

## Municipal News – January 2009

It is difficult to believe that 2008 is gone. It was a year of accomplishments for the City of Barnwell, the council and its employees. I would like to reminisce for a moment and review the year. Then I will let you know what to expect in 2009, which looks to be another exciting year.

I can't begin to reflect back on the year without first thinking of the city employees and department heads. The numerous accomplishments of 2008 would not have been possible without the team effort that these employees have achieved. I could not have asked for a better group of people to be working with toward the goals of the city council and its master plan.

Early in the year we finished the Main Street lift station which increased our sewage capacity by 60% to the area by Heathwood on the lake. After many debates through comments and surveys, we came to a conclusion on how best to move forward on the navigational changes and the island placements on the circle. Even though we have had to delay our construction work until now due to a required review of approved projects by SCDOT, we are now prepared to move forward with the project and plan for a start date of January 19<sup>th</sup>.

2008 was also a year of changes within the Cities Management Teams. Through it all though, department heads and other employees have stepped up to take care of many tasks without worrying whether the task was their "responsibility" or not. New faces have come and some have gone, but we are appreciative to all who have stayed the course to get the job done.

A number of our parks and areas have been spruced up this year thanks to hard work and a few grants. A PARD grant in the amount of \$65,000 from the SC Department of PRT provided a grant to place new fencing and lighting (and eventually new landscaping) at Fuller Park. A Palmetto Pride grant in the amount of \$3,800 provided funding to place new planters all around the downtown area, which were built by the Career Center and are being maintained by the downtown businesses. The city parking lot received a major facelift thanks to the efforts and cooperation of Barnwell County and the City Street Department. The City also received a Competitive Community Grant from the State Budget and Control Board in the amount of \$24,000 to replace and refurbish the Circle Fountain. The entrance signs coming into Barnwell have been given a facelift with new planting areas provided by the hard working Street Department employees.

In April of 2008, we launched our new website, [www.cityofbarnwell.com](http://www.cityofbarnwell.com), which provides updated information to citizens, visitors and other interested groups about our community and what we have to offer. We encourage you to get online and check it out. The website is updated at a minimum, weekly, and sometimes daily.

We also had some celebrations during the year including the Cities Mean Business month where we recognized our oldest businesses in the city. During the Festival on the Round, we celebrated the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Sundial. And in December, we re-dedicated the fountain to one of Barnwell's most noted mayors, Herman I. Mazursky, who held office for 30 years.

The Fire Department received a grant of \$30,000 from the V Safe Program through the State Legislature for Volunteer and Combination Fire Departments. The funds used for this grant have assisted us in equipping the refurbished ladder truck, also a grate accomplishment, which will help in Barnwell's overall fire rating.

The Barnwell Police Department answered 8,099 calls for service. Responded to 299 alarms and investigated 224 traffic accidents. The Department made 494 arrests during the year. Our animal control unit answered 342 complaints and impounded 209 animals at the animal shelter.

The City's Planning Commission has worked hard this year, with the help and guidance from the Lower Savannah Council of Governments, to provide the city with an updated Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Maps for future development and growth opportunities.

As most everyone knows, our major projects for the year have been in the renovation of the old bank building on the Circle for the New City Hall and the Lemon Parks Sports Complex. These projects have not been without interesting and sometimes frustrating setbacks and issues, such as honey bees, termites and RAIN. As we look back on the goals of the creation of the Master Plan in 2006, "the central business district of Barnwell would be a road map for the community as a whole to do the following:

- Preserve and enhance the small town charm of Barnwell while taking advantage of strong growth patterns encroaching upon them from larger, nearby metropolitan areas.
- Create opportunities for economic growth in the community by reinforcing existing businesses and encouraging new business to locate to the community.
- Increase the quality of life for citizens of Barnwell through economic development and enhanced public amenities for the community."

We continue to feel that the progress that we are making with these and other projects will continue to assist us in accomplishing these goals. We know that we still have a long way to go, and the economy is not making it very easy. But in 2009, we will continue to work toward our goals. Expectations for Lemon Park will be that the Clover-leaf fields, press box and concession stand and soccer/football field will be complete in mid-April and the total completion of the park by the end of the summer. City Hall is expected to be complete by mid-summer. Our new Recreation Director has created a new program guide filled with programs for all ages. People have complained sometimes that there is nothing to do in Barnwell, well not anymore. Check out these programs and support them!

