

Mark Cross

...from the Mayor's Desk

As my first column in *Around Town*, I wanted to give an overview and update of projects that are happening at City Hall right now. As we proceed, I'll continue to fill in the blanks and update our ongoing projects.

As you may know, Troy City Hall is now located on the corner of South Lincoln and Cap au Gris Street, across from Avery Park. Old City Hall, located at the corner of Main Street and College Street, is listed with O'Brien Real Estate in Winfield, Mo. The asking price is \$340,000.

Very soon there will be signs of construction at the intersection of Lincoln and Cherry Streets as we install traffic lights and new curbs. There will be dedicated turn lanes in all directions and this construction will connect these new improvements with the Highway 47 expansion improvements from a few years ago. This will increase traffic flow and change the look of that busy intersection. This improvement will be paid for by using a combination of federal dollars coming through the St. Louis region and matching dollars from Troy.

In another effort to increase safety and traffic flow, we are in the process of applying for a grant to install a sidewalk along Old Cap au Gris Road from Lincoln Drive to Troy Buchanan High School. When bus transportation was cut to the schools, pedestrian traffic increased in an already congested area for cars. We need to provide a safe place for our students to walk to school and we are hoping to move forward with this quickly. We are working with MoDOT to have them provide or cost share a pedestrian bridge so that cars and students don't share a bridge meant primarily for cars. I will keep you updated as this proceeds.

Another emerging issue is a recent order from the EPA for Troy to divert sewage flow from the old sewer plant, east of Highway 61 near Highway 47, to the new sewer plant, about 1 mile south just east of 61. Our preliminary estimate for this mile



Mayor of Troy Mark Cross

of sewer line is \$1.2 million.

I have been on the job for six months as Mayor of Troy and I'm amazed at the high cost of infrastructure. In this case, we have no choice but to make the sewer improvement. It is a reminder that we must continue to maintain and improve to avoid costly and unplanned expenses even during economic downturns.

Speaking of economics, Troy revenue comes from property tax, personal property tax and sales tax. Our sales tax receipts are down 5 percent for July, August and September. Our most recent report comparing July 2009 to July 2010, shows a decline of 18 percent. If we have another month with similar results, we will need to review the budget so that we can adjust spending to income. The Board of Aldermen and I are watching this carefully.

Everyday on the job, there is something that needs taking care of. I thoroughly enjoy the challenge. I'm having a great time and have a terrific staff with experience and energy. I'm looking forward to serving you.

Mr. Bill won't be thrilling this year

Mr. Bill's Thrills Haunted Barn and Trail of Terror will take a respite from its eight-year reign of terror on West Highway U. It will remain closed for the Halloween season 2010.

"I have had some health issues for more than a year and I need more time to recuperate," said William (Bill) Lash of Troy. "I'm hopeful to get my strength and energy back in time for our Scream Break in March and then offer a bigger and better Halloween season for 2011."

Lash explained that it was a difficult decision as so many charities and groups that benefit youth would miss out on the proceeds this year.

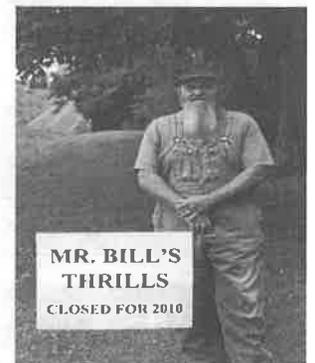
Last year, proceeds were \$2,854 with between 2,500 – 3,000 visitors. In all, Mr. Bill's Thrills has donated \$16,820 to area youth charities and more than 6,000 cans of food to area food pantries since 2001. In the past, Mr. Bill's Thrills gave \$1 off the ticket price if a guest brought two cans of food.

Mr. Bill's Thrills started as a Halloween party for his church in an old, three-room house on his property in 2001. Once

he renovated the house, he didn't want to use it for the Halloween party and changed venues to the barn. From there, it has expanded to an additional building and three acres of "trails."

"I try to work off of people's fears and phobias but we are low on gore," Lash said. "We always give them their money's worth."

The premise of the haunted story is that a young farmer and his wife build a homestead and start to farm...and then things go terribly wrong. Lash dreamt the story line for Mr. Bill's and wrote it down. He admits that there may be little historical accuracy but it seems to work for his many guests. After his first year, Lash started to go to vendor shows for the horror entertainment industry and realized that the sky was the limit to staged horror. He has expanded or made significant changes each year to keep the visit fresh for guests.



Bill Lash with his yard sign.