



MAYOR'S MONTHLY EDITORIAL

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MAYOR'S MONTHLY MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 2018

I love this city! I also like where we are headed and a day doesn't go by when I am not proud to serve the citizens of Douglas. I am excited about the positive changes we are making to benefit our future as a thriving and prosperous community. Douglas is the place where I raised my family and have watched my friends raise their families. Small town values are what makes Douglas a memorable destination for visitors, a magnet for new residents, new industry, and, in my opinion, the best place to live, work and raise a family.

I want to start this month's minutes with saying as the Mayor of Douglas, I am extremely excited about our Coffee High School Trojan football season! Last year, our city was united with a common goal to support our football team. I want that community unity to continue throughout the year. Our children deserve our full support in the classroom, on the field, and in the community. I joined the Touchdown Club to show support of our team and community. We need all citizens to come to the game and make some noise. Bring your entire family to the game. Remember, citizens 65 and above do not pay to attend the game. I promise you will enjoy the game. Our team is very young, but our team plays hard and are committed to our community. Our team spirit and athletic abilities are creating a unity that allows Douglas to always shine bright!

Utility Hawk is a program that allows citizens to monitor their water and electric usage. I am encouraging all citizens to sign up for Utility Hawk. The Utility Hawk program assists citizens to recognize electric high usage periods during the day. For example, if electric usage is high during the day when the children are in school and the parents are at work, this program will allow the homeowner to use this information to adjust their thermostats temperature to lower their utility. Additionally, citizens will be able to monitor their water usage with the Utility Hawk. A leaky toilet or broken water line can be identified with the Utility Hawk. For example, the house is empty and the citizen used 15,000 gallons of water...the Utility Hawk will display the abnormal water usage and allow the citizen the opportunity to look for and repair water leaks or that leaking faucet.

In the next few months, we will have a Douglas Utilities pre-pay portal called "My Usage" that we will be rolling out that will allow customers to "pay as you go". This program will allow citizens to place any amount of money on their account at any time. The citizen will be able to put money on their account using the MyUsage app, the internet or simply by walking in and seeing a customer service specialist. The citizen will also be able to track their daily use and receive email and text alerts when their account balance is getting low. This is just another way Douglas Utilities is helping customers manage their utility usage.

I receive a lot of questions about utility bills. I want citizens to know the City Commission and Douglas Utilities have taken actions taken to lower utility bills, inform citizens, and allow citizens to monitor their accounts. We have changed to a Douglas Utilities logo in the hopes that citizens would realize this is a UTILITY bill, not an electric bill. Some customers have electric, water, sewer, gas, trash, and irrigation on one bill. We have made the bill easier to read and offer a diagram on the Customer Care Center website page to explain the charges on a bill. Citizens that sign up for UtilityHawk have the capability to monitor electric, water, and gas utilities on their phone or any other device with internet capabilities.

Citizens who are age 65 and above, can receive a \$10.00 senior citizen discount off their utility bill. We imbed the average cost of a property on the application for services and then have an educational discussion with customers about household utilities and energy saving tips. For example, if a customer comes in City Hall to have their utilities cut-on at 123 Main Street. As that person fills out the application, they should see that the property at 123 Main Street has an average utility bill of \$900 on the application.

We offer FREE energy audits of homes to help property owners discover energy savings inside their property/homes. For renters/tenants, we need to have the permission of their landlord before we can perform the energy audit. Right now, we are working to setup a meeting with landlords to discuss pre-rental energy audits of rental properties so that a potential renter will know the condition of the rental property prior to signing a property rental agreement. Additionally, we will discuss with landlord the impact of poorly maintained area on public safety and community health. We are also trying to increase educational promotions for citizens to learn about their utilities and our department functions. Coming soon, we will offer the "pay as you go" feature that allows citizens to pay a portion of their utility bill whenever they desire.

My F.U.N. (Future Understanding is Necessary) acronym continues to represent our current and future initiatives. Our employees are entrusted to look toward the future and see what opportunities we can offer citizens whether it is to help them save on utility costs by becoming more observant of their usage which leads those citizens to become better stewards of the future by conserving energy. We have to understand what the future could possible hold and we have to have futuristic thinking in understanding our community's needs and concerns in order to keep Douglas Always Shining Bright.