



# KEISER NEWS

# 2023

## "Small town, big heart - that's Keiser!"

December Newsletter

Vol 8

### FROM MAYOR RICK CREECY

#### "Get Involved and Make a Difference: Volunteer Opportunities in Keiser"

In the heart of our beloved Keiser, community spirit has always been a driving force. It's the collective effort of our residents that makes our town special. Today, we're excited to share some meaningful volunteer opportunities that can truly make a difference in our community.

**Join Our Volunteer Fire Department:** Our Volunteer Fire Department is the backbone of our town's safety and well-being. These dedicated individuals work tirelessly to ensure the protection of our homes and businesses. Whether you're an experienced firefighter or new to the field, your passion and commitment are invaluable. Join our Volunteer Fire Department, and you'll be a part of the team that safeguards our community. To learn more about this rewarding opportunity, reach out to our Fire Chief today.

**Strengthen Our Neighborhoods in 2024 with Neighborhood Watch:** Safe neighborhoods are the bedrock of a thriving community, and we're excited to announce our plans to launch a Neighborhood Watch program in Keiser in 2024. This program will be a cornerstone in keeping Keiser secure and welcoming. By participating in this initiative, you'll play a pivotal role in enhancing our town's safety. Your involvement will mean helping deter crime, promptly reporting suspicious activities, and fostering even stronger bonds among neighbors. We invite you to be part of this exciting endeavor and take an active role in creating a safer environment for all

residents. For more information and to express your interest, please reach out to Chief Gattis or City Hall.

**Beautify Keiser with the City Clean-Up and Beautification Committee:** The charm of Keiser lies in its simplicity, but we can always enhance our surroundings. Our City Clean-Up and Beautification Committee is on a mission to keep our streets, parks, and public spaces clean and inviting. Volunteering for this committee is an excellent way to give back and take pride in our town's appearance. Join hands with fellow residents to plant flowers, clean up litter, and ensure that Keiser continues to shine as a picturesque community. Contact City Hall to get involved and play your part in making Keiser even more beautiful.

**Making a Difference, Together:** Keiser thrives when its residents actively participate in shaping the town's future. Volunteering isn't just about giving back; it's an opportunity to connect with your neighbors, build lasting friendships, and create a lasting impact. These initiatives are just the beginning, and there are countless other ways to get involved and contribute to our vibrant community.

**Our Commitment to You:** As your mayor, I am committed to supporting and nurturing a culture of volunteerism in Keiser. Your dedication to these initiatives is invaluable, and it reflects the unity and resilience that define our town. Together, we can accomplish great things and ensure that Keiser remains a wonderful place to call home.

City Council meeting on the 3rd Monday of each month at 6:00 pm. All welcome.

Follow us on Facebook and at our website [www.cityofkeiser.com](http://www.cityofkeiser.com)

Water bills due the 15th of each month. Late charges will be applied on the 16th and shutoff on the 27th unless the 27th is Friday.

Remember riding ATV's on city streets is a violation of state law and will be enforced.

Remember the city has a leash law. If you are walking your dog in the city limits they MUST be on a leash. No exceptions.

If you have not yet registered your dog or cat. Please come to City Hall and do so.

You can buy 40 gallon garbage bags at City Hall. There are 50 in a roll and the cost is \$10.00 per roll.

Home owners and contractors are required to notify city hall before any mechanical excavation can be done.

City Hall—870-526-2300  
Hours 8:00am to 5:00pm M-F  
Closed 12:00 to 1:00 for lunch

# PEGGY SELLARS KEISER RECORDER/TREASURER

## “WRAPPING IT UP”

The City of Keiser has started the process of *wrapping up* the year 2023. By the time December 31 arrives, we will be able to tie it up with a pretty bow.

This wrapping up usually begins in Mid-November. Each year at this time we recognize our City of Keiser Volunteer Fire Department, for their dedication and service to our city, by giving each fireman compensation for the hours away from their families to attend meetings, trainings, and sadly, the occasional house fire. Jerry and I know first-hand how devastating a house fire can be. About this time 3 years ago, we lost nearly every possession we owned when our house burned. We so appreciate how important it is to have a well-trained fire department. Not only did our fire department work hard to try to save what we had worked a lifetime to acquire, they showed concern and compassion toward us personally.

