



# From the Office of the Mayor

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“AUTUMN IS A SECOND SPRING WHEN EVERY LEAF IS A FLOWER” -ALBERT CAMUS

Everywhere you look signs of fall are appearing and there always seems to be a renewed sense of excitement about life once fall arrives. Cooler temperatures, Friday night football, hoodies and of course pumpkin EVERYTHING are just a few of the examples of things we all seem to be able to find common ground about. Common ground is something that I'd like to speak about in this newsletter. These days it seems that so many people online and in our everyday life want to dwell on the differences we have and use these differences to cause division. One of the first things we did under our administration was to make sure everyone who was working for the betterment of our community was pulling in the same direction. You also see this with the newly minted Mayors' Caucus. We realized very early that for our city, our community and our region to succeed we had to put aside differences and find common ground. Think about that for a minute, we have politicians from different cities in our region, all with different specific goals and expectations, working together for the betterment of all citizens in our area. That to me is the ultimate goal, to bring everyone together working for one cause, the betterment of all citizens. We all realize that we are representatives of every single one of our constituents, not just the ones we agree with on certain issues or views. I believe our administration and your council members are a true representation of what our founding fathers envisioned when they imagined a representative body of legislators. I wish our state and national leaders would follow your city council's example, putting differences aside and putting the people first. We are, after all, tasked with the duty of making Paragould the best place to live, work and raise a family.

Speaking of community betterment, a lot of great things have been going on since my last newsletter. One of the biggest announcements was flipping the switch making Paragould a GIG city. This BIG SWITCH coincided with the kids return to school. This announcement made sure that lightning fast internet was available to all citizens in Paragould and especially benefits our children who were returning to school. All of our local schools are 1 to 1 which means every student has a laptop or a tablet to do their work on. We have added Wi-Fi in our parks and now with fiber internet to the home we feel that students are far less likely to fall behind on schoolwork due to the availability of internet from so many different directions. We have also added PMSP (Paragould Mobile Sky Patrol) cameras to all of our parks so any student using this Wi-Fi can do so safely. These Sky Patrol units will not just keep an eye on our students but will also bring about a new sense of safety to our parks for all citizens. I hope to see these units utilized all across our city in the coming years to keep our crime rate low and keep our citizens safe.

There have been major retail announcements over the past few months as well. Freddy's Steakburgers made an announcement that they have purchased the former Mitchell Funeral Home property. Shortly after that announcement Starbucks added they would be joining Freddy's at that location. Also, a new Sonic location near GCT High School and a Steak & Shake south of town are both currently under construction. Additionally 1812 Pizza has made an announcement that they have invested in historic downtown and are hoping to be opened late this year or early 2022. In talks with business leaders in retail development I truly feel these announcements are just the cusp of what our city is going to experience over the next few years. We feel retail offerings, much like many of the other improvements we have talked about, are a direct betterment in our citizens Quality of Life. These Quality Of Life improvements help our local industries recruit talent, helps our chamber and EDC in the recruitment of new industry, helps build our tax base and at the end of the day gives the residents of Paragould more offerings to better their everyday lives.

Our downtown area continues to see great improvement. Last newsletter we talked about the Farmers Market and Innovation Center and now 1812 has made their announcement. Since that last newsletter I am happy to report that all empty storefronts have been purchased and plans are in place to rehabilitate and restore these buildings to be viable businesses. Again these new downtown businesses will be more offerings for our citizens, help build our tax base and help with Quality of Life and recruitment. The Downtown Summer Concert Series has just ended and had around 2500 attendees and just last week the Greene County Future Fund held its annual Get Downtown Festival. The festival had over 35 vendors, food trucks, a 10k, 5k and kids fun run, and 10 live bands. The festival was attended by approximately 7500 people with an estimated economic impact of \$80,000.00 to our city. As you can see all of these happenings are part of a greater plan...

“Build up our community, Build up downtown, Recruit more retail, Build better parks”

All equaling

“Better jobs, Higher wages and a Better way of life for all of Paragould.”

Building a better Paragould and making sure all citizens are represented, that is our goal and that is what we are dedicated every day to doing. As always, it is an honor to be your mayor and your representative.

-Josh

