



KEISER NEWS

2024

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

February Newsletter

Vol 10

FROM MAYOR RICK CREECY

As your Mayor, I am committed to fostering a city that not only thrives but also reflects your needs and aspirations. Recently, we reached out to you with an important initiative: the Low to Moderate Income (LMI) survey. This survey is a critical tool for us to better understand the economic landscape of our community and to secure essential funding for its development.

Why Your Participation in the LMI Survey Matters

The LMI survey is more than just a set of questions; it is a key that can unlock numerous opportunities for Keiser. Our current LMI level stands at 39%, which, according to state guidelines, categorizes our city as relatively wealthy. However, this classification limits our eligibility for various state grants that could significantly benefit our community.

To change our financial standing in the eyes of the state and access these vital resources, we need to elevate our LMI level to at least 51%. Achieving this requires your active participation. Each completed survey brings us closer to a true representation of our city's economic diversity and needs.

How Can You Participate?

If you haven't yet filled out the LMI survey, we strongly encourage you to do so. You can download a survey from our website or stop by City Hall and fill out the survey in person. Remember, we need a minimum of 95% participation from our residents for the state to consider our data valid. Your response is not

just valuable; it's essential.

Looking Forward: Share Your Ideas for Keiser's Future

Beyond the LMI survey, we are eager to hear from you about how we can further improve our beloved city. Your insights, ideas, and feedback are vital for our collective progress. Whether it's about enhancing public spaces, upgrading infrastructure, or introducing new community programs, your voice is the catalyst for positive change.

How to Share Your Ideas:

Call City Hall and make an appointment so we can sit down and discuss your suggestion. Send me an email at rjc.cityofkeiser@gmail.com or attend our monthly City Council Meeting. One idea we are working towards is the ability to pay your water bill online, by debit or with a debit/credit card at City Hall. If you are interested in this option please let us know.

Every idea will be considered and valued, as we believe in a community-driven approach to city planning and development.

In Closing

Keiser is not just a place on the map; it's our home, shaped by its people. Your participation in the LMI survey and your proactive suggestions for our city's future are integral to our shared success. Let's work together to create a Keiser that resonates with the dreams and needs of all its residents.

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

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

New City Hall Hours

Hours 8:00am to 4:45pm M-F
Closed 12:00 to 1:00 for lunch

"Keiser's Path Forward: An In-Depth Vision from Your Mayor"

I am excited to share with you a detailed vision for our city's future—a future where Keiser shines as a beacon of growth, safety, and community spirit. This vision extends beyond a simple strategy; it embodies my commitment to all of you for a prosperous and lively Keiser.

Enhancing Safety: A Robust Approach

Safety is our cornerstone. With the introduction of our new Police Chief and the expansion of our police force, thanks to the Department of Justice grant for an additional full-time officer and two auxiliary officers, we are set to enhance community safety like never before. Additionally, the initiation of a Neighborhood Watch program will empower you, our residents, to actively participate in creating a secure environment for all.

Infrastructure: Laying the Groundwork for Growth

A city's growth is mirrored in its infrastructure. I am delighted to share specific, tangible steps we are taking in this crucial area:

Sewer System Revitalization: A critical component, our new lagoon sewer lift station, is scheduled for delivery in late February. Its installation, taking a few weeks, marks the beginning of our extensive sewer system upgrade. To address the current challenges, we will soon be sending out bids for a comprehensive evaluation of our sewer system. This includes televising the system to assess the damage accurately. Our goal is to develop a detailed plan to enhance the sewer system's resilience, particularly against rain-induced issues.

Water System Upgrade: Our water tank is set for a significant upgrade in May. This includes not only a new coat of paint to protect and preserve it but also substantial improvements to our water filter house. These enhancements are designed to ensure a reliable, high-quality water supply for all our citizens.

Development: Homes, Businesses, and Community Pride

Our development plan for Keiser is holistic. We are not just focusing on constructing new homes and welcoming diverse businesses but are also committed to elevating our community's aesthetics. A city that takes pride in its

appearance is a city that values its community. Let's work together in maintaining and beautifying our public spaces and homes, contributing to Keiser's charm and value.

Transforming Our City Park: A Hub of Activity and Nature

I am particularly enthusiastic about the transformation of our city park. This project is envisioned as a multipurpose community space featuring a new bike and walking track, a creatively designed playground safe for our children, and dedicated areas for our seniors. This park is set to become a hub for a variety of community activities, including cultural festivals, concerts, and family gatherings, providing a green oasis for relaxation and community bonding.

