

A Message from the Mayor
David A. Levy

It's a great day in Archer City.

Summertime brings two things that I'm not particularly fond of -- hot weather and city budget planning meetings. We can't do too much about the former short of air conditioners and lemonade, but the latter certainly benefits from attention and planning.

We face some serious challenges for the next few years. Our drinking water is safe and we have made significant improvements to our water and sewer systems, however our water treatment plant is old and according to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) it cannot continue to operate indefinitely. We have three choices: (1) construct a new water plant, (2) run a pipeline to Wichita Falls and buy treated water from them, or (3) do nothing and keep patching. Choices one and two are expensive, and choice three is not really a responsible option for our future.

Similarly, we are a town currently without a doctor or any sort of medical clinic. Our Archer City Ambulance Service is all that we have to keep our loved ones alive in the event of a medical emergency. Our two ambulances are essentially mobile emergency rooms, and we employ two full-time paramedics, one intermediate EMT who is about to become certified as a paramedic, and additional part-time personnel. Once again, state and federal regulations make it infeasible to operate as we did ten years ago, necessitating professional staff and equipment. That being said, it is a major expense. We receive very little money from the county, and Medicare payments for ambulance services are slow and continue to be cut. We have our own service because it was putting lives at risk to wait for an ambulance to come to Archer City from Wichita Falls. Is the Archer City Ambulance Service something that should be a priority for us?

Our streets are in poor condition. Patching them in summer weather is relatively easy -- fixing them properly is harder and far more expensive. We tend to forget that we have water and sewer piping under our streets and it would perhaps be simple, but ultimately irresponsible, to resurface streets without ensuring that the infrastructure below the streets is in good condition, otherwise you would just have to tear up the new street surface anytime that an old water line breaks.

We now have a two person police force and anticipate adding reserve officers at no additional cost to the city. According to Chief Burton, crime has been reduced and there are less drugs on the streets. Again, operating a police department places demands on our city budget. How important do you consider the police department for our city?

Our parks are really excellent for a smaller community. We benefitted greatly from the efforts of Ricky Garlington in that regard, but every amenity that you add places an additional, ongoing maintenance demand on city resources.

Archer City is fortunate to have a first-class City Council. Our council members devote far more than one night a month to better our city; everyone on the council has identified an area to study, identify problems, and attempt to identify solutions. At this point, before we commit any funds

for the next fiscal year, we need to establish our priorities for the future of our community, and to do that we need your help.

We will be holding a town hall meeting on Friday, July 30th at 7:00 p.m. at the Archer County Activity Building. The format will be a brief overview of our budgeting process, an introduction to issues under discussion by the members of the Council, and then we want to turn the microphone over to hear what you have to say. Please come out and give some guidance as we plan for our future.