

***For Your Information***

FROM THE CITY MANAGER & STAFF

November 1, 2019

**The Clewiston High School Public Safety Academy will hold their annual Veterans Day Program on Monday, November 11th at 11:00 a.m. at Veterans Park.**

**Due to the Veterans Day Holiday, there will be no solid waste service offered on Monday, November 11<sup>th</sup>. This service will be provided on Tuesday, November 12<sup>th</sup>. Please remember to place your carts out early Tuesday morning.**

**Dates to Remember**

November 11, 2019 – Veterans Day Holiday – City Offices Closed

November 12, 2019 – Special Magistrate Hearing

November 13, 2019 – City Commission Workshop

November 18, 2019 – City Commission Meeting

November 21, 2019 – Golf Course Advisory Board Meeting

November 28-29, 2019 – Thanksgiving Day Holiday – City Offices Closed

**Office of the City Manager:**

Citizens, Business Owners & other interested parties:

When doing my due diligence about Clewiston during the city manager recruitment and subsequent hiring process earlier this calendar year, I was intrigued with the economic development possibilities for Clewiston, Hendry County and surrounding areas. Throughout my long career in municipal government, economic development enhancement has been a major focus with varying degrees of success. Based upon my experiences, I have developed a firm belief that efforts to grow the economic base of the community are critical to achieving success. Job creation and retention, increasing private investment and improving the business climate are priority goals for a successful economic development strategy. My experience and assessment of the needs and opportunities in Clewiston have led me to recommend that the City's economic development strategy include three major areas of emphasis to enhance the degree of achievable success.

In terms of what I refer to as “traditional” economic development regarding industrial and major business recruitment, the City must forge and build upon its strong partnership with Hendry County to further long planned enhancements along the Sugarland Highway (U.S. Highway 27) primary growth corridor. Specifically, the City and County must collaboratively coordinate efforts to sufficiently plan and develop the necessary infrastructure along the route from the

current western boundary of the City in the vicinity of Lewis Boulevard to the vicinity of Airglades Boulevard which provides access to the existing county-owned airport that will be the home to the Airglades International Airport project. With the recent issuance by the Federal Aviation Administration of a long awaited Record of Decision which will allow the planned privatization of the airport to move forward to conclusion in 2020, it is imperative that the City and County leverage state and possibly federal financial assistance to make the necessary infrastructure improvements a reality in a timely manner. The Florida legislature has already invested the first \$1 million dollars toward this end which will soon be utilized to construct the initial segment of the wastewater utility lines from the City's treatment plant toward the airport. I am pleased to report that the City Commission and Hendry County Board of Commissioners have unanimously agreed to make this year's top legislative priority a joint effort to get additional funding in the amount of \$ 11.1 million to hopefully complete the utility infrastructure enhancements necessary to serve the Airglades project site and provide the opportunity for properties along this entire section of the highway growth corridor to also be developed with additional industrial, commercial and residential investments. The City has seen an uptick in interest of late for additional investment within the City in its Park of Commerce which further encourages me that the community is ripe for investment and job creation. These economic opportunities have also generated interest in residential investment within the City which is sorely needed to provide relief to the currently very tight housing market in Clewiston. Further updates and actions of the City and its partners regarding these development opportunities should be expected in the months ahead.

A second recommended major area of emphasis in Clewiston's economic development strategy should be focused on what I will dub as "downtown" revitalization specifically in some of the older sections of the City's commercial district. The City has in the past participated in the national Main Street program and developed a number of revitalization type planning documents to this end, but the economic downtown and its adverse impacts on private investment and development in the community during the last decade plus have thus far limited the positive outcomes from these efforts and investments of time and resources. A number of indicators suggest that the tide is turning and that the opportunities for such investments are again on the rise. In cooperation with the Hendry County Economic Development Council, City staff and I are literally dusting off old plans and carefully considering new initiatives to again put the spotlight on the need for development and redevelopment in the area. One initiative being preliminarily considered is the development of what has been dubbed as a "Clewiston Entrepreneurial Incubator & Collaboratory Civic Commons Concept". This effort which is in the earliest of stages could be pursued in a local facility that would help promote business startups and expansion activities. There are a number of successful models for such facilities in and out of the region that are being analyzed to assess the viability of such an effort here. Stay tuned for more discussion on this topic in the near term as well.