Fostering a Connected Community

A strong community is the foundation of a great city. I envision Keiser as a place where daily interactions weave the fabric of a tightly knit community. Your support of local businesses, active participation in park events, and engagement in city council meetings are essential in fostering this community spirit.

Your Role in Realizing Keiser's Future

I call upon each of you to join hands in this transformative journey. Your involvement in community activities, commitment to maintaining your property, and active participation in shaping city policies are vital to realizing our shared vision for Keiser.

Together, let's stride towards a future where Keiser is not just a place to live, but a community to cherish, a city to take pride in, a place we call home.



Addressing the Aging Sewer System: A Path Forward

The infrastructure of our town's sewer system, a network that has served us for over five decades, is on the cusp of a significant transformation. Originally constructed with clay pipes, a material known for its susceptibility to deterioration over time, our sewer system has been grappling with numerous issues that are symptomatic of its aging framework.

The Heart of the Problem

The use of clay pipes in the sewer system has led to a fragile network prone to damage. These pipes, connected through numerous junctions, are particularly vulnerable to movements and invasive tree roots, especially at points of breakage or connection. Moreover, during periods of heavy rainfall, our sewer system inadvertently transforms into a storm drain, further aggravating the strain on an already overburdened infrastructure.

One of the critical components of this system, the lagoon lift station, serves as the final conduit between the city and the lagoon ponds. Positioned three feet below ground level in a pit, this lift station is especially prone to flooding during heavy rains, leading to frequent shutdowns. With a capacity of pumping around 450 gallons per minute, or 27,000 gallons per hour, a shutdown of eight hours – a common occurrence during storms – results in a staggering loss of 216,000 gallons of sewage handling capacity.

A Glimmer of Hope: Grant and New Infrastructure

The light at the end of this tunnel is visible, thanks to a grant awarded last year. A new lift station with a substantial increase in capacity, which has been on order for several months, is expected to ship by February 19th. This new station, designed to be installed at ground level, will alleviate the flooding issue, marking a significant step forward in our battle against the sewer system's frailties.

Next Steps: Diagnostic and Repair

The next phase involves deploying a robotic system into the sewer network. This advanced robot will perform multiple functions: cleaning the lines, recording

the conditions through video and photographs, and pinpointing the exact locations of damage with GPS coordinates. Additionally, each manhole will be inspected for damages.

Armed with this comprehensive data, we will collaborate with our engineers to devise a plan to revamp the sewer system. The objective is to eradicate the longstanding problems that have plagued our town. Depending on the findings, we may initially opt for repairs that ensure no shutdowns occur, even if not all damages are systematically fixed. This approach is aimed at stabilizing the system, buying us time to secure additional funding without using all of our \$4.6 million dollar 1.75% ANRC loan.

The inspection and televising process are expected to be completed by April 30, with repair work estimated to take between 12 to 24 months, depending on the extent of the necessary repairs.

Future Preparations and Sustainability

In anticipation of future emergencies, we are also applying for a Mitigation Grant. This grant will enable us to modify all lift stations to include a bypass system for use during power outages or station failures. Additionally, we plan to acquire a portable diesel-powered bypass pump, easily transportable between lift stations, ensuring continuous operation of the sewer system under any circumstances. A backup generator for the water treatment plant is also on the agenda, ensuring continuous water filtration and supply.

Conclusion: Patience and Perseverance

We recognize that the wheels of government turn slowly, and we are committed to diligently working towards minimizing downtime. However, the challenge is formidable, especially during heavy rains. We ask for your patience as we navigate through these complex renovations. By mid to late-2025, we hope to look back on these issues as challenges of the past, having successfully implemented a plan to not only fix but sustain our vital sewer system for years to come.

The “Infernal” Revenue Service By Peggy Sellars

I have had the privilege of serving as your treasurer since 2019. My husband Jerry had served several terms on the city council, and I had been called on to help at city hall from time to time during those years, so I was somewhat familiar with how city government works, or that’s what I thought. Truth is, “I didn’t have a clue.” I had done simple bookkeeping since I was 15 years old and did the farm payroll for my daddy. However, my office jobs did not prepare me for city government.