In Mid-November, we were also able to extend our heartfelt thanks to our city’s employees for a job well-done by giving them each a yearly incentive. From the City Hall Coordinator to the guys who ride the garbage truck, these are the people who really keep our city running smoothly. The average citizen would be surprised to know what these guys must deal with daily – all hours of the day or night, in all kinds of weather. Water leaks and repairs don’t look at the clock or check the weather before they happen. Thank you to the citizens who can always be counted on for a bottle of water, a coke, or a cookie for the guys on garbage day. You know who you are.

REPORTS! REPORTS! REPORTS! A year in city government does not just leave quietly. It must be documented, in every way possible by every state agency that exists, that it was even here and everything it did while it was here. That’s what 2023 is doing now. Endless reports, audits, those blessed W-2’s. Thirty

more days left to tie up any loose ends. 2024 is chomping at the bit to come in.

"We currently have two loans from the USDA, which means we have specific rules to follow about our city's budget. Each year, we need to plan our city's budget for the next year. This involves carefully looking at our city's money, deciding what's most important, and figuring out where to spend and where to save. It's a big job that needs a lot of thought.

Once we've made a draft of the budget, it's not final yet. The City Council has to look at it and give their approval. This step is important because the Council represents our community's interests and they make sure the budget makes sense for everyone in our city.

After the Council agrees to the budget, there's one more thing we have to do. We need to send the approved budget to the USDA by December 1st of every year. This deadline is really strict. If we miss it, we could have problems with our loans. So, we always aim to work efficiently and get everything done on time."

In conclusion, I am pleased to report (there’s that word again) that 2023 has been good for the City of Keiser. But I’ll leave it to Mayor Creecy to tell you all about that. After all, he is responsible for a lot of the good that has come to Keiser this year.

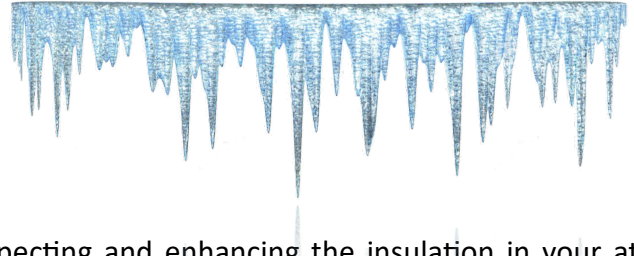
That pretty bow to tie it all up with is laying on my desk. By the way, that bow is yellow and black. Goodbye for 2023. Got to go. Got to let 2024 in. Can’t wait to see what he’s got in store for us.



## NEAL BROWN DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS

As Keiser transforms into its wintry wonderland, enveloped in snow and ice, it becomes imperative to adopt a dual approach in winterizing both your home and vehicles to withstand the harsh season. The process starts with your home, where it's crucial to insulate all exposed pipes, both inside and outside. Foam insulation works effectively for this purpose, helping to prevent the pipes from freezing. Equally important is the insulation of drains, along with maintaining a slight but consistent flow of water in faucets, particularly those linked to pipes in unheated or exposed areas. This is a preventive measure against freezing. For areas like laundry rooms, often situated in the less insulated segments of a house, keeping them adequately heated is essential. This can be achieved through the careful and safe use of portable heaters.

In addition to insulation, it's vital to seal any cracks and openings in your home to keep the cold air out. This step is essential in maintaining a warm interior and preventing pipes from freezing. Familiarize yourself with the location and operation of your home's water shut-off valve, as this knowledge can be critical in the event a pipe freezes and bursts. Shutoff valves are located in most homes close to your hot water heater. Outdoor plumbing should also be a focus; draining water from lines such as garden hoses and irrigation systems is crucial, as the water remaining in these lines can freeze and cause the pipes to burst. Applying heat tape or heat cables with a thermostat control to vulnerable areas can provide additional protection against freezing. Regularly in-



specting and enhancing the insulation in your attic, basement, and crawl spaces is advised to prevent cold air ingress, which can lead to freezing pipes. An often-overlooked tip is to keep cabinet doors open to allow warm air circulation around plumbing, particularly for pipes located under sinks and near exterior walls.

Transitioning to vehicle winterization, it is important to check and maintain antifreeze levels and the health of your car battery, which can be adversely affected by cold temperatures. Regularly monitoring and adjusting tire pressure is key, as it tends to drop in colder weather. For enhanced traction on snowy or icy roads, consider installing winter tires. Keeping the gas tank at least half full is advisable to prevent fuel lines from freezing and to prepare for any unforeseen delays. It's also essential to ensure your vehicle's heating system is in top working order for both comfort and safety. Replacing standard wiper blades with winter-grade ones and using a washer fluid suitable for cold weather are small but critical steps in maintaining clear visibility during adverse weather conditions. An emergency kit in your vehicle should include items such as blankets, a flashlight, first-aid supplies, a small shovel, and snacks, which can be lifesaving in case you get stranded. Regular maintenance of your vehicle's lights and signals is important for visibility, and carrying de-icing equipment can help keep them clear in icy conditions.

