

Friday, January 8, 2021

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# Oh! What a Year!

Posted Tuesday, January 5, 2021 12:06 pm

By McKenzie Mayor Jill Holland

Oh! What a year we've had! I believe we are all tired of the "new normal" and know all of us are looking forward to a fresh start with renewed energy, good health, prosperity, and confidence throughout the New Year. 2020, has been a year full of challenges, and on behalf of all of us at the City of McKenzie, our prayer is for the coming year to bring better and more certain times for you, your family and friends. We have experienced a lot of trials and tribulations in 2020, but it has also given us moments and events which remind all of us of the generous spirit of our community-minded citizens and make us forever grateful that we live in McKenzie.

We want to bring you up to date on what has happened in our city throughout the past year, and the renewed energy and hope we look forward to in 2021.

## Sidewalks and Streets

The \$990,000 multi-modal grant that McKenzie was awarded to build the sidewalk down Cedar from Main Street down to Highland is slowly progressing. All the property easements have been signed and as soon as TDOT gives its approval we will be able to bid out the construction and are looking forward to a new sidewalk for our walkers and those in scooters and wheelchairs. The walkway will certainly provide a safer course for all those traveling back and forth on Cedar.

We are looking forward to work beginning on our Transportation Access Grant which will include a sidewalk down Main Street from Maple to EW James. It will also include culvert rehabilitation which should prevent future flooding in this area. Presently, the grant is still in the environmental phase and has some time before it will be approved to bid. State employees working from home seems to have slowed a lot of the process for approvals from the state.

## Water and Wastewater

We continue to work on our aging wastewater system, and Community Development Block Grants provide us the financial opportunity to continue to replace old lines and rehabilitate lift stations. As we have to cut across city streets, many times this leaves potholes which have to be filled. Please continue to bear with us, as the gravel fill in the potholes has to settle for several months before we are able to pave over them.

Please remember for your convenience and safety that you can pay your water bill by phone or email. You must have your account number when you choose one of these methods of payment.

Phone: 855-591-2994

Email: Website mckenzieln.org

## Parks and Recreation

McKenzie parks received new playground equipment and a new Harmony Park, thanks to a Local Parks and Recreation Grant we received. Both Mulberry and the City Park have engineered wood chips donated by the McKenzie Rotary Club. The wood chips are safe and contain no dyes or chemicals in addition to providing a safe playing surface. Harmony Park is our new music park next to the Splash Pad and is fun for all age groups.

The McKenzie Dog Park is open during the winter months, however, because of the possibility of freezing weather, the water has been cut off. Therefore, dog owners will need to bring their own water for their dogs.

## Codes

Our citizens do a great job of taking care of their homes and yards. We know sometimes, especially during the summer months, the grass grows fast and it easily gets out of hand. Sometimes, because of various reasons, there are properties throughout the city that are neglected and can cause safety problems in addition to being unsightly to the

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## MOST RECENT SPECIAL EDITION

neighborhood. It is our goal to provide safe, family-friendly neighborhoods that promote an excellent quality of living for our residents. Therefore, we depend upon you to help us in our efforts. Please let our codes department know if there are codes problems in your neighborhood that are detracting from the livability of all in your neighborhood.

Please remember after multiple complaints from our citizens regarding grass in the streets, that the city council approved an ordinance that prohibits grass and debris blown onto the streets. It is important that our lawn service businesses and citizens adhere to this ordinance to prevent possible accidents to bikers and motorcyclists and avoid a fine.

McKenzie Industry

We are looking forward to Pottery Direct officially opening in the first quarter of 2021. Although, they have employees and have been in production, they will be hiring approximately 16 new employees. Because of Covid, no one is allowed in the building, however, interested people can email their resume to work@potterydirect.com. Pottery Direct makes beautiful vases from the ball clay found in Henry and Weakley counties. They were based in the Netherlands, however, found it was much cheaper to make their products here, rather than ship the clay to them. Their work has been delayed because of Covid and the slowdown in obtaining the equipment they needed to begin production.

