

## ANNUAL STATE OF THE TOWN REPORT

The fiscal year ending June 2009 was a good year for the Town of Signal Mountain. The most significant event was the opening of the Middle/High School, thanks to fifty years of effort by many in our community. We began the process of annexing Fox Run and Windtree, joined a national movement and legalized backyard chickens, improved energy efficiency, reduced costs in many departments, began the process to repeal the SROZ, and organized several public meetings to determine the best and most appropriate use of the former middle school property.

We also took steps to improve the Town's management and the efficiency of the services we provide in light of a softening economy and the likelihood that Town revenues would decline. We ended the year with a balanced budget, lowered our debt and witnessed various improvements in our departments thanks to Town Manager Honna Rogers, who celebrated her first full year with us last March. Under her leadership, the departments have worked together seamlessly. As a result, the quality and the efficiency of the services we provide continue to improve.

### Financial Management:

- Reduced the Town's school-related loan from \$6 million to \$4.8 million by making an additional principal payment and continued to focus on the early retirement of the debt.
- Initiated once a week trash collection with new automated equipment saving the Town over \$100,000.
- Outsourced operation of the Recycle Center to Orange Grove Center and the hauling and sale of our recyclable materials to Rock-Tenn for an estimated savings of \$30,000.
- Reduced energy costs through a no-interest loan to add energy-efficient lighting and other improvements to town facilities.
- Began the 2009 fiscal year with a general fund balance of \$4,039,300 and ended with a strong general fund balance of \$3,923,744. The decline in the fund balance by year end reflects the purchase of the truck and equipment needed for our new automated trash collection system.

### Employee Management:

- Formalized the performance evaluation process and trained supervisors to conduct objective and timely evaluations.
- Instituted an employee wellness program.
- Provided options for employees to purchase supplemental life and critical illness insurance.
- Mitigated increases in employee health insurance premiums by changing insurance carriers and moving to a higher deductible reimbursement plan.

### Police Department:

- Responded to 2,076 incidents including 149 arrests.
- Increased training in areas such as victim assistance, conversational Spanish for policemen, and improved our field-training program for new hires.

- Logged an impressive 2,703 hours in its quarterly in-service training program.
- Continued to be among the best-trained and strongest police departments in the region.

#### Fire Department:

- Responded to 632 incidents during the year, 61% of which were medically or rescue related.
- Logged over 6,400 hours in training.
- Ensured all Department members trained as first responders and acquired certification as Level 2 Firefighters.
- Passed the State Firefighting audit with no deficiencies.
- Ensured the fire safety of the Town by maintaining an ISO rating of 5.

#### Public Works Department:

- Spent 16,000 hours on sanitation services such as curbside garbage collection, leaf and brush pickup and maintenance of Town rights-of-way.
- We had over 13,000 visits to our transfer station.
- Began implementation of a pavement management program and conducted sub-surface assessments of our streets to help plan and budget for improvements.
- Performed pavement cuts, pothole filling, and crack sealing to prepare for street paving.
- Kept 2,053,960 pounds of recyclable material out of the landfill, saving the Town money despite the downturn in scrap material prices.

#### Building and Stormwater Department:

- Issued building permits valued at over \$10,000,000.
- Conducted 1100 building inspections.
- Cooperated and provided assistance to the WWTA in support of their aggressive sewer relining and private service lateral programs.
- Monitored water quality regularly and reported improvement.
- Implemented a Culvert Cleaning Program.

#### Water Department:

- Responded to 1,163 work orders.
- Read 14,777 water meters and repaired 19 major leaks and break in Town lines.
- Instituted new leak detection program.
- Installed an automatic Scada pump monitoring program.
- Established a water tank cleaning and maintenance program with a third party.
- Ensured the quality of our water supply through preventive maintenance and operational efficiency at the lowest cost possible.

### Recreation Department:

- Served well over 1,000 people in organized sports, summer camps, and at the Town pool.
- Maintained the gym for organized and free play for countless kids and adults.
- Rebuilt the concession stand area at the pool.
- Installed new anti-entrapment drains at the pool.
- Enhanced services and lowered costs.

### Library:

- Increased membership to serve over 3,900 people.
- Increased average circulation to almost 6,000 items per month.
- Continued to conduct high-quality special programs for children and adults.

### Mountain Arts Community Center

- Provided over 1,800 people with a variety of classes, including summer camps.
- Welcomed new MACC Director Barbara Storm upon the retirement of long time MACC Director Karen Shropshire.
- Upgraded the MACC facility to host receptions and parties with a working kitchen, permission to serve alcohol at private receptions, and other improvements.
- Became the property of the Town.

Finally, the 2008-2009 fiscal year was marked by significant community involvement. At least 120 citizens volunteered on Town advisory boards and commissions ranging from Planning, Design Review, Zoning and Appeals, Clean Streams, Transportation, Personnel, Recreation, Parks, Tree Board, and others.

Looking ahead to fiscal year 2009-2010, we begin with strong general fund reserves and with budgeted revenues and expenditures of \$5,110,749 million. However, due to the current economic climate, approximately \$50,000 from reserves will be used to balance our budget and maintain services. Still, the Town has much to look forward to.

- A new LED traffic signal and several miles of paving thanks to stimulus money.
- Completion of grant-funded sidewalks along James Boulevard.
- Improved water quality as the WWTA works on its Private Service Lateral Program to control the inflow and infiltration of stormwater into sewer lines.
- Phase 2 of improvements to replace 60-year-old water lines on Sunset, Signal Mountain Boulevard, Palisades Road and Lower Brow.
- A positive resolution to the current litigation by Fox Run and Windtree and a finalization of the annexation of those two subdivisions as part of the town. .
- A revised and updated website, sign ordinance, board ordinance, commercial design standards, subdivision regulations, zoning ordinance, commercial land use plan, town-

wide sewer plan, and others to maintain and plan for sustainable infrastructure and growth.

Our 2009-2010 fiscal year will be one of significant challenges, not the least of which is our economy. Many of our public buildings, facilities, and equipment need considerable repair or replacement and there are always unforeseen problem and issues. However, we are prepared to meet the challenges in this and future years. The success of our community has always been marked by strong citizen involvement in local government, town meetings, and community service. It is through this sense of community that the Town has and continues to thrive.

Finally, the Town Council wishes to thank our employees for their on-going work to improve services and lower costs and our many volunteers for their countless hours of community service.

Bill Lusk, Mayor  
Signal Mountain, TN