

City of Forsyth

Dennis Kopitzke, Mayor

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This is the third and final article that will provide information associated with the City's growth plan. In my article of October 23 I provided a summary of some of what has been done to implement those goals and objectives. This third article will finish the review of the growth plan.

SAFETY AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

Improve Fire Protection Services – The City has an excellent volunteer fire department. The City works with the volunteers to provide the most current training. There is a cooperative effort to provide excellent equipment. In the past 4 years the City has purchased a “quick response unit” for approximately \$163,000.00; contributed \$28,000.00 toward the acquisition of personal safety equipment and is currently working to obtain a coal board grant for the purchase of a new fire truck (\$384,000.00). The 2017-2018 budget allocates \$246,378.00 for the fire department. The City will work with the department to make sure the best possible service is provided to the citizens of Forsyth.

Improve Law Enforcement Services – An officer from law enforcement attends City council meetings. The department provides the council with a monthly report, summarizing the type of call and location of each call responded to during the month. If needed, issues can be addressed as part of the council meeting. The City/County, just recently, reviewed the existing contract, made positive changes and approved a new contract. One major issue mentioned in the Growth Plan was the drug problem. Information was provided to the sheriff's department and there is an expectation that the sheriff's department will keep the council informed of major changes in the drug use issue. The City provides. The City budgeted \$191,244.00 for fiscal year 2017-2018 to support law enforcement and the City will continue to work cooperatively with the County and department to ensure law enforcement service.

WATER AND WASTEWATER

Water/Wastewater Permitting and Redundancy – The City's water and wastewater systems are inspected on a regular basis, meet all permitting requirements and reports are published in the Independent press. The plants have systems to protect service when there is a loss of power and backup systems are in place to make sure service is provided even in extreme emergencies.

DIKE

The City is working with the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the SWIF (System Wide Infrastructure Framework) program to make improvements in the dike. The improvements and City maintenance will guarantee that the dike will provide safety from floods in years to come. A major requirement is that all non-conforming vegetation and stored items must be removed from designated dike property. The dike area has been surveyed and property line markers have been placed. The City is working with property owners, along the dike, to make sure that non-approved vegetation is removed and that all non-allowed equipment and other items are removed.

PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN

There is still a need to develop a parks and recreation plan. The City will be reorganizing the Tree Board and involvement in the Tree City USA program. Along with this involvement the development of a parks and recreation plan might be added.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Much needs to be done in the following areas: (1) develop a community marketing plan to attract new businesses (2) examine the potential for creating a senior living hub (3) examine potential for creating a transportation center in Forsyth (4) develop a tourism marketing plan (5) improve enforcement of the community decay ordinance (6) create an incentive program to remove or renovate dilapidated or unsound housing. City representatives are involved with Visit Southeast Montana Tourism, SouthEast Montana Development Corporation (SEMDC), City/County Planning Board. Each year community members can participate in the CEDS (Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy) process. The CEDS allows participants to discuss City strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Additional information is available from the mayor's office or at City council meetings. Meetings are normally held on the 2nd and 4th Monday of each month; 7:00 PM, City Hall.