

Highlights and Accomplishments of City Government 2008-2009

The City continued to be a statewide leader in the delivery of municipal services. The City was struck by an EF-4 tornado on Good Friday that was 23-1/2 miles long and 1/2 mile wide at its widest point. The tornado resulted in two fatalities, 81 homes destroyed and over 100 million in damages. The City employees immediately responded and did an amazing job at helping the community respond and recover. Power to over 18,000 customers was restored within 3 days. The Solid Waste Department collected over 16 million pounds of yard waste and 21 million pounds of building debris. The response of the Police and Fire Departments was immediate, effective and demonstrated the professionalism of our emergency responders. The City's efforts were greatly supplemented by community volunteers, Rutherford County, neighboring communities, private contractors and neighbors. The tornado was the defining event of 2009 and in the face of tragedy, it brought out the best in our community. The City incurred approximately \$3.6 million in additional costs, much of which will be recovered through federal and state emergency management agencies.

Construction and Development

FY 2008-2009 saw the opening of a 283 room Embassy Suites with an attached 80,000 square foot conference center at the intersection of Medical Center Parkway and Interstate 24. The hotel and meeting space are another private investment stemming from the City's Gateway Initiative to create new retail, hospitality, medical and office development along a new northern entrance corridor from Interstate 24 to the center of Murfreesboro.

The Gateway Island Trailhead includes a 3-mile extension of the Stones River Greenway around the north side of Medical Center Parkway. The island includes a gazebo and reception center, a pond with waterfalls and a lighted walking/jogging trail. There are picnic tables and benches strategically placed in the park for our citizens and visitors to use. Phase II of the Stones River Greenway extension (Old Fort Park to Highway 99) was completed in August 2009. Planning continues on the North Murfreesboro Greenway, and the extension of the Stones River Greenway to Barfield Crescent Park and for a master plan to renovate and improve the Walter Hill Park that the City acquired in 2005.

The planning process began and an architect was hired for the new Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce and Visitor's Center, a joint City/Chamber project. This new 33,744 square foot center is estimated to cost \$6.9 million to construct. It will house both the visitor's center and the Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce. Land for the project in the Gateway area was donated at an estimated value of \$2.35 million. Federal grants of \$3.36 million and a \$2 million donation from the Christy-Houston Foundation will finance the majority of the project. The City of Murfreesboro has agreed to finance the remaining costs of construction with the Chamber of Commerce repaying the note over a 25 year lease. The visitor's center is expected to bring an increase in tourism revenues to the area.

City Council approved partnering with Middle Tennessee State University for improvements on Middle Tennessee Boulevard from East Main Street to Greenland Drive. A joint agreement between Rutherford County and the City of Murfreesboro was signed to construct 16 tennis

courts at Old Fort Park. Construction began in March 2009 and the courts will be available for county school use during their tennis season and for public use during other times of the year. The City's contribution to the project was approximately \$750,000.

Personnel

Roger G. Haley was named City Manager of the Year for 2009 by the Tennessee City Management Association. Mr. Haley has since retired. Several employees moved into department head positions: Gary Whitaker, Building & Codes Director; Lanny Goodwin, Parks & Recreation Director; Cumbey Gaines, Murfreesboro Fire Chief and Robert J. Lyons was named City Manager.

In response to the changing financial environment, City Council voted to close the existing defined benefit retirement plan to new hires so that all full-time employees hired after July 1, 2010 will be enrolled in a new defined contribution plan.

Streets

The City continued its aggressive road building and widening program. Projects completed included widening South Rutherford Boulevard from CSX to Broad Street, DeJarnette Lane, Rutherford Boulevard at Greenland Drive, Greenland Drive, Veteran's Parkway Phase I, Robert Rose Extension, Pitts Lane, Old Lascassas Road, Battleground Drive, AgriPark Drive, and River Rock Boulevard. The City is also partnering with Rutherford County in the reconstruction of Halls Hill Pike and Florence Road. Projects under construction include Veterans Parkway phases 3A and 3B and North Spring Street.

Among projects under design are Rucker Lane, Wilkinson Pike, Veterans Parkway Phases 2 and 3C, and the realignment of Manson Pike, Gresham Lane, and Fortress Boulevard into a new intersection.

Police

The Murfreesboro Police Department added eighteen (18) new patrol positions, four (4) new full-time civilian positions, including two (2) Dispatchers, one (1) Secretary in VICE and one (1) Technical Support Specialist in Administration. Seven new vehicles were purchased in conjunction with the hiring of an additional 18 patrol officers.

