

## Viney Grove Road Extension Making Progress

Sweetser Construction continues to make good progress on the extension of Viney Grove Road from Bush Street to Buchanan Street.

The contractor has completed most of the preliminary excavation and has brought in tons of sub base material bringing the road bed up to base levels. They plan on starting on the creek crossing next month.

The contractor has executed an updated construction schedule on the project, and as of last week anticipates completion around the end of the year, weather allowing, which would be well ahead of schedule based on a 10 month construction contract.



## Property Millage Assessment Looking at Roll-Back

Prairie Grove, like most cities and school districts in Washington County, will likely be looking at significant roll-backs in their millage rates for 2024. Arkansas Constitutional Amendment 79 caps gains in assessed rates to 10% in a calendar year. A roll back calculation must take into account gains in the overall assessed value of a taxing entity that are based on newly acquired property (such as new homes) and increases in value such

as re-appraisals. ACA states:

- (a) To determine whether a rollback of millage rates is required under Arkansas Constitution, Article 16, § 14, each taxing entity shall compare the adjusted taxable assessed values of the real and personal property in the current year to the adjusted taxable assessed values of the real and personal property in the preceding year.
- (b) To calculate the millage rollback, the adjusted taxable assessed value of the real property in the current year shall be

compared to the adjusted taxable assessed value of real property in the preceding year.

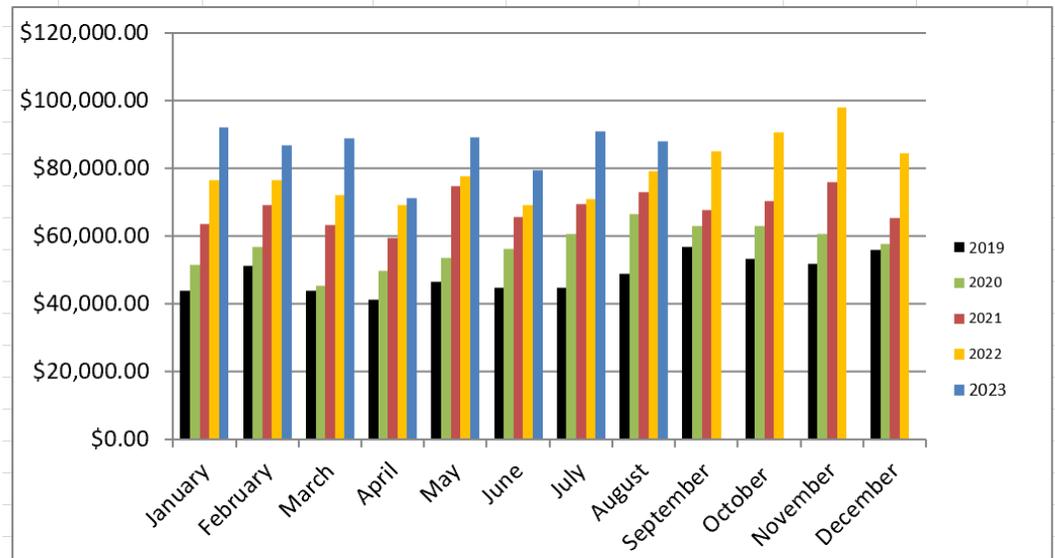
Prairie Grove is expecting around a 10% decrease in millage rate which would lower it from 5 to 4.5 for 2024 but won't know the exact amount until after the equalization board makes their final determinations. The county will do a revised roll back calculation following that final report.

## Sales Tax Update

August Sales Tax saw good gains (11%) over August of 2022, and year to date sales tax continues to run 16% higher than the same period in 2022.

For August, total city sales tax collections were over \$240,000. The sales tax per 1% increased from \$79,134 in August of 2022 to \$87,862 in August of 2023.

Updated projections for 2023 have the sales tax collection running approximately 11% over the budgeted estimates for the year.



## Park Advisory Committee Meets

The Park Advisory Committee Met on August 22nd and with new members present, discussed a wide variety of Park issues, including both current and future needs.

The committee reviewed funding, projects, and discussed the need to meet with the school very soon to talk about the future use of the softball fields at the school complex. The current 25 year agreement runs out next year.

The committee discussed some land needs as well as needs for basketball courts, pickleball courts, areas for future baseball and softball, and soccer.

## ORG State Reimbursements Submitted

The City has submitted all of the invoices from the recent Muddy Fork Park improvements to the Arkansas Parks Outdoor Recreation Grant Program, to be reimbursed up to \$119,000.

The City received the grant at the end of 2021 for the construction of restroom facilities and a new playground for the Park.



