

Fall 2014 Edition

WHISTLESTOP

The City of Erlanger Newsletter



MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

As this edition of the Whistlestop is mailed to our residents, I am delighted to be able to tell you that the state of our city is strong and optimistic!

Erlanger has the finest police, fire/ EMS, public works and general government departments and these continue to improve daily. Our city administrator, Marc Fields, has exceeded expectations in his first few months in his current position, completing tasks and projects that had been lingering for long periods. Our staff is responding to his style of leadership. Efficiency, innovation and professionalism have surfaced and Erlanger's commitment to public service is profound. Indeed, your city staff is adhering to our mission statement: "Performing Collectively to Provide Exemplary Services for Our Community with Integrity and Pride".

Erlanger's efforts at encouraging development are paying off. As a recent Enquirer article reported, new business continues to locate in our city and existing businesses are expanding. Projects for companies such as Signature Hardware, McD Concrete, and Sterling Cut Glass are at or near completion. While our entire Commonwealth was surprised and shocked at Toyota's announcement that it was consolidating California and some KY operations to Texas, Erlanger has already gained at least 600 of the 800 jobs likely to leave in a couple of years. There is much more to come as negotiations on other development continue. The value of real estate in Erlanger has increased over \$57 million since I became your Mayor. Our Economic Development coordinator David Hahn has been busy and successful!

Last winter was one of the roughest in recent memory, but our public works department shined through it all. Our roads were kept in great condition. Our fall leaf collection program helped keep rights of way clear. Neighboring cities have asked our staff to instruct their employees on how Erlanger maintains the roads. What a compliment!

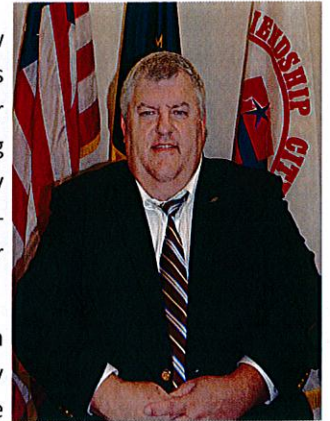
During Fiscal Years 2012 and 2013 the City elected to use the compensating rate for property taxes and to forego the 4% increase permitted by state law. The compensating rate simply ensures that the city receives the same amount of revenue as the previous year. Erlanger's Council, which has the duties of approving budgets and establishing tax rates, used the lower rates to offer our citizens and property owners some relief from the persistent economic downturn. The tax rates adopted by Council in August for FY 2014 do not even take the compensating rate – the tax rate was unchanged. In addition, Council lowered the tangible tax rate that affects our businesses. Your Council is truly a responsive and effective legislative body.

We listened to the complaints that many properties were falling into disrepair. Investigation revealed that most of these properties were either rentals or abandoned due to foreclosure. Council tightened our laws related to rental properties to ensure public safety and to protect property values throughout the city. Many sites show remarkable improvement, and your city government will keep working on it.

Erlanger still faces challenges common to other cities. Over the past five years we have employed extraordinary measures in an effort to keep our expenses in line but in spite of our attempts our expenditures have continued to increase. Many of these expenses are completely out of the control of the City administration and management. Some of the most obvious examples of these increased costs are motor fuel, utility costs, health insurance premiums and pension expenses. Retirement costs required by the state have increased over a half million dollars since I took office. The cost for road salt has tripled since 2008! Nonetheless, we have continued to find ways to keep costs we can manage under control and, sometimes, do more with less.

As your Mayor, I wish you all a glorious autumn and a mild winter, continued success with your endeavors, and thank you for your comments and support.

Thomas L. Rouse



MESSAGE FROM THE CITY CLERK

Enclosed with this newsletter are the 2014-2015 tax bills. All tax bills are mailed directly to the property or business owners. If you have an escrow account with a mortgage company, please forward your tax bill to them. We will only electronically send tax information to mortgage companies upon their request.

If you have an escrow account and to prevent delinquent accounts, *please confirm with your mortgage company that they have paid your bill prior to December 31st.*

To receive a 2% discount, tax payments *MUST* be received by October 31st, We accept postmarks. *If you are paying in person, you will need to make that payment no later than Friday, October 31st.*

The final date to pay your tax bill is December 31st. Starting January 1st, a 20% penalty is applied as well as a 6% interest per annum.

Tax bills can be paid through mail, at the Bank of Kentucky, by credit card (Mastercard, Visa), over the phone, at www.ci.erlanger.ky.us, and at the Erlanger City Building.