The City's use of an automated traffic signal camera system on six intersections saw almost 20,000 citations for red light violations issued. The use of automated technology in the police department and other agencies continues to be a tool for maintaining high levels of government service without increased costs.

Fire

One fire engine with equipment was purchased and put in service by the Murfreesboro Fire Department. Voice amplifiers for all firefighting personnel were purchased, a ten ton HVAC unit at fire administration was replaced, employees repaired the hose tower and ladder system at headquarters, an air fill station was purchased to refill individual SCBA bottles and kitchens at Stations 7 and 8 were remodeled.

After careful consideration, the City chose not to open Fire Station 10 or hire its staff of fifteen firefighters on the western edge of the City. Construction of the station was in response to anticipated residential growth in the area. With the downturn of the economy, a substantial portion of that growth has not currently materialized. The station is ready and will be slated for opening at the time sufficient development occurs.

Public Transportation

The City's public transportation service, Rover, provides services city-wide along 8 routes. The total ridership during the FY09 fiscal year climbed from 118,659 passengers to 169,377, an increase of 42.7%.

Solid Waste

The Solid Waste Department collected and processed 24,000 tons of yard waste (tonnage from the Good Friday tornado is not included in this total) at the public works facility from July 1, 2008 thru June 30, 2009. The agreement between the City and BFI for free disposal saved the City of Murfreesboro \$1,731,350 in disposal fees for the fiscal year.

Cable TV

To provide better communications with the public, the Cable Television department implemented a web streaming service to offer archived video, RSS feeds and podcasts for one year's City Council, Planning Commission and all other televised committees, plus the programming for Channel 3 produced by City staff.

Water and Sewer

The Stones River Water Treatment Plant is currently being expanded to 20 million gallons per day capacity. In addition to capacity, the most recent membrane technology and granular activated carbon filters have been added to the treatment process to meet present and future water quality regulations. Other additions include replacing gaseous chlorine for disinfection to on site chlorine generation, auxiliary emergency power and an additional 1 million gallon clearwell. The membrane portion of the process was completed and placed into use, as well as other major components of the chemical feed systems.

During the April 10, 2009 tornado, the water plant was without power for 30 hours. The auxiliary emergency power generator, which was placed into service in January 2009, kept the plant operational during the outage.

The City continued to expand the use of wastewater effluent. Approximately 3 million gallons per day of the wastewater effluent is being recycled for beneficial use at the Old Fort Golf course, Siegel Soccer Complex, The Avenue retail center and in the landscaped median of Medical Center Parkway.

The expansion of the biosolids treatment process at the wastewater treatment plant was completed, doubling biosolids treatment capacity. Variable speed drives were added to the oxidation ditch aerator motors providing better control and power conservation. Odor control was also added on the biosolids holding tanks by moving the gaseous chlorine scrubber unit no longer needed at the water plant and replacing the media for odor control at the wastewater plant.

Murfreesboro City Schools

The Murfreesboro City School System is known for providing children with small class sizes (average size = 20) taught by extremely talented and dedicated teachers in an environment of beautiful, well-maintained school facilities. The school system has been a leader in preschool education since the early seventies, offers an after-school program for all children, and for twenty years has been a leader in augmenting instruction through state-of-the-art technology. The system is a leader in supplementing public funds through private giving by establishing The City Schools Foundation to enhance education programs for children. In 2008, the City Schools earned system-wide accreditation (as opposed to building-by-building) by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools making Murfreesboro City Schools one of the few systems in the region to earn such accreditation. On the 2008 State Report Card, Murfreesboro City School students exceeded state averages in all subjects on academic achievement earning A's in math, reading, and writing and B's in social studies and science.

Awards and Acknowledgements

The City received several awards or recognitions, including Fastest Growing County in Tennessee by United State Census Bureau. Nashville-Davidson-Murfreesboro MSA was ranked 5th in U.S. markets for 'Economic Strength' by Policom and Murfreesboro was named one of 'The Best Places to Raise Your Kids.' by Business Week.

Additionally, the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) awarded a certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting to the City of Murfreesboro for its comprehensive annual financial report (CAFR) for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2008. This is the eleventh consecutive year the City of Murfreesboro has received this prestigious award. In order to be awarded a Certificate of Achievement, the government had to publish an easily readable and efficiently organized CAFR that satisfied both generally accepted accounting principles and applicable legal requirements.