy and make this happen.

Even when things are like they are, I can get excited about the way they could be. We're not talking about impossible things here, just a different way of thinking and some new ideas. What are your ideas about Trenton? How can we make it better? I know Trenton isn't perfect, but we're working on it. Till next time, God Bless Trenton.