

WHISTLESTOP

The City of Erlanger Newsletter

Fall 2010



MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR



Mayor

Thomas L. Rouse

All the talk lately has been about the lack of trust in government. "Take our country back!" "All they do is tax and spend!" Each of us has been subjected to this dialogue. The Tea Party has raised issues about government that have been simmering for years. Neither national political party is in good favor. The press is having a field day! On the local level, however, the news is much, much better.

The City of Erlanger's primary purpose is to provide public safety services. We think we have the finest police department in Northern KY, and perhaps in the Commonwealth. The national insurance rating organization, ISO, thinks we have one of the finest fire departments in the Commonwealth. The EMS/paramedic service we operate won national recognition a few months ago. Our public works department is noted as being the best in snow removal in our region. It appears that your city is doing its job by providing high quality public services within a balanced budget. The financial pressures, however, are significant and there is no end of this in sight.

Your City Council and I appreciate the trust you placed with us to manage your money in a fiscally conservative manner. The City budget is YOUR budget, and you are free to examine and review it at any time. We all welcome any input you may have. I have challenged some folks who are critical of government spending to look at the Erlanger budget and let us know where we are 'fat,' where we waste your money, and how to make your budget leaner and more efficient. There have been few takers. We have unfilled positions due to retirements and resignations. There was no raise in the last budget for your employees and a minimal adjustment in the current budget. Try as we might, however, there just is not enough revenue to meet legitimate needs.

Your City Council made an extremely courageous decision to raise the payroll tax (for the 1st time in 17 years) on folks who work in Erlanger, and dedicated the new revenue for use in road repair and capitol purchases. The pressure to raise the real estate tax on property owners – you - above the annual adjustment has been relieved. This move created discussion in our business community about the wisdom of this move in these times, and the debate has been civil and enlightening. The need for the revenue is clear. The use is well-defined. When an ambulance dies, it must be replaced – and this happened last year, causing an unbudgeted draw down of reserve funds. One of our major pieces of fire equipment is obsolete and its replacement will cost you nearly 5 figures. The need is never ending.

We will start the 2011-2012 budget process with the newly-elected Council early next year. If you have any interest in the process or product, everyone affiliated with your government welcomes your input.

Finally, and on a personal note, I will begin my 2nd 4-year term as your Mayor in January. I have been connected with this City one way or the other most of my life, and am really honored to be your Mayor. My immediate predecessors, the late Fred Thomas and my friend Marc T. Otto, Sr., did a wonderful job in their terms of maintaining the quality city government you demand and deserve for your hard-earned dollars. My goal is to continue this, and find new ways (looking 'outside of the box') to provide affordable, high quality service. Many thanks to you for your trust, concern and comments.

Mayor Thomas L. Rouse

ALL ABOARD!

**Can you hear the whistle blowing?
Chug on down to the Railroad Depot Park.
It shouts fun for all!**

Come join the Historical Society for their monthly meeting at the Depot Museum on Crescent Ave on the second Wednesday of each month. We usually have a short meeting, a speaker and then refreshments and camaraderie.

The Society has just started a Facebook page and would love to have folks join the fan page and leave comments and suggestion. Search-Erlanger Historical Society-Non Profit organization

We are in the process of putting all our Historical handouts, our Newsletter and the Erlanger Proper Subdivision Walking Tour on our webpage. Visit our webpage and check out the history of Erlanger, KY. at erlangerhistoricalsociety.org

The Museum is open every Saturday from noon until 4:00 p.m. and you can view all the artifacts and purchase t-shirts, railroad toys, and history books. We now have two books available. The complete history of Erlanger, KY titled [Erlanger Kentucky from the Buffalo Trace to the 21st Century](#) and also the Arcadia Historical Picture Book titled [Elsmere/ Erlanger](#).

Or just bring your children or grandchildren to the beautiful park by the tracks. There are swings and slides for little ones to enjoy and a great Amish train known as "The Hahn Express" for them to climb upon. While they are there they will love to see the trains rush by and whistle at them when they wave to the conductor. Pack a picnic lunch and a cool drink and sit in the gazebo or under the shelter and just relax.

