



Bentonville

focus

A CLOSER LOOK AT OUR COMMUNITY

City Newsletter

Bob McCaslin, Mayor

Winter 2007

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We're on the Web!
www.bentonvillear.com

City Council Meetings

Council meetings are held the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month at 6:00 p.m. in the council chambers of City Hall, 117 W. Central. Agendas are printed in local papers and on the web page.

Council Members

| | |
|----------------|--------|
| Mary Baggett | Ward 1 |
| Chris Sooter | Ward 1 |
| Rod Sanders | Ward 2 |
| James Smith | Ward 2 |
| Ed Austin | Ward 3 |
| Bryan Bennett | Ward 3 |
| Scott Comiskey | Ward 4 |
| Jim Grider | Ward 4 |

State of the City

Excerpts from Mayor's speech on Jan. 23, 2007. Visit the city web site for the full state of the city address.

The City of Bentonville is strong and healthy. The first leadership change in more than a decade has taken place without negative impact on the City's ability to serve its citizens. Excitement about the future overshadows the challenges associated with meeting the City's many growth related needs. Families and individuals from across the United States and the world continue to come and call Bentonville their new home.

Population and Development. A special census completed in 2006 placed Bentonville's population at 28,600. Our own data indicates a January 2007 population of 29,800. Total building permits issued in 2006 were down from 2005 by less than 3%. This past year developers and builders donated to our City streets, sidewalks and improvements valued at \$24.5 million.

Utility Services. Bentonville's City Utilities currently serve 16,861 active accounts with electricity, water, waste water, and sanitation. This is an increase of more than 800 accounts since 2005. Bentonville has led the way for the development of a regional waste water treatment facility and continues to assist in finding state, and possible federal, funding necessary to get this off of the drawing board and operational.

Transportation. We, as a City, have a great challenge before us to secure funding for our street & highway needs. Our needs far exceed our resources at the present time. We have seen recent projects within the City, including SE C St., NE J St., W. Central at S. Walton intersection, NW 3rd St., and the extension of Tiger Blvd. Work has just begun on Hwy 72 East and Hwy 102 West.

Needed improvements to State Highways 12 & 112, the I-540 & Hwy 102 interchange and a new interchange at I-540 and J St. have become significantly more pronounced. Talks have begun with the Arkansas Highway Department regarding these opportunities.

The design of the 8th Street project should begin soon. This project is comprised of both federal and private funding. Completion of this multi-year project will provide a much needed additional east - west traffic option.

Library. 2006 saw the opening of the new Bentonville Library. A beautiful state of the art facility with more than 38,000 square feet of space available for both library patrons and community use. Bentonville is fortunate to have generous citizens who came together to privately fund the vast majority of this project. The addition of a children's librarian is planned for 2007.

Parks. The completion of a new Master Parks Plan is expected within the first calendar quarter of 2007. The new plan will address, and in some cases readdress, needed improvements and additions to our parks system. Due to the generosity of a local family, we will soon be able to add to our trail system more than four miles of mountain bike and rugged walking trails near N. Walton Blvd. and I-540. The new Parks Master Plan will also include recommendations for development of the "Price-Coffey" property located East of I-540. Funding for the development of this property is not available at the present time.

Police. The quality of life we enjoy in Bentonville is due in part to the unusually safe environment that we live in. Our Police Department can easily be judged successful due to the lack of crime and disorder. The growth in population has resulted in an increase of over 9,500 calls to the Emergency Communications Center during 2006. However, most crime categories are down versus 2005. The addition of an Accident Reduction Unit, with two new officers, has reduced the workload on thirty officers assigned to street patrol duty.

Fire. Bentonville is fortunate to have an enviable "Class 2" ISO fire rating. This rating is based on very strict criteria and benefits Bentonville property owners through lower insurance rates. The



Extension of Tiger Boulevard

State of the City: continued on page 2



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State of the City *continued from Page 1*

construction of a new No. 1 fire station at the corner of 8th and SW A St. will begin in a few weeks. Property for station No. 6 has been purchased in the southwest area of the City. Bentonville Fire Department responded to a total of 3,547 emergency calls in 2006, 300 more calls than handled in 2005.

