



MAYOR'S MONTHLY EDITORIAL

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MAYOR'S MONTHLY MINUTES - FEBRUARY 2019

Greetings citizens of Douglas! I want each citizen to know, we are working for citizens and creating a brighter Douglas for future generations. We are growing and becoming a more responsive government, by implementing programs that address concerns that have been voiced by our citizens. In 2018, efforts were continued to help improve our services, neighborhoods and community, as well as, our citizen's way of life.

On several occasions throughout 2018, several Commissioners, including myself, completed training with the Georgia Municipal Association. This training allows us to become better stewards of our city and we need to share our knowledge with our youth. The inaugural Douglas Mayor's Youth Council began in 2018. These students make me so proud with their knowledge and recommendations for a brighter tomorrow in Douglas. Throughout the year, they have attended training in Georgia, volunteered in the community, and have grown into outstanding citizens. The Douglas-Coffee County Teen Court is rapidly becoming a method to help deter teens with minor offenses from committing more damaging offenses and give them a second chance to better themselves and the community. I believe in our youth and I believe they can have a brilliant future ahead.

Over the past year, the City Clerk/Customer Service department has worked with outside agencies to offer the Utility Hawk program and My Usage program to city utility customers. Utility Hawk is an online program that allows customers access to a portal that will show real-time utility usage at their home or business. My Usage allows customers to pay as you use utilities. These programs are now ready for citizens to take advantage of and start saving on utilities.

The Community Development Department consists of 6 divisions which includes the Airport, Code Enforcement/Building Inspection/Animal Control, Grants, Public Information, Martin Centre and Heritage Station Museum. In 2018, the Community Development Department updated and adopted the 5 year Joint Coffee County and Cities of Ambrose, Broxton, Douglas, Nicholls Short Term Work Plan, renewed Alumni Status with Georgia Initiative for Community Housing, formed the Douglas - Coffee County Land Bank, reinstated the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing Committee. We have seen growth at the airport by constructing 16 new T-Hangars at Airport which allowed for revision and renewing lease contracts for all t-hangars. On the historic airbase, two buildings were rehabbed which allowed us to acquire two tenants in the buildings.

The City of Douglas has been awarded grants to help with funding for several projects. We worked cooperatively with Elixir and implemented the Employment Incentive Program for Elixir Industries. Housing rehab has been implemented through the Community Home Investment Program (CHIP) Grant. Douglas received Community Development Block Grant funds in the amount of \$459,895.00 for water and sewer improvements along West Phillips Street, West Cherry Street, and Magnolia Street. We also received Community Development Block Grant funds in the amount of \$528,484.00 for the improvements for the Elixir expansion and development of Roland Sahm Way Road. Douglas was awarded a Land Water Conservation Fund grant in the amount of \$100,000 from the Department of Natural Resources for the development of the Miracle Field. The Fire Department was awarded a Fireworks grant in the amount of \$14,776.36 from the Georgia Emergency Management Agency for the purchase of a truck. The Police Department received Bullet Proof Vest Grant and also a grant for H.E.A.T. Officers.

Working with the Chamber of Commerce, Community Development negotiated an intergovernmental contract with the Chamber of Commerce to provide the services that falls under Main Street, Visitor Center, Tourism, Festivals and Events. Prior to negotiating the contract, the Community Development department hosted successful events - Summer Beach Bash, South Georgia BBQ & Outdoor Festival, and Christmas Parade. The department has assisted with government promotions such as Georgia Cities Week, Fire Prevention Week, Public Power Week, Natural Gas Week, Customer Appreciation, Spring Junk Free, MLK "Day On" Service Project, National Night Out Against Crime, Mayor's Monthly Minutes Editorials, Mayors' Christmas Motorcade, Community Toy Drive, Chat N Chew Listening Sessions and the first City of Douglas Job Fair. Social Media campaigns have also been carried out with a Photo Contest and City of Douglas Trivia. Douglas was recognized for Travel and Tourism growth when we hosted a Tourism Product Development Team. This team of professional have provided a Tourism Product Development Report which allows the City of Douglas the opportunity to apply for Tourism Grant Funds. Douglas continues to maintain its Georgia and National Main Street Accreditation. The department took action to rid community eyesores – approx. 10 structures demolished and Code Enforcement issued increased warnings and citations on junk cars.