The Circle Navigational construction will begin in the next few weeks. We again ask for your cooperation and caution as the work is being completed in the next few months. The funding for this project comes from the Federal Highway Administration and is managed by the South Carolina Department of Transportation. We are appreciative to the state for helping us move forward on this project. We have also received a 2009 Palmetto Pride grant in the amount of \$4,000 to fund a new landscaping plan for the shrubbery area around the fountain. You may have already noticed that the shrubbery has been removed for this project.

As we move forward into 2009, look for our updates in this column and on our website for additional information. If you, our citizens, have any questions, concerns or comments, please call us or come by the city hall at 124 Burr Street. We are here to serve YOU!

## Municipal News February 2009

The Barnwell Recreation Department has kicked off the New Year with a Winter/ Spring Program Guide. Several events have already been held and have been a huge success. A youth WII Tournament was held January 16<sup>th</sup> followed by a preschool Smorey Telling program on January 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Wondrous Worms program was held January 28<sup>th</sup>. The program guide lists recreation events that will be held through April 28<sup>th</sup>. Come by City Hall and pick up your guide, check out the calendar of events on the website ([www.cityofbarnwell.com](http://www.cityofbarnwell.com)) or call Emily Randell at 259-3317 to register your child for these great programs. To get a deal on some of the programs provided in March and April, look for the “palmetto tree” on one of our pages of the website. It is a link to a coupon for a few of the programs! Click on the link, print out the coupon and bring it in when registering your child for the designated programs Check it all out at [www.cityofbarnwell.com](http://www.cityofbarnwell.com).

There have been some changes in this year’s City tax bills, some of you have already noticed that your 2008 tax bill from the city was less than the 2007 tax bill and that the millage rate dropped from 63 mills to 57.1 mills. Here is what happened. In preparing the budget for the 2008 tax year the City discovered that it had erroneously charged 63 mills for tax year 2007 instead of the correct millage rate of 55.5. In order to correct this unintentional error, a budget for the 2008 tax year was adopted by the City to properly reflect the correct millage of 57.1.

However this did not correct the error for the prior 2007 tax year. In order to correct this error, State Statute requires that the City place with the county Treasurer the necessary funds to allow the county Treasurer to make refunds to City taxpayers for the error in the millage rate for the 2007 tax year.

This is not a simple task, but the process is underway and the necessary funds have been placed with the county Treasurer in order to issue refund checks. Refund checks could go out as early as February 2009. The County Auditor, James G. Fickling and the County Treasurer, Wendall Gibson, Jr. have rendered invaluable assistance and have fully cooperated with the City in order to correct this error.

If your tax refund is less than \$5.00 you must claim your refund in cash in person at City Hall, by presenting proper photo identification and your notification letter. This is being required in order to minimize the cost of check writing, mailing, etc.

The City regrets this error, but believes that we have done everything that we can do in order to correct it and issue refunds at the earliest possible point in time.

The City has received a letter from the Barnwell Regional Airport Commission requesting that the City take action to move the Vultures from the Turkey Creek Roost.

The landing and Takeoff flight path is directly over the roost area and several close calls with Vultures have occurred. I have contacted the USDA wildlife office to ask for a survey of their roost by their wildlife experts. Mr. Noel Myers State Director of the USDA Wildlife Program visited the roost site on January 29<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Myers' findings were that the roost was a threat to aviation and property damage and approved a program on NON-LETHAL harassment to get the roost moved away from the critical areas. The roost is populated with both Black and Turkey Vultures, these birds are protected under State and Federal Law; however, either species is not on the threatened or endangered list. The City has applied for all the proper permits to conduct this program.

Starting in approximately two weeks the City will begin the non-lethal harassment of this roost site. You will here loud explosions from 4pm until dusk in the area of Fuller Park and the SCDNR Fish Hatchery. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at City Hall.

Due to uncertainty of budgets, construction schedules and lack of past participation, it has been decided to cancel the Festival on the Round this year. It is not known whether the city will engage in reviving the festival next year or not. Other activities will be planned though through the Tourism & Community Development Department and the Parks and recreation Department. If you have any interest in working with us, please contact Lynn S. Cox or Emily Randell of the City.

## Municipal News March 2009

By John Zawacki

Work is now in full swing on the circle, the islands have been poured on Burr St next to the County Library and work has moved on to Main St and Burr. Once the Islands are all installed the contractor placing the cross walks will begin work. The project should be complete by May 1 barring bad weather.

I know that between the traffic circle work and renovation for City Hall that congestion and access to the Circle businesses has been difficult. I appreciate everyone's patience with us, if the construction is giving you problems please call City Hall so I can try to alleviate the situation.

