

Tupelo Public Works Department Accomplishments

July 6, 2009 – July 20, 2011

The Tupelo Public Works Department has maintained a busy schedule since Mayor Jack Reed, Jr. took his role as Mayor of our All America City. Our Department is proud to present to you a synopsis of the progress we have made since July 6, 2009.

In response to the Administration's call to reduce the cost of City operations, Public Works restructured its staff, contracted out its brush grinding, reduced its vehicle fleet, planted trees from the City tree farm instead of purchasing them, relied on in-house and free training. As result, the Department saved City tax payers a substantial amount of funds.

After years of study, the Public Works Department adopted a four-day work week. Employees work Monday through Thursday from 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Although staffers still log a 40-hour work week, it saves money by reducing their daily drive times and equipment set ups. Some office staff remains on duty Friday to answer phones and an on-call crew responds to emergencies. Since implementing this schedule we have seen a boost in productivity and considerable savings in our day to day operations.

In the past year, the Public Works Department reduced its staff by 20-percent. Most staff reductions occurred through attrition; others through termination. The Department placed more qualified and better cross-trained employees into key positions. This ensures that the Department maintains the same level of service utilizing less manpower.

There is no better way to improve our Community's development than to invest in its future. The Public Works Department employs approximately twelve high school or college age students through cooperative education programs or summer jobs each year. Traditionally, many of these students come back each summer until they finish their schooling or a secure a full time career. The students learn how to identify species of plants, landscape yards, and safely apply herbicides and pesticides. Public Works wants to instill in these young adults a respect for authority, a willingness to serve and work with others, and diligence in meeting responsibilities.

Public Works had the privilege of participating in the City's Plant-A-Seed program this summer. Two students were mentored for several weeks in the areas of landscaping and clerical skills. Through this experience they were taught to be punctual and dependable, to pay attention and listen carefully, be honest and ethical, and to follow instructions.

Community outreach is a vital part of the Public Works Department's belief system. Under Mayor Reed's leadership, our Department has had the opportunity to serve our Citizens in a variety of ways.

National Public Works Week (NPWW) is celebrated the third full week of May in cities all over North America. During this week we commit to promoting the advancement of public outreach and the public awareness of Public Works services. Educational materials and demonstrations are provided to our Citizens. During the demonstrations larvacide is given away to promote Mosquito control and litter bags are passed out to encourage the public to keep our City roadsides litter free.

In May 2010 the Public Works Department hosted a coloring contest. All primary age students attending Tupelo schools participated in the contest. The winner of the contest was named Director for the Day, earning the right to inspect our facility and Public Works projects. Paris Lehman, a second grader from Joyner School, won the award. Paris was given her own Public Works hard hat and safety vest. She ended her day by being treated to lunch at the Fairpark Grill. Our director, Mr. Sid Russell, Mayor Reed, and the Superintendent of Tupelo Public Schools joined Paris for lunch. Mayor Reed gave Paris a special recognition certificate to serve as a reminder of her special day with the City.

In April of 2009 the Public Works Department united with the Community to help find a missing dog. Melinda Carter has been visually impaired since her childhood and relies on her guide dog, Ansel, for her independence, safety and freedom to go where she wants. Public Works crews assisted other citizens in searching for the dog in ditches and along the roadsides while performing their normal duties. They radioed the central office anytime a black dog fitting Ansel's description was sighted. As a result of the search Ansel returned unharmed to Ms. Carter within twenty-four hours.

The Public Works Department offers to the public free mulch and compost in an effort to encourage Citizens to manicure their property at a minimal cost. The site opens seasonally and remains in operation until the mulch supply depletes. During this time an attendant remains at the site to assist Citizens in loading the materials. The site is located on North Commerce Street.

The Boys and Girls Club of Tupelo utilizes The Haven Acres Community Center to provide daycare and special activities for area youth. The center is also used as a meeting place for the Haven Acres neighborhood. Public Works maintains this property and its grounds. At the residents request we supply the center with a compost collection site. Homeowners can conveniently collect and use the compost to landscape their properties. In addition to the general maintenance of the site, Public Works continues to make improvements to the facility. In December 2010 a Public Works Crew formed and poured a new basketball court for the community to enjoy.

