

Temple Mayor

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Completion of Two Long-Term Projects

Some important improvements which were started in the City of Temple a few years ago will be completed in 2023, and I am delighted the new year will take us across the "finish line" with several community improvements. In this column I will focus on two of these projects.

THE WATER METER REPLACEMENT PROJECT. The familiar sight of Temple's city meter readers going from residence to residence, manually reading each water meter, will soon become part of our community's history. The more than 2,100 water meters for residential, commercial, and industrial customers are being replaced by state-of-the-art meters which are read remotely. Not only will this process be faster and easier for our Public Works staff members, it should eliminate "meter mis-reads" that occur when the employee is having to clean-off mud or debris from the face of the meter box before trying to look through a scratched-up protective window and read a set of numbers.

As with many other manufactured products in our country, the new water meters for the City of Temple have been delayed due to manufacturing and shipping problems. Unless we have another delay, actual installation of these meters should be underway by the time this magazine has been distributed. For efficiency in the meter installation process, a plan and schedule were prepared by the consulting engineering firm of Keck & Wood and the selected contractor (RTS Water Solutions, LLC) who submitted the low bid of \$1,157,055.35. The new water meters will be installed street-by-street, following the "map" prepared by these two companies to maximize efficiency in this work and to finish the job as soon as possible.

We were very pleased to secure funding for this project -- identified as an Automated Metering Infrastructure (AMI) Fixed Base radio communication system -- through the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority's competitive process. The \$1,404,000 loan from GEFA (for construction costs and for the fee of our engineering firm) is to be re-

paid by the City of Temple over a period of 20 years, with an annual interest rate of only 0.13 percent.

I think Temple's water customers will be pleased with the accuracy of the new water meters, as well as the removal of the "human factor" in trying to read meters with dirty, scratched-up "windows" which obscure the recorded number of gallons used by the customer.

THE CITY HALL EXPANSION PROJECT. The final project to be started using 2015 SPLOST (Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax) funds was the expansion of the Temple City Hall. Before starting work on improvements to the City Hall building, City officials wanted to focus on various street, water, sewer, and parks and recreation improvements. Then, once City officials were confident there were sufficient SPLOST revenues to complete the identified infrastructure and recreation projects, work started on the City Hall expansion project.

As you know, the building at the southeast corner of U. S. Highway 78 and Carrollton Street (Georgia 113) originally was a branch bank with drive-thru facilities. This SPLOST project has been to complete the enclosure of the former drive-thru banking facilities, as well as doing some remodeling in the bank's former lobby and office area. Frankly, it has taken longer than expected for this construction work to be completed, but we now are looking forward to having full use of the building.

Members of the City Council and I took action several months ago to name this facility the William Simmons City Administration Building, in honor and memory of Mr. Simmons for his long service as a member of the Temple City Council and as an educator. Dedication services will be planned soon, with an open house for our community. Also, I expect the City Council soon to be able to hold its meetings in this facility, as well as sessions of the Temple Municipal Court. Also, early in 2023 this large room will be available for rental use for meetings and other events.

To each of you: Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Stay safe. ♦