

FYI

Merry Christmas!

Downtown Work Shifts Focus for Now



The replacement of water lines, that began in mid November has continued from Pittman to Neal Street where the new line is tied into a new line installed earlier this year on Neal Street. The water line work has preceded from Pittman and with the exception of a couple days has allowed two lanes of traffic

to remain open during the work. The contractor has installed the services along

with the main water line. The contractor made the decision to start with the water line work first, because there were delays in receiving the large concrete drainage boxes that were needed to start the drainage work on the west side of the project.

Now that those were delivered, the contractor

began work on the replacement of the old pipes with new drain boxes that will provide far more capacity than what was there previously. The road closure started on Dec. 4th and should be open again by the Dec. 18th.

The contractor, Brothers Construction, blocked Buchanan Street but provided access to businesses. Businesses such as Flash Market, the post office, Shape up Gym, Edward Jones, and Jim's Pizza all had access during the construction across the roadway.

How the downtown has Changed

- The downtown, at the beginning of the 1900's, was once home to multiple banks, an opera house, a butcher shop, multiple grocery stores, multiple cafes, drug stores, soda fountains, gas stations, and a tractor and implement company.
- Even as recent as the 80's, downtown hosted three cafés, two drug stores, multiple hardware stores, two clothing and shoe stores, and multiple gas stations.
- Today, downtown is filled primarily with antiques, flea markets, novelty stores, and boutique shops, but a hardware store, a drug store, and one café remain.

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2nd Phase plans submitted to ARDOT

The 2nd phase plans have been sent to ARDOT which must approve them as part of the funding procedures agreed to when they

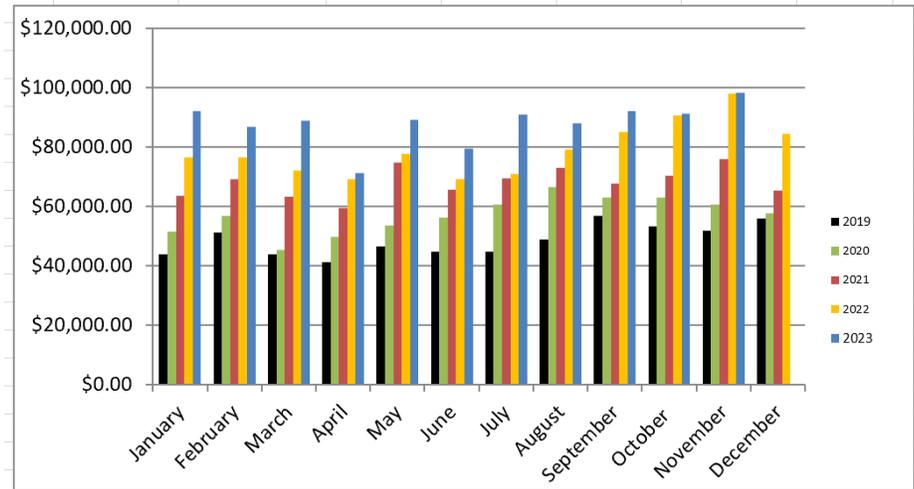
turned over the corridor to the City. The plans are at a stage referred to as 60% plans but are actually closer to 90% plans. ARDOT will expect

to see both as part of this approval process.

ARDOT will provide approx. \$3.2 million for the project.

Sales Tax Update

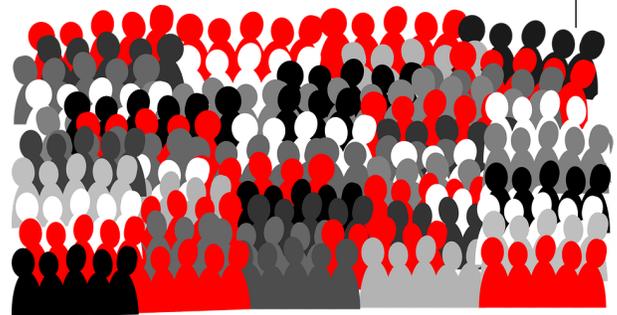
For the second consecutive month, sales tax collections were less than what were expected. November collections barely exceeded November of 2022 collections by the slimmest of margins, \$98,096 compared to \$98,040 last year, an increase of only .05%. Year to date, sales tax still runs ahead of 2022 by 12% but that has dropped significantly the last two months.



