

Roaming Around Reidsville

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Next year I will have been with the City of Reidsville as its City Clerk/Public Information Officer for 25 years. It is hard to believe at times that it has been that long. And even on the hardest day I've ever had a work, it has always been one of the best decisions in my life to come and be a part of TEAM REIDSVILLE.

One thing that I have always appreciated about the City and the Reidsville City Council are their commitment to our employees. City leaders have known that without good, dependable employees and forward-thinking management, we can't provide the good, dependable services that our residents want and need. That is why the City is always looking for great workers who can help us achieve this goal.

Speaking on behalf of the City Council, Mayor Donald L. Gorham recently discussed the City's commitment to its employees.

"The City of Reidsville recognizes our employees are our single most valuable asset," the Mayor stressed. "They enable us to exemplify our mission statement: to promote and enhance the quality of life of our residents, by providing effective services with integrity, sincerity and efficiency. These men and women provide services daily to meet the needs of our businesses and industries. They are the face of Team Reidsville throughout the community."

So, how does the City show its support for its employees? Every three years the City studies one-third of the positions in the City to make sure we remain competitive with our salaries and benefits. This year Public Works was reviewed. Last year it was the Police Department's sworn positions. This coming year it will be "All Other", which includes those at City Hall, Parks & Recreation, Fire, other administrative positions throughout the City as well as non-sworn jobs at the PD.

At last month's Council meeting, the governing board approved implementing pay increases for our Public Works Department ahead of the usual July date. Like other workers across the state and nation, our employees are feeling the pinch of rising gas and food prices, etc. Moves such as this early implementation are designed to help us not only gain new employees but also retain those valuable workers we already have. Our Public Works employees, some of which have the most physically



demanding jobs in the City, will see, for the most part, increases in their pay grades. Their pay grades may be raised anywhere from 1-5 levels.

A handful of Public Works employees won't see a pay grade increase but that is only because the City's new minimum wage increase will benefit them even more. Back in March of this year, the City Council voted unanimously to increase the minimum hourly rate of pay for all full-time employees to \$15/hour and for all part-time employees to \$12/hour. The only full-time employees not included in the minimum hourly rate increase are Reidsville firefighters. Because of their unique work schedules, the firefighters' yearly salaries far exceed the new minimum annual salary of \$31,200 for full-time employees. The minimum annual salary of a newly hired firefighter with the City is \$38,437.07.

Well-qualified emergency services personnel, such as fire and police, are always in demand. However, it wasn't until recently that municipalities have become even more aggressive in actively recruiting employees from other cities. Finding qualified employees or those who can be trained in one of the City's Trainee or Cadet programs is always a struggle in such cases. To help with the shortages being experienced here in the City, the City of Reidsville decided it couldn't wait until next year to review Fire Department salaries. That study was recently conducted to ensure that our firefighting positions were competitive with our neighboring municipalities, and the new minimum salaries implemented.

You often hear "the grass is always greener" or that someone is willing to take a position that pays more now but not in the long run. Each person must decide what is best for them. But I truly believe that if someone comes to work for the City of Reidsville, they will be making a great life decision. Working for the City of Reidsville has so many benefits – paid insurance for the employee and the option to purchase good, affordable insurance for family members; 13 days of paid holidays, including a personal holiday; and, of course, sick time. For those general employees who retire from the City with at least 25 years of service, the City will pay 50% of the cost of your health insurance after you retire until you reach Medicare age. If you give the City 30 years of service, it will pay 100% of the cost of your health insurance until age 65! One of the best benefits is being a part of the State Retirement System. The City pays 12.0% of your annual salary into the system for you, and employees contribute an additional 6%, creating a wonderful nest egg for when you retire, with lifetime benefits. In addition, the City contributes 5% of your salary to a 401k program, with no employee contribution required. When we are young, we think more of the hourly wage but as we mature, we realize how important the other benefits offered by the City are for us.

So, for me, the bottom line is if you get the opportunity to come and work for the City of Reidsville, I recommend you take it. It is a decision you won't regret – I know I didn't!

In other news in and around Reidsville:

Fire Hydrant Flushing Continues

The Reidsville Fire Department began flushing fire hydrants throughout the City in May, weather permitting. This flushing, needed to clear sediment from water lines and to ensure hydrants are

functional, may create some dingy water briefly. Be careful washing clothes if you know hydrants are being flushed nearby. We attempt, when possible, to put updates on the City Facebook page of where the Fire Department will be flushing hydrants Monday through Thursday each week. This practice will continue over the next month or so.

Farmer's Market Is Open!

Everyone is thrilled that the Farmer's Market at Market Square in downtown Reidsville opened last month. The market is open Thursdays & Saturdays this year from 7 a.m. until 1 p.m. There will be fruits, vegetables, greens, baked goods, eggs and the work of local artisans. Again this year, you can double your EBT/SNAP, Farmer's Market WIC and Senior WIC (and there's no cap on doubling!). These double bucks apply to any food item at the market. If you bring a friend, you can get \$5.00 in Fresh Bucks. How can you go wrong?

Night of Fun at RCARE

RCARE, 102 North Washington Avenue, is offering a night of fun, fellowship and, hopefully, a little music on the outdoor patio from 6-8:30 p.m. on Thursday, June 2. Some of the regulars at the senior center have been asked to bring their instruments and entertain those attending. RCARE will provide hot dogs with all the fixings! If you'd like to participate in the entertainment or just attend, call the center at 336-349-1088 so they can add you to the entertainment program and plan their food arrangements.

Second Round of 2nd Downtown Fridays

Last month the annual Car and Motorcycle Cruise-Ins returned to downtown Reidsville on May 13. While weather that day wasn't perfect, we are hoping for more beautiful skies on Friday, June 10. The event, set for 6-8:30 p.m., will feature music, food and games for the kids. The Chamber of Commerce will provide a beer garden. 2nd Downtown Fridays will continue through August 12.

Concerts on the Square Begin

They're back! Concerts on the Square, Market Square, that is, return on Saturday, June 25, with the *Ace Party Band*. Enjoy the sounds of Pop & Top 40 during this free concert from 7-9 p.m. in beautiful downtown Reidsville. Bring a chair to Market Square and have a great time!

"Fitness on the Square" on Mondays

"Fitness on the Square" with free Zumba classes started back in April at Market Square in downtown Reidsville. Every Monday, weather permitting, through June 27, you can exercise with Certified Instructors provided by the YMCA. Times are 6:30-7:30 p.m. "Fitness on the Square" is sponsored by Cone Health/Annie Penn Hospital and the YMCA, along with TEAM REIDSVILLE. For more info, call the Events Hotline at 336-347-2381 or go to downtownreidsville.gov.