At the City Hall renovation, the work focus has changed from demolition to actual rebuilding of the facility. We are still on for a completion date of July 20<sup>th</sup>. The installation of the roofing tile on the main building roof will start this month. Keep a lookout for it, you will be pleased with the style. The roofing tile is a modern composite material that is made from 85% recycled material.

Lemon Park is now 67% complete. Work is presently focusing on the cloverleaf ball fields and soccer field in order to make our April 18 deadlines. The City is planning for an April 17<sup>th</sup> dedication. More information will be available on this as the agenda and plans are finalized. The contractor requests that all citizens please stay off the sodded fields so they may be ready to play on in April.

Construction of the Playground and Brown St. parking lot will begin upon completion of the Clover leaf Ball Fields and should be accomplished by July. We have developed a plan which will leave the playground open at all times even when the Ball fields are closed.

Please place on your calendar our Relay for Life Celebration to be held on the circle on April 24<sup>th</sup>. We will start the program off with a Cancer Survivors Lap and dinner. If you have not signed up for this event, you may do so now at City Hall.

Municipal News April 2009

By John Zawacki

I have received several questions lately on how can the City do the projects that are now under way with the current economy as it is. First of all these projects were started more than a year ago when the economy was booming, And once committed to, the projects have to continue to completion. Let me go through each project and explain the funding for each as well as provide expected project completion.

### **Lemon Park Sports Complex**

This project was approved by City Council because they understood the need for a recreation area for our citizens and to generate tourism in the City through various tournaments. Recreation Director Emily Randell already has 6 baseball tournaments scheduled for 2009. The funding for the complex comes from the Hospitality and Accommodation taxes, a \$194,250 grant from Baseball Tomorrow Fund grant and funds that the City has saved over the years. The City has entered into a lease buy back agreement with BB&T Bank for the project. We will make 15 annual payments of \$182,218.06 to pay off the lease on the complex. The four 200-foot fields, concession stand and the multi-purpose field will be completed and playable for the 2009 recreational baseball and softball season beginning April 18. We invite everyone to come to the Lemon Park Grand Opening Ceremony on Friday, April 17, at 6 pm. The rest of the park, including a 300-foot baseball field, t-ball field, and playground, will be completed by the end of the summer (as scheduled).

### **City Hall Project**

The City Hall renovation was part of the Master Plan developed for the City of Barnwell in 2006. The plan of City Council was to save a magnificent building located on the circle and to locate City Government activities in the core business area. The funding for this project came once again from funds saved over the years and a general obligation bond sale. BB&T Bank once again gave the City the best bid for the G O Bonds. These will be repaid by the City by an increase in tax millage. This increase will be listed separately on your tax bill. Currently the City treasure is working to determine what the millage increase will be. The payment period is over 11 years with an annual payment of \$111,836.20. The project is on schedule and will be completed by July 20.

## **Circle Upgrades**

The Circle upgrade project is funded by a grant received from SCDOT in the amount of \$196,138.66. The City portion of this project is \$49,034.66 this was obtained from the City Savings account. This project is on schedule and will be completed by early May.

Several other smaller projects were completed; the new fountain on the circle was funded by a Budget and Control Board grant of \$24,000. The City Parking Lot project was completed with county C funds for repaving and funds budgeted from the city for landscaping. The new landscaping on the circle was done with a Palmetto Pride grant of \$4,000.

I hope I was able to answer the questions on funding, and if you still have additional question please feel free to call me at 259-3266.

The City has been asked by Ms. Ella Gardner, MRC Coordinator to set up an information meeting on the Medical Reserve Corps. The MRC was founded after the 911 attack to provide a national system of Volunteers. These MRC units are community based and function as a way to locally organize and utilize Volunteers. Volunteers include Medical and public health professionals, veterinarians, interpreters, Chaplains, office workers and other vital support positions. If you are interested in learning more come listen to Ms. Gardner's presentation at the Barnwell County Library on Wednesday May 20<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 pm.

Municipal News May 2009

By John Zawacki

As we approach mid May several of the on going City projects are coming to completion. The Fuller Park PARD Grant for the Fuller Park basketball courts and hill only require the paving of the parking lot for completion. This will be completed next week. I hope everyone is happy with the landscaping of the hill; this is one of the first areas seen by visitors to our City.

We are 90% complete on the Circle traffic upgrades, with only one handicapped area and parking lines to be installed. We are going to wait for SCDOT to pave the circle prior to putting down the parking lines this should take about 90 days. Thanks to all for your patience while work was going on especially the downtown merchants who were most impacted by the construction.