If you are a homeowner residing in the home and are 65 years of age or are on disability income, you may be eligible to receive a Homestead or Disability Exemption on your Kenton County and City of Erlanger property tax bills. This year's Homestead Exemption is \$36,000.00. If you are eligible, the amount of the exemption is subtracted from your property's assessed value so you will pay less property tax. To apply, please contact the Property Valuation Administrator (PVA) office at 859-392-1750.

The Erlanger City Council passed the 2014-2015 tax rates through Ordinance No. 2405 at the September 2, 2014 Council Meeting. The tax rates are as follows:

Real Property Tax Rate—\$0.3570 for each one hundred dollars of assessed value. Last year's rate was the same. A definition for property tax rate is a levy on the value of property that the owner of the property is required to pay to a government in which the property is situated. Multiple jurisdictions may tax the same property. For instance, Erlanger property owners also receive a tax bill from Kenton County. *(If City Council had chosen to take the compensating tax rate, the City would have brought in the same amount of revenue as the 2013-2014 tax year but the tax rate would have been higher. They voted to keep the tax rate the same, accepting that the City would receive less revenue than last tax season.)*

Personal Tangible Tax Rate (Businesses)—\$0.6090 for each one hundred dollars of assessed value. Last year's rate was \$0.6780 for each one hundred dollars of assessed value. A definition for tangible tax rate is personal property that can be physically relocated, such as furniture and office equipment. Tangible personal property is the opposite of real property, as real property is immovable. This is for businesses only. *(City Council voted to take the compensating tax rate which was actually lower than last year.)*

WORKING SMOKE ALARMS SAVE LIVES

TEST YOURS EVERY MONTH!

Fire Prevention Week * October 5-11, 2014

This year's Fire Prevention Week campaign includes the following smoke alarm messages:

- ⇒ Install smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside each separate sleeping area, and on every level of the home, including the basement.
- ⇒ Interconnect all smoke alarms throughout the home. This way, when one sounds, they all do.
- ⇒ Test alarms at least monthly by pushing the test button.
- ⇒ Replace all smoke alarms when they are 10 years old or sooner if they don't respond properly.
- ⇒ Make sure everyone in the home knows the sound of the smoke alarm and understands what to do when they hear it.

To learn more about smoke alarms and "Working Smoke Alarms Saves Lives", visit the National Fire Protection Association's website at www.firepreventionweek.org.

CHANGE YOUR CLOCK, CHANGE YOUR BATTERY!

This year daylight savings time is Sunday, November 2, 2014. So, remember to set your clocks back one hour, and remember to change the battery in your smoke detector when you change your clock!

Some additional fire safety information:

- ⇒ Review your **ESCAPE PLAN**, have at least two ways to get out.
- ⇒ Have a **FIRE DRILL**, children do well at school, but at home they usually don't do well because not enough families practice.
- ⇒ Have a **MEETING PLACE** outside the home to make certain everyone is accounted for.
- ⇒ **GET OUT, STAY OUT**, never go back inside for *any* reason.

IMPORTANT TRASH COLLECTION DATES

Thanksgiving Day—Trash *will* be collected.

Christmas Day—Trash *will not* be collected. It will be collected the next business day.

New Years Day—Trash *will not* be collected. It will be collected the next business day.

LEAF COLLECTION

October 27-December 8, 2014

The collection schedule can be viewed on line at www.ci.erlanger.ky.us and will be available for pick up at the City Building, Heritage Bank, Fifth Third Bank and the Bank of Kentucky. If you have submitted your e-mail address to be placed on our Resident E-mail Database, the schedule will be electronically sent to you. If you haven't, *please visit www.ci.erlanger.ky.us to add your e-mail under "E-mail Notifications"*.

The Public Works Department has divided the city into different zones. When looking at the schedule, first locate what zone your street is in, then find your zone on the schedule. The schedule allows for each street to be collected four times throughout the collection period with the exception of Stevenson Road and Commonwealth Avenue that are only collected twice because of traffic control requirements.

Please remember to keep leaf piles behind the curb and do not place them in the street. Leaves must be out to the curb the morning of your scheduled collection day. If the leaf pile is blocked in any manner or contains anything besides leaves, a notice will be left on your door explaining that they were unable to collect your leaves.

