

DEADLINES

NEWS DEADLINES

For inclusion in the Wednesday edition of the *Itemizer-Observer*:

Social news (weddings, engagements, anniversaries, births, milestones) — 5 p.m. on Thursday.

Community events — Noon on Friday for both the Community Notebook and Community Calendar.

Letters to the editor — 10 a.m. on Monday.

Obituaries — 4 p.m. on Monday.

ADVERTISING DEADLINES

Retail display ads — 3 p.m. Friday.

Classified display ads — 11 a.m. on Monday.

Classified line ads — Noon on Monday. Classified ads are updated daily on www.polkio.com.

Public notices — Noon on Friday.

CORRECTIONS

The city of Monmouth does not contract information technology services from the city of Independence. Monmouth uses services from Polk County. The *IO* regrets the error.

WEBSITE

The *Polk County Itemizer-Observer* website, www.polkio.com, is updated each week by Wednesday afternoon.

The *Itemizer-Observer* is also on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Watch for breaking news, links to stories, sports scores updates and more.

Sign up to receive our newsletter, sent to your email each Friday, with weekend reminders and a peek at the next issue.

WEATHER

RECORDED	HIGH	LOW	RAIN
Jan. 17.....	51	26	.90
Jan. 18.....	56	46	.83
Jan. 19.....	52	38	.03
Jan. 20.....	51	37	.12
Jan. 21.....	49	36	.23
Jan. 22.....	51	37	.10
Jan. 23.....	53	30	.00

Rainfall during Jan. — 5.37 in.
Rain through Jan. 23 — 5.37 in.

Taskforce revs economy

Focus on marketing, business and building development

By Jolene Guzman
The *Itemizer-Observer*

DALLAS — Mayor Brian Dalton wants 2017 to be the year Dallas started revving its economic development engine.

Dalton laid out that vision in his state of the city address on Jan. 17. He's hoping the city's commerce growth will begin to match its residential growth.

"Folks are starting to call us by that ugly term, 'bedroom community.' Sadly, they have something of a point," he said. "Since 2015, we have had 608 building lots approved or under approval, and eight residential subdivisions in the planning process this last year."

While happy for the uptick in residential building, Dalton doesn't see the same progress on the commercial side. From a purely tax-revenue perspective, that isn't a good thing, he said.

As a rule, residential homes offer the city less in property taxes than their occupants use in services.

With businesses, the opposite is true.

"An adequate tax base to support livability occurs when there is a proper balance between homes and businesses," Dalton said. "We are losing that balance right now."

Dalton's message wasn't all gloom. Efforts of the city's Economic Development Commission and Economic Development Roadmap process are working to change the trajectory of commerce in Dallas.

"I think we've hit bottom on the no-fun run of our economic slide," Dalton said. "The direction now is up."

The Economic Development Roadmap identified what citizens believed were the most important needs to be addressed on the economic front, and charged them with coming up with ideas



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer

Several vacant business spaces dot downtown Dallas.

to meet them.

The Rural Development Initiative facilitated a series of town hall meetings, out of which three focus areas emerged, said Greg Ellis, a former economic consultant to the city.

Those areas are: community marketing, business development and building development.

Committees formed to address each of those needs, Ellis said.

Community marketing focuses on events that could bring people into town — and spend money while here. Ellis, who belongs to that committee, said the first event it wants to bring to town is a disc golf tournament.

"We've been contacting people who can make that happen and help kind of coach us," Ellis said.

Tournaments have been held on Dallas City Park 18-hole course and former city rec coordinator David Brautigam organized a "lawn games" event last summer using the course.

The business development committee is charged with finding ways to bring in

more customers to established business, while the building development committee is looking for ways to fill vacancies.

Dalton said there are a lot of spaces available for businesses looking to open or expand.

"We have 27 empty spaces in downtown and 300 acres of industrial land not being used right now," he said.

Ellis said the roadmap initiative is off to a good start and hopes to incorporate more people and ideas.

"I'm really excited about this continuing. With the enthusiasm I see now, I don't think it's going to go away," Ellis said. "The people that are involved right now are really excited about it. I think you need to keep new people coming in."

The three committee will have a yet-to-be scheduled joint meeting in February.

"More people are welcome, because we would love to have people come into the committees," Ellis said. "I'm sure that there's a million great ideas out there."

Dallas to borrow \$1.75 M to buy Mercer Reservoir

By Jolene Guzman
The *Itemizer-Observer*

DALLAS — The city of Dallas will borrow \$1.75 million to pay for most of the purchase of property surrounding the city's sole water source, Mercer Reservoir.

The Dallas City Council approved the loan, offered through the Department of Environmental Quality's Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund. Terms on the loan are 20 years at 1.6 percent interest. The city applied for the loan in 2015, and was recommended for funding.

"It's a 400-acre purchase that has been negotiated over the last year," said Mayor Brian Dalton before the council took its 8-0 vote approving the loan on Jan. 17. Councilor Jackie Lawson was excused from the portion of the meeting during which the vote took place.

The total cost of the purchase is \$1.895 million.

Engineering and Environmental Services Director Fred Braun wrote in a memo to the council that the city will be purchasing approximately 405 acres of land immediately surrounding the reservoir.

"The purchase includes sites that were identified as geologically prone to landslides as well as prime land that can be used for timber harvest and/or expansion of the reservoir," Braun wrote. "The city will set aside (from timber harvest) the areas determined to be geologically sensitive."

The purchase price will be divided among three land owners: Golden Pond Timberlands — \$975,000; John Hancock Life Insurance Company USA — \$621,000; and Hancock Timberland XI Inc. — \$303,000.

The remaining \$145,000 of the purchase price not covered by the loan will be drawn from the city's water systems development charges fund, which is set up to pay for expansion of the system.

Braun said repayment of the loan was calculated into the new utility rates that will go into effect in February.

Purchasing pieces of the Rickreall Watershed, which feeds the reservoir, was suggested in a detailed study of the watershed completed on behalf of the city in 2012.

On other business, the council:

- Heard Mayor Brian Dalton's annual State of the City address.
- Elected Councilor Micky Garus as its council president in a 5-4 vote. He will serve a two-year term as council president.

At the Jan. 17 meeting, all nine councilors were present, though Councilor Jackie Lawson called into the meeting from Eugene. Lawson nominated Garus for the post, while Councilor Kelly Gabliks nominated Councilor Ken Woods Jr.

Garus won on the first ballot — the previous attempt to elect a council president ended in a tie — with the support of Lawson and councilors Jennie Rummell, Paul Trahan and Terry Crawford. He voted for himself.

Woods voted for himself, along with councilors Jim Fairchild, Bill Hahn and Gabliks.

Following the council president vote, Lawson was excused for the remainder of the meeting.

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