So, what do you do when you find yourself in a position that requires more expertise than you are equipped with? Well, here’s what I did. Since a city treasurer is required to report to, interact with, and foster a working relationship with many government agencies, I called or emailed every state official in the State of Arkansas from the Governor’s office on down when I needed help. I asked questions. If I didn’t get the answer I needed, I would ask someone else. I became phone friends with people in every state agency in Arkansas. Grace and mercy must have been following me around, because I learned, and I got it right. I am happy to say that we are consistently knocking it out of the park in our state audits. Those state officials were a Godsend to me, helpful, so gracious and kind.

Then there’s the IRS, who I fondly refer to as the INFERNAL REVENUE SERVICE. I realize that tax time is a mixed bag of opinion depending on who you talk to. I spoke to a young mother recently who was so excited because she was expecting a large refund check. On the flip side of that coin, there are those who will have to dig deep into their pockets to pay what they owe in federal taxes.

In city government, it’s an entirely different ballgame. At the close of each month, I pay our payroll taxes to the IRS. Quarterly I prepare and send a 941 report that details all the Federal tax, Medicare, and Social Security that is paid by employees and the city’s contribution. January is always a busy and sometimes hectic month for my department. W2’s must be given to all employees. The city is also required to send copies of all w2’s to the State and to the Social Security Administration. You can rest assured that all is good with the City of Keiser as far as taxes.

Remember all those helpful state agencies I mentioned that got me through those first couple of months of my term. Well, the INFERNAL REVENUE SERVICE was not in that group. Firstly, it is almost impossible to have contact with their agents. If, by chance, you do make contact, you get either no answers or wrong answers. Examples

include:

They do love to send letters.

“Our records indicate that you overpaid in the 3rd quarter by \$.10. Do you want us to refund the \$.10 or would you like for us to credit it to your account?”

Or

“Our records indicate that you underpaid in the 3rd quarter in the amount of \$.10. You must send the amount to us in 10 days, or you will be assessed a \$650.00 fine.

Their agents are not helpful.

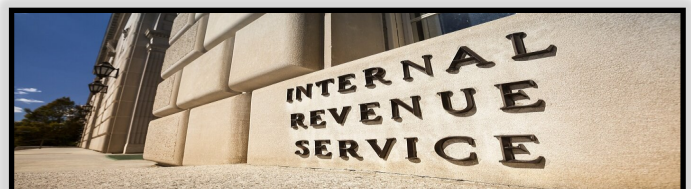
I needed an answer concerning a tax issue that I was unsure of. The agent I spoke with had no answers. She actually said to me, “Girl, I don’t know.” I asked to speak to a supervisor. Her reply, “We don’t have a supervisor.” I had no problem at all believing that.

I kept calling until I finally contacted an agent that was able to answer my question. Before ending the call, I asked for her name and contact number so I could get her if I needed to speak to someone again. Her reply was, “We are not allowed to give out that information.” That was kind of understandable until she added, “we are not allowed to talk to the same people again.”

They are not good record keepers.

At one point, I had sent in our payroll taxes only to have them sent back to us with one of those letters they like to send. The letter stated that we did not owe any taxes. I knew we did so I sent the check back to them. Would you believe they sent the check back to me with another one of those letters. This time I held on to the check. Guess what? Another letter, they wanted their check back. I finally sent them a letter stating, “you do not owe us any taxes, and we do not owe you any taxes. Do not send us any more checks, because you are just going to send me a letter telling me that you want the money back with interest.”

Folks, I can’t make this stuff up. Sorry, but tax time does this to me. I understand that Tennessee does not have an INFERNAL REVENUE SERVICE. I wonder what their city treasurers do the entire month of January.



CHIEF ANDREW GATTIS KEISER POLICE DEPARTMENT

Is it really February already? Time sure does fly by quickly. January brought us some really cold weather and then it brought us a lot of rain right after it. so I'm sure we are all happy to be past that for now. With that being said February is here Keiser and we are another month closer to some warmer weather. Throughout the month of January our officers have worked diligently to improve and build upon their training and education. I am happy and proud to say that all officers, including myself, have completed over 100 hours of training and continued education in the month of January alone which is truly amazing. That's more than 4 times the annual requirements for training made by the state and I plan on seeing continual improvement as each month passes throughout the year.

We also have a new phone system at the PD so now even if I am not currently in the office everyone will still be able to call the PD # and it will be rerouted to my work cell at all hours of the day.

With the month of February I would like the community to become more familiar with our city ordinances.