Phase two of the Lemon Park Sports complex is moving slowly due to the rain we have recently received. I feel we will be back on track with the construction with in a week. The playground equipment will arrive in 4 weeks and work will begin on this part of the project. Parking has been a challenge on Monday, Tuesday and Thursdays due to the number of games being played. The City underestimated what parking would be needed and now has started work on a third parking lot on Lemon Park Drive. We are expediting construction so that it will quickly be available for use. On Hagood Ave. the major storm water work has been completed and final grading and seeding of the road shoulder will begin next week.

Tournaments for Lemon Park continue to be planned, the first one being a girls softball, boys baseball tournament sponsored by East Coast Ball. Teams from Tennessee, North Carolina , South Carolina, Georgia and Florida will participate. On June 20-26<sup>th</sup>, the Dixie Youth District

Tournament will be held at the Park. This one-week long tournament is sure to bring major excitement to Barnwell. **Good Luck to all the teams.**

The repair of the gazebo at Collins Park is now complete; this renovation has made a major improvement for the park. We hope the citizens of Barnwell continue to utilize this fine Park.

The new recreation summer programs are out, please look over the program guide to see all the great events that Emily and her staff have planned. The guide can also be seen on our City web site ([www.cityofbarnwell.com](http://www.cityofbarnwell.com)). All questions should be directed to Emily Randell at 259-3317. The City Looks forward to a great summer of recreational activities.

Other programs that the city is involved in include the Clemson Extension 4H20 program during the week of June 15-18. You may contact Clemson Extension for more information on this great program for youth ages 8-12. We are also working with the county museum and other organizations to have a Storytelling Celebration, June 12-13. This will be a fun and entertaining Friday evening and all day Saturday event. Tickets will be available soon. A July 4<sup>th</sup> Family Fun Fest and Fireworks is being scheduled for Saturday, July 4<sup>th</sup>, so we hope that all of those who will be in town will come out for an evening of fun! If you have any questions regarding any of these programs, please call Lynn Cox at 541-6555.

The City Council has passed Ordinance 2009-3 adopting and enacting the new City Code. For anyone who is interested in viewing all of the City Ordinances these are now on the city web site. This has been a major step for the city to provide the city ordinances in a readily accessible way to our citizens, businesses and visitors. If you have any questions concerning these ordinances, please do not hesitate to call city hall at 259-3266.

## Municipal News June 2009

The second phase of the Lemon Park Sports complex is moving again. After a delay due to rain the last two ball fields have been sodded and the concrete contractor has made great gains in the side walk. The play ground equipment has been installed and now the irrigation system and the concrete walking trail will be laid. Please note that the playground is not open for use. There is still a great deal of construction work to do and the area is not safe for children. We will make an announcement when the playground will be open. Parking is still an issue due to the fact that two additional parking lots are still under construction. We hope to have parking lot 2 on Lemon Park Drive opened for the Dixie youth district tournament to be held the week of June 20<sup>th</sup>. The parking lot will hold an additional 140 cars.

With the curtailment of Hanesbrand's, operation inflow to the Waste Water Treatment Plant has dropped to approximately 700,000 Gallons per day. Prior to the Hanesbrand's closure the Waste Water Treatment Plant received approximately 1,250,000 gal of waste water per day. Also the current wet weather has the residential use of city water down from normal usage. This is due to less sprinkling of lawns.

The affect of this has reduced anticipated Water and Sewer revenue to the City by an expected \$400,000. To counter this anticipated revenue shortfall the City has eliminated 3 positions in the waste water department and has cut \$188,000 from their operating budget. We hope that these measures will bring the budget in line with expected revenue.

On a lighter note we have asked the State Parks and Recreation Department to change the scope of the Fuller Park grant to allow the City to use the remaining funds to build a disc golf course at the park. In order for this to happen our legislative delegation has to agree to the change. I have sent letters to Senator Hutto and Representative Hosey asking for their approval. Emily Randell has had a disc golf course designer look at the lay out of Fuller Park; he will provide Emily with a conceptual design of a course.