In the summer of 2010 the City of Tupelo celebrated its 140th Anniversary. The Public Works Department assisted Ms. Anna Beth Wyatt, Communication Director, with the City Time Capsule project. The Public Works Department helped design and make the actual capsule complete with City logo. Tupelo Citizens filled the capsule with treasured heirlooms depicting life in our century. Public Works buried the capsule outside of City Hall. Mr. Bobby Coghlan, Public Works Special Projects Coordinator, arranged for a marker to be engraved out of Tishomingo Limestone. The marker was installed at the capsule burial site.

In November of 2010, the Public Works Department partnered with the Mayor's Task Force on Neighborhoods and Public Spaces in the Wildflower Project. The project called for planting 40-pounds of wildflower seeds. The Public Works Department planted the seeds at Gum Tree Park, McCullough Boulevard, Tupelo Regional Airport, two sites along Veterans Boulevard, and along Coley Road. As result of this project, motorists traveling through Tupelo can enjoy a variety of colorful blooms throughout the spring and summer.

The Tupelo Tree Farm is one of the Public Works Department's greatest accomplishments. The farm, located on Lawndale Drive, was redeveloped in 2003. The farm initially nurtured approximately 1,400 saplings including cypress, crape myrtle, Japanese maple, elm and a variety of oaks. The trees grow for five years before the City replants them throughout the Community. In 2010, the farm was expanded to support an additional 700 trees along with hundreds of clusters of day lilies. The City plants about 500 day lilies each year. Averages of 300 trees are replanted on City property each year resulting in a significant cost savings. Mr. David Knight, Tree Farm Manager, received the annual reforestation award at the 2011 Statewide Celebration of Trees. The Mississippi Urban Forest Council and the Mississippi Forestry Commission jointly sponsored the award.

The Public Works Department shares our City Administration's passion to revitalize Downtown Tupelo by incorporating Green Spaces at multiple locations. Downtown lots that were not kept maintained were transformed into small park-like settings. The Green Spaces provide an area for Citizens to picnic or hang out while Downtown. Public Works crews play a key role in the planning and construction of these projects. This past month Public Works cleaned and stacked 1,400 bricks on pallets to be used in the Court Street Green Space.

Investing in and revitalizing our City neighborhoods is a top priority of this Department. We offer a variety of services to enhance the quality of life for Tupelo residents.

In a quest to help residents keep Tupelo beautiful, the Dial a Truck Program was revived in 2009. Residents can reserve a municipal truck, load it with debris, and a Public Works crew will haul it off at no charge.

In an effort to keep our All America City streets looking their best the Public Works Department provides a street sweeping service. Two commercial sweepers are utilized by running routes throughout the City. Currently the sweepers have cleaned 1,926 streets since October 1, 2010. This program is vital to the function of our City Drainage System as well as ensuring curb side appeal to all City neighborhoods.

Another very popular service we provide is Mosquito/Vector Control. Citizens may call the office and report a problem area to be sprayed. The mosquito spray truck runs as needed through the summer season. If the call volume is low, the truck runs on a routing system. Public Works provides larvacide and brochures that educate our residents on methods to reduce the mosquito population on their property. The Mosquito/Vector Control program is vital to the health of our Citizens.

By utilizing a small fleet of boom trucks that run citywide routes we provide curbside brush and large trash removal. Since the beginning of the current fiscal year, Public Works has picked up 1,795 loads of brush. This brush is transported and stored at our landfill site near the Metro Fuel Center. This site is maintained by Public Works and is staffed year round to push and pile these materials. The limbs are processed into mulch which is taken to our City Mulch Site which opens at specified times throughout the year.

The same fleet of trucks picks up large trash items such as furniture and appliances along with brush on these routes. As of today, Public Works has collected 306 loads of large trash since October 1, 2010. These materials are stored in large containers leased to the City by Waste Management. The containers are emptied and processed a few times a week.

As our Citizens strive to adopt healthy habits and lifestyles, interest in recycling has peaked in recent years. Public Works provides collection bin trailers for recyclable materials. The program provides four trailers that are positioned throughout the City to service each area. The following items can be recycled: newspaper, cardboard, aluminum cans, steel cans, and #1 and #2 plastics. Under the Mayor's leadership we have made the necessary changes to ensure that all items collected at these sites are processed by a proven environment friendly method.

