

## Ask the Mayor August 2007

mayor@cityofbridgeton.com

About a year ago there was a break-in on my street and one of my neighbors asked the investigating patrolman what he would suggest she to do to keep her family safe.

“Move out of Bridgeton” was his advice.

The story got into the paper and there was some criticism of the policeman. But he was probably just giving an honest opinion – quite a widely held one – that the cause was lost.

In the last few weeks the city has made important appointments to move Bridgeton in a positive direction. We have a new acting police chief and a full-time director of public safety; two men committed to making Bridgeton once again a safe, welcoming place to work, live and raise a family.

I believe that we can stop Bridgeton’s downward spiral and restore our reputation.

I think that it is a cause well worth fighting for. Bridgeton is a beautiful city full of decent people working hard and doing the right things.

This administration is committed to making our town solvent and self-supporting once again and the only way this can come about is by attracting new businesses and homeowners and keeping the ones that we already have. These things cannot happen unless we make our city clean and safe. In the last year we have made a good beginning with the clean – now is the time to work on safe.

We must all recommit ourselves to keeping our neighborhoods safe and making our downtown a peaceful, inviting place. We need to crack down on the quality-of-life crimes that eat away at the morale and reputation of our city. The good people of our town need to be the eyes and ears of the police force.

The new planters on Commerce Street, which the Renaissance League acquired, installed and maintain, are thriving. To me they are a symbol of the charm and promise of our city and evidence of the renewal that is going on all around us.

No one ever said that change would be easy. In fact, a lot of folks told me that it would be impossible and that I was crazy to run for mayor. But I was taught, "never give up, never surrender." I believe in God, family and country and I believe that Bridgeton is on the move. Many disagree – they point to other old cities in New Jersey that lost their industries and have sunk into chaos. Our neighboring townships are full of folks who used to live in Bridgeton but lost faith in our city’s direction. Well this is a new administration, the past is the past and we cannot un-ring the bell, but there are many more things that unite us than divide us. Pulling together, a committed community can perform miracles.

I would invite everyone who still believes in our hometown to join me in the work of reviving her.