



*Mayor Graves October 10, 2012 column in The Gallatin News*

## **On the Horizon**

(October 10, 2012) Now that November 6 is less than a month away, everyone is talking about the elections. Who will win and who will lose. All of this may make for good coffee shop talk, but the real question facing all of us is, "What is Gallatin's future going to hold after the election?"

Our fine city – Gallatin – is at a crossroads. Over the past years, we have been gaining momentum. We have completed new roads. We have a new downtown square that attracts several hundred people for 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursdays on Main and draws tens of thousands for its annual festivals. We have improved various intersections for better traffic flow and enhanced safety. We have more sidewalks and a multi-purpose path for alternative transportation such as walking, biking, skating boarding, etc. We have an express bus service that is exclusive to Gallatin and more public transportation is on the way.

As we move into 2013, there are many opportunities for our community. The Albert Gallatin/Hatten Track extension will take several more years to complete and the cost may increase over the years – but it will open the northern part of our city to business and residential development.

Vietnam Veterans/SR 386 has become the gateway into our city and needs a corridor study to make sure this vital entrance to the city is enhanced. We need to commence this study now. This gateway into Gallatin is too important to let it develop by happenstance. There need to be standards and design criteria. This is the time for Gallatin to plan its future.

The new road into our industrial center is currently underway. We have 200 acres of desirable land for businesses to either relocate or expand. This new road will enable us to give prospects an up close and personal view.

It has been six years since we had a tax increase and while the pressure to spend is enormous, it is imperative that we hold the line. A low tax rate makes Gallatin more attractive and competitive than our neighbors. As new businesses locate here, they hire more workers. This workforce spends its dollars here contributing to our revenue base. More revenue coming in means we can continue to keep our taxes low. A low and consistent tax rate sets Gallatin apart from other communities.

Our city government has increased its efficiency thanks to the use of more technology. We currently are upgrading our servers to have more capacity, but the future will bring more demand for broadband and wireless capabilities. Gallatin will need to continue to embrace innovations. Even though we are wireless in parts of our city, we need to expand our coverage. Again, this sets us apart from our competitors.

As more people move into our community, they bring ideas from other parts of the country. Some are easy to implement and others are more difficult. However, many of our new residents are here by choice. All citizen input is important to us. These ideas may lead others to locate here. I will continue to do surveys and *Mayor's Night In* to listen to our citizens – both new and established.

Cities are either moving forward or losing ground. Cities don't stand still. Communities must evaluate new ideas and embrace them when they make sense. Gallatin competes for residents, businesses and industry – not only with other cities in Sumner County, but all over Middle Tennessee and the South. We have only to look around us to see the level of competition. As Gallatin plans for its future through a SR 386 corridor study, keeps its tax rate low by holding down spending, keeps abreast of technology, listens to its residents, and provides land for development – Gallatin can only continue to move forward. By planning for our future, we will become even more of a destination point and thereby move past the crossroads to secure our future.