Always *be on the look out for Public Works Employees working in your area during leaf collection season and do your part to help provide them with a safe working environment* as they provide this invaluable service to you. Be patient as they stop to collect leaf piles in your neighborhood, do not follow any of the trucks and or equipment too closely, and be alert as you traverse through work zones that they have up.

CHRISTMAS TREE DROP –OFF

The Public Works Department will also have their "Christmas Tree Drop-off" program again this year. Bare trees (no ornaments, plastic wrapping, lights) can be dropped off at 3516 Jack Scheben Drive from December 29th through January 16th, Monday-Friday from 7:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m. The trees will be mulched and made available to Erlanger's residents for pick up.

ANNUAL REPORT OF CITY OPERATIONS

For an overview of City operations, we have produced an annual report that describes activities within each department during the fiscal year of July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014. The report also includes an outline of City goals for the current fiscal year beginning on July 1, 2014. To read this annual report, please visit our website at www.ci.erlanger.ky.us.

STREETLIGHT REMINDER

Lighting the way for drivers and pedestrians, streetlights are vital to our everyday lives. With a multitude of streetlights throughout the City of Erlanger, we appreciate your help in identifying lights that are malfunctioning or in need of repair. The sooner we know they are out, the sooner we can contact the appropriate power company to get them fixed.

If you are unsure of the service area that you live in, please contact Joe Daugherty at joe.daugherty@erlangerpw.com or 859-727-7620 to report street light issues. Please make sure that you provide the following information: pole number/nearest physical address of the light, type of issue (out/flickering/burning during the day) and your contact information.

If you know the service area that you live in, you may contact the respective power company directly. For streetlights that need attention in the Duke Energy service area, please contact 1-800-310-6346. For streetlights in the Owen Rural Electric service area, please contact 1-800-372-7612. Please be prepared to provide them with the physical location of the light, the nature of the issue, and your contact information.

Thank you for taking the time to help us keep your neighborhood light on!

FALL STREET REPAIR PROJECTS

Pending concrete street replacement:

Hillwood Court and Candlewood Court

Pending blacktop resurfacing:

Concord Avenue and Viola Lane

Pending Street Maintenance/Repair Work:

Pavement failures on Lakemont Drive

Projects By Other Utility Agencies in the City:

NKWD Dixie Highway Water Main Re-lining Project- underway

NKWD Water Main Replacement- Mary Street- targeted start date of December 2014

NKWD Water Main Replacement- McArthur Lane-targeted start date of December 2014

NEWS FROM THE POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Erlanger Police Department is nearly up to full staffing level. Within the last two months we have had our last four officers graduate from basic training at the Department of Criminal Justice Training Center in Richmond, KY *We welcome Josh Osterbrook, Josh Nezi, Kyle O'Hara and Michael Clark to the department.* They are currently undergoing their on the job training with other seasoned officers from our department and will soon be patrolling/answering calls on their own. We had one officer leave recently and now have this position to fill.

The Police Department would like to remind you that with the change of season there are reasons to be more observant in our neighborhoods. First of all, children have returned to school which creates more traffic in the mornings and at release time. Also, school buses are on the road and many other students walk to and from school. All of these factors require drivers to be more cautious. Slow down, watch for pedestrians and **NEVER** pass a stopped school bus. By being observant we can help keep our children safe.

In less than a month we will be celebrating Halloween. This is another time when our children are out enjoying themselves. Some of these children have no parental escorts and may take risks when crossing streets. Again, drivers need to be extremely cautious on Halloween to help keep our children safe.

With the change in seasons the air chills, windows and doors are closed, and people spend less time out in their yards and gardens. The Police Department asks citizens and those visiting our city to be extra alert for any suspicious activity in our neighborhoods. With older students back in school, many homes that were occupied in the summer are now empty while the homeowners are at work. This creates a prime opportunity for burglaries to occur. While you are out and about, keep your eyes open and report anything that "just doesn't look right." If we all are extra observant we can help keep our homes and property safe.

Lastly, fall brings the advent of leaf pick-up, road repairs and the beginning of adverse weather. Watch out for workers on the road and be more cautious when operating vehicles in any work zone or in adverse weather. By doing this we can keep our workers and drivers/passengers safe.

By being close to full staffing levels in the Police Department and having citizens who are cautious and observant, we can continue to keep Erlanger a safe place to live and work.