In summary, by taking these detailed and proactive steps to winterize both your home and vehicles, you can significantly reduce the risks associated with the cold season. This comprehensive approach will ensure that you are well-prepared for the winter, keeping your home safe and comfortable, and your travels secure and reliable. Remember, the effectiveness of your winter preparation lies in its thoroughness and attention to detail.

## CHIEF ANDREW GATTIS - KEISER POLICE DEPARTMENT

As this year comes to a close I would like to remind everyone that this is a time for gathering, for family, and for being thankful for those around us and the things we cherish. With that being said it is the holiday season and with that comes a few extra things to watch out for. Be mindful of other drivers on the road while making your trips this month to see family members and extended family. I urge you not to speed while traveling to your destinations but to drive safely and arrive unhurt so you can enjoy your time with family. Please wear your seatbelts and encourage those in your vehicle to do the same. Make sure to leave early and plan for unforeseen circumstances during the trip so you have plenty of time to get there without being in a rush.

After opening presents and you go to dispose of your trash try not to leave any identifying boxes on the side of the road. For example if you were to get a new computer or if the kids get a new game system don't leave the box that shows what you got on the side of the road because this could entice home burglaries where there normally would not be any. I recommend breaking the boxes down, placing them inside of a garbage bag and then throwing the bag in the trash can just to prevent unwanted incidents from occurring.

For those that will be participating in "their beverage of choice" I would like to ask you to have a plan before engaging in anything. Have a designated driver before you plan on doing anything else, make sure you have someone responsible with you so you are safe and able to enjoy the holiday without any negative incidents. If by chance something happens during this holiday season and you need a ride home please do not hesitate to call someone you trust that can get you home safely. Please do not make the decision to drive while under the influence. Worst case scenario I would even rather you call the Police Department or myself for assistance before you ever consider putting yourself or others in a bad situation. I want everyone to have a safe and enjoyable time with their friends and family this holiday season.

Moving into more of the Law Enforcement aspect of this time of the year, we will be enforcing traffic safety heavily as to ensure that everyone continues to



stay safe and reaches their destinations without any negative incidents. With that being said if you are speeding through our neighborhoods, If you are actively using your cell phone while driving, If you disregard a stop sign, or If you are driving recklessly you will be stopped and given a citation. If you do make the bad decision to drive while under the influence then you will be stopped, given a citation, taken to the Mississippi County Detention Center where you will be booked in and your vehicle will be towed at your expense. We have way too many children that enjoy playing outside with their new gifts this time of year for there to be any of the above incidents to be happening in our city. There are plenty of hands free devices now that allow you to drive without having your phone in your hand and/or distracting you. If you do not have one and need some help finding the best option for you then please come by the Police Department and we can sit down and try to figure out the best option for you together. My door is always open, so please do not hesitate to come and talk with me. I will help out in any way that I possibly can, and if I don't know the answer then I will find the right answer and let you know. Again, I am here to assist and protect our city to the best of my ability. That even includes just sitting down, having a conversation with anyone that would like to, or needs to, and trying to find the best solution to help them out, no matter what the situation is. I am also available for conversations that are not Law Enforcement related. I have a lot of experience in a wide range of categories, not just Law Enforcement, so feel free to reach out to me about anything.

From the City of Keiser, the Keiser Police Department, and myself (Chief Gattis) I would like to wish all of you a safe and Happy Holiday.



## PENNY WILBANKS—WATER/CITY HALL COORDINATOR

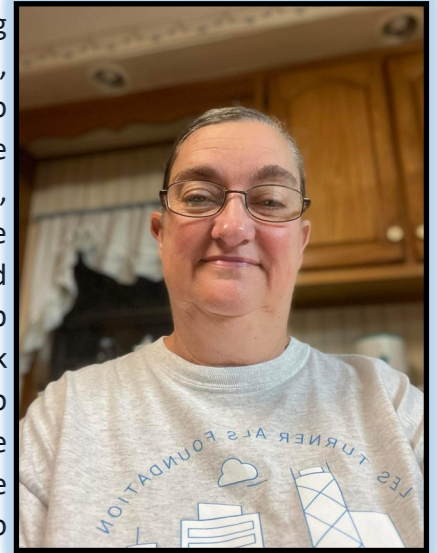
"Hi there, my name is Penny Wilbanks. I'm a mother to three wonderful children and a grandmother, or 'Nonna', to six amazing grandchildren. For more than twenty years, I've worked in office settings, keeping things organized and handling various secretarial tasks. This work has taught me a lot about how to keep things running smoothly and efficiently.