This is the year of the Civil War sesquicentennial and the Historical Society is planning a Civil War display for the museum. If you have any artifacts you would like to loan us please call Pat at 727-8959. We would sure appreciate your participation.

There is a growing concern for the Burn Ban which ends September 30th due to the extremely dry conditions. Kenton County Homeland Security/Emergency Management has issued that the burn ban that is currently in effect will be extended indefinitely. This means that no burn permits will be issued by Erlanger Fire/EMS. (727-2488)

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

When you leave your home each day, you drive on city maintained streets to get where you are going. The car seat that your child is riding in may have been inspected by one of our police officers. You drive by a city park where children are playing. If you are involved in an accident you call 9-1-1, which is answered by an Erlanger dispatcher. Erlanger's police, fire, and emergency medical services will respond to assist you. No matter why you come to Erlanger, whether it is for employment or to live, services are expected. These same services require funding by the city. One of the sources for this funding is property taxes. No one likes to be taxed, especially with today's economy, but without revenues from property taxes, city governments would not be able to provide the services that everyone needs or wants. Remember, your needs may be different than your neighbor's needs. It is the city's responsibility to meet the needs of the community as a whole. Real estate taxes are calculated by multiplying the property's assessed value by the real estate tax rate. On September 21, 2010, Erlanger City Council set the real estate property tax rate at \$0.315 per \$100 and the personal property tax rate at \$0.418 per \$100 for the 2010.

Each year we get numerous calls from residents confused on why they are receiving two property tax bills. Only one is from the City of Erlanger. The other is from the Kenton County Sheriff's Department for your Kenton County property taxes. For questions regarding those bills and where to make payments, please contact the Sheriff's Department at 859-392-1800.

If you have an escrow account, DO NOT pay your city tax bill without contacting your mortgage company first. Each year we spend a great deal of time on duplicate payments where the mortgage company and the property owner both pay the tax bill. Refunds will not be issued until after January 2011.

This year property tax payments will not be able to be paid online. With our new website, we could not secure a "safe" line for tax payers to submit their credit card information. Credit card payments can be made through mail or by phone by calling 859-727-2525, prompt # 1.

If you are 65 years of age and older or are disabled, you may be eligible to receive a Homestead or Disability Exemption on your City of Erlanger and Kenton County property tax bills. To apply, please contact the Kenton County PVA at 859-392-1750.

(Below is a paid advertisement)



KANGAROO
 www.thekangarookidz.com (859) 242-k1dz (5139)
Inflatable Rentals
 Kangaroo Kidz LLC
 3149-A Dixie Highway #114
 Erlanger, Kentucky 41018

FIRE MARSHAL'S ALARMING UPDATE

October is Fire Prevention month in Erlanger, and this year's theme is **Smoke Alarms: A sound you can live with.** In an effort to better educate communities throughout the U.S. about smoke alarm recommendations, the nonprofit National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) is promoting "Smoke Alarms: A Sound You Can Live With!" as the theme for this year's Fire Prevention Week campaign, October 3-9, which Erlanger Fire/EMS is supporting locally.

Many homes in Erlanger may not have any smoke alarms, not enough smoke alarms, alarms that are too old, or alarms that are not working. We want residents to understand that working smoke alarms are needed in every home, on every level (including the basement), outside each sleeping area and inside each bedroom. And, if a smoke alarm is 10 years old or older, it needs to be replaced.

Smoke alarms can mean the difference between life and death in a fire. NFPA statistics show that working smoke alarms cut the chance of dying in a fire nearly in half. But they must be working properly to do so. The association's data shows that many homes have smoke alarms that aren't working or maintained properly, usually because of missing, disconnected or dead batteries. Roughly two-thirds of all home fire deaths result from fires in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms.