Area Growth Leads to a Milestone

NW Arkansas Metro population now exceeds 576,000 persons, and recently moved to the 100th largest metro area in the county, passing Scranton PA and Chattanooga Tennessee.

The Fayetteville Metropolitan area is the 15th fastest growing urban area in the country with 25% growth in the last decade and Fayetteville alone is expected to exceed 100,000 population easily by 2030. Prairie Grove on the other hand, saw 61% growth over the same period of time, and has seen that swell an additional 19% since 2020, with population now estimated over 8400.



Viney Grove Extension Still expected to be Completed by Spring

Work continues on the extension of Viney Grove Road to Buchanan Street where it will align with Blunt Street to the south. The work is not going as quickly as the contractor, Sweetser Construction, had projected, but is still well with the time frame allowed under the contract.

They have begun widening the intersection at Buchanan which will get widened and turn



lanes installed as part of the project. The intersection will have a four way stop sign installation to control traffic.

In addition, Sweetser is installing the necessary drain pipes along th new corridor. Next should see road base installed, curbs, sidewalks, then paving to complete the roadway.

Building Update

November was another slow month for building permits, with only two new permits issued for new homes. The new permits were both in Wagon Springs ranging from 1200 square foot to 1500 square foot.

Total permits for new single family homes, for the year are now 151. The city has grown by an estimated 377 people based on those new housing starts. New population estimates put the City at around 8434.



Library Partners with Mr. Rogers to collect Sweaters and Winter Coats

Prairie Grove Librarians participated in the AR PBS Mister Rogers Neighborhood Sweater Drive recently, and collected an amazing 501 sweaters, coats, hats, mittens, gloves and other warm winter clothing to benefit the Arkansas Support Network and Lifestyles.

The drive took place during the month of November, and will benefit many Arkansas in need of gently used warm winter clothing. Shown in the picture, are PG library staff, Megan Wood, Amanda Thulin, and Matt Baker.

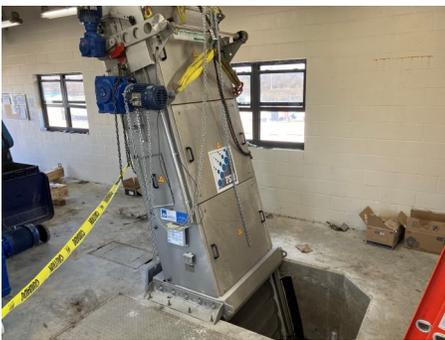


WWTP Update

Crossland Heavy Contractors continue their work on the WWTP and are attempting to wrap things up shortly after the new year.

They have now installed the new grit removal system after removing the old "raptor" equipment (see new installation top left and old equipment bottom left).

The contractor has removed all of the old filter media out of the 1969 trickling filters and those two basins will be used as temporary holding basins for the solids that will be removed from the oxidation ditches. The rock that has been removed is being



used for a new driveway behind the plant. Crossland has subcontracted the cleaning of the existing oxidation ditches and will complete that before putting the new bio unit on line. The new unit is not finished, but remaining work is underway and equipment is being installed and it should be completed soon.



City Offices Will be Closed Monday and Tuesday, December 25th and 26th, for Christmas



CITY OFFICES
New Hours
January
2024
8:00-4:00

- Karen McCratic, Prairie Grove representative on the Washington County Library Board, was recently appointed to the Chairman of the County Board. The county Library system includes, Springdale, Farmington, Prairie Grove, Elkins, West Fork, and Lincoln libraries, and operates the Greenland and Winslow libraries.
- Jackie Baker was recognized at the meeting of the Code Officials of Arkansas Fall Conference for completing her second term as the organizations President. CORE represents the building inspectors throughout the State of Arkansas and organizes certification training for those officials.

Staff to begin 8-4 work day Jan 1

Beginning January 2nd, the new hours of the Prairie Grove City Hall, District Court, Water Utility Office, and Police clerk will be 8:00 am to 4:00 pm.

Employees will be utilizing working lunches, and will receive breaks during the day to grab quick nourishment while continuing their work schedule.

Office staff have often been needed in the past to remain at their desks during business hours

due to minimal staffing. Covering vacations, sick time, and other personal time often involves shifting office personnel around to cover for each other.

This new policy will allow them to stay at their desk, eat, and answer phones or wait on customers as needed. The city will be putting out notices of the new hours soon.

