
Posey: City should expect tight budget in '08

By **ED HOWELL**
Eagle Senior Writer

Jasper Mayor Sonny Posey said Monday city revenue has been "good, not great," which should lead to a tight fiscal 2008 budget for municipal government.

Addressing the Jasper Kiwanis Club, Posey said the city's budget this year has met most of its projections with only a few areas showing soft spots.

Copies of the proposed fiscal 2008 budget were scheduled to be passed out to city council members Tuesday. A vote on the budget could come as early as Oct. 2.

"It's tight. Thank heavens we have some good fund balances," he said. "Revenue is good, not great. We're not showing any decreases."

Sales taxes will be up 2 percent this year, which is under projection because the city

See **POSEY, A9** ►

we hope it goes on, legally of course."

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Posey

From A1

transferred a portion of what Walker Baptist Medical Center would have paid in sales and use tax to business license fees. That was at the request of the hospital, which has reported deficits.

"If you add back in what we shifted from sales tax to business licenses, we nearly got our projection there," Posey said.

Business license revenue showed marked improvement this year, said Posey.

Posey went through a list of projects under way. He said the first phase of the downtown revitalization project has been completed.

"We've got new lights that have been installed about halfway around downtown, and we're sprucing up the remaining fixtures, the ones we didn't have the money to replace right now. We're sending a bucket truck out and painting them a high gloss black so they'll match up," he said.

The city is applying for funding for Phase 2, which

may take a year to 18 months. He said it has taken a while to complete the process because of government regulations.

Posey said the Town Creek project near Maddox Middle School will include "cleaning the sides and give some new shape for the banks."

Structures to retain more water will be installed.

"It won't be enough to float a boat, but it will be a much nicer appearance," he said. "We should be able to secure our money for this project hopefully by the end of this year."

Posey said a Memorial Park



Mayor
Sonny Posey

area project is almost complete. It includes new ballfields, but the city is rejecting requests for use at least until spring to give more time for the fields to grow in well, especially after this year's drought.

Crews are working this week on a new North Jasper Park on a 16-acre parcel in the north end of town, south of Brakefield Dairy Road, surrounded by Coral Boulevard, El Dorado Drive and North Highland Boulevard.

"The park will be lit with automatic turnoffs. In the neighborhood, we feel like by 9 or 10 o'clock that those lights are out. It also has a children's playground area. There will be no ballfields, but maybe some pavilions will be added," said Posey, who lives in the area. "The walking track is already in place, and it's a half-mile in length. Grass and landscaping is next."

"It's for anyone in town but especially for those who live

north of Highway 78. That section of town has not had a park area, but now we have one," he said.

An Airport Road widening project should be under way by spring, Posey said. The state has already performed survey work for the \$2.8 million project, of which the city will pay \$250,000. U.S. Rep. Robert Aderholt has obtained \$1.8 million of those funds. The three-lane road will stretch to Highway 257, although it will be short of the full length needed.

"Right now we think we can get it to Ridgewood," Posey said, adding Airport Road is the busiest street in the city.

Jerry Redmill, formerly of North Alabama Lumber and Concrete, has been placed in charge of the city street department, Posey said. Also, longtime city planner Duane Wallace has retired and Keith Pike, his assistant, was promoted through civil service to take his place.

Reading

From A1

participating in the NAEP reading and mathematics assessments, required by

is proof positive that our game plan is working," said Riley. "The progress we have made in just a few years is truly

public school students in grades K-3 had completed the Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI) training before the 2007 NAEP assessment was administered to