NFPA and Erlanger Fire/EMS agree that interconnected smoke alarms offer the best protection; when one sounds, they all do. This is particularly important in larger or multi-story homes, where the sound from distant smoke alarms may be reduced to the point that it may not be loud enough to provide proper warning, especially for sleeping individuals.

Most people have a sense of complacency about smoke alarms because they already have one in their homes. Fire Prevention Week provides an excellent opportunity to re-educate people about smoke alarms, new technologies and expanded options for installation and maintenance. Ultimately, we want this year's campaign to serve as a call to action for households nationwide to inspect their homes to ensure that their families have the full smoke alarm protection that's recommended.

Erlanger Fire/EMS offers the following tips for making sure smoke alarms are maintained and working properly:

- Test smoke alarms at least once a month using the test button, and make sure everyone in your home knows their sound.
- If an alarm "chirps," warning the battery is low, replace the battery right away.
- Replace all smoke alarms, including alarms that use 10-year batteries and hard-wired alarms, when they're 10 years old (or sooner) if they do not respond properly when tested.

Never remove or disable a smoke alarm.

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Experience those days gone by. Revisit childhood memories at the Depot Museum. See how your family helped make the City what it is today.

POLICE CHIEF REPORT

School Opens: When driving near schools or school bus stops, please be aware that school is back in session and children are present. Every year we have a child struck by a vehicle either near school property or on their way to school. Pay attention to the School Zone Speed Limits. If you are cited for speeding when the lights are flashing or during the time when the limits are in effect, the fine will be doubled.

Thefts: We have seen a significant rise in the number of thefts from parked vehicles and homes in Erlanger and Crescent Springs. Use common sense; do not leave valuables in your vehicle and make sure to lock your doors. No items should be left in your vehicle, especially GPS type devices which have become a favorite of thieves. Ladies, do not leave your purses in your vehicle or if grocery shopping, do not leave them in the cart.

Burglary: We have also seen an increase in burglaries, thefts from homes. Keep all doors and windows locked. Leave lights on at night, thieves do not like to be seen. Most burglaries have been occurring in the day time. Be aware of this fact and if you see any suspicious activity, no matter what time of day, call 911. We would much rather come to find nothing than to find out later that a theft occurred.

- Visit the *National Crime Prevention Councils web-site at www.ncpc.org for crime prevention tips.*

Community Safe Night: We will host a community night out at Flagship Park located at 3990 Lakemont Drive in Erlanger. The event will be held on October 7, 2010 from 5:00 PM until 8:00 PM. We will have police equipment on display with demonstrations on how it is used. Food and drinks will be provided. Come out and meet some of the members of your police department.

THE CITY CHALLENGES YOU

Are you or a family member between the ages of five and ninety nine? If so, the City of Erlanger's Connect Erlanger Committee challenges you to participate in City Government Month 2011.

Why? City Government Month is geared to introducing city or local government to the citizens in our community.

What? You choose the project! Yes, rather than us telling you what to work on, the challenge is for you to come up with an age appropriate project. It can be anything relating to city government. The project can be art, an essay, a map, ordinance, whatever you choose. The projects will be judged on creativity, originality, and content—depending on the type of project chosen.

When? Projects must be turned in at the Erlanger City Building before or on Tuesday, March 1, 2011. All participants will be recognized, however the winners chosen will receive an award on Tuesday, May 4, 2011 at the Erlanger Council Meeting.

Don't forget to attach your name, age, and phone number!

(This is a message from Council Members Renee Skidmore and Bill Howard.)

FALL LEAF COLLECTION

The Public Works Department will begin their annual **leaf collection program** the week of October 25th, 2010 and it will continue through the week of December 6th, 2010. 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 on Dixie Highway at Cave Run, 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.

This year, the last date of leaf collection will be Friday December the 10th. After this date, equipment used for leaf collection will be prepared for winter usage and leaf disposal will be the responsibility of the homeowner.

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.

In addition to the leaf collection program, 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 27th through January 10th. The trees will be turned into mulch that is made available to Erlanger's residents.

