

The Mayor's Corner

By Mayor Beth A. Taylor

Fellow Citizens,

On behalf of Wytheville Town Council, I would like to wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas. This year, we have all been forced to do things a little differently and the holiday season is no exception. But that doesn't mean we can't keep the spirit and joy of Christmas close to our hearts while protecting ourselves and staying apart.

There are still many ways that we can enjoy the holidays. You may have already experienced festive activities such as seeing Santa ride through your neighborhood on a fire truck or voting for your favorite tree at the Festival of Trees. Here are a few activities you can still experience.

Check out the "Holiday Illumination Wytheville & Wythe County" Facebook page for information about where you can see beautiful decorations from 6-9 p.m. every evening through December 26. Currently on stage at the Wohlfahrt Haus Dinner Theatre is "A Country Christmas." Seating is limited because of social distancing, so be sure to make your reservations for a matinee or evening performance.



In an effort to help lift all our spirits, a special video entitled the "Wytheville Christmas Show" was created. It includes performances and segments from some talented people in our community. It's a little taste of the holiday festivities that you might normally experience in person during December. Please visit wytheville.org for a link to this video or see Facebook postings on the Visit Wytheville and Downtown Wytheville pages.



Tree Committee

Did you know?

- The Town adopted a Tree Ordinance on February 23, 2015 recognizing the importance of trees in Wytheville.
- The Town of Wytheville has been recognized with the Tree City USA designation by the Arbor Day Foundation for the past two years (2018 & 2019) and anticipates the same in 2020.
- The Town developed a tree nursery to plant new trees and replace removed trees in the Town, such as at West End Cemetery.
- The committee recognized the danger of running bamboo and adopted an ordinance addressing the location of such plants.
- The committee is working on a specimen tree program and a tree walking guide.
- The Town is working on the development of a management plan for trees.
- You can donate to the Town of Wytheville's Tree City USA program.

Wytheville Public Utilities Department

The Town is in the process of having a Sewer System Evaluation Survey (SSES) performed during the next 6-8 months. The survey will include smoke checking the service lines, installing flow monitoring equipment in strategic locations and CCTV camera investigations in sewer lines and manholes. The survey will determine areas within the Town's sewer system where inflow and infiltration of storm water is impacting the system. Reducing and eliminating inflow and infiltration helps prevent sanitary sewer system overflows that results from system overloads. The Town has received funding for the study from The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Virginia Clean Water Revolving Loan Fund Program in the amount of \$75,000. The Mount Rogers Planning District Commission awarded the Town \$25,000 of additional funding for the study. The study is to be completed before June 2021 allowing the Town to apply for additional funds through the Virginia Clean Water Revolving Fund Program to help cover the expenses of repairs and upgrades to improve the Town's sanitary sewer system.

Wytheville Fire & Rescue Department

Do you know what the "Ride Saver Program" is? The Ride Saver Program is an OPTIONAL subscription designed to help the citizens of the Town of Wytheville with out-of-pocket expenses should anyone within a household need 911 transport to the hospital. The average minimal charge for an ambulance transport is \$450. Most insurances will cover a portion of the call for service. Any additional cost is then the responsibility of the patient. With the \$200 Ride Saver Program, the patient will no longer be responsible for any additional expenses that insurance does not cover. Additionally, the Ride Saver Program subscription is for all individuals that reside in the household. The subscription lasts for one calendar year from the date of purchase. Should a citizen not have insurance, the Ride Saver Program covers all expenses for the ambulance transport.

I, Mayor Taylor, would like to share an example. There is a family, in our community, that has a family member that had a new medical emergency requiring three 911 ground transports to hospital (along with two helicopter transports) all within several weeks. This program saved them a lot of money and worries for the ground transport bills, and we were able to give them information on a similar privately run helicopter program.

If you are interested in the Ride Saver Program or have any questions, please call 276-223-3368, The easiest way to sign up is in the Treasurer's Office. A subscription form must be filled out, along with payment in the form of a check (made out to Town of Wytheville Fire & Rescue), cash or a credit card. Also, here is a contact for the AirMedCare (helicopter 911 emergency flight service), you can call Sarah Sarver at 276-613-3971.

Wytheville Police Department

Did you know that from the month of August to the present time there has been seventy (70) drug related arrests or pending arrests? Community policing has been a positive strategy for the Town of Wytheville Police Department and has resulted in achieving a number of desirable outcomes that include lowering crime rates, improving public opinion of our Law Enforcement Agency and increasing communication and outreach to our citizens with neighborhood meetings and social media presence, to name a few. The goal of the Town of Wytheville Police Department is to team-up with the community and other law enforcement agencies to devise a plan to eliminate drugs from coming into our community. The overall concept is to make a change in the culture of our community and make it very clear that drug use is unacceptable and must stop. The Wytheville Police Department is continuing and will not stop battling the drug issues in the Town of Wytheville. These accomplishments are credited to the detectives and police officers patrolling the streets and making our community safe and free of drug activity.

Council Actions

- Ordinance No. 1391 - an ordinance amending and reenacting Ordinance No. 640, generally known as the Zoning Ordinance, to rezone the property located at 675, 705, 725, 745 and 795 Fairview Road, which is located on the West side of Fairview Road between Ager Drive and North Fourth Street, from M-1 Industrial to R-3 Residential.

Appointments

- Kathleen (Kathy) Laster to the Wytheville Industrial Development Authority (WIDA).

Committee Vacancies

- Two remaining vacancies on the Wytheville Industrial Development Authority (WIDA).
- One vacancy on the Joint Industrial Development Authority (JIDA).
- If you are interested in serving on either committee, please call Town Clerk Sherry Corvin at 276-223-3349. She will be more than happy to give you information regarding these committees and help you through the process.

Shout Outs

- Carrington Place is battling COVID-19 and is asking for individual store-bought snacks (such as fruit cups, cookies, chips, crackers and candies) and drinks (such as juice boxes, small waters or soft drinks). Please drop your donations at their front door, I recommend attaching a note to let the staff know who it is from. If you leave a donation for the employees, then please label as such. We are so fortunate to live in a community that rallies together to support each other, especially our citizens who are elderly or have serious medical issues. I am so proud of the outreach and community support that has been shown for Carrington Place! Bravo to the citizens, churches, local businesses and Three Rivers Media, our hometown radio station, for all your efforts to help the residents of Carrington Place. My sincere thanks to all of you!
- A Mr. Swearingen recently reached out by phone to our Downtown Wytheville Board. Here are his comments: "In 1966, I stayed overnight in Wytheville, a midway place to stop, coming from West Virginia on my way to Atlanta, found a nice hotel. I will never forget my stay there." He found the hotel and Town to be very pleasant. He also asked for some promotional literature about Wytheville.

It is our hope that 2021 will be a much happier, healthier year and a time when we can begin to resume normal activities. Until then, let's keep being safe and come up with creative ways that we can continue to enjoy the holidays and spread the spirit of the season. Keep in touch with your neighbors and elderly members of your neighborhood through the winter season to make sure they are okay and have the essential items they need such as food and medication.

Wytheville is a strong community and we will rise above this pandemic together. Individually, let's do our part to keep each other safe so that someday soon we can experience the joy of being together again.

Let's all continue to be safe by wearing masks, washing our hands, practicing social distancing and not holding gatherings that increase the possible spread of the virus.

I welcome the opportunity to talk to you regarding your ideas and concerns. I can be reached by phone at (276) 223-3356 or via email at beth.taylor@wytheville.org.