Sales Tax. Preliminary 2006 financial results show improved sales tax revenue. The one-cent capital sales tax raised \$6,738,000, an increase of 17% over 2005 and \$438,000 more than the 2006 budget estimate. 2006 revenue from property taxes rose 22% over 2005, for a total of \$2.7 million. Although all of the 2006 budget items are not finalized, the City is expected to close out 2006 with total revenue slightly better than projection and total expenses slightly less than projection.

Expenditures. Capital expenditures in 2006 totaled in excess of \$39 million. Major capital expenditures included: \$12 million for the new water line and water storage tank, \$12.2 million for streets, \$2.2 million for new electric substations and \$2.7 million for underground primary electric lines. Capital expenditures planned for 2007 will focus primarily on street construction and street improvements. The Highway 72 East project and the Highway 102 West projects will consume the vast majority of our current \$21 million line of credit for capital improvements.

The future is bright and opportunities to grow responsibly have never been better. With work underway on a world class museum of American art, we must be prepared to capture and capitalize on the opportunities that will come with an additional 250,000 visitors per year. We not only have the previously mentioned capital needs but we as a City have opportunities to clean-up and spruce-up. We need to raise the level of pride in the way we look and the way we take care of our resources. I want to see Bentonville implement a recycling program that will set a new standard of excellence in Arkansas and the U.S. I want to see improved esthetics at each of the gateways into our City. Bentonville truly is a unique and special place to live; we need to treat it that way.

I am grateful to the citizens for the privilege to serve as mayor. To the professional staff and all of the employees who have assisted in my transition over the past weeks, I am indebted. Thanks too to the City Council members for their willingness to serve. To all of the board and commission members and volunteers who spend hundreds of hours annually in public service, thank you - you are what makes this a great place to live.

Three Street Projects Launched by March

By the time this newsletter is in mailboxes, three street improvement projects will have commenced. Three projects that began in 2005 will wrap up by mid-year. The partnership projects between the City of Bentonville and the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD) for Hwy 102 and Hwy 72 are still in the utility relocation phase with plans to begin construction by the end of summer. Preliminary design will begin this Spring for the 8th St. widening project, a partnership project with AHTD.

| Beginning Construction | |
|---|--|
| SW I St., Hwy 102 to Walton Blvd | |
| John DeShields Blvd., NE S St. to Hwy. 72 | |
| SE C St., SE 22nd St. to SE 28th St. | |
| Under Construction | |
| Tiger Blvd., NE J St. to McCollum Rd. | |
| NW 3rd St., Saddlebrook to Coachlight | |
| SE J St., Hwy. 102 to S. Walton Blvd. | |

Municipal Airport Improvements

By Britt Vance, Utilities Director

It's been almost a year since a tornado bounced through Bentonville causing extensive damage to several homes and businesses in its swath. Among the facilities damaged in that event was the Bentonville Airport also known as Louise Thaden Field. Since that time some makeshift facilities have allowed the airport to continue operations as plans are made to replace the buildings lost in the storm.

In the meantime, as the building plans move forward, the runway lights which were damaged and effectively disabled have been replaced with new equipment and the system is up and running. A new taxi-lane has been constructed on the west side of the runway using primarily Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) funding. This new taxi-lane will allow additional hangars to be built on the airport site and should be a catalyst for continued growth and improvement of Thaden Field.

Water Line Nearing Completion

By Britt Vance, Utilities Director



The 48-inch Water Transmission Line Project continues to make steady progress towards a completion scheduled for June of this year. Placing this line in service is important to both the City of Bentonville and to the City of Rogers to avoid the water use restrictions experienced by our cities for the past two summer seasons.

The 14-mile pipeline is approximately 80% completed and barring any significant delays the line will be filled for the first time in May. After testing the line for leaks it will be sterilized with chlorine, flushed and then placed into service.

The type of pipe being used for this project is pre-stressed concrete cylinder pipe (PCCP), chosen for its resistance to corrosion and inherent long life. It is very likely that this pipeline will still be in service longer than any of us who witness its first day on the job.

The line has the ability to safely deliver as much as 40 million gallons per day which is an adequate amount to serve a population well over 100,000. A 2 million gallon elevated storage tank is also being constructed at this time and can be seen near completion south of NW 12th street in Bentonville. When completed and painted it will bear the Bentonville Tiger logo.