The City needs your help in stopping vandalism at the Fuller Park basketball courts. The City has provided a paved parking lot for users of the courts and has place a split rail fence to protect the City Cemetery. We have also planted grass around parking lot. To date the fence has been hit and broken and the markers around the grassed areas have been torn down and cars parked on top of the new grass. If you see this happening, please call City

Hall or the Barnwell Police. We thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

The City invites everyone out to a Patriotic Celebration during the weekend of July 4<sup>th</sup>. Friday evening, July 3<sup>rd</sup>, the Barnwell County Arts Council will host the Fort Gordon Military Band out at Veteran's Park beginning at 7:30 pm. Bring your chairs and enjoy some great patriotic music. On Saturday, July 4<sup>th</sup>, prepare your picnic baskets and bring the kids, grandkids, and the rest of the family for a Family Fun-tastic Fest at Veteran's Park. At 5:00 pm, organized games will be provided for free by the city recreation department, along with a jumpy castle (a charge will apply) and good old-fashioned fun. Patriotic Musical Concert by several noted Barnwell Countians will lead into a Fireworks Display at 9:15. This event is sponsored by the City of Barnwell in partnership with the First Baptist Church and Hagood Ave. Baptist Church. Everyone is invited for this family-friendly, Fourth of July Patriotic Celebration at Veteran's Park.

## Municipal News July 2009

City Hall is 4 weeks from completion; the second floor is currently 96% complete and will be done by July 15<sup>th</sup>. This area will house the law offices of Tom Boulware and H. Edward Smith. Their entrance will be on Jefferson St. with an elevator located off of the back parking lot. Mr. Clinton Lemon will also have Offices on the second floor with his entrance on Main St. Mr. Lemon's offices can also be reached via the elevator in the rear of the building. City hall will be completed by the first week in August with an opening date expected to be September first. At that time you will be able to pay your water bill using the new drive thru located in the rear of the building or use the after hour drop box located on Jefferson St. The City will have a dedication of City Hall on September 8<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 PM. Please plan to attend and see the completed facility.

The total Lemon Park Sports Complex is due to be complete by August 15<sup>th</sup> with an expected Playground opening of August 17<sup>th</sup>. After this date the gates at Brown St and Park St will be opened at 8am and will close at 10:30 pm daily. The City asks that until September 30 you do not get on the grass at the playground so that it can get a good start. All play areas can be accessed using the walking track. Also, during the hottest hours of the day, playground equipment can be very hot and can burn, so please take caution with young children. Remember this is your park, please ensure that it is kept clean and neat.

The shipment of the disc golf course components has been pushed back to July 21<sup>st</sup> this will cause the course to also be delayed for opening. The city will also have available inexpensive discs for those wishing to try out the course. Flying discs can be purchased through other sporting goods stores as well. We hope that many of you will take advantage of this new park amenity we have provided through the South Carolina PARD grant program. Playing the course will be free to the public.

The city of Barnwell would also like to thank all of those who assisted in this year's first Fourth of July FUN-tastic Family Fest. The Patriotic weekend was kicked off by a great concert provided by the Fort Gordon Military Band, sponsored by the Barnwell County Arts Council. Thanks to the Tourism & Community Development Director, Barnwell Police Department, Fire Department, Street Department, Recreation Department, First Baptist Church and all those individuals who assisted with the

festivities. We hope that everyone had a good celebration. We learned a few things this year and so hope to make this an annual event.

Currently City budgets for the Fiscal year 2009/2010 are being prepared the City Council will have a budget work shop on July 21<sup>st</sup> to review the first draft of these budgets. Once the City Council is satisfied with the proposed budget a public hearing will be held prior to the second reading of the Budget Ordinance. Dates, times and location for this Public hearing will be published in the paper and announced on the radio.

## Municipal News August 2009

The new disk golf course at Fuller Park is now complete. The first tee is located next to the baseball parking lot by the picnic tables. Rules are posted along with a sign that explains and depicts the hole next to the tee. There are nine holes; the last hole is located behind the basketball courts. All you need to play is a disc (Frisbee). Play is a first come first use system and please be courteous to other players on the course. An overlay of Fuller Park showing the location of each hole is on our web site ([WWW.cityofbarnwell.com](http://WWW.cityofbarnwell.com)) along with a score card that can be printed out. Frisbees can be purchased at City Hall for \$2.00 each.

August 22 & 23 are the dates for our last baseball tournament of the season. East Coast Ball, Baseball World Championship will consist of 30 teams in age groups 10U 11U and 12U. Most of the teams participating are from Georgia and South Carolina. Come on out to see these great teams play for the Championship.