Now, I'm really looking forward to getting involved with the City of Keiser. I've heard great things about this community and am eager to be a part of it. I've been especially impressed by Mayor Creecy's efforts to improve the town. It seems like there's a real push to make Keiser an even better place to live, and I'm excited about the idea of being a part of that change.

With my background, I think I can offer a lot to the mayor's office and to the town in general. I'm good at organizing, managing schedules, and handling all the paperwork that comes with running an office. Plus, I'm always ready to learn new things and pick up new skills. I think these abilities will be really helpful in a town office setting.

I'm not just looking to work here, though. I want to get to know the people of Keiser, learn about the town's needs and how I can help meet them. I think it's important to understand the community you're a part of and to grow with it. I believe that by working together, we can all make Keiser an even better place to live, work, and raise our families.

I'm really excited about this new chapter and the chance to contribute to the town of Keiser. I hope to bring my experience and skills to the table and work alongside the residents and leaders of this community. Let's see what we can achieve together!"



## *A Jolly Tradition: The History of Christmas Parades*

As the holiday season approaches, the streets come alive with the twinkling of lights, the scent of pine, and the sound of joyful caroling. One cherished tradition that marks the arrival of Christmas in many communities around the world is the Christmas parade. These festive processions have a rich history that dates back over a century, and they continue to enchant audiences of all ages. Join us as we unwrap the history of Christmas parades, exploring their origins, evolution, and enduring appeal.

The roots of the modern Christmas parade can be traced back to the 19th century. In the United States, the first recorded Christmas parade took place in 1824 in New York City, organized by the city's prominent mercantile establishment, the R. H. Macy & Co. store. This early parade, known as the "Santa Claus Procession," featured Santa Claus riding on a sleigh pulled by reindeer. The tradition of Santa's appearance in parades became a hallmark of Christmas celebrations.

The late 1800s saw a surge in Christmas parades, with cities across America hosting their own versions of the festive processions. These parades often featured elaborate floats, bands, and costumed performers. They were designed to capture the spirit of the season and promote holiday shopping, as retailers used parades as a means to attract customers.

One of the most famous Christmas parades in the world, the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, has been a cherished New York City tradition since 1924. While it technically takes place on Thanksgiving, the parade marks the unofficial start of the Christmas season. Originally organized by Macy's employees, the parade featured oversized balloons, marching bands, and live animals.

The introduction of the iconic giant helium balloons, including the likes of Mickey Mouse and Snoopy, in the 1930s, added a whimsical touch that continues to captivate spectators today. The Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade has become a televised spectacle, attracting millions of viewers from around the globe, making it one of the most beloved and recognized Christmas parades in the world.

While the Macy's parade may be the most famous, Christmas parades are celebrated in communities big and small. Each parade often reflects the unique character and history of the locale. From the charming small-town parades with horse-drawn carriages to the grand extravaganzas in major cities, these events bring people together to share in the holiday spirit.

Over the years, Christmas parades have incorporated various themes and traditions. Some parades focus on religious elements, reenacting the Nativity story with live performers and floats depicting scenes from the Bible. Others embrace the spirit of giving, encouraging spectators to donate toys or clothing to those in need.

In addition to Santa Claus, Christmas parades often feature beloved characters such as Frosty the Snowman, Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer, and the Grinch. These characters add a touch of whimsy and nostalgia to the festivities, delighting both children and adults alike.

Christmas parades have come a long way since their humble beginnings in the 19th century. What started as a simple procession has evolved into a beloved tradition that brings communities together to celebrate the magic of the holiday season. Whether it's the grandeur of the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade or the charm of a small-town celebration, Christmas parades continue to capture the hearts of people worldwide. As we gather with friends and family to watch these festive processions, let us remember the history and enduring spirit of this cherished holiday tradition. Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good parade!





Attorney General Tim Griffin proudly recognizes Chief Glen Austin as Mississippi County’s Officer of the Year, a tribute to his distinguished career in law enforcement, culminating with his retirement as Keiser’s Chief of Police on October 31, 2023. Chief Austin’s career, marked by unwavering dedication and leadership, has significantly contributed to Keiser’s public safety and community wellbeing.