That way no one has to be cited for noncompliance. Remember trash only gets put out by the road on certain days so anything being put out by the road at any other time could result in someone receiving a citation, and I would much rather you keep your hard earned money where it belongs, in your pocket. Lastly I am going over our current animal control facility with an investigator to assess and correct any issues there might be that could cause it to be unsafe for any animals that would be housed inside of it. Once the facility is completely up to date on everything that it needs then we will begin to put it to use. I have been seeing a growing ordinance violation with animals within the city, so I urge each of you to please read over our animal related ordinances so that you are aware of them and do not get cited for noncompliance in the future. Thank you for all that each of you do and I hope you have a great month. As always if you have any questions or concerns please feel free to reach out to me at any time.

NEAL BROWN DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS

The Public Works Department is delighted to introduce Steven "Dylan" Smith, the newest member of our dedicated team. Born in the welcoming community of Joiner, Arkansas, Dylan has journeyed through Osceola and finally settled in the peaceful town of Keiser.

Dylan's arrival couldn't have been timelier. Recently, our town faced significant challenges due to two intense rainstorms that put our sewer system under great pressure. It was during these trying times that Dylan, alongside Daniel Lewellen, showcased extraordinary dedication and resilience. They worked tirelessly, often during the most inconvenient hours. Their commitment meant braving the harsh elements, working late into the night and starting again before dawn, all to get our community's sewer system operational. This hard work often goes unnoticed, but it's the backbone of our town's wellbeing and comfort.

We are profoundly grateful for Dylan's choice to join our team here in Keiser. With damage to our sewer mains and the threat of flooding and backups during heavy rains of 2 inches or more, the need for vigilant and skilled hands has never been greater.

Dylan and Daniel's profound dedication and tireless work ethic significantly enhance our capacity to manage and overcome these difficulties. Their ability to navigate complex situations and perform under pressure is not just a professional asset; it's a beacon of hope and reassurance for our community. Thank you men for your service.



PENNY WILBANKS WATER/CITY HALL COORDINATOR

A Note of Thanks and Hope,

I'm writing this letter with a heart full of thanks and excitement to say a big thank you to every person in the City of Keiser for making me feel so welcome as your new City Hall Coordinator. These past few weeks have been wonderful, mainly because of how kind and welcoming everyone has been. Every day, I meet people who are friendly and kind, which has really helped me settle into this important job.

I want to give a special thanks to our Mayor, Rick Creecy, and the hardworking team at City Hall. They've welcomed me warmly and trusted me with big responsibilities, which has been both a great honor and a big inspiration. Their support has been a key part of me getting used to this new role.

Walking around City Hall and the streets of Keiser, I'm always reminded of how connected we all are in this community. I've enjoyed seeing people I know from school days and past jobs. Mixing these old connections with my new role gives me a special viewpoint in my day-

to-day work.

I'm really committed to helping our city grow and thrive. My goal is to be helpful, supportive, and active in efforts that make our city better and stronger.

Looking forward, I'm really optimistic and excited about what's ahead for Keiser and everyone living here. I'm focused on learning more and doing my best to contribute in a big and lasting way. I want to do well in my job and be someone Keiser can be proud of.

I'm so thankful for the chance to work in this lively community and to make a real difference. The support and encouragement I've received has been amazing, and I'm keen to give back just as much. I'm looking forward to building new relationships, strengthening old ones, and working with everyone to create a bright and successful future for our city.

Thanks again for the warm welcome, trusting me, and letting me be a part of Keiser's exciting future. I'm honored to be here and can't wait to see what we'll accomplish together.

New City Hall Hours



Monday - Friday from 8:00 - 4:45

Closed for Lunch from 12:00 - 1:00

The History of Valentine's Day

The Romantic Journey of Valentine's Day: From Ancient Rome to Modern Love

Love is in the air as Valentine's Day approaches, with couples exchanging heartfelt gestures and affectionate gifts. But have you ever wondered about the origins of this beloved holiday? Let's take a journey through time to explore the rich history of Valentine's Day, from its ancient roots to its modern-day celebration.

Ancient Roman Beginnings

The history of Valentine's Day can be traced back to ancient Rome, where a mid-February festival called Lupercalia was celebrated. Lupercalia was dedicated to the Roman god of agriculture and fertility, Faunus, as well as the founders of Rome, Romulus and Remus. During this festival, young men would draw the names of young women from a container, and they would be paired together for the duration of the festival, sometimes leading to marriages.

Christian Influence

The holiday as we know it today also has Christian origins. It is believed that Valentine's Day was established to Christianize Lupercalia, as the Christian church wanted to replace pagan celebrations with religious ones. The name "Valentine" may have come from several Christian martyrs named Valentine, who were remembered for their acts of kindness and love.