Meet the Mayor: Mr. Bob McCaslin



On January 1, 2007, Mr. Bob McCaslin was sworn in as Mayor of Bentonville. Mayor McCaslin is a native born Arkansan and has called Bentonville home since 1996.

Mayor McCaslin received a degree in Business Administration from Arkansas Tech University and began a long career with Kraft Foods in 1972. He served Kraft in many capacities, including Sales, Sales Management, Operations Management, Customer Service Management and Financial Management. His profession gave him assignments in Fort Smith, Kansas City, Houston, Memphis, Springfield, Dallas and Atlanta. He retired in February 2002 and the following year began his civic service to Bentonville as City Council Alderman.

Mayor McCaslin has been married to his wife, Lana, for 38 years. They have two married daughters and three grandchildren. Together they are members of the Church at Pinnacle Hills. Mr. McCaslin continues to serve as a Gideon, a Rotarian, and a member of the Bentonville/Bella Vista Chamber of Commerce.

Build It and They Will Come

The line from the movie, Field of Dreams, is especially true for the Bentonville Public library. Since opening its doors to the public in November of 2006, people have been drawn to the new library to read, learn and just relax.

A comparison of library activity for the month of January in 2006 and 2007 does show if you build it they will come.

| | Jan 2006 | Jan 2007 | Percent Change |
|-------------------|----------|----------|----------------|
| Items checked out | 15,089 | 25,841 | 71% |
| Borrowers added | 359 | 968 | 170% |
| Borrowers Updated | 3,417 | 4,228 | 24% |
| Library Users | 7,678 | 15,818 | 170% |

Located at 405 South Main Street, just three blocks from the square, the new library offers a feast for readers. Unlike libraries of our youth, the new library is beautifully designed with comfortable furnishings and painted with a palette of light fresh colors throughout. Cozy reading nooks, private study rooms and a warm and inviting fireplace seating area are just some of the features attracting visitors. Children and teens each have their own personal spaces, designed to meet their special needs.

Innovation and cutting edge technology are also key features of the new library. Driven by the new RFID technology, the library features a completely wireless facility, three state-of-the-art meeting rooms, over 40 public use computers, a kid's tech center and fully automated self-checkout stations.

The new Bentonville Public Library continues to develop programs and services to enhance your experience. Ongoing programs include: weekly children story times, after school movies, computer and internet training classes and Monday movie matinees.

The new Bentonville Public Library is a great place to visit. To learn more about your new library, visit our web site at: www.yousemore.com/bentonville.

Crystal Bridges Update

By Bob Workman, Executive Director, Crystal Bridges

Preparations are now underway for the construction of Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art. Scheduled to open in the fall of 2009, the museum will showcase the finest examples of American art from its earliest works through the twentieth century. Crystal Bridges will include galleries for permanent and special exhibitions, dynamic education spaces, an auditorium, dining facility and numerous function areas. The project is situated on 100 acres of pristine Ozark landscape, within a short walk from the Bentonville Town Square.

Site grading and utilities installation has commenced, and later this year project officials will be presenting plans to the City for review and approval. Bob Workman, Executive Director of the Museum meets regularly with Mayor McCaslin and other City staff to assure strong two-way communications as this project develops.

The construction yard is located west of NE J Street, at the John De Shields intersection. Along NE J Street is a construction fence with the *Fenceworks Community Gallery* displaying 20 murals by Bentonville Middle and Jr. High school students. Additional murals will be added in the months ahead. Be sure to drive by the site often and enjoy the great talents of our area youths.

With its world-class architecture, outstanding masterworks of American art, and dynamic programs, Crystal Bridges promises to be a major asset to Northwest Arkansas and this Mid-west region, as well as a significant tourist destination that will bring visitors to Bentonville from around the globe.



Bob Workman thanks students for their participation in the Fencework Community Gallery.

Trash Service Reminder

Trash pick-up begins for residential customers at 6:30 A.M. If you have questions regarding your trash service in Bentonville you may call the Utility Billing department at 271-3100 or directly contact Allied Waste Disposal at 855-4226.

