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A NOTE FROM THE CITY MANAGER

As I am out in the community, I am often approached by citizens with suggestions for new businesses in Atchison. “Why can’t we get a Target?” “Wouldn’t an Applebee’s be great?” “I think a Golden Corral would do well here!”

At the end of the day, the City doesn’t determine which businesses open (or close) in Atchison. Those decisions are made by the open market. As the saying goes, “we live in a free country”, and that means businesses choose where to locate free from government intrusion. Target determines which sites work best for their desired operations based on multiple factors, including trade area population, traffic counts, and median household income. Unfortunately, Atchison doesn’t come close to meeting Target’s criteria for considering a location here. Atchison’s prospects for a Golden Corral locating here are similar. Golden Corral requires that a minimum of 21,500 cars drive past their restaurant each day, and Atchison’s busiest intersection has

less than half that number, at 10,100 cars per day.

When the Atchison market does pique the interest of a major franchisor, the next step is finding a willing and able operator. This is someone who will live and breathe the business; someone willing to work half days (that’s 7 am - 7 pm, plus additional hours as needed) with very few days off. Almost always, that person must also have a large amount of capital to invest in the business. For example, if you want to secure a Jimmy John’s franchise, you’ll need \$80,000 in liquid assets and \$300,000 in total assets. Or, maybe you are interested in running a Wendy’s? That takes \$2 million in liquid assets and \$5 million in total assets. But the financial capacity alone won’t get you there. You also need the experience to be a strong manager and the passion for and commitment to the work you are doing.

Another question I’ve heard a lot lately is, “why a new hotel and not a

new restaurant?” The simple answer to that is three-fold. One, a study showed that there was a need for another hotel in Atchison. Two, there was an active and able developer who was passionate about building a hotel in our community. And three, there were investors, both locally and outside of Atchison, who believed in and invested in the project. The City had an underutilized parking lot that wasn’t producing any revenue or jobs for Atchison, and we were able to bring all these components together for a great development and create an exciting project.

I’d also like to note what an exciting time it is in Atchison, with Walls of Books and 5th Street Mercantile opening this month, and Chuck and Hank’s announcing they will now be open 7 days a week.

If you have questions feel free to contact me at 367-5506 or treyc@cityofatchison.com

- City Manager Trey Cocking

Atchison Achieves E-Community Status

The City of Atchison’s Economic Development Advisory Group (EDAG) is pleased to announce a new partnership with NetWork Kansas to help start and grow small businesses in the Atchison community.

The NetWork Kansas mission is to promote an entrepreneurial environment by providing a central portal that connects entrepreneurs and small business owners with the right resources—expertise, education, and economic resources—when they are needed most.

In pursuit of this mission, NetWork

Kansas partners with business development organizations and educational institutions that work with entrepreneurs and small business owners who have the vision and potential to succeed. Through this partnership with NetWork Kansas, the Atchison small business community will have access to a \$125,000 locally controlled, revolving loan fund for small business startups and expansions.

The program is called E-communities (E for Entrepreneurship) and several dozen communities across the State have already seen this program bear fruit in their communities. Everyday

businesses like restaurants, cleaning services, breweries, small manufacturers, retail stores, etc. are able to use this locally controlled, revolving loan fund as gap financing for making their small business dreams come true.

The funding for the E-Community Program is created through the sale of entrepreneurship tax credits, which are allocated to NetWork Kansas by the State Legislature. The tax credits are marketed for sale throughout the community and those proceeds create the \$125,000 revolving loan fund. The tax credits are a 75% tax credit at

the state level, as well as a federal tax deduction meaning anyone over the 25% federal income tax bracket can actually save money on their taxes by purchasing the credits. Anyone interested in purchasing tax credits to benefit the e-community program in Atchison can do so by contacting the office of Patsy Porter, CPA at 913-367-2707.

To learn more about the E-Community Program, contact Justin Pregont, Director of Public Works & Utilities at justinp@cityofatchison.com or 913-367-5561.

Atchison Becomes More Eco-Friendly

The City's Solid Waste & Recycling Division serves approximately 3,500 households, providing both weekly trash and bi-weekly recycling collection services. Starting October 15, 2016, a series of glass only drop off locations will be added to the City's recycling program offerings.

In the spring, City staff began researching options to recycle glass in the Atchison community. With an eye toward improving the recycling rate, staff identified a series of strategies in a memo to the City Commission in June 2015. One of those strategies included the introduction of a glass recycling program that would be easily accessible to the public. Glass accounts for approximately 4.5% of all municipal solid waste, and Atchison's solid waste customers produce approximately 150 tons of glass every year. If 10% of Atchison households participate in the glass drop off program, the City could save 15 tons of glass from heading to the landfill every year.