### PGPAC - Purpose

- Advisory Only
- Advise on the Adoption of Policies, Rates, and other Park Rules
- Review Park Current Needs
- Develop Master Plans, Improvement Plans, and Plans for Future Needs
- Review Grants and Advise on Grant Content and needs
- Develop Ideas for everything and anything Parks & Recreation

### Current Issues

- School Softball Field Lease; expires in 2025
- Future Grant Applications
- Pickleball Discussion
- Basketball Courts
- Open/Close Times in Parks?
- Land Purchases
- Other Improvements (shade, domes or bubbles, benches)

## Building Update

Building Permits for September were up some in August, but with the completion of Hudson Heights phase 1 and Wagnon Springs phase 1, many more are expected to be issued by years end.

11 permits for new single family homes were issued in August with all but one located in Mt. View Subdivision. The remaining permit was the first permitted in Hudson Heights phase 1, but the developer has inquired about permitting many more in that subdivision in the next month or so.

Total single family permits for the year is now 97. New homes in August ranged from 1861 to 1968 sq/ft..



## WWTP Progress

Progress Continues at the WWTP and the new bio unit #3 is almost ready to start filling with water to test for leakage. The unit holds approximately 1 million gallons of water.

Units #1 and #2 will also have to be drained and cleaned, but the logistics are still being worked out. Each is needed for ongoing treatment, and the biology requires precise amounts of biological sludge and micro-organisms present to treat the water making the process complicated.

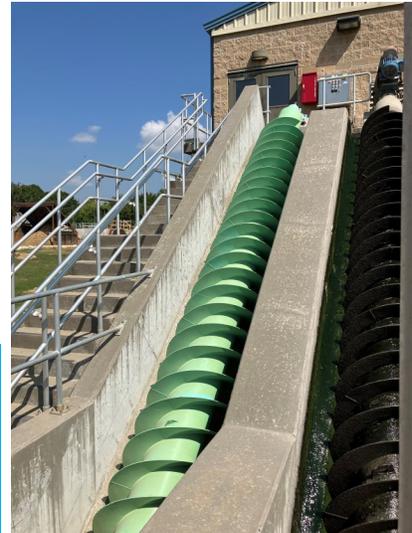
Other construction has included work on the new chem building, near completion of a new splitter box, and installation of the 3rd screw pump- Work remains on the UV System, electrical work, installation of chemical feed systems, and electrical control installations.



Top: The anoxic zone of the new bio unit #3

Right: the new screw pump is being installed

Bottom: Bio Unit #3 is almost ready to fill with water for testing.



## ARPA agreement finalized

The City has submitted the finalized agreement with the Arkansas Natural Resource Commission to be eligible for the receipt of 4.475 million in American Rescue Plan Act funding to be utilized for the WWTP project. The money has to be matched by the City, but that match has already been met.





## City News

- *2nd Saturday Trades Day held there second ever Street Dance on Sept. 9th, and many in attendance deemed it to be a huge success. An estimated 200-300 people turned out for the free bounce houses, live music, food trailers, evening farmers market, and dancing in the streets. The family friendly event will likely become a regular event.*
- *The annual Clothesline Fair kicked off with a parade on Saturday September 2nd, which lasted well over an hour. The fair and popular square dance competition saw large crowds all weekend despite warm temperatures. Emergency crews did respond to several heat related emergencies over the course of the three days.*
- *Other upcoming events include the fall Junk Ranch Oct. 5th—8th, The chamber of commerce Holiday open houses in early November, the Chamber of Commerce annual Cocoa Crawl on December 9th, and the annual 2nd Saturday Trades Parade of Lights December 9th. In addition, the Prairie Grove Historic Society will be hosting a holiday tour of homes the afternoon of December 9th.*

## Group Looking at Creating a Historic District

A group of Prairie Grove Citizens have been meeting for more than a year to develop a plan to form a Historic District in the Heart of Prairie Grove. The district would have to be created by ordinance, by the City Council. Much of the area being considered focuses on Mock Street, Bush Street, and adjacent areas.

The group has been researching some of the other cities in Arkansas that have Historic Districts and have been consulting with the Dept of Arkansas Heritage regarding the Arkansas Historic Preservation program.

The state partners with communities, with their CLG (certified local government) program. 21 cities in

Arkansas are currently CLG's. There are a number of requirements to be a CLG including having a Historic District Commission. The duties of the HDC include:

- Encourage historic preservation
  - Provide technical assistance to citizens
  - Promote a partnership of local, state and federal government
  - Administer appropriate state and local legislation for the designation and protection of historic properties
  - Approve applications for Certificates of Appropriateness (COAs) in designated historic district(s)
  - Maintain a survey and inventory of local historic properties
- Participate in nominating properties/areas

to the National Register of Historic Places

The HDC must create a map of the district, and create a survey and inventory of historic structures.

The group has been meeting as time allows and hopes to have a draft ordinance based on the ordinances of other Arkansas Cities that has been shared by the state. They hope to make a presentation to the City Council in the near future.

Any ordinance would include a clear map of the area covered by the HD. It would also mandate the creation of a historic district commission and define the terms, number of members (minimum 5) and duties.