

As we approach the end of another fiscal year, we are again working on finalizing a new budget for the upcoming year which will be fiscal year 2020. The end of the year allows a good time for reflection on what we've accomplished in the past and what we want to focus on in the future. As I've stated many times before, we have a great City Council that works together to get things done – to move Carbondale forward. As I look back on what we've accomplished together, some of the highlights include:

- Opening of a downtown hotel, Hilton Home2 Suites
- Completing two phases of streetscape construction on Illinois Avenue
- Strengthening our relationships with SIU and SIH
- Organizing a diverse group of faith leaders to allow us to better connect to all parts of the community
- Passing a chronic nuisance ordinance and introducing new housing programs; each designed to protect and preserve our neighborhoods
- Adding numerous bike/pedestrian paths to allow our residents more access to our great amenities as well as to each other
- Hosting more events, like Halloween, to bring the “fun” back to Carbondale
- Managing the 2017 eclipse activities where we welcomed over 50,000 visitors to our city

The FY2020 budget has been a challenge. The City Council has been committed to not raising real estate taxes and with continued cutbacks from the State of Illinois, we're again asking our staff to do more with less. However, I'm pleased that we will continue to focus the resources we have on improving Carbondale and moving the city forward. Some of the things we'll be working on in the upcoming year include:

- Reconstruction of Oakland Avenue from Walnut Street to Chautauqua Road to include a new water main
- Repaving Freeman Street from Oakland Avenue to Glenview Drive
- Completion of the Highway 13 expansion from Giant City Road to Reed Station Road, to include a new multiuse pedestrian path
- Adding a new bike/pedestrian path from Oakland Avenue to New Era Road
- Adding more recreational opportunities to Cedar Lake
- We'll continue to ask our police department to focus on neighborhood-based patrols to ensure that our crime rate stays at its current 23-year low
- We'll continue to have community events, like Halloween, to allow residents to better connect to one another

Once again, everyone is working together to get things done and to move the city forward. Our citizens are engaged in the process and know they will be given a chance to be heard. My best wishes to all of you throughout the year.