With this in mind, the City teamed up with Ripple Glass, the most prominent glass recycler in the Kansas City

metro, to provide glass recycling to the residents of Atchison.

Ripple Glass is a subsidiary of the Boulevard Brewing Company that was developed by Boulevard and other Kansas City businesses and organizations. The innovative company focuses on creating a robust, metro-wide collection network while also processing recycled glass at their state-of-the-art facility.

While it is difficult to extract much value out of glass as part of a comingled recycling stream, if it is kept entirely separated, it can be a valuable commodity in the secondary market. Ripple Glass processes the glass they receive and turn that product into fiberglass insulation, as well as new beer bottles. Ripple Glass already has a presence in Atchison, although that presence has been limited to a collection



point at the Atchison County Transfer Station.

The City has purchased four new dumpsters to be placed in several locations around town:

- Farmer's Market
- First Baptist Church (17th & W. Riley)
- Wal-Mart Parking Lot
- Saint Benedict's Catholic School (Parking Lot south of 3rd & Division)

The dumpsters cost just under \$3,000 to purchase while Ripple Glass furnished the purple paint and decals to properly label and brand the bins as "glass only". Student volunteers from the Benedictine College Green Club painted the dumpsters during the Chamber's Fall Clean Up event earlier this month.

The goal of this new program offering is to make glass drop off more convenient for the community. As necessary, City crews will empty the community glass only dumpsters and transport those contents to the Atchison County Transfer Station, saving \$35 per ton in the process.

Demolitions Delayed to Allow Time for Repair

The City's demolition program aims to make a positive impact on Atchison neighborhoods by removing eyesores and unsafe structures throughout the community. The end goal of this cleanup effort is to improve public safety and promote and encourage private reinvestment.

So far this year, approximately 30 properties have been identified as meeting the criteria for demolition as unsafe and dangerous structures. Five of those structures were brought before the City Commission on July 18, 2016 and were set for demolition hearings on September 6, 2016. The owners of the properties were notified of the hearings and were encouraged to attend the meeting to share their

plans for their properties.

To be declared unsafe and dangerous a structure must be severely dilapidated to such an extent that the structural strength is materially less than it was before, and it is less than the minimum requirements of the building code for new buildings of a similar structure, purpose or location.

Three of the five homeowners were present at the September 6th hearings, where Commissioners agreed to allow the three property owners additional time to submit plans to make repairs to the structures, with the hopes that they can be repaired rather than demolished. The owners of 1309 Division, 1311 Division, and 1016 Division will have

until January 6th to repair their structures and all are required to work with the Code Enforcement Officer to submit a plan for repair in the upcoming months.

During the hearing, the Commission also voted to demolish two structures: 920 N. 4th and 1021 Ash. The owners of these structures were not present at the meeting, but they have been notified that they have until October 6th to repair their properties or they will be demolished.

At the October 3rd Commission meeting, six additional structures will be proposed to the City Commission for demolition. If approved, demolition hearings will be scheduled via City resolution and the property owners will be notified via certified mail.

Community Digs Deep at Hotel Groundbreaking

The Atchison community welcomed the future downtown Holiday Inn Express hotel with a groundbreaking ceremony on September 23rd. The groundbreaking took place where the 68-room hotel's front doors are destined to stand. The project is scheduled to be completed in the fall of 2017.

Pictured, left to right: Jennifer, Alec, Alaenah and project developer Bill Michaud, City Manager Trey Cocking, Chamber of Commerce President Jacque Pregont, Mayor Jack Bower, and project contractor Wade Wilkenson of Wilkenson Construction.



EVENT CALENDAR

September 29-30

Jock's Nitch Liquidation Sale
10:00 am - 8:00 pm
(619 Commercial St., Downtown)

October 1

Jock's Nitch Liquidation Sale
10:00 am - 5:00 pm
(619 Commercial St., Downtown)

October 1

Oktoberfest
10:00 am - 5:00 pm
(Downtown)

October 3

Atchison City Commission Meeting
4:30 pm
(City Hall)

October 5

Atchison Planning Commission/Board of Zoning Appeals Meeting
4:30 pm
(City Hall)

October 7

First Friday
5:00 pm - 10:00 pm
(Downtown)

October 8

Horseshoe Tournament
1:00pm
(Atchison VFW)

October 8-9

Family Fun Weekend
10:00 am - 5:00 pm
(Butterfly House on the Prairie Cummings, KS - Old JU-4 Schoolhouse)

October 10

Parks & Forestry Board Meeting
6:00 pm
(City Hall)

October 17

Atchison City Commission Meeting
4:30 pm
(City Hall)

October 20

Witch's Night Out
5:00 pm - 8:00 pm
(Downtown)

October 22

Dogtober
10:00 am - 12:00 pm
(Downtown)

October 29

Trick or Treat Down the Street
11:00 am - 2:00 pm
(Downtown)

October 29

Kiwanis Halloween Parade
2:00 pm - 3:00 pm
(Downtown)

Atchison’s CSO Woes

Most cities in the United States have separate sewer systems for wastewater (sanitary system) and stormwater runoff (stormwater system). Atchison is 1 of only 3 cities in Kansas that has a Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) system. CSOs are remnants of early infrastructure when communities built sewer systems to collect both stormwater and sanitary sewage in the same pipe. Atchison’s system is over 100 years old and the oldest parts of the system consist of cast iron and clay pipes. Today, city sewers are specially designed concrete pipes.

occur, Atchison is in violation of both state and federal wastewater regulations.