(Below is a paid advertisement)

THOMAS L. ROUSE

Attorney at Law

32 years of service to the
people of Northern Kentucky

859-393-3234

www.ThomasRouseLaw.com

ERLANGER PROGRAMS OR SERVICES AVAILABLE

For more information call 859-727-2525 prompt #1

- ⇒ Police Explorer Program
- ⇒ Neighborhood Watch Programs
- ⇒ Car Seat Inspections
- ⇒ Property Security Checks
- ⇒ Citizens Police Academy
- ⇒ VIPS (Volunteers in Police Service)
- ⇒ Dispatch on Twitter
- ⇒ CPR, First Aid, and Fire Extinguisher Classes
- ⇒ Fire/EMS Explorer Program
- ⇒ Home and Business Inspections
- ⇒ Senior Citizen Smoke Detector Program
- ⇒ Passports
- ⇒ Erlanger History Book \$25.00
- ⇒ Notary Publics (No Charge)
- ⇒ TANK Bus Passes
- ⇒ Erlanger Maps (No Charge)
- ⇒ No Knock Policy
- ⇒ Depot Park Reservations (727-2525 #1)
- ⇒ Pothole Reports (need location of pole)
- ⇒ Street Light Outage Reports
- ⇒ Leaf Collection
- ⇒ Christmas Tree Drop Off/ Mulching
- ⇒ Video Streaming of regular Council meetings (website)
- ⇒ Resident/Business E-mail Database (www.ci.erlanger.ky.us)
- ⇒ Citizen Service Request (www.ci.erlanger.ky.us)

SENIOR TENNIS IN ERLANGER

The Old Timers Tennis Group invites Erlanger seniors with some tennis experience to join the group. The group meets every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, twelve months in the year, at Silverlake public park in Erlanger. Annual dues are less than \$20 for balls. For more information, call Peter Lobo (859-344-8822) or Joe Guenther (859-341-8433).

The matches are all pick-up doubles matches with teams informally made up from all who show up to play. Sets are abbreviated to 4 games, with a tie-break played at 2 all. This keeps matches short with little wait time and usually new teams are formed after every match. Winter tennis, for the uninitiated, can be a lot of fun with proper clothing. Try it!

The seniors tennis group has been supported by the City of Erlanger Parks and Recreations for over ten years. We thank Director Kathy Cahill, now retired, for her continuous support including reserving court time.

Article by Mr. Peter Lobo

***You're on the right track!
Visit the last remaining wooden structure
from Cincinnati to Chattanooga.
The Depot is for train fans of all ages.***

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CITY CALENDAR

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

Minnie d'Erlanger Churchill Visit

October 16, 2010, 1-3 p.m.
Railroad Depot Park

Leaf Collection

October 25th through December 10th

Family Halloween Event

October 29, 2010, 5:00 p.m.
Erlanger Branch of the Kenton County Library

2% Discounted Tax Bill Deadline Dates

October 29, 2010 7am-6pm at City Bldg.
October 29, 2010 Bank of Kentucky, Erlanger
October 31, 2010 postmarked by mail

Trick or Treat in Erlanger

October 31, 2010, 6-8 p.m.

Senior Thanksgiving Luncheon

November 19, 2010, 10:00 a.m.
Erlanger Branch of the Kenton County Library
Reservations only by calling 859-962-4000
Reservations only taken after November 1, 2010

General Government Offices Closed

November 25, 2010
November 26, 2010

Family Christmas Event

December 5, 2010, 1:30 p.m.
Erlanger Branch of the Kenton County Library

General Government Offices Closed

December 23-24, 2010
December 31, 2010

Christmas Tree Drop-Off

December 27th-January 10th
Public Works Facility
Jack Scheben Way

Tax Payment Due Date

December 30, 2010 7am-6pm at City Bldg.
December 30, 2010 Bank of Kentucky, Erlanger
December 31, 2010 postmarked by mail