

Ask the Mayor - December 2006

I want to congratulate the fantastic effort of the Bridgeton Renaissance League and Bob Rose and Kim Gaunt for pulling off another flawless Christmas House Tour. I also would like to thank the organizers of the Bridgeton Area Christmas Parade Carol Musso and Steve Wymns. The parade was amazing from the audience, to the 200 plus groups that participated, including the weather. Everything was perfect.

People have been asking me when the next neighborhood cleanup will be scheduled. They will begin again in the spring of next year - but in the meantime, I'm hoping that every resident of our town will make an effort every day to keep their own neighborhoods clean. Stick one of those plastic grocery sacks in your pocket and spend five minutes collecting the litter on your block. The Main Street Association has organized the downtown stores into a regular cleanup schedule that is making our business district more attractive. Let's try to do as well in our residential neighborhoods.

I see lots of food wrappers and soda cans tossed on the streets and sidewalks. Especially around convenience stores, this is a problem. I hope the owners of these stores will pitch in and try to keep their neighborhoods looking better; and that parents will talk to their kids about not throwing trash on the street.

Over the next few months a letter will be handed out in the hard to keep clean neighborhoods that will ask all businesses and residents to keep their property clean. After the letter campaign is done the city code enforcement officers will start issuing tickets for litter in front of your business or homes. Our goal is to reinforce the message that even if the trash isn't yours don't walk by it, pick it up.

We're continuing work on the abandoned gas station on Irving Avenue and hope to be able to convert it to a police substation. That would be a boom to a neighborhood that has the highest crime rate in the city. To the extent that it's possible, we're using volunteer labor in the project. We have a terrific core of volunteers in Bridgeton who show up whenever the call goes out.

A couple of weeks ago, Kenny Williams called the police and the newspaper to complain about speeding on Laurel Street. The police sent up some men with a radar gun and spent a day issuing tickets. This is a demonstration of how government can work. We need the citizens to take an active role in dealing with our problems. Is there a vicious dog on your block? Do you suspect drug activity in your neighborhood? Is there a rental house on your street that is overcrowded? Call the animal control officer, the police, and the housing office.

The decorations are going up and our town is looking very festive. Our public works department is in the process of restoring the street lamps downtown replacing the glass so the light is brighter. I hope everyone will get downtown, join in the caroling and visit our local merchants. God bless us all, everyone! – And God bless Bridgeton!