One legend tells the story of Saint Valentine, a Roman priest, who defied Emperor Claudius II's ban on marriages for young men, believing that single men made better soldiers. Saint Valentine continued to perform marriages in secret, which ultimately led to his arrest and execution. Before his death, he is said to have written a letter to his jailer's daughter, signing it "From your Valentine," thus giving birth to the tradition of sending love notes on Valentine's Day.

Medieval Courtly Love

During the Middle Ages, Valentine's Day became

associated with courtly love. Poets like Geoffrey Chaucer and writers like Shakespeare popularized the notion of romantic love in their works. The exchange of love letters and tokens of affection became a fashionable practice among nobility.

Commercialization and Modern Celebrations

The commercialization of Valentine's Day began in the 19th century when mass-produced Valentine's Day cards became widely available. By the 20th century, the holiday had evolved into the celebration we recognize today, with the exchange of cards, flowers, chocolates, and romantic dinners.

Valentine's Day Around the World

While Valentine's Day is most commonly associated with romantic love, it is celebrated in various ways around the world. In some countries, it is an occasion to honor friends and family members, and in others, it has cultural twists and traditions unique to the region.

Conclusion

Valentine's Day has come a long way from its ancient Roman origins, evolving into a day of love and affection celebrated worldwide. Whether you see it as an opportunity to express your love for a partner, friends, or family, the history of Valentine's Day reminds us of the enduring power of love and the importance of cherishing those close to our hearts. So, this February 14th, take a moment to appreciate the rich history behind this cherished holiday as you celebrate the love in your life.

♥ happy ♥
Valentine's
♥ day ♥

This edition of our newsletter is packed with crucial details about our sewer network. This focus is timely, as we enter the rainy season, bringing with it above-average precipitation that challenges our aging infrastructure. Earlier sections of this newsletter outlined our strategy to upgrade these vital systems. During periods of heavy rain, there are proactive steps each community member can take to ensure our sewer system operates efficiently. Consider reducing water consumption by taking brief showers, postponing laundry, and dishwasher use, and avoiding letting water run until it heats up for handwashing. Every small action contributes to the overall efficiency of our system.

It's equally important to be mindful of what we dispose of in our sewers. Certain items should never be flushed or drained. Despite their labeling, wipes, including those marketed as "flushable," fail to break down in the manner toilet paper does, leading to notorious clogs in pipes and pumps. Feminine hygiene products, encompassing items such as tampons, pads, and similar products, are not intended to be flushed and are known contributors to blockages. Paper towels and tissues, possessing a thicker and more durable structure compared to toilet paper, do not disintegrate swiftly, posing a risk to plumbing systems. Dental floss, a non-biodegradable item, can exacerbate small blockages by entangling, transforming minor issues into significant complications. Cotton balls and swabs are prone to clumping, potentially leading to clogs in the pipes, while condoms, also non-biodegradable, can inflate within the plumbing system, further causing blockages. Diapers, due to their high absorbency, expand in water and can cause substantial blockages. Hair, notorious for intertwining with grease and other substances, forms stubborn clogs. Cooking oil and grease, which solidify upon cooling, are notorious for creating stubborn blockages in the sewer system. Cat litter, even those variants labeled as "flushable," can lead to pipe clogs and pose threats to marine life. Lastly, plastic items, due to their non-biodegradable nature, are a source of serious blockages and can inflict significant environmental damage.

Being mindful of our water use and what we flush, or drain can significantly impact the efficiency and longevity of our sewer systems, especially during the demanding rainy season. Let's all do our part to maintain a robust and functioning infrastructure.

February 2024

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1 National Freedom Day	2 Groundhog Day	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11 Super Bowl	12	13	14 Valentines Day	15	16 <i>Water Bill Due</i>	17
18 Daytona 500 NBA All-Star Game	19 <i>Council Meeting</i>	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27 <i>Cutoff Date</i>	28	29 Leap Day		

Super Bowl Winners Past 20 Years

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New England Patriots

Seattle Seahawks

Pittsburgh Steelers

New England Patriots

Indianapolis Colts

Denver Broncos

New York Giants

Philadelphia Eagles

New Orleans Saints

Kansas City Chiefs

Green Bay Packers

Tampa Bay Buccaneers

New York Giants

Los Angeles Rams

Baltimore Ravens

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