



MAYOR'S MONTHLY EDITORIAL

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MAYOR'S MONTHLY MINUTES – JANUARY 2019

Happy New Year citizens of Douglas! The great year of 2019 has begun and I am ready to get started with improvements for Douglas. I hope to see growth and prosperity for our great city in 2019. There is already proof that Douglas is growing and please remember that with growth, there comes growing pains. I ask all citizens to please be patient as road expansions and improvements continue. I promise, once it is done, everyone will appreciate the road enhancements that have been made possible by Georgia D.O.T. and the contractors.

Have you noticed the new construction in Douglas? With progress, there comes a time to renovate old buildings and also a time to demolish or sell some of our old buildings. Sometimes, this must happen to improve our quality of life. The old high school has been sold and is currently undergoing demolishing to make way for a new business or businesses to come to Douglas. Many of you ask, why isn't there businesses and restaurants like Valdosta and Tifton? By creating vacant space, building new buildings, and renovating older spaces, we can work with the Economic Development Authority and others to bring these larger businesses to Douglas and Coffee County.

It is time to begin the renovations at City Hall. Many offices will be relocating to different areas in town. We apologize ahead for the inconvenience this will cause, however, once completed with renovations, City Hall will be your one stop shop. At the present time, the tentative plan is to move the City Clerk, 311/Customer Care Center, Customer Service, Code Enforcement, and Finance will relocate to the old Suntrust Bank office located across from Save-A-Lot. Citizens will pay their monthly utility bills, purchase business licenses, cut utilities on/off, or pick up disbursement checks - all at this location. Also tentatively, the Mayor and City Manager's Office, Community Development, and the Human Resource office will relocate to the Ashley Slater House located at 211 S. Gaskin Avenue. To meet with the Mayor or City Manager, submit job applications, or to ask for information about grants and other housing programs - citizens will go to the Ashley Slater House. City Commission meetings tentatively are going to be held at the Weir Center. Keep in mind, these plans may change and more details will be released soon.

We are beginning to start on the Sports Complex project at JC Adams Municipal Park. We are re-directing the flow of traffic with a new road that goes straight into the park. I can't wait for this project to begin so that we can have most of our Parks and Recreation Athletic

programs in one place. After this project begins, soon we will begin with the Miracle Field, Swimming Pool upgrades, and completion of the Municipal Services Complex.

I have preached passionately over the last year about cleaning up our neighborhoods and around our homes. In 2019, we are going to continue this initiative so that our citizens can get rid of excess trash and large items at NO cost to the citizen. We've had some issues with trash and recycling pick up in the last few months, but, we are working diligently with Waste Industries to remedy this problem. Most of all, we need to hear from you, so that we will know where the problems are occurring each week. Please give our Douglas Utilities Director a call at 912-389-3445, if you are experiencing trash or recycling pick up problems.

Now that our park assessment has been completed, we know we need a lot of upgrades. We are looking at implementing approximately \$3.1 million dollars of upgrades. Our children need safe play equipment, park building and bathroom upgrades, and more repairs in our parks. Citizens can help keep our parks up to standards by adopting a park through the Recreation Department. Call today and find out how you can "Team Up to Clean Up" our parks at 912-384-5978.

As far as utilities, we have several new initiatives that citizens should take advantage of – the UtilityHawk Software and the My Usage program. These are two different ways to monitor and adjust your utility usage each month. UtilityHawk can help you keep an eye on usage so you will know when you have a water leak or when an electric meter is slow. We just implemented the My Usage "pay as you go" program in December. This program allows you to set a monetary limit each month for utility use. Since we went to a set utility rate in the summer, you don't have to worry about the utility cost fluctuating each month. You are paying one set fee in the winter and summer months. Please see below utility chart with our comparison to the other electric companies located in Coffee County. You will see we are comparable or less than each one of those companies.

If you know of a youth that exhibits leadership skills, let us know! We want them to be involved in the Mayor's Youth Council. Our first year of the Douglas Mayor's Youth Council has been a huge success! These outstanding youth will help shape the future Douglas and Coffee County. We also saw the beginning of the first Douglas-Coffee County Teen Court program. This program is a great asset for our young people who have made a mistake. This program gives them a chance to change, learn not to commit minor offenses, and become more productive youth.

I enjoyed the holidays with my family and I hope that each of you spent time with your family. Now, I want to challenge your family to begin spending more time in the community doing things for others. Douglas will always shine brightly when we give time to our community and helping each other live a better life.