In December of 2010 and 2011 the Public Works Department picked up discarded live Christmas trees from City curbsides. Trees were collected for several weeks and drop off sites were conveniently positioned around Tupelo. The trees collected were donated to the Army Corp of Engineers as part of a habitat recycling program.

The Lee County Supervisors host two collection days for Hazardous Waste per year. The Public Works Department continues to accept paint and other

hazardous materials from Tupelo residents in an attempt to encourage well maintained residences. The paint is stored at our facility until a collection day is hosted. The waste material is then delivered to the collection site.

Sidewalks are vital in our neighborhoods. They encourage healthy lifestyles and improve the quality of life in Tupelo. In December of 2009 the Public Works Department completed \$50, 0000.00 in sidewalk improvements. Sidewalk projects took place on Court Street, Main Street, Church Street, Madison Street, Magazine and Green Streets. As result of the project Public Works replaced or poured 4,100 linear feet of concrete sidewalk downtown. Currently Public Works has several sidewalk projects underway.

Tupelo is fortunate in that we have a system of Neighborhood Associations spearheaded by the Developmental Services Department. These groups meet monthly and are able to work together to handle issues and make improvements to their neighborhoods. Speeding motorist and pedestrian safety are key issues. The Public Works Department assisted multiple neighborhoods recently by installing speed tables to the roadway. The neighborhood joins together to fund raise for the resources to purchase the materials for the project. Public Works plans out the project and installs the speed tables.

The City of Tupelo is home to some beautiful cemeteries located in various places throughout the town. The City owns four of these cemeteries. The Public Works Department maintains these sites. It is our duty to make our City Cemeteries quiet beautiful places that serve as a symbol of love and faith. Polices and procedures are in place to ensure that the cemetery grounds remain attractive. The Public Works Department continues to maintain the maps & records for each City Cemetery. A Public Works crew is assigned to inspect, and perform any maintenance on these grounds daily.

Day to day operations at Public Works entails a multitude of daily projects. Each Public Works employee is evaluated and assigned to an area relating to his/her ability. Our goal is to cross train our staff so that any division can assist another in times of need. The Department attempts to make frequent reviews of progress and adjustments to maintain a high level of productivity. In short, employees are not working for a certain crew or division but for the Department as a whole.

The Public Works Department shares Mayor Reed's philosophy in that we treasure Tupelo trees. The Arborist Division plays a vital role in keeping Tupelo a safe but attractive City. This crew prunes and removes diseased trees in an effort to maintain a healthy urban forest and reduce the risks of trees falling in heavy storms and winds. Our current policy is for every one tree removed approximately seven trees are planted. By following strict guidelines this crew has ensured that Tupelo continues receiving its Tree City USA status. Tupelo has had the Tree City USA status for a consecutive 27 years.

The Arborist Crew gets routine training on proper pruning, cutting, and planting through the National Arborist Association.

The Public Works Drainage Division works diligently to maintain the function of our City storm water system. The system consists of series of storm drains, inlets, and ditches, cross drains, pipes, culverts, and detention ponds. All City maintained ditches and detention ponds, curbs and gutters have recently been inventoried and mapped. These areas are scheduled to be sprayed at strategic time through the year to keep vegetation maintained, To be cost efficient this service is placed on bid and the work is contracted out.

The Public Works Department recently made critical repairs to the following Tupelo bridges: Rankin Boulevard at Kings Creek, Daybrite Drive at Kings Creek, Blair Street at Kings Creek, Jackson Street at Kings Creek, and Mount Vernon Road at Town Creek. The Office of State Aid Road Construction inspects and rates all the state's bridges every two years. The repairs made kept us in compliance with state and federal standards.

The Public Works Department works along side the Drainage Task Force, a citizen based committee to improve and construct drainage infrastructure to reduce and maintain City storm water. Recently, several projects were completed to improve storm water flow and reduce flooding problems. Improvements were made to the Eastwood Ditch located on Veterans Boulevard. Extensive improvements were done to the storm water system in the Haven Acres Subdivision. Residents in the Sharon Hill Subdivision got immediate relief from flooding in June of 2010. Major drainage improvements were made to the storm water system on South Green Street. The Committee is set to oversee the following projects this year: Bristow Ditch Improvements, Eason Boulevard/Highway 6 Ditch Improvements, Fant/Rogers Drive Ditch Improvements, Hampton Street Drainage Improvements, Edgemont Subdivision Drainage Improvements, Mount Vernon Road Drainage Improvements, Old Belden Circle Drainage Improvements, Shady Lake Road Drainage Improvements, and Tolbert Street Drainage Improvements.