Chief Austin’s tenure has been a testament to his commitment to law and order, leaving a legacy of a safer Keiser. His efforts will be celebrated alongside other top officers from Arkansas’s 75 counties at a special luncheon hosted by Attorney General Tim Griffin on December 12th at the Benton Event Center, Benton Arkansas. This event will also feature the announcement of the five regional winners and the statewide Officer of the Year.

Keiser’s community extends its deepest appreciation to Chief Austin for his invaluable service. His retirement marks the end of an impactful era in local law enforcement. The city, its residents, and fellow officers wish him a fulfilling retirement, acknowledging his significant role in enhancing Keiser’s safety and fostering community trust.

# December 2023

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1 World Aids Day	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15 <i>Water Bill Due</i>	16
17	18 <i>Council Meeting</i>	19	20	21 First Day of Winter	22	23
24 Christmas Eve	25 Christmas	26	27 <i>Cutoff Date</i>	28	29	30
31 New Years Eve						

## *DOJ Microgrants Program—Community Policing*

In the coming year, the City of Keiser is gearing up for an extensive initiative aimed at revolutionizing local policing and strengthening the bond between law enforcement and the community. This effort, bolstered by funding from the Department of Justice's FY23 Microgrant Program, is structured around several pivotal components.

**Community-Oriented Policing Model:** At the heart of this initiative is the shift towards a community-oriented policing model. This approach is more than just a strategy; it's a philosophy where police officers and community members become partners in ensuring local safety. The model encourages police officers to go beyond traditional law enforcement roles, actively engaging with residents, understanding their concerns, and working together to solve problems. This collaborative approach aims to make policing more effective and responsive to the specific needs of the Keiser community.

**Enhanced Training for Officers:** A key focus is on providing police officers with additional training. This training isn't just about law enforcement tactics but also covers areas that are crucial for community interaction, such as conflict resolution, understanding diverse perspectives, and effective communication. The goal is to equip officers with skills that will improve their interactions with community members, fostering a more understanding and supportive relationship.

**Transparent Communication Channels:** To build trust and ensure open communication, the project includes the creation of accessible communication channels. This means setting up online forums and organizing community meetings where residents can voice their concerns, share ideas, and directly engage with police officers. Such platforms are intended to create a space for open and honest dialogue, bridging any gaps between the community and the police.

**Community Advisory Board:** A significant step towards collaborative decision-making is the formation of a community advisory board. This board will include both community members and police representatives, offering a diverse range of perspectives. The board's role will

be to provide feedback on police practices, suggest improvements, and help guide the department in making decisions that reflect the community's needs and values.

**Youth Outreach Programs:** Recognizing the importance of building positive relationships with younger residents, the initiative includes dedicated youth outreach programs. These programs aim to engage with the youth of Keiser in meaningful ways, whether through mentorship, educational workshops, or recreational activities. The objective is to establish a foundation of trust and mutual respect between the police and the younger generation.

**Community Events and Workshops:** Regular community events and workshops are planned to encourage active participation from residents. These events will serve as platforms for discussing public safety concerns, brainstorming solutions, and building a cohesive community. Workshops might cover topics like crime prevention, personal safety, and community policing, providing valuable information and skills to residents.

**Neighborhood Watch Programs:** An integral part of the initiative is the implementation of Neighborhood Watch programs. These programs are designed to empower residents to take an active role in their neighborhood's safety. By fostering a sense of vigilance, the Neighborhood Watch encourages residents to report suspicious activities and collaborate closely with the police to prevent crime. Regular meetings and training sessions will be conducted to educate residents on safety practices and effective communication with law enforcement.

**Continuous Evaluation and Communication:** To ensure the success of this comprehensive initiative, there will be ongoing assessment and transparent communication of its effectiveness. The City of Keiser is committed to regularly evaluating the impact of these programs and sharing the findings with the community. This process is crucial to maintain transparency and adapt the approach as needed, aiming to continually progress towards making Keiser a safer and more inclusive community.



# Towns in Mississippi County

T G C S W Z S M Z A R M O R E L N P R J M O O D D  
 R T Q F Q O F K G T K B O F Y W B Z U A B E W D Q  
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| Frenchmans Bayou | Blytheville | Leachville | Dell |
| Burdette         | Bassett     | Osceola    |      |
| Gosnell          | Armored     | Etowah     |      |
| Joiner           | Keiser      | Driver     |      |
| Luxora           | Manila      | Wilson     |      |
| Dyess            |             |            |      |

**Contact Us**

City Hall—870-526-2300 Email—cityofkeiser@gmail.com Mayor—rjc.cityofkeiser@gmail.com



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