I have received several calls on the newspaper article on the potential increase in water and sewer rates. At this time no decision has been made as to the amount of the potential increases. City Council is presently looking at all areas to reduce cost to help with the revenue shortfall caused by the closing of Hanesbrand and reduced operations at Milliken. The closure of these plants has left the City with no large industrial users of water and sewer. This fact has produced a \$500,000 deficit in the Water Department and General Fund budgets. To date City Council has been able to identify approximately \$200,000 in potential budget cuts. The Police Department has received two grants which will cover overtime and pay the salary for one officer, these grants saved an additional \$66,000 to the 2009/2010 General Fund budget. This still leaves a \$234,000 deficit in the total City budget for 2009/2010. In order to balance the budget there will most likely be some increases in fees. However this is still being discussed. In order for there to be fee increases the City Council must pass an ordinance establishing the fees. A first reading of these Ordinances was read at the August third City Council meeting. There will now be a Public Hearing on September 14<sup>th</sup> prior to the City Council's regularly scheduled meeting. The meeting time and location will be published in the newspaper and be announced on WDOG. There will be a meeting agenda on the City Web site and posted at City Hall.

Another concern voiced by several citizens is the movement of the large generator that will pass through Barnwell on Marlboro Ave. There is concern over the cutting of several large limbs on the live Oaks that line the road. The City has met with the company in charge of the moving operation and has stated our concerns over damage to the trees. The company has agreed to have their arborist meet with the Mayor to discuss our concerns. They have indicated that no indiscriminate cutting of trees will be done and that all necessary cutting will be well thought out prior to cutting. The City has proposed several alternate routes through the City however bridges and other obstacles do not allow for their use. This project has been in the planning for two years and all routes have been evaluated and only the safest route has been chosen. City Council will monitor this situation and continue to talk with the movers to ensure that the least damage will be done.

The City of Barnwell Police Department would like to remind everyone about the free information service offered and sponsored by The Barnwell Police Department and the Nixle Company. This free service allows the user to get updates, alerts, traffic warnings, and citizen advisories from the Barnwell Police Department. All you have to do is go to [www.nixle.com](http://www.nixle.com) and sign up. If you choose, you can get a short message texted to your cell phone and the entire message sent to your email address. (Standard text message rates apply) This is a safe service endorsed by the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Council of State Governments, Verisign as well as other national associations and organizations. All information sent by the Barnwell Police Department is safe and secure. Regardless of whether you are a resident of or one who visits the City of Barnwell, this free service is available to any and everyone. If you have any questions about this great program, contact Chief Todd Gantt at the Barnwell Police Department at (803) 259-1838.

The City of Barnwell will dedicate the new city hall on Main Street on Tuesday, September 8 at 7:30 p.m. We invite all interested citizens and visitors to come out for this dedication and open house. Thanks to Virgo Gambill Architect Firm and especially Query-Pritchard Construction for a great renovation job. We hope that the new city hall will be a source of pride for all who live, work, play and visit Barnwell County.

## Municipal News September 2009

On September 14<sup>th</sup> City Council held its first Public Hearing and Regularly Scheduled Meeting in the new City Hall Council Chambers. Only five Barnwell citizens were present for the Public Hearing, which had to do with increasing water and sewer rates, adopting two new fees and adopting the 2009/2010 City budget. In this month's Municipal News I would like to cover the reasons for the water and sewer increase and give an overview of the City's budget for 2010.

The events of this past year that caused our City Council to increase water and sewer rates were the untimely closure of the Hanesbrand's plant and the announcement from Milliken that it would also cease operations at the Barnwell plant. These two plants provided the City with \$550,000 in water and sewer revenue which funded 41% of the budget of the Water and Sewer Departments. In order to make this year's budget (2008-2009) balance, City Council approved the Administrator's recommendation to eliminate one position, transfer one - Water and Sewer employee to the Recreation Department, and reduce the water and sewer budget by \$188,000. These actions still left a budget deficit of \$218,000. To cover this deficit City Council appropriated \$218,000 from the water and sewer reserve fund.

The 2009/2010 water and sewer budget has also been cut an additional \$14,150. In order to fund the 2009/2010 water and sewer budget of \$1,321,500, water and sewer rates were raised. This increase will affect barnwell citizens as follows:

If you have a ¾ inch meter, your monthly water and sewer bill will increase \$18.40

If you have a 1 inch or 1.5 inch meter, your monthly water and sewer bill will increase \$32.40

If you have a 2 to 6 inch meter (industrial type) your monthly water and sewer bill will increase \$117.40

These illustrations are based on a 6,000 gallon per month water use rate. If you use more than 6000 gallons, the rate will increase by \$3.65 per every 1000 gallons.

For those residential customers that have 2 inch meters the city will replace these at your request, a small charge will apply.

