

Roaming Around Reidsville

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It's hard to believe it is already December. Before we know it, we will be celebrating Christmas and the new year of 2020 will be just around the corner. And that means the City of Reidsville is inching closer to a big milestone in our history. Reidsville is on a "countdown" of sorts as the City begins preparations for its Sesquicentennial in 2023. That's right, we will be celebrating the City's 150th birthday, and while three years may sound like plenty of time, City staff has actually been discussing plans for the past two years.

Now, though, is the time to really buckle down and get to work on what we hope will be a year-long celebration. The Reidsville City Council at its June meeting agreed to purchase part of the land at the corner of South Scales Street and Williams Street across from Fire Station #1. Plans are to erect a Sesquicentennial Clock Tower there, which will help launch the **Reidsville150** project as well as provide a visual defining point at the south side entranceway into the downtown area. In July, Commonwealth Brands became the first industry to donate to the clock, which will be installed by Verdin Clock Company and will tie in aesthetically with the roof at nearby Market Square. The company gave \$10,000 to jumpstart the project.

I remember when I arrived in the City in January of 1998 that we held a small 125th Birthday event near the end of the year. However, we are expecting our **Reidsville150** party to be much more, beginning with the establishment of the Clock Tower and continuing throughout 2023 with different events. Our Assistant City Manager of Administration/Finance Director Chris Phillips, somewhat of a history buff himself, is heading our staff committee making plans for the Sesquicentennial. Others on the core committee are Donna Setliff, Community Development Manager; Judy Yarbrough, City Marketer; Leigh Anne Bassinger, HR Director; and myself, but other staff members will be called in to assist when needed. We will be drawing on the expertise and knowledge of our residents to help with the plans. In fact, we are currently identifying possible partnerships within the community, including both groups and individuals, who might help with the planning and coordination of the project.

Our committee has also broken down into sub-groups to focus on possible areas of concentration: Publications; Events; Facilities; Government; and the Clock Tower. We'd love to get citizen feedback on what you'd like to see in our Sesquicentennial celebration. We will be using local news media, Social



**Proposed Sesquicentennial
Tower, Reidsville**

Media and our City website, reidsvillenc.gov, to interact with the public to get ideas. We also have started collecting some historical items to include as part of the celebration and are establishing guidelines for how to gather and maintain any donated items. If you have anything you'd like to add either in ideas or items for the Sesquicentennial, you can email Reidsville150@reidsvillenc.gov.

You should expect to see more about our plans for the Sesquicentennial in the coming months as we reach out for ideas. And most likely, in the coming years you will see us highlight the history of Reidsville in a variety of projects and events. We have been doing that already, starting with our "Roaming Reidsville" QR Code Video Tour highlighting some of Reidsville's most prominent historical structures, from the Penn House to City Hall. At the Fall Jubilee this year, the City opened up the Governor Reid House for tours. We have incorporated a brief history of the City into our citizen's academy. We are also excited about a first ever event, a Downtown Lantern Walking Tour (highlighted in the Upcoming Events listed below).

Other Upcoming Events in December

- **Saturday, December 7:** The **Holiday Market** returns to the Penn House, 324 Maple Avenue, from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. Running Pine Herb Farm & Friends present the annual market when area arts and crafts vendors take over the Penn House, which will be beautifully decorated for the holidays. There is no cost to enter, but we don't guarantee your pocketbook won't be lighter after you find that unique Christmas present for family, friends or yourself!
- **Also on Saturday, December 7:** The First Ever **Downtown Lantern Walking Tour** will leave at 5 p.m. from Mural Park at the corner of South Scales and Gilmer streets. This 1½-hour walking tour will focus on downtown history, buildings, businesses and people. Led by the City's Historic Preservation Commission, the free tour will end at City Hall for a tour of that facility, music and light refreshments. Don't forget to wear comfortable shoes! And sorry, no pets please.
- **Friday, December 13: Late Night Downtown Holiday Shopping:** Downtown merchants will be open until 7:30 p.m. for holiday shopping!
- **Saturday, December 14:** This is the date for the Reidsville Parks & Recreation Department will hold a "**Pay It Forward Coat Drive**" **Giveaway** starting at 9 a.m. at the Rec Building, 201 North Washington Avenue. Donations of coats for all ages can be made through December 6th at the rec department. Call 336-349-1090 for details.
- **Tuesday-Thursday, December 24-26:** City Offices will be closed for the Christmas Holiday.