BE INFORMED

Ordinances require a first and second reading before being voted on by City Council. To learn what these ordinances are, please visit our website at www.ci.erlanger.ky.us. Ordinances that have had their first reading are placed on the website prior to their second reading. Please remember, these are **DRAFT** ordinances until voted on by Council. They do not go into effect until they have had their 2nd reading, the Mayor has signed the ordinance and they have been advertised in the Kentucky Enquirer. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call 859-727-2525.

ERLANGER FIRE/EMS NEW HIRES

Erlanger's eight newest full time employees have reported for duty at Erlanger Fire Station 1. The ensuing weeks put their experiences and resolve to the test during their recruit training. The new fire recruits will be participating in a variety of basic firefighting training, as well as learning new, advanced Erlanger tactics and procedures. In August, each recruit began their on-duty assignments with their respective shifts. Please be sure to welcome them into our Erlanger Community.



ROBERT "BOB" HUG
Firefighter/EMT-B



RANDY GODSEY
Firefighter/EMT-B



KYLE SCHAUER
Firefighter/ Paramedic



JASON BECKER
Firefighter/ Paramedic



ELLIOT EPPING
Firefighter/ EMT-B



JACOB CAYLOR
Firefighter/ Paramedic



BENJAMIN REESE
Firefighter/Paramedic



DANIEL VERKAMP
Firefighter/EMT

FROM THE DESK OF THE COMMUNITY LIAISON

Here are a list of upcoming events and things to do in Erlanger throughout the end of the year:

Fall Harvest Festival	Saturday, October 4 th	1:00 – 5:00	Erlanger Library
Pumpkin Patch Party	Friday, October 17 th	6:00 – 8:00	Erlanger Depot Museum
Pumpkin Decorating Party	Friday, October 24 th	6:00 – 8:00	Erlanger Library
Halloween Party	Wednesday, October 28 th	7:00 – 8:30	Erlanger Library
Senior Thanksgiving Luncheon	Tuesday, November 18 th	10:30 – 12:30	Erlanger Library
Senior Thanksgiving Luncheon	Thursday, November 20 th	10:30 – 12:30	Erlanger Library
Christmas Tree Lighting	To Be Announced	TBA	Erlanger Depot Museum
Christmas Event	Saturday, December 7 th	1:00 -5:00	Erlanger Library

For more up to date information on any of the events above, please visit the city’s website at www.ci.erlanger.ky.us.

Coming Attractions: Here’s a peek at what the City is planning for 2015

We are organizing a clean-up day in conjunction with the Great American Cleanup Weekend. We envision this to include areas targeted for beautification and eventually expanding it to include all neighborhoods.

We are hosting our first ever Municipal Government Academy. Participants in this 6 – 8 week series will experience their local government from the inside out. Learning opportunities will range from Police and 911 Service, to Fire Department management, general government and administration and the logistics, planning, and execution of keeping our roads safe and attractive. Each department will conduct a portion of the series with one session dedicated to learning about the roles and duties of our local, county, and state elected officials.

Summer 2015 in Erlanger will usher in the return of the Summer Parks Program with many of the perennial favorites returning such as the Petting Zoo and the Magician Show, and they will be augmented with a few new activities such as a patriotic themed event around Memorial Day.

All of the events and activities above will be updated on the City’s website and facebook page so, visit us, like us and follow us!

CITY BUDGET

KRS 91A.030 mandates that cities in Kentucky must pass an annual budget. Each year department leaders work together to create a fiscally responsible budget that is presented to City Council. The proposed budget is passed through legislation known as an ordinance. Since City Council Members are the legislative branch of local government, it is their responsibility to pass or fail a proposed budget ordinance. To view Erlanger’s budget for the fiscal year beginning on July 1, 2014, please visit our website at www.ci.erlanger.ky.us.

The City of Erlanger has been awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. This honor was awarded by the Government Finance Officers Association. This is the highest form of recognition in government accounting and financial reporting. This represents the twelfth consecutive year that Erlanger has earned this prestigious recognition. Thank you to Chief Finance Officer Greg Engelman for all the hard work he does to keep Erlanger fiscally sound!

**WELCOME NEW
BUSINESSES IN 2014**

- Chipotle
- Dolwick Training Facility
- Edgewood Animal Clinic
- Randy Railey Financial Services
- McD Construction

Salvadores

- St. Elizabeth Medical Center
- Sterling Cut Glass

CONGRATULATIONS

**BUSINESSES ON
EXPANSIONS IN 2014**

- Bank of Kentucky
- Beacon Orthopedics
- Convergys
- Erlanger Elsmere School District
- Signature Hardware

Don't forget to vote on November 4th!
To find out where your voting precinct is, visit the voter information center.
<https://vr.sos.ky.gov/vic/>

CITY AUDITS

An audit of the City’s financial records is conducted on an annual basis, as mandated by KRS 91A.040. Erlanger’s audit for fiscal year 2013-2014 will occur this fall with completion before the end of the year. To review our last audit for fiscal year 2012-2013, please visit our website at www.ci.erlanger.ky.us.