The third recommended major area of focus in Clewiston's economic development strategy involves a renewed emphasis on tourism opportunities in and around the community. In my experience, water access is like gold in terms of its economic opportunity possibilities. Obviously, Lake Okeechobee is and should be a major driver in any tourism effort. With the federally funded U.S. Army Corps of Engineers major construction project referred to as the Herbert Hoover Dike (HHD) cut-off wall extension slated to begin in the vicinity of Clewiston

this month, the City is focused on taking all the necessary steps to be prepared for constructing the new legislatively funded \$2 million replacement access bridge across the canal to maintain the City's recreational access to the dike and the recreational facilities located there once the Corps HHD project is completed. The new bridge provides the opportunity to greatly improve on public access to properties in the vicinity particularly for boaters and to this end, City staff and I are brainstorming other possible public and privately funded enhancements in the vicinity aimed at improving Clewiston's marketability as a tourism destination adjacent to the Lake and at the midpoint of the Okeechobee Waterway that connects both of Florida's coastlines. The lengthy period that the aforementioned major construction projects will take until completion gives the City ample opportunity to plan, develop and market its agreed upon strategy to further its tourism goals once formalized. I am convinced there is great potential for this "third leg" of a comprehensive economic development stool to be a major contributor over time to the Clewiston economy.

As always, I share these thoughts to hopefully generate interest, ideas and feedback from others. These are just thoughts and observations that are far from being finalized. Input and critique are welcomed.

Thanks for your continued support and interest in the City of Clewiston,  
Randy Martin, City Manager

### **Staff Reports**

#### **Library Director Natasha Hayes reports:**

- Within the last two weeks, the library was accessed for normal operating business as well as serving the community as a meeting place with a total of 40 individual meetings being held.
- Library staff provided ready reference assistance directly to 158 patrons along with daily routine services which include circulation of materials, computer assistance, and programming.
- Bonanza was held from 3:30-4:30 p.m. on October 23<sup>rd</sup> with 4 children and 1 adult in attendance.
- A Social Security and Medicare Informational Session was held on October 29<sup>th</sup> from 2:00-3:30 p.m. There were 5 participants.
- Ms. Bautista is continuing to do a fantastic job with our afterschool homework help. On October 21<sup>st</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, she assisted 24 students for this two week period from 4:00-6:00 p.m. This program is currently at full capacity, however we are encouraging parents to stop in the library and sign up on the waiting list if their child is in need of assistance with their homework. If we have children drop from this program, library staff will reach out to those students on the waiting list. Registration forms are located at the library.
- Crafternoon was held on October 30<sup>th</sup> from 3:30-4:30 p.m. There were 8 children and 5 adults in attendance.
- A Storytime session was held on October 23<sup>rd</sup> at 9:30 a.m. There were a total of 19 children including members of the public and preschoolers from Little Disciples School. The children also worked in the computer lab on the reading program, Lexia, as well as abcmouse.com. These programs enhance and contribute to their fluency along with providing hands on practice with computers.

- Lego Club was held on October 24<sup>th</sup> with a total of 8 participants. As this program maintains enthusiasm, library staff is looking into bringing in additional Lego Kits and building supplies.
- The library's computer lab was accessed and used by a total of 12 patrons. If you are in need of a quiet place to use the computer, our computer lab is open to the public along with the computers located on the main floor of the library.
- The Clewiston Police Department hosted the Trunk or Treat on October 31<sup>st</sup>. The library participated with the Chamber of Commerce in handing out candy to the community. The staff enjoyed seeing all the children and adults in their costumes.
- **Upcoming Programs - Week of November 4th-** Afterschool homework help will be provided to those registered on Monday and Thursday next week from 4:00-6:00 p.m.; Social Security and Medicare Informational Session will be held on Thursday next week from 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.; Afterschool Coloring Club will be held on Wednesday next week from 3:30-4:30 p.m.; and Lego Club will be held on Thursday next week from 3:30-4:30 p.m.
- The Book Club will meet on November 4<sup>th</sup> to discuss *The Secrets We Kept* by Lara Prescott. Make sure to join in on this exciting group and ready to discuss it.
- Outreach Storytime will be held on November 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>. If any school or center would like to have the library come to them in order to provide Storytime, please contact the library as we would like to provide literacy services to those in the community who are unable to come to the library.

**Public Works Director Sean Scheffler reports:**

**After twenty years of service to this community, Mr. Jose Lopez says farewell. A luncheon was held in his honor at the Public Works Operations Building on Monday, October 28, 2019 to show our appreciation for all he has done. He will surely be missed.**

- **If you have any recreational needs or questions, please drop by City Hall from 8:00am to 5:00pm or call 863-983-1484.**
- **Mosquito Control:** Trap counts for the week: Saginaw 107; Okeechobee Blvd. 232; Elks Field 127; Golf Course 200; and Harlem Community 87. Ground missions were run on October 18 and 25. Please call 863-983-1471 if you are having mosquito problems or have any requests or questions.
- **Project Updates:**
  - The new Ventura Sidewalk Project has not yet broken ground.
  - The concrete block planter bases for the new “Welcome to Clewiston” signs have been built and are getting the brick veneer installed.