Our Street Maintenance Crew plays a role in Public Works day to day operations. This crew is charged with the massive task of maintaining approximately 300 miles of roadway within the city limits. Along with basic maintenance this crew takes part in major road improvements and construction.

Traffic control is a major factor in the area of our City roadways. This crew works tirelessly to ensure our roads are marked properly and that signs are visible and in the proper position. In the fall of 2010 the Public Works Department conducted an eight week inventory of all its traffic signs. The Department is capable of telling you exactly how old a sign is, how much it cost, and its location in a matter of seconds. There are roughly 8,300 traffic signs in Tupelo.

The Federal Highway Administration upgraded its specifications for signage last year. One-third of the city signs are the familiar green street name signs mounted on every corner. These signs will have to be replaced with a newer version 9 inch sign. Approximately one fifth of the city signs are 24 inch stop signs. The stop signs will be replaced with 30 inch signs.

The Public Works Department inspects all City streets and once a year and determines which ones receive work based on need. Roads typically need major repair every seven years. This year's Mill and Overlay project is underway and the contractor is making excellent progress. The streets slated for this year are Patterson Street, Elderberry Street, Beechnut Street, Emily Street, Martin Hill Drive, Oakview Drive, Meeks Street, Anderson Street, Trout Street, Ashley Lane, South Green Street, Robert E Lee Drive, Fawn Drive, Lansdowne Drive, Sourwood Drive, Northlake Drive, and Englewood Drive.

Our Department works along side the Major Thoroughfare Committee to handle major capital road improvements. Construction of a second bridge on Eason Boulevard is just one major accomplishment of this program. This bridge ferries two lanes of eastbound traffic over the creek while allowing the old bridge to handle the westbound vehicles. The completion of this project is a tremendous contribution to the safety and efficiency as citizens travel the east and west corridor. June 30, 2011 marks the date for construction to begin on South Gloster Street. The project calls to add a fifth lane on Gloster Street from Garfield Street to an area near the new Highway 6. These improvements will enhance safety and lessen the traffic congestion that plagues this area.

In August 2009 work began to make significant improvements to Endville Road. Workers installed a drainage system, created curb and gutters, installed a new road base, and added a left-hand turn lane on to McCullough Boulevard. This project was completed last year. Some 4,300 vehicles travel that portion of Endville Road daily. The project eased traffic congestion significantly.

The Public Works Department will respond to a crisis day or night regardless of the weather. The heaviest snowfall in than 40 years brought our All America City to a near standstill this past winter. Public Works Personnel began salting major thoroughfares at 6:30pm the day before the snow was forecast. By the next day six inches of snow covered Tupelo. Four snow plows began clearing major thoroughfares and then moved on to the secondary neighborhood streets. By mid morning all the city's major arteries were relatively clear. Public Works continued to work clearing roads and sidewalks for several days following.

Historically the Public Works Department is willing to extend a helping hand to other city departments. This year our Traffic/Paint crews have assisted several departments by repainting their parking lots or handicap spaces this summer.

Our Street Maintenance Crew repairs street cuts made by the Water and Light Department in an effort to assist them on projects and to ensure safe roads.

Several crews assisted the Tupelo Regional Airport by mowing and clearing their campus several months ago. The Department came to the Airport's aid again this year by planting trees and shrubs along the fence line from West Jackson Street and Airpark Road. Public Works installed an irrigation system at this site to water the new planted vegetation.

The Public Works drainage crew has assisted Habitat for Humanity twice this year by performing demolition on house to clear lots for new construction.

Rights of Way Maintenance is one of the most important divisions at Public Works. This crew is responsible for making this All America City a beautiful place. The Public Works Department has been busy over the last couple of years building landscape beds and revamping existing beds. The results speak for themselves. By strategically planting and using a contrast of colors, and textures, the Public Works Department is transforming our roadsides on bed at a time.