CITY OF ERLANGER'S PROGRAMS OR SERVICES

859-727-2525

POLICE DEPARTMENT

- ⇒ POLICE EXPLORER PROGRAM (14-20 years of age)
- ⇒ NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH GROUPS
- ⇒ PROPERTY SECURITY CHECKS
- ⇒ CITIZENS POLICE ACADEMY
- ⇒ VIPS (Volunteers in Police Service)
- ⇒ MEDICATION COLLECTION PROGRAM

FIRE/EMS DEPARTMENT

- ⇒ CPR, FIRST AID, AND FIRE EXTINGUISHER CLASSES
- ⇒ FIRE/EMS EXPLORER PROGRAM (14-18 years of age)
- ⇒ HOME AND BUSINESS INSPECTIONS
- ⇒ SENIOR CITIZEN SMOKE DETECTOR PROGRAM

GENERAL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT

- ⇒ PASSPORTS
- ⇒ ERLANGER HARD BACK HISTORY BOOK \$25.00
- ⇒ ERLANGER/ELSMERE IMAGES OF AMERICA BOOK \$20.00
- ⇒ NOTARY PUBLICS
- ⇒ TANK BUS PASSES
- ⇒ ERLANGER & SURROUNDING AREA MAPS
- ⇒ NO KNOCK POLICY-SIGN UP TODAY
- ⇒ DEPOT PARK SHELTER RESERVATIONS

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

- ⇒ POT HOLE REPORTS (need location of pothole)
- ⇒ STREET LIGHT OUTAGE REPORTS (need location of light)
- ⇒ LEAF COLLECTION
- ⇒ CHRISTMAS TREE DROP OFF/MULCHING

WEBSITE COMMITTEE

- ⇒ FACEBOOK—CITY OF ERLANGER
- ⇒ CITIZEN SERVICE REQUEST CENTER ONLINE
- ⇒ WEBSITE www.ci.erlanger.ky.us

THE CITY OF ERLANGER IS LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS WHO WOULD LIKE TO HELP. FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL BECKY HOPKINS AT 727-2525.

The City of Erlanger allows businesses and organizations to **advertise** in our Whistlestop Newsletter. This is a quarterly newsletter that provides city information and updates for Erlanger businesses and residents. For Erlanger businesses or organizations the cost is **\$30.00 per issue**, this includes businesses located on "The Dixie". Non-Erlanger businesses can also advertise for **\$40.00 an issue**. If you are interested in placing an advertisement, please contact Sherry at sherry.hoffman@cityoferlanger.com or by calling (859) 727-2525.

City Council Meetings

First Tuesday of every month at 7:00 p.m.

Erlanger Historical Society Meetings

Second Wednesday of every month at 7:00 p.m., Railroad Depot Museum

Erlanger-Elsmere School Board Meetings

Second Thursday of every month at 7:00 p.m.

Dixie Farmers' Market

Erlanger Baptist Church Parking Lot
Every Thursday, ending October 30, 2014, 2:00-6:00 p.m.

Pumpkin Patch Party

Erlanger Depot Park
October 17, 2014, 6:00-8:00 p.m.

Halloween Party

Erlanger Branch Library
7:00-8:30 p.m.

2% Discounted Tax Bill Deadline Dates

October 31, 2014

Trick or Treat in Erlanger

October 31, 2014, 6-8 p.m.

Leaf Collection

October 27th through December 8th

Senior Thanksgiving Luncheon

Erlanger Branch Library
November 18 or 20, 2014, 10:30-12:30 p.m.

General Government Offices Closed

November 27 and 28, 2014

Christmas Tree Lighting

Erlanger Depot Park
To Be Announced

Christmas Event

Erlanger Branch Library
1:00-5:00 p.m.

General Government Offices Closed

December 25 and 26, 2014 and January 1, 2015

Christmas Tree Drop-Off

December 29th-January 16th
Public Works Facility, Jack Scheben Way

Tax Payment Due Date

December 31, 2014