



TO: Mayor and City Councilors

FROM: Rich Olson, City Manager

REF: FYI ~ Week Ending December 8, 2006

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1. Every year, many cities in the United States receive direct funding for community development from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). These Entitlement Communities are mostly large and medium-sized cities. We have discovered, however, a number of small communities in North Carolina with less than 50,000 in population, which receive funding directly from HUD and are considered Entitlement Cities. Salisbury, which has a population of 26,000 and less poverty than Elizabeth City, is an Entitlement City. We have been in contact with HUD regarding this issue, but have not received a satisfactory response. At this point, we are going to contact Congressman Butterfield about the issue and ask for help with becoming an Entitlement City. As an Entitlement City, we would receive approximately \$300,000 in CDBG funds annually from HUD without competing with other communities. The City will also be able to receive HOME (affordable housing grant) Funds from HUD directly by applying jointly with two of our surrounding counties. As the federal government continues to cut funding for social programs, the City will have to compete with other small communities in the State for shrinking State funds. As an Entitlement Community, we will receive annual funding directly from HUD. I believe this process will be an uphill battle, but one well worth pursuing.
2. The City has received verbal notification from the Division of Coastal Management that it was approved for a grant to purchase the waterfront property at the corner of Water and Elizabeth Streets. Staff will be working with the property owner and the CAMA office over the next few weeks to work out the details of the purchase. The actual grant award will not be officially announced until the first of the New Year. The purchase will probably take place in March 2007.

3. An Assessment Center has been organized for the candidates chosen to interview for the Chief of Police position on Tuesday, December 12. In addition, interviews will be conducted on Friday, December 15 for the finalists chosen to interview for the Public Utilities Director position. I am looking forward to filling these two key positions. I will forward additional information to the Council as soon as possible.
4. The sealed bids for the surveillance camera system were opened at 2:00 p.m. on December 7, 2006. Three bids were received in this process and the prices ranged from \$181,000 to \$285,000. During the review of the bids, it was determined that one vendor may not be properly licensed by the North Carolina Private Protective Licensing Division. In addition, there was a \$100,000 difference in bid prices. The Elizabeth City Police Department will be sending a recommendation to City Council at its first regularly scheduled meeting in January 2007, after it has been determined that the vendors are properly licensed and that the bid process covered the specified equipment contained within the bid.
5. On December 7, Ricky Albertson, Load Management Technician, Belinda Arnold, Customer Service Manager and I attended a seminar on "Prepay Metering" in Washington, North Carolina. The meeting was presented by Mark Day of Distribution Control Systems, Inc. of Hazelwood, Missouri and Cecil Rhodes with Electricities. Brunswick, North Carolina is currently using this prepay metering system for 7,000 of its customers. In addition, Bryant, Texas is using these meters for a large number of its customers. The Prepay Metering System allows customers to purchase power as they receive income and/or as they need it. The system alerts the customer within three days of their meter getting low. The customer is able to monitor the cost of the electricity they use by the hour, day and month. Prepay metering would save the customer a considerable amount of money in late fees, reconnect charges and deposits. Brunswick offers the customer a choice of prepay or conventional metering when they apply for service. When a customer chooses prepay metering, instead of paying a utility deposit, the initial fee paid goes directly to the cost of purchasing power. The customer can purchase their electricity on a power card for as little as \$5.00 if they choose. Utilizing Prepay Metering will allow our customers to avoid late fees and disconnection fees, which in certain cases, annually amounts to the cost of a monthly bill. Staff will demonstrate these meters to the Council during the Work Session scheduled for January 22, 2007. There are many advantages to our customers if we use Prepay Metering.
6. The Elizabeth City Police Department will be sending its three Divisional Commanders and members from the Community Policing Division and the

Drug Unit to the Greenville, N.C. Police Department on December 13 for gang awareness training. In addition to this training, Lt. Young is in the process of forming an advisory board/task force to determine the needs of the community as it relates to gang activity. The department is projecting that the first meeting will be held in early January 2007. The Department will be seeking individuals from the Elizabeth City/Pasquotank Public School System, Elizabeth City State University, Elizabeth City Housing Authority, Ministerial Association, Pasquotank County Social Services, Juvenile Justice, Parks and Recreation, Albemarle Hospital, College of the Albemarle, Pasquotank County Sheriffs Department, Pasquotank County Correctional Facility, NAACP, River City Community Development, the District Attorney's Office and several citizens at large.

7. Staff continues to work on drainage/flooding issues for the Oxford Heights subdivision. The deuce and a half has been serviced by the City's garage personnel and is operational and ready for use. In addition, Emergency Management Coordinator, Christy Saunders, and Senior Planner, Angela Cole, will be attending a FEMA Mitigation Meeting on Tuesday, December 12 sponsored by the NC Division of Emergency Management. FEMA has announced the availability of mitigation project and planning funds for the fiscal year 2007 Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) grant program. The fiscal year 2007 FMA priority is to fund cost-effective flood mitigation activities that reduce the number of repetitive loss structures currently insured by the NFIP. Approximately \$811,980 is potentially available for projects that mitigate repetitive loss structures. An additional \$78,600 is available for mitigation planning activities that address repetitive loss structures. Letters of Interest are due to NCDEM by December 29, 2006. After receiving the Letter of Interest, NCDEM will forward potential applicants the materials needed to apply for funding.
8. Upcoming Events:
 - The Elizabeth City Area Chamber of Commerce will host a ribbon cutting and open house on Tuesday, December 12 at 9:30 a.m. for Waypoint Development's Heron's Ridge subdivision located off River Road. Model Homes will be open during the event. RSVP directly to the Chamber by calling 335-4365 if you plan to attend.
 - The Albemarle District Jail Commission and the Commissioners of Pasquotank, Perquimans and Camden Counties will host a Groundbreaking Ceremony for the Albemarle District Jail on Tuesday, December 12 at 1:00 p.m. at the Pasquotank County Commerce Park.

- Port Discover, 613 E. Main Street will host a Christmas celebration on Thursday, December 14 between the hours of 8 a.m. and Noon. Drop in for delicious goodies, holiday cheer and a bit of science, too!
- The Elizabeth City Planning and Community Development Department will host the annual Board and Commission's Holiday Part on Monday December 18 at 7 p.m. at The West End Station. Please RSVP to Dawn Harris by calling 337-6672 no later than Monday, December 11 if you plan to attend.
- We have received an invitation from Congressman G. K. Butterfield to attend a Holiday Celebration in his Williamston Office on Friday, December 15 from Noon until 2 p.m. If you would like to attend, please let me know and I will provide additional information.

RCO/vdw