We moved Douglas Utilities into the future with the SMART Grid initiative with Tantalus and the "MyUsage", pay as you go program. To remove the electrical load on Substation #2, a new distribution line installed from Bowens Mill Rd down Hwy 135, to Richey Lane, and tied back in at the Southwire II on Pope Drive. By adding multiple switches to the distribution system electrical loads can move from Substation to Substation. A new distribution line was added to serve the new Elixir Anodizing Facility. A total rebuild of the distribution line on West Forest Drive was conducted. The electrical division has changed out 50 primary and secondary poles that were deemed unsafe and changed major routes from traditional lighting to LED lighting. Improvements allow our electric division to remain steady and allow growth in our agricultural and industrial markets. By May 2019, we will begin construction on the Utilities annex located on the 206 connector. Providing facilities and grounds that are large enough to house utilities and maintenance departments will create centralized operations and more efficiency for these departments.

Over the last 4 years, Natural Gas agricultural loads have grown significantly and commercial loads have remained steady. Natural Gas line extensions were made for the Premium Peanut Oil operation and for Elixir's Anodizing facility. The Compress Natural Gas station is running on average about 8100 GGE's per month which produces \$20,250.00 revenue and the loan for the CNG station loan has been paid in full. The gas division is currently servicing 52 chicken houses, 4 peanut drying operations, 2 cotton gins, 25 tobacco barns, 4 green houses for farming operations, 3 corn dryers, vineyard operation, pecan

dryer, and natural gas generator to run irrigation on a pecan orchard. Agricultural load has grown significantly over the past 4 years. The peak shaving plant has undergone an overhaul with equipment upgrades. Water/Sewer has seen improvements in the last year, with TNT gravity line rehab project, Westside sewer main rehab and new installation, Bo Jo Lift Station diesel bypass pump installed, installed 8" line for the Mingledorff rehab project, Wells 5 & 6 had renovations performed, and we smoke tested Jackson and Hollywood Subdivisions and the Northside Sewer Trunk Line.

A major focus in the Public Works division has been pothole repairs, mowing routes throughout City, major overhaul and maintenance on Airport Historic Area, every sidewalk and curb edging, and leaf/limb. Ditch cleaning and reclaim of ditches has taken place along 8 miles of the 15 miles of Storm Water canals, and broken storm drain covers have been poured. A basin cleanout regiment has begun on all major collection streets. The engineering on Gordon St and Fleetwood Circle Storm Water Projects has been completed. In 2018, we continued our contract with Trans Waste for curbside recycling and household garbage pickup.

The Douglas Coffee County Parks and Recreation Department was voted the Agency of the Year for GRPA's District 2! Recreation programs are nurturing our future athletes and capturing district and state championships! The Adopt-A-Park program is available and we have several parks waiting to be adopted by local organizations and individuals. Coming up Spring 2019, we should see construction at JC Municipal Park, which will begin Phase 1 of a first class Sports Complex for our kids to play and compete in tournaments. By late summer, we should begin construction at Davis Wade Park for the Miracle Field and new swimming complex.

Public Safety is always a priority with the City of Douglas. The Fire and Police Departments work hard each year to ensure our citizens are safe and protected by ensuring that firefighters and officers receive the training and equipment needed. They gave back to our community by hosting the National Night Out Against Crime, Boys & Girls Club cook-out, and education training to our school age children and adults. The Fire Department hosted three (3) Georgia Fire Academy classes, achieved all required training, and made minor updates to their training facility. A drone program has been put into action and 3 firemen are pilots for this program. A new Haz-Mat truck and monitors were purchased using grant funds. The ISO rating improved from a 3 to a 2 rating which saves homeowners on insurance costs. The Douglas Police Department opened its new training facility. This facility is state of the art complete with a moving target system to better train our officers when they are in the field. Three women's firearm safety classes were conducted and over 40 women learned how to properly and safely shoot a firearm.

In closing, I have to congratulate our outstanding athletes and coaches! Congratulations the No. 1 team in the State Region 1-AAAAAA – the Coffee County High School Boys Basketball Team!! I also want to say congratulations to the Coffee High School Swim Team for placing first in the 1-AAAAAA region girls and boys and as a combined team. Congratulations to the CHS wrestling team for their wins also! I am so proud of all athletes in Douglas and Coffee County – they are working hard and proving they have the endurance to bring home the win. Lastly, don't forget to bring old, torn flags to the Flag Exchange that is scheduled for February 16 & 17 from 1pm-4pm in the Lowe's parking lot hosted by the American Legion Post 515 and Boy Scout Troop 859.