



## From the Office of the Mayor

Volume I, Issue 3

May 5, 2021

Sam Cooke once sang “A little flower that blooms in May, A lovely sunset at the end of a day, Someone helping a stranger along the way, That’s Heaven to me.”

Now that winter is in the rearview mirror and spring has finally sprung, it’s a season of new beginnings and renewed hope. So many in our community have chosen to get the covid-19 vaccine, whether in one of our covid clinics, through their family physicians or our pharmacies. All of these efforts have allowed our numbers to continue to fall and life is returning to a sense of normalcy because of that. I wanted to take a few minutes and bring you up to speed on some of the things we have been working on at city hall over the past two months.

Some very big news happened in the first of March with a ribbon cutting at PLWC for its new solar plant. This addition to PLWC will help diversify the way they are able to supply power to our residents and hopefully help keep our power cost among the lowest in the state. Did you know that Paragould has the 4<sup>th</sup> lowest power cost in the state and now that the Fiber To The Home project is in its final stages we will join just a handful of cities in Arkansas that are recognized as a Gig City. These additions to our local utility will not only provide better services to our residents but will also help make our community more attractive to new residents and new industries.

Speaking of serving our citizens and attracting new residents, in the last update we spoke about the 8-Mile Creek Trail and that a bid opening was coming. I’m happy to report that on March 30<sup>th</sup> we opened bids and that TATE General Contracting, a locally owned company, was awarded the bid. Construction on the trail will begin on June 1<sup>st</sup> 2021 and will be complete before June 1<sup>st</sup> 2022. We will be having a groundbreaking event on May 14<sup>th</sup> at Harmon Park to celebrate this project and all of the people who have had a hand in making this addition to our parks system become a reality.

In staying with “Quality of Place” initiatives, because of the hard work of the City Beautiful Commission, Paragould recently joined over 3400 cities nationwide in being recognized as a Tree City through Tree City USA. This recognition is something City Beautiful has been working towards

for a long time and to see them receive this recognition is encouraging for our city, our citizens and our future. My favorite quote in the Tree Proclamation is “Whereas trees- wherever they are planted- are a source of joy and spiritual renewal”

We are also happy to announce that our IT Department has built and hung the first Mobile Patrol Unit. The first 4 units will be placed in our parks system to keep our park visitors safe and to bring about a renewed peace of mind knowing that there is a police presence in our parks at all times. We feel that these units will not only keep our residents safe but will also deter any nefarious activities that cause damage to our parks. Having free Wifi in our parks, the new 8-Mile Creek Trail and the addition of our mobile patrol units, shows our citizens a renewed sense of dedication to our parks. I would encourage each of you, if you haven't recently, to go visit one of our parks, whether it's the splash pad at Labor, the dog park at Harmon, catching a fish or kayaking at Reynolds or visiting our Community Center, I think you'll be surprised at just what all our parks have to offer.

In closing I'd like to address our region as a whole. Recently Mayor Copenhaver of Jonesboro, myself and around 30 other mayors of cities across Northeast Arkansas formed a Mayor's Caucus. We all came together and realized that we see the need for all of NEA to be pulling in the same direction. We also realize that when one of our cities has a success story that that success is felt across the region. If Paragould has an industry expansion, an addition to our parks or any other improvement in our community then all of NEA reaps the rewards. We have seen this model work across the country and we want to replicate that and make our entire region a better place to work, live and play. The old adage “ a rising tide floats all ships” comes to mind and seems to fit perfectly.

I want everyone to know what a privilege it is to go to work for you, each and every day. I consider it an honor to be representing you and if you ever need my assistance my door is open.

-Josh



Greene County Future Fund rendering of 8-mile Creek Trail