

## **A Work in Progress**

### **Guest Commentary**

#### **Mayor Chuck McClanahan**

I recently shared with our residents, the declaration of a New Day in Corsicana and I meant what I said. We are starting with a fresh, new perspective and vision. Our first step is making big changes in how we keep our citizens informed about what goes on within city government in our town.

The new Communications Mission Statement reads: In its ongoing effort to facilitate open and accountable access to City government, The City of Corsicana will utilize all available resources to foster effective, timely, comprehensive communication with its citizens.

This mission statement reflects the following values and goals:

#### Values

- Truth, accuracy and candor in all government communications are essential.
- The City of Corsicana is committed to the highest possible level of quality and professionalism in all its undertakings.
- It is essential the City of Corsicana maintain a communications culture that is adaptable to the changing needs of the citizens it serves.

#### Goals

- To provide useful, easily understandable information to Corsicana residents about their City government.
- To facilitate citizen input and feedback concerning the programs and policies of the City government to aid in the decision-making processes of the City.
- To encourage citizen involvement and participation in government and community activities.
- To support the City Council and administration in achieving overall goals and specific community programs.

Thanks so much to all who responded to the survey that was distributed in the water bills. Your input is invaluable and all of the results will be posted on the City of Corsicana website very soon.

In reviewing the results of the survey, the most prominent concern voiced by our citizens relates to the condition of our streets. The City Council has heard the concern and is taking measures to address the problem. The Council recently voted to allocate an additional \$250,000 to street reconstruction. This brings the total investment in streets for the year to approximately

\$1,000,000. In addition, over the next four years the Council will consider issuing \$12 million in bonds to reconstruct major arterials around town. The current project underway is the reconstruction of Forrest Lane from Beaton to Dobbins. Completed projects are East 13<sup>th</sup> from Business 45 to Lago de Plata and East 12<sup>th</sup> from Business 45 to South 12<sup>th</sup>. The next projects will be South 15<sup>th</sup> from the railroad to IH 45 and Dobbins from Forrest to 26<sup>th</sup>.

The second most common concern voiced is the lack of code enforcement activities. Our citizens want more effort placed in identifying and holding accountable those who don't comply with city ordinances. To address that problem, we are in the process of developing a citizens' code compliance initiative. A training program is being developed to educate selected and screened citizens to help in the code compliance effort. They will be trained and equipped to identify, take pictures, and report violations to planning and zoning. If you are interested in applying, please contact Elizabeth Borstad at (903) 654-4858 to sign up.

As I read the notes from our citizens, I discovered several misconceptions and much misinformation our citizens seem to understand as facts. One I still hear relates to Cracker Barrel. Let me tell you what really happened.

In 2005, the representatives of Cracker Barrel approached the City of Corsicana to plan the construction of a restaurant. All the necessary information was provided along with notice of the requirement that all buildings fronting on major highways must have a masonry front. Cracker Barrel asked the Council to consider waiving that requirement for the restaurant. The item was placed on the City Council agenda for consideration during the June 7, 2005 meeting. On the day of the Council meeting, the representative called from DFW airport in route to the meeting. He stated that he had been contacted by his home office and directed to return and ask the City Council to table the item. The item was tabled.

Ultimately, the Council considered and approved the variance on June 6, 2006. The process also required a plat be prepared and the plat was approved on July 20, 2006 by the Planning and Zoning Commission. These two actions completed the process for Cracker Barrel to build. The company later told us they decided not to build here, and other places, due to the economic forecast and they were adamant that the decision had nothing to do with the City of Corsicana staff or ordinances.

Please stay tuned for more myth busters and updates. A new City of Corsicana website is under construction. Improving communication is one of the most important first steps toward embracing a clearer vision of what it means to say, it is a New Day in Corsicana. I am so proud and honored to be your Mayor and my door is always open.

Chuck McClanahan

Mayor

