



(Mayor Graves' September 19 Column in *The Gallatin News*)

Moving Forward

Now that the temperatures are dropping, Fall is in the air. The leaves are beginning to turn, football games have commenced, and the holidays don't seem that far away.

Every September, I present the annual State of the City Address – and you can now watch it online at the City's website. Gallatin continues to be on solid footing and is fiscally sound because of our prudent fiscal policies. We set priorities and watch our pennies.

Our city continues to move ahead on important projects. TDOT recently gave a presentation to Gallatin regarding the progress and design of 109 South from the bypass to the Bridge. TDOT has removed the median and gone with a five-lane design. There are bike lanes and sidewalks on both sides so that folks have a choice of alternative means of transportation. The Council has accepted the design and TDOT has been notified to proceed.

The Cumberland River Bridge changes almost daily. Girders are now being added to the bridge. The bridge will be complete in early 2014 and TDOT hopes to have the road from the bridge to the bypass done not long after the bridge opens. At the same time, Wilson County is working on their section from the bridge to Hwy 70. When this road is finished, it will connect Interstate 65 in Portland to Interstate 40.

In spite of our many accomplishments, the City has still not passed a budget for this year. Gallatin is still in a continuation budget, with no end in sight. The obstacle continues to be a \$1,600,000 second pool at the Civic Center. The last phase of greenway has become a bargaining chip for the pool. Four members of the Council have decided if the pool isn't approved, then funding for the greenway will be held hostage. Not passing a budget for our city has dire consequences.

For example, in the not too distant future we will need monies included in the proposed budget to meet some of our contractual obligations. There is the realignment of Drivers Lane that needs to coincide with the building of 109 South to the bridge. There is our required match for ROW on Albert Gallatin/Hatten Track Road. There is our required match for the extension of GreenLea from SR386 to Long Hollow Pike. All of this funding is tied up in the proposed budget and none of these funds can be released until a budget is passed. Not passing a budget and holding up projects does not play well for Gallatin's future.

A second pool at the Civic Center, while a good project, is a non-essential project. Funding the greenway is a contractual obligation – a contract the Council voted for unanimously. We must honor our contractual obligations. The pool may be a good idea for the future, but not this year. The economic climate is still very uncertain.

For six years, Gallatin has been a city on the move – continuously improving to meet the needs of the community. We should continue moving forward – making sound fiscal decisions, safeguarding taxpayers' money, and improving necessary services.