For more than 40 years, federal and state laws have set standards for clean water. Several years ago, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) issued an administrative order to the City to correct its CSO problem. The City of Atchison and KDHE engaged in negotiations to finalize a new Consent Agreement and Final Order (CAO) for the City’s CSO system that would reduce or eliminate overflows due to Missouri River flooding. The CAO became effective on December 14, 2011 and it contains a series of improvements to the current CSO system and requires progress to be made in a timely matter. By accepting and signing the CAO, the City became legally obligated to complete all required actions outlined in the agreement. Failure to comply with the CAO could result in fines imposed against the City by KDHE.

During periods of heavy rainfall and, even during dry weather, the wastewater volume in Atchison’s system can exceed the capacity of the Wastewater Treatment Plant and the excess wastewater has to bypass the plant and go into the Missouri River. When this happens, an untreated combination of stormwater and raw sewage are discharged directly into the river. When these overflows

Under the CAO, the City is required to spend \$12.4 million in the first five years of the CAO to make improvements and operate the system. Additionally, the City must raise \$3.1 million in revenue annually by 2017, to be used to operate, upgrade, and maintain the current wastewater treatment facilities and complete projects as outlined in the CAO. This part of the agreement is very different from the agreements other cities operate under and it is much more lenient toward Atchison residents.

To begin addressing the CAO’s revenue requirement, the City instituted a CSO fee of \$13.32 a month in April 2015. To lessen the burden on residential customers, the City eliminated its \$13.32/month trash fee and the City is now paying for residential trash service through some of the proceeds of the countywide solid waste and joint communications sales tax.

The CSO fee revenue is used to assist with CSO remediation projects and long overdue upgrades to the City’s Wastewater Treatment Plant. The CSO fee was increased by 5% in 2016, but the City still needs to raise about \$500,000 in additional revenue to meet the \$3.1 million requirement by 2017. Although the revenue requirement of the CAO will have to be met within the next year, the City will spend another 40 to 80 years correcting its CSO issues.

In order to generate \$3.1 million, the agreement allows the City to raise rates over five years from roughly \$1.5 million a year to 2% of median household income, which is still a difficult burden on the community, but is much better than the \$8.5 million per year that would have been required under the original Administrative Order.

Clean Up Atchison: Fall Edition

September 3rd marked the 2016 Atchison Fall Clean-Up. Over 300 volunteers, including local students from USD 409, MH-MA, and Benedictine College, wore orange while working hard to clean-up Atchison. Their efforts helped restore and reveal Atchison’s beauty. Thank you to all who volunteered their time to help in Atchison’s beautification effort!



ORANGE CONE ALERT



Construction on the City’s Flood Gate Automation Project has commenced! East-bound traffic motorists can expect a short detour on Main Street between 7th and 8th streets onto Commercial Street. West bound traffic will remain on Main Street through the duration of the project. Weather permitting, construction is estimated to last through mid-October. On November 16, 2015, the City Commission awarded a contract to Foley Company for the construction for the Flood Gate Automation project that, when complete, will fulfill a key requirement listed in the City’s consent agreement with KDHE for CSO remediation.

Clean-Up Millard Allen Ballpark

On Saturday, September 3rd, members of Project Atchison, the Parks & Forestry Board, the Benedictine Softball team and family of Millard Allen himself worked to clean up the Millard Allen Baseball Field located at 8th & Riley. The volunteers worked hard to spruce up the field with painting, weed eating, picking trash pickup, and other cleanup duties. Thank you for taking pride in Atchison!



Atchison Rail Museum Seeks Funds

In April, the Atchison Area Chamber of Commerce purchased the Atchison Rail Museum from its original owners, the Northeast Kansas Railroaders, Inc. Since then, the Chamber has begun work to restore the rail cars, but it is not an inexpensive undertaking. On September 10th, the Chamber hosted the Atchison Rail Museum Fundraiser to kick off efforts to raise funds for refurbishing the Atchison Rail Museum’s train cars and the 811 locomotive. The evening’s activities included food and drinks, rides on the Miniature Train, and music provided by the Atchison Jazz Express.

