

Murphysboro Minute

December 2016

From the Desk of Mayor Will Stephens

Upcoming Events

Community

Christmas Dinner

December 25th

KC Hall—200 S. 6th
Street

Have a very
Merry
Christmas
and Happy
New Year



One of the difficult things about writing this newsletter is that it spans the course of 3 months. So as I write I am busy hanging ornaments on the Christmas Tree and trying to remember what last minute gift shopping I need to complete. When this newsletter reaches some of you it will be far past Christmas and into the New Year. So let me begin by saying Merry Christmas, or a Happy New Year, whichever timing works best for you the reader.

Regarding the business of the City, let me bring you up to date on the 2017 budget for Murphysboro. The budget is crafted by city staff, the council and myself during the months of November and December. Due to an unexpected 55% increase in our health insurance premiums, the city budget as first proposed was facing a \$220,000 dollar deficit. This was cause for great concern. In order to balance the budget some difficult decisions had to be made. To get the numbers to work we had to put off the replacement of a retiring employee, trim the budget for housing demolition, put off the replacement of the roof at the Senior Citizens Building, reduce our budget for the City Attorney, rebid our health insurance, and a number of other smaller reductions across all departments of the City.

I appreciate the willingness of department heads and the council to work towards getting us where we need to be financially.

With that being said, there are many reasons to be excited about 2017. Set to unfold are a number of projects that I think will help our town grow, in turn expanding our tax base and providing a better quality of life for residents of Murphysboro. Some of those items include the promise of a new hotel to be built at the former Apple Tree Inn site. Expect to see a lot of action happen on that site starting in March of 2017. Also the announcement of the reopening of the Murphysboro I.Y.C. as a transitional center for the Department of Corrections should provide more than 100 jobs in our community. Furthermore, I have been in communication with the ownership of the former Jackson County Rehabilitation Center, and they assure me that they will have their Drug and Alcohol rehabilitation center up and running in 2017. This too will create an additional 50+ jobs within the city. Other items such as the expansion of One Hot Cookie, a new coffee shop opening behind the Courthouse, Silkworm's recent expansion, and additional projects simmering below the surface makes me feel confident that this coming year could be a great one for Murphysboro.

Also, I want to let residents know that the Murphysboro Cruise Nights are going forward in 2017. Josh Sayer, is helping to coordinate those events this year, and I appreciate his willingness to step up and keep that great event going. If you are interested in helping with Cruise Night, you can call 684-4961 or email mayor@murphysboro.com and I will get you in contact with Mr. Sayer.

Lastly, I would remind residents that I am available to meet regarding issues facing the city every week. If you have a question, concern, or just want to chat call 684-4961 and set up an appointment with me.

Mayor Will Stephens

www.murphysboro-il.gov or 618.684.4961