

Message from the Mayor  
#71 06-18-2010

Recently, several of our Board of Aldermen and I attended the Tennessee Municipal League Annual Conference. It was a great opportunity to talk to local government officials from all over the state to see how they are doing in this economic environment that we are facing. It was also an opportunity to share ideas, discuss the decisions of the recent legislative session and how they affect our region and city, hear the candidates for governor, check out the newest machinery and technology available, attend workshops addressing the challenges we face in Tennessee in 2010, and network with people who share the same interests and concerns that all local government officials share. It was a great three days. My thanks go to Aldermen Cannon, Gibson, Jackson, and Overall for attending the meetings with me and further learning how to best serve you.

Needless to say, what we found out was that East and Middle Tennessee seem to be faring a little better than West. With the state making huge investments in Volkswagen in Chattanooga and Hemlock in Clarksville and the spin-offs that will surround them, East and Middle Tennessee are doing better than we are here in West. We need some help from Nashville in the months to come to get us back on our feet. I actually heard a candidate for governor say exactly that. It has made me re-think my choice for governor. West Tennessee just needs a little assistance and then we can make it happen.

Speaking about the governor's election, I hope you are making your mind up and are preparing to vote for your choice. Did you know that we only had an 8% or 9% turnout in the Democratic Primary? We have to vote if we want our voice to be heard. The upcoming November election will not only decide who will sit at the head of Tennessee government but also who will make decisions for the City of Trenton. If you are not registered to vote, please get registered and if you are please vote for the person you feel will best serve you.

I'm sure that if you have some sort of storm water drainage issue on your property, it has become very noticeable to you over the past several months. The abundance of rain we have had has brought these issues to yours and our attention. A couple of years ago when we were in the drought, we didn't notice our problems. We, too, in the city are aware there are drainage problems in many areas. While the majority of these issues are private property problems, some are not and will require our attention. The city is not allowed by law to come on your property and do work unless it directly affects the city. In that case some sort of "easement" agreement should be in effect between the property owner and the city.

If you have read the paper lately, you are aware that the City of Trenton has cut their budget by over \$500,000 in the past three years. Some of the cuts have been accomplished by not rehiring positions that become vacant. What this equates to is that we are running many of the departments with skeleton crews and while we can perform the services that you require as part of your tax dollars, it stretches us when it comes to "extra" projects. With this said we will be evaluating our issues with storm water drains and setting up a schedule to fix the problems. Please bear with us. The problem has taken 50 years to make, so we will not be able to fix it overnight. Thank you.

We will be taking a second vote to adopt our 2010 – 11 budget this week and we are very proud of it. It is a balanced budget with no funding from reserves, no city tax increase and a small cost of living raise for our employees. Even with the raise we cut spending by 5% over last year's budget. We have kept the price of a city sticker at \$15.00 but felt like we needed to increase the late fee, which we did from \$22.50 to \$50.00.

City stickers go on sale in October when we start collecting property taxes. You have till December 31<sup>st</sup> by law to get them. The City of Trenton then gives you the months of January and February to still get your sticker without penalty. That is 5 months to purchase your stickers. City stickers or wheel tax is among the most fair because a majority of residents have an automobile. It is the responsibility for every resident to have a current sticker placed on their license plate. This is a city ordinance. We feel like 5 months is an adequate period of time to purchase yours without penalty. Avoiding having to pay the \$50.00 penalty is simple. Please don't get caught next year for being late. It will be very costly.

The heat of summer is in full swing. The grass in my yard is growing at an alarming rate each week. It is easy to get behind. Let's work to keep our property looking good this year, free of trash and debris and cut in a timely manner. Most of the flood debris has been picked up and we are getting to get back to normal again. Trenton is a beautiful city when we work on it and a few neglected properties can make us all look bad. I hope we will all make the effort to keep our city clean and neat. I don't like having to send letters to those who abuse

our city maintenance ordinances but I will when I must. If we work together, Trenton can be a place we are all proud of. Trenton isn't perfect but we're working on it. Till next time, God Bless Trenton.