- Work on the Levee Cut Off Wall is scheduled to start in November. Preparations and set up of the batch plant that makes the slurry for the wall are under way.
- Sidewalks on US27 from Wendy's to San Luiz and from San Luiz to Alverde have a projected construction start date of FY 2021/2022.

- **Parks Department Activities:**

- After an apparent lightning strike knocked out several components at the Sports Complex, all new components were installed. We are waiting for MUSCO to come back to install new lamps on five poles on the High School Soccer Field.
- Began painting the picnic tables at the Lake.

- **Street Division Activities:**

- Team members in the Public Works Department were certified in MOT (Maintenance of Traffic) on Wednesday and Thursday.



- Installed guardrail at the “dead end” of Magnolia Street at Okeechobee Blvd.
- Serviced entrance to Commerce Park.
- Repaired sidewalk on East Crescent.
- Repaired two damaged inlets and cleaned out culverts.

- **Facility Maintenance Activities:**

- Installed locker and repaired lights in the Police Department.
- Inspected fire alarms in all City buildings and completed minor repairs.

- **Reminder:** Every inlet in Clewiston is tied into a system that eventually deposits storm water into the Lake. It is against the law to pour or allow anything but water to run into any inlet. NO car soap, motor oil, herbicides, fertilizers, pesticides or any kind of cleaning solutions should be allowed to run into any inlet. Grass clippings are never to be discharged into or onto a street. Though these actions may seem insignificant to you, the problem is when everyone is doing it, a steady stream of pollutants enter our water. Do your part and don't pollute.

**Golf Course Director Robbie Rush reports:**

- Get all information of what's going on at Clewiston Golf Course Facebook.
- The 2nd Annual CHS Alumni 9-Hole Scramble is scheduled for November 2, 2019. Sign-up is in the golf shop. The tournament is benefiting the boys' and girls' golf teams.
- The Clewiston Rotary Club Tournament is scheduled for November 16, 2019.
- Golf Shop hours are 7:45am-5:15pm. The first tee time is 7:55am.

- Golf Carts must be in by 6:45pm.
- Our new season merchandise is starting to come into the golf shop. We also currently have a sale on the remaining ladies clothes in the golf shop.

**Utilities Director Danny Williams reports:**

- **Electric Crew Activities**
  - Removed vegetation from lines on El Paso and Del Monte;
  - added jumpers to Feeder Two to remove old blades;
  - repaired street light fixtures;
  - repaired connector on transformer at Domino’s pizza restaurant;
  - installed new lights on Lopez Street;
  - installed two new security lights at residences;
  - repairing fish decorations on Francisco Street;
  - assisted with repair of lift station panel.
- **Water Sewer Crew Activities**
  - Repaired three water line breaks;
  - performed weekly lift station inspections;
  - performed utility “locates” on Osceola Avenue;
  - repaired lift station pumps at two locations.
- **Customer Service Department**
  - We offer several bill paying options; please visit or call the office at 983-1454 if you’d like to learn more!
  - **Please remember to register with CodeRed (Reverse 911).** This system allows us to contact you in case of an emergency or with other informational announcements. You may register by clicking on the CodeRed link at the bottom of the City’s website page [www.clewiston-fl.gov](http://www.clewiston-fl.gov). You may update your information at any time through the same link.
  - If you are considering replacing your air conditioner or insulation, remember the City offers a **rebate program** for those items. Most local contractors participate in the program and can give you information. You can also visit our website at [www.clewiston-fl.gov](http://www.clewiston-fl.gov) or call our office.
  - **Don’t forget to sign up for your meter based surge protection!** Visit our office today.

**PLEASE BE AWARE OF UTILITY PAYMENT SCAMS: Scam artists are calling Utility customers posing as employees of Clewiston Utilities and threatening disconnection of services if payment is not made immediately. Please be aware:**

- 1) **Clewiston Utilities will NEVER request you to purchase money cards or gift cards to pay your account over the phone.**
- 2) **Clewiston Utilities will NEVER contact our customers on the weekend and threaten disconnection of services.**
- 3) **Clewiston Utilities will NEVER speak to our customers in a threatening tone.**

**If you feel you have been a victim of this scam, please contact Clewiston Utilities to verify the call or the Clewiston Police Department and file a report.**