

MAYOR'S REPORT TO THE CITIZENS

7-4-14

On this day of the anniversary of the independence of our country I wish you well. You may be wondering how things are progressing with the repair of streets as we move forward to repair the damage caused by the severe storms of April 28th and 29th. That is the purpose of this report – to pass on to you information that, hopefully, will be encouraging.

Emergency repairs have been made and other repairs are awaiting the submission of work orders developed by FEMA. Work orders are in the process of being developed and should be submitted within the next two weeks. At that time we'll have a scope of work and will be able to seek quotes from contractors for repairs based on the scope of work described in the work orders.

Riggs Street should be the first in line for repairs, followed by Hilldreth, Pensacola and Mobile. State Street repairs are incomplete so additional work will be done at that location. Every street in Town received damage to some extent and each will be addressed in order of damage severity, which will include edge of street damage, damage to ditches and culverts, and damage to the shoulders.

This has been a trying but interesting time. I've observed that many residents have pitched in to help the community return to a state of normalcy. Some have used their tractors, blades and other equipment to clear silt from the streets or to fill pot holes. Others have cleared away and disposed of debris from their properties and the rights of way. Almost everyone I've encountered has been patient and understanding that the process takes time for evaluation of damages and to work with the various agencies involved in recovery. We've turned a corner in the process and should be able soon to begin permanent repairs. Your resilience is truly amazing and I thank you for your outstanding cooperation!

Not only was damage done to public facilities but to homes and personal properties as well. The Town has no authority to assist on private property but we at Town Hall are available to help with information, fax machine and notary public. If you know of anyone who needs those services please encourage them to let us know.

As a last note, this event brings home the urgent need for a storm water management/ drainage plan. The infrastructure is old and piecemeal and inadequate for the average severe rain storm, much less for the sort of event that occurred on April 28th and 29th. Sadly, the council had a chance to get that done through an EPA grant that would have been administered by The Nature Conservancy and it was turned down by a vote of three to three. If that grant had been awarded to the Town, we would have had a plan in place by the end of this year. Please help me by urging your town council to take advantage of assistance from agencies that are willing to help the Town. Those funds will be given to someone and that grant is supported by your tax dollars. Turning it down doesn't mean the funds won't be used – they will be used but by some other town or city.

Fortunately, because of careful spending over the past years, there was money in reserve that will help us through this disaster. But we need to do what we can to make the Town more resilient in the face of natural (and manmade) disasters. It makes sense to bring some of our tax dollars back to help us with that task.

As always, I encourage you to visit Town Hall and let us know of your concerns – tell us what we're doing well and give us suggestions for improvement.

In Your Service, Patsy