On the Total City budget for Fiscal Year 2009/2010 (Oct 1, 2009-Sept 30, 2010) the budget increased by \$132,090, due to the annual payment of the General Obligation Bond. The revenue for this payment comes from an increase in property tax. This year City Council increased the millage rate by 12.1 mills. 10 mills of the increase is for the payment of the bond which is \$111,840 annually for 10 ten years. At the end of the ten years the 10 mills will be removed from the property tax. The remaining 2.1 mills will be used to cover increased operating costs. This increase in millage rate on property taxes will affect Barnwell City residence as follows;

A Barnwell resident who occupies a home asset at \$100,000 would pay an additional \$48.40 in taxes A Barnwell resident that owns a home asset at \$100,000 but does not live in the home would pay an additional \$72.60 in taxes.

This is the first sustaining tax increase for the City since 1974. In 1994 there was a tax increase that lasted one year and then was rescinded by city council in 1995.

The Recreation Department budget will increase in the 2009/2010 budget year for the operation and maintenance of the Lemon Park Sports Complex. This new City budget is for \$110,500. This additional cost to the City will be covered by profits from the concession stand, Recreation program fees and funds from the Hospitality Tax and the City's General fund.

The lemon park Sports Complex was constructed with funds from the Cities savings, Hospitality Tax revenue and a Lease Purchase Agreement with BB&T Bank. The lease Purchase requires that the City make annual payments of \$182,200 for 15 years. This payment will come totally from the hospitality tax revenue and will not affect property taxes.

If you have any questions please call City Hall at 259-3266

## Municipal News October 2009

All major construction at The Lemon Park Sports complex is now complete. The playground and walking track areas have been open since October 1<sup>st</sup> from 8 am to 10 pm seven days a week. These park hours will continue until November 1<sup>st</sup> when Eastern Standard Time goes into effect. The new winter park hours will be from 8am till 7pm, seven days a week. Gates to the common areas that will be opened are on Park St across from the parking lot and the gate at the Hagood Ave parking lot. For you walkers, Emily Randell tells me that if you start at either park gate and go around the figure eight walking track 7 times you have walked one mile or eight trips around the figure eight is one mile.

You will notice that the second concession/restroom building that was to service the playground, T-Ball field and 300 ft. field has not been constructed. The City has reached its budget for the Park and is currently unable to complete this construction (note all infrastructure for the building are in place water, sewer and electricity)

We are currently looking for grants to help fund this building and are hoping to increase Tourism in the city to increase Hospitality Tax to also aid in the funding.

The public is invited to a special dedication of the Hamp Campbell Field, Edward Beasley Field, the playground and the Webb Family Walking Track on Thursday, October 22 at 5:30 p.m. at the Lemon Park flag pole.

City Hall is currently 98% complete and only small items remain. Please take note that the drive through window is open for business 8am to 4:30 daily.

At the October 5<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting the City Council Street Committee presented recommendations for some parking changes around the Circle and Main Street areas. These recommendations were to allow only two hour parking on the Circle, on Main Street from Jackson St, to Franklin St and on Pechman St. The parking arrangement on Allen St and Jackson St would also change from parallel parking to 45% diagonal parking. The recommendations were accepted by City Council and Council voted to implement these changes. It is expected that these changes will be in effect by mid November.

If you would like to be notified via email of city news and information, sign up for our Barnwell Buzz e-news letter. You may sign up from our website at [www.cityofbarnwell.com](http://www.cityofbarnwell.com) or email [lscx@cityofbarnwell.com](mailto:lscx@cityofbarnwell.com).

Our biannual Community Clean Up Campaign is scheduled for Saturday, November 7. We need volunteers to help us this day to clean up the community. Supplies will be available from City Hall beginning at 8 am. Campaign will end at noon, and trash drop off will be on the circle. We also need folks with trucks to assist in collecting bags and other articles. First impressions are considered by potential industries and visitors to our community. Your assistance will be greatly appreciated!

Plans for the Christmas Events are underway. The annual Christmas by Candlelight and Tree Lighting will be held on Thursday, December 3. The City Christmas Tree has been donated by the Johnny Creech Family of Barnwell. The annual Christmas parade will be held on Saturday, December 5 at 4 pm. Anyone wishing to participate in the parade can drop by city hall for an entry form or visit our website at [www.cityofbarnwell.com](http://www.cityofbarnwell.com). Businesses or organizations wishing to rent a float must turn in an entry by

November 1. All other entries are due no later than November 27. If anyone has questions regarding these events, please call the City Tourism and Community Development Office at 803-541-6555.

Municipal News November, 2009

Well the Holidays are almost upon us. We at the City are getting ready to put out the Christmas decorations and set up the Christmas tree on the circle. This Year our city Christmas tree was donated by the Johnny Creech Family and is probably the largest we've ever had.