Cachengo is our new computer software company and we welcome the owners, Ash and Janae Young to our community. They have been working with our young talent from Bethel and UTM teaching them computer coding, etc. They are looking at a possible expansion and have already grown from their initial start-up a few months ago.

Congratulations to Profile Metal for its \$2.5 million expansion of its operation. The State of Tennessee's Department of Economic and Community Development worked with the company to expand its operations by 7,000 square feet. The new growth in the company should create 23 new jobs by 2025. Profile Metal Forming manufactures custom-engineered stamped metal components and assemblies for the automotive, appliance, materials handling, telecommunications and construction industries, including stamping, welding, punching, roll forming and bending

The expansion is expected to begin in late 2020 and be completed in Spring 2021.

We are always grateful to all of our industries for the important role they play in our community. Not only are they responsible for our growing economy, they provide many great paying jobs to our citizens and those in surrounding areas, and they are always very supportive of our city.

The Train Depot



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The McKenzie Train Depot on 89 Bruce Street served as the economic hub of McKenzie since our beginning in 1869, when two railroads crossed at McKenzie Station, and the town came into existence. Although the passenger trains have long ceased to travel through McKenzie, the McKenzie Depot is still a reminder of the economic beginnings of our town. Today, the depot which is on the National Historic Register continues to serve as the economic engine of McKenzie as it houses both the Industrial Development Board and the new McKenzie Chamber of Commerce and Industry. In addition, the depot hosts our train museum. Be sure to stop by to take a look at the pictures and exhibits which have defined train travel in McKenzie through the years.

McKenzie Chamber of Commerce and Industry

We are looking forward to kicking-off the membership drive for our new McKenzie Chamber of Commerce and Industry in January. The mission statement of the new chamber is, "to nurture the profitable development of McKenzie's existing businesses, enhance the qualities of our community, and market strategically to targeted businesses for a long-term growth and prosperity of our community." Membership is open to businesses, industries, non-profit organizations, social and service clubs, educational institutions, and individuals. A board will be elected from the membership. The headquarters of the chamber will be shared with the McKenzie Industrial Development Board at the depot on Bruce Street. The new McKenzie Chamber's strategic goals include: membership development; growth focused; community minded; and education. Measurable goals will be membership, retail sales development, news businesses, and households. Monica Heath, the newly appointed Director of the Industrial Development Board



Christmas Greetings 2020 (/stories/mbxmas 12-15-20,7468)

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BEST OF 2020: VOTE NOW!



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The Best of 2020: Vote Now! (/stories/bestof2020,7379)

So 2020 is almost over... and it's time to vote for your favorite people and businesses that shined in 2020! Your support of local businesses makes our community stronger. Please ...

Vote Now ▶ (/stories/bestof2020,7379?)



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will also serve as director of the McKenzie Chamber of Commerce and Industry. For more information and membership fees and requirements, contact Monica Heath at 731-352-2004, email her at mckenzieindustry@gmail.com or visit at McKenzie Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 89 Bruce Street, McKenzie.

McKenzie RailYard

Last year the McKenzie Industrial Board bought the building on 9 Broadway with the intention of turning it into a co-working space. A series of grants awarded from the State of Tennessee Economic Development Department and TVA have allowed us to turn this goal into a reality. This entrepreneurial center provides a great low-cost way for start-up businesses to begin without having to put a lot of capital into a building, equipment, insurance, utilities, etc. The completely re-furnished three-story building has four offices for long-term rent, two conference rooms, and separate workstations for short term offices. The rent provides 24 hour access through keypad door entry, high-speed wi-fi, printers, break room, restrooms and all utilities. There are open houses planned for both business and industry and anyone who is interested in renting space for a business or hosting a business conference or luncheon. For more information contact Monica Heath 731-352-2004, or email her at mckenzieindustr@gmail.com.

Save the Date for

A great 2021!

