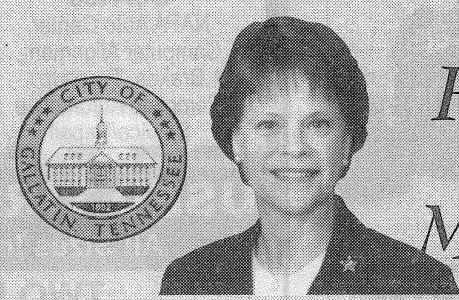
From the Mayor



When our nation was being formed there were many factions that represented diverse groups desiring a voice in the way our country would be run. As a young country, representatives from each group would attend meetings and return to each group and/or community with news of decisions and events. Folks depended on word of mouth to keep up with current happenings.

Then there was the advent of the telegraph, the radio, and the telephone. Information began to flow in all directions. When televisions came into our homes we not only heard the news but we could see the events unfolding.

Today we communicate electronically. There is YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and a myriad of others. Communication is now 24/7.

At the heart of all this communication is a person's need to not only know but to also be heard and to have input.

When I first moved into City Hall in 2007, my office wasn't wired for a computer. The only way to directly communicate with the Mayor was to either call or come to City Hall. For people who worked, particularly out of town, that was an obstacle to communication. Today, thanks to the addition of a computer, citizens communicate with me electronically, when it is convenient for them. Emails are sent late at night or early in the morning asking for information or help in solving an issue. Appointments are set up not just by phone, but over the internet. Messages are sent on Blackberry's and the reply is to the Blackberry. However, phone calls and personal visits still take place.

All this electronic information still has not replaced citizen input through meetings. It is important to be able to talk with folks face to face on issues of importance.

That is why I formed the citizen Visioning Committee when I first took office. It is important to listen to citizen's ideas of what they want their communities to be.

The Visioning Committee painted a picture of Gallatin which is now taking shape.

Building on that, the Long Range Planning Committee, made up of citizens, was formed. This committee has discussed infrastructure, the airport and several other projects.

The Community Enrichment Committee is composed of civic and arts groups who coordinate cultural events in Gallatin. This committee planned the Downtown Dedication and the Tuba Christmas.

This year because of the national census count, a Special Census Committee of citizens was formed to spread the word of the importance of being counted. Because of the participation of citizens and staff, we reached non-profits, churches and faith-based organizations as well as business groups, Chamber members and employers. Today our participation rate in the 2010 Census is 75%.

Because citizen input is important to the future of Gallatin, I sit on all of these committees. A multitude of ideas are proposed and being able to hear them first-hand helps me set priorities for our City.

This past Monday night was the Mayor's Night In at City Hall. Citizens had the opportunity to come and talk with me after regular work hours. Citizens were interested in new programs and more revitalization in particular areas of our community. The Mayor's Night In will be a monthly event on the 4th Monday of each month from 4:30 – 6:30 pm.

Recently, I sent out a survey to the citizens of Gallatin asking for their input. We have received over 400 responses from citizens as to their priorities for Gallatin's future. We are a stronger community because of citizen communication.

Communication is the lifeblood of our community. Gallatin continues to grow and prosper because citizens get involved and share their ideas. I look forward to hearing from you.