The plan is to put the tree up on November 19 and decorate it before Thanksgiving. On Thursday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> we will have our Tree Lighting Ceremony at 5:30pm. This is a traditional tree lighting service with the Christmas Story and Carols. This year, we will have the talents of the Barnwell First Baptist Church Handbell Ringers and the Youth Choir. The Love Light Dedication will also be done at this time, so your Love Lights need to be turned in by November 30<sup>th</sup>. Proceeds from the Love Lights help the Barnwell County Nursing Home, Meals on Wheels and the Rotary Club's Coins for Alzheimer's Research Trust. Forms for the Love Lights can be picked up at many of our downtown businesses, City Hall, The People Sentinel or on line at [www.cityofbarnwell.com](http://www.cityofbarnwell.com)

On the evening of the 3<sup>rd</sup>, the annual Christmas by Candlelight will be held after the tree lighting from 6-8 pm. Please visit our downtown merchants who will be open that evening.

The Annual Christmas Parade will be held on Saturday December 5<sup>th</sup> at 4:00pm. The route will be somewhat different this year. We will be bringing the parade from Hagood Ave, up Burr Street, around the Circle "backwards" then down Main Street. Some of the parade participants may disembark near the IGA. So for those who normally watch the parade on Main Street from IGA east to Carolina Ave, you may want to move back further towards the circle.

Please Note that City Hall's holidays will be, for Thanksgiving November 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> and for Christmas December 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>.

At the last City Council meeting, Council listened to several citizens that spoke of their concerns over the proposed two hour parking around the circle, on Main St. and Pechman St. After council heard the comments it was decided to return the issue to the Street Committee for further review and for the Committee to report back at the December 7<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting on their findings. City Council also scheduled a Public Hearing for December 7, 2009 on adopting Land Development Regulations for the City. The meeting will start at 6:00pm.

The City is currently working with the US Census Bureau on the 2010 Census. We are insuring that every home in the City of Barnwell is identified so none are missed during the census. We are doing this because getting every one of the city's citizens counted is very important. An accurate count insures that changes in our city are recognized so proper apportions for seats in the US House of Representatives are addressed and help decide on how federal funds will be assessed. It also will help in Redistricting questions. In the 2000 Census South Carolina ranked 49<sup>th</sup> in the country with the lowest Census forms returned. The City urges all the citizens of Barnwell to fill out your Census form and mail it back. You will be hearing more on the Census as time goes on.

Do not forget that our Barnwell City Website is updated often to bring you the latest. Please check it out at [www.cityofbarnwell.com](http://www.cityofbarnwell.com). There are a number of Recreational Programs available for all ages. Come by City Hall for a copy of the Program Guide or see the Parks and Recreation page on the website.

The City wishes everyone a Happy Thanksgiving!

## Municipal News December 2009

The Mayor and City Council along with all City employees wish everyone a Blest and Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. This year, City Hall will be closed on December 24 and 25 and January 1.

2009 has been a year with great achievements for the City with the completion of the Lemon Park Sports Complex, City Hall and a tremendously expanded Recreation Program. We have however experienced some down turns in the City with the closing of both the Hanesbrand and Milliken plants.

We have accomplished several significant projects this year such as the re-codification of the City's Ordinance's, completion of the City Comprehensive Plan and updated Zoning Ordinance. The City received grants this year for three new police cars, firefighting equipment, Street Beautification and landscaping of Fuller Park Hill.

We now move on to 2010 and the challenges it will bring. On January 4<sup>th</sup> the City Council will hold two public meetings: one to hear comments on the proposed two hour parking around the outer circle and several side streets, and two: to add a section in the Zoning Ordinance to better define modular homes in the City. At the regularly scheduled City Council meeting Council will have the second reading of the City of Barnwell Land Development Regulations. All are very important topics for the City and we urge interested parties to attend these meetings.

The City also established Complete Count Committees for the 2010 Census; your City Council members will be getting the word out on how important getting a Complete Count is to the city and its citizens. There will be banners around the City reminding everyone to fill out their Census questionnaire and to return it the Census Bureau. Remember, getting a complete count is in your hands.

We remind everyone that the website is constantly updated with information about government, programs and issues. You may also want to sign up for our Barnwell Buzz E-News letter which is sent out via email every month. Our website address is [www.cityofbarnwell.com](http://www.cityofbarnwell.com) and to sign up for the email, contact [lscox@cityofbarnwell.com](mailto:lscox@cityofbarnwell.com).

The Parks and Recreation Department is printing the Spring Program Brochures this month and they will be available at City Hall as well as other strategic locations throughout the city. Pick one up to check out the programs available for all ages.