The virus may have put a damper on our festivals and events for 2020, but we are gearing up for a great 2021! We are looking forward to starting our Nights on Broadway again and the opportunity to gather downtown on the square with our friends and neighbors on warm summer nights as we listen to great music, visit and eat some of the very best from our booths and food trucks.

Unfortunately, we had to cancel our great Sweet Tea and Fried Foods Festival, however, the setback gave us time to re-imagine and improve our festival for 2021. Save the date for September 25th for our Sweet Tea and Southern Pickin's Festival. We will still have all the great music and lots of great guitar and banjo pickin' but the new spin this year will be Southern Pickin's. Our Merchants Outlet Mall, Antique Mall, Jack Martin's, My Sister's Closet will be just part of the many booths and places that will be featured for pickin' through booths for great treasures finds. We are working on booths throughout the town which will feature antiques, oddities, and something for everyone. And of course, we will still feature the great fried foods the festival is noted for.

The McKenzie Farmers Market had a good season in spite of the virus. Precautions were taken to ensure the safety of the vendors and customers, and we were able to offer fresh produce, baked goods, crafts, jams, jellies and meats throughout the season. We are looking forward to an even larger market next year with more of a variety of products. Watch our Facebook page for a survey to find out what our customers would like at the market.

Wi-Fi

We are still on track for our Wi-Fi. However, because of the Nashville bombing and problems with the internet, there is a delay in the installation and we will keep you updated as we hear more from the company.

COVID Relief

In an effort to slow the spread of the virus, and help to keep our employees and citizens safe, each Tennessee was given Covid Relief funds to help prevent the spread of the virus. In addition to automatic hand sanitizers in city hall, the farmers market and the Park Theatre, a new drive-up window at city hall, and plexiglass shields at the front window at city hall. We were able to install OXY 4 air purifiers in our HVAC systems in each of our city-owned buildings. These buildings include the Park Theatre and the Senior Citizens buildings. These air purifiers have been proven to be highly effective in reducing and eliminating the virus, molds, bacteria microbes and volatile organic compounds.

Economy and Budget

At the onset of the virus, we were concerned and warned to prepare for reduced revenue in our local sales tax. In an effort to continue to provide services to our citizens, and not raise taxes, we cut our fiscal budget and did not include any additional projects other than what was already committed as part of a grant. In addition, we made the decision not to give our employees a raise and to postpone paving streets this year. Although, we are still cautiously optimistic, our sales tax revenue has leveled and even given us some positive growth. We are grateful for your decision to shop local, as it has helped to keep the doors open for our home-town businesses and helps us keep taxes low.

Happy New Year 2021!

On behalf of all of us at the City of McKenzie, we are here to serve our citizens and to ensure your safety and enhance the livability of our city and neighborhoods. Please do not hesitate to call us with your concerns and ideas toward furthering the betterment of our city.

We wish you 12 months of success, 52 weeks of laughter, 365 days of fun, 8760 hours of joy, 525600 minutes of good luck, and 31536000 seconds of happiness. Happy New Year!

Best wishes for a very healthy, peaceful, joyful and prosperous 2021,

Jill Holland

Mayor, City of McKenzie



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Tomorrow is the first blank page of a 365-page book. Write a good one! ~ Brad Paisley

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Pictorial History of McKenzie: Time Capsule Opening (/stories/pictorial-history-of-mckenzie-time-capsule-opening,7598)

Weekly 150: The Manley Family (Part I) (/stories/weekly-150-the-manley-family-part-i,7558)

Pictorial History of McKenzie: 16-Inch Snow, 1968 (/stories/pictorial-history-of-mckenzie-16-inch-snow-1968,7557)

Tweets by @mckBANNER



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Pictorial History of McKenzie: Time Capsule Opening
Opening of McKenzie Time Capsule, 1990. File photo originally published in "A Pictorial History of McKenzie, Tennessee," by The McKenzie Banner in October 2004. #tbt



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