Voluntary Taxes Help Fire, Parks & Cemetery

The City of Bentonville offers a voluntary tax that you will receive late this spring or early summer. You may voluntarily contribute to the fund for fire, parks and cemetery. The fire and parks fund is used for capital improvements to fire and park facilities while the cemetery fund is used for capital improvements as well as maintenance to the city cemetery. We would like to thank everyone who voluntarily contributes to this tax!

Garage Sale Signs

Its garage sale season again! The City no longer requires a permit to hold a garage sale. However, garage sale regulations still apply. Please keep these items in mind when holding your garage sale and posting signs:

The garage sale should last no more than three (3) days.

Two signs are permitted: one on the premises and one off-site.

Signs should be no larger than six (6) square feet.

Signs should include the address and date(s) of the sale.

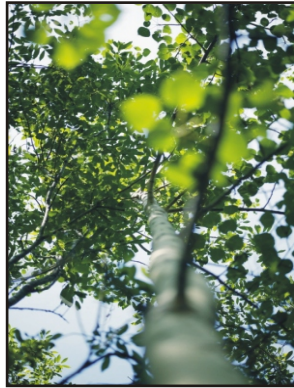
Only post signs three days prior to the sale and remove by the day after the sale.

Place signs behind the sidewalk or 10' from the back of the curb where there is no sidewalk.

Do not attach signs to utility poles or street signs.

Do you know of a Majestic Tree?

By Mark M. Bray, County Extension Agent and
Karen Rollet-Crocker, Landscape Architect and board member Peel House Foundation



Bentonville has a wealth of large, rare, and historic trees which contribute to its social, environmental, and economic prominence. Through community networking, Compton Gardens is launching an effort to identify and recognize the "Majestic Trees of Bentonville". Majestic Trees are categorized as: landmark trees, historic trees, rare trees, large trees or old trees. Anyone can nominate a tree by visiting the City of Bentonville's website <http://www.bentonvillear.com> and completing the "Majestic Tree" nomination form.

This program is funded by a grant provided by the Urban Forestry Program and the U.S. Forest Service and is coordinated by the Advisory Council for Urban Forestry at Compton Gardens. For more information contact: Janet Rusch at 273-7126 or janetrusch1@wmconnect.com.

Serving the Community

Several boards and committees serve in an advisory capacity to city staff and officials. These are comprised of Bentonville residents and are appointed by the Mayor and approved by City Council. Depending on your interest and expertise, there might be a committee for you. Here are some of the citizen advisory committees: **Tree and Landscape Advisory Committee, Criminal Nuisance Abatement Board, Board of Adjustment, Planning Commission, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, Advertising & Promotion Commission, and Public Art Advisory Commission.** To apply for any of the above committees or boards, check with the City Clerk for upcoming ending terms and vacancies and complete an application form. City Clerk's Office: 271-5966, 117 W. Central Ave.

Tree and Landscape Advisory Committee

By Danielle Semsrott, Community Programs Coordinator

Established in 1998, the five member Tree and Landscape Advisory Committee advises the Planning Services staff on tree planting and landscaping within Bentonville and to promote education designed to increase public awareness of trees, their needs, and proper care.

Since their inception, the Tree & Landscape Advisory Committee has contributed to the following projects: Tree City U.S.A. status for nine consecutive years, Tree City U.S.A. Growth Award status in 2006, partnered and participates in the Annual Arbor Day Celebration sponsored by the Bentonville Garden Club, established a tree farm at Memorial Park, instrumental in updating commercial landscaping regulations, drafted a Street Tree Planting Corridor Plan, and assisted with Urban and Community Forestry Grants.

Currently, the committee is working on a landscaping improvement project for the North Bentonville Trail. The trailhead of this 1.7 mile trail is located on the east side of N. Walton Boulevard, just south of the intersection of SW A St. and N. Walton Boulevard. Improving this trail with landscaping will make a visual impact when residents and visitors enter our City.



2007 Great American Clean Up

Keep Benton County Beautiful has scheduled a Clean-up Day for Saturday, April 28th as part of the 2007 Great American Clean-Up. Visit the website for more details: www.keepbentoncountybeautiful.com



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