

# Town of Iowa

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Monthly Mayors Report

June 20, 2023

## **THE UGLY**

**LITTER & DEBRIS** - It saddens me to have to continue to address these specific issues. As a reminder we do **NOT** have a program for picking up debris including mattresses, furniture, limbs etc. Many people are also setting bags of trash on top of waste management cans. This creates an issue and should be avoided, no one likes to pick up trash from a bag that has fallen and broke open. Please join me in being part of the solution to our litter and debris problem.

## **THE BAD**

**TOWN BUDGET**: Regrettably the town of Iowa's revenues have fallen below projections again this year, as a result the budget that I have proposed for the 23-24 budget year has cuts to both the town and police departments. It is my hope that this is a temporary issue and that as funds are replenished, we can begin to address some of the cuts that were made. Inflation continues to be the driving force behind the reduction of tax revenue. A "special meeting" has been called for June 28, 2023 to hopefully pass our budget by July 1<sup>st</sup> so that we as a town can avoid any negative affects as prescribed by the state legislature.

**INFRASTRUCTURE** : We as a town have had many issues over the years when it comes to infrastructure. I am keenly aware that allocating taxpayers' dollars to fix issues with water treatment or wastewater is not something that residents can actually see being corrected. Its not at all like overlaying a street or digging out a ditch. However, putting a "Band-Aid" on our water treatment or waste water system is not beneficial in the long run.

Based on the budget that I have proposed more funds are being directed into water treatment, and waste water system as a whole. With the reduction in revenues, we have no choice but to be more deliberate in dedicating funds that will provide stable water treatment, and waste water treatment. As a reminder we are attempting to work out a plan for flood mitigation- not as simple as digging out a ditch and will take time. Overlay of streets is a concern as many in town have not been done over past

administrations. As a cost saving measure, I have chosen this year to place our street overlays in a multi municipality bid process. Our hope is that this will drastically reduce the cost to tax payers for street overlays by opening the bid process to much larger and efficient crews outside of our normal bidding process.

## **THE GOOD**

**METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANAZATION:** Congratulation town of Iowa!! Recently the MPO voted to extend their boundary, and by so doing the town of Iowa is now a member of the MPO.

The MPO's mission is to administer a cooperative, continuous and comprehensive (3C) transportation planning process to assemble regional agreement on transportation investments, that harmonize roadway, public transit, bicycle, pedestrian, and other transportation needs and support regional land use, economic, and environmental goals for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods. Special priority is allotted to providing equal access to a variety of transportation choices and effective public involvement in the transportation planning process.

**SWLA:** The Southwest Louisiana Regional Planning Commission (RPC) is committed to the future of Southwest Louisiana. By focusing on the key aspects of sustainable growth in the region, we help maintain a healthy environment and streamline transportation, while driving economic development.

Its exciting to know that now we as a town have the necessary tools at our disposal to develop a comprehensive "Master Plan" for the town of Iowa that can help guide us for the next 5, 10, and 20 years into the future!!

**IOWA FARMERS MARKET:** Saturday AUGUST 5<sup>th</sup> 8am-12 noon! Unfortunately, we had some scheduling issues that prevented us from starting the first weekend of July. However, this delay has brought about changes that will make it better.

For entertainment Andy Smith will be in concert beginning @ 8:30 am. He has performed for Governors, Presidential Candidates, Military Functions, and performed at the weddings of their children.

Andy has been the opening act for artists like BB King, Jerry Jeff Walker, Bob Wier, Starship, Lonnie Mack, Leon Russell, KC and the Sunshine Band, Hunter Hayes, Ellis Hall and Aaron Neville and some of his band members moved on to play with George Benson, Jimmy Smith, Joe Cocker, Dr. John, George Duke, Stanley Clarke, Bobby McFerrin, Bob Wier, John Mayer and many more.

Tommy Senegal will be on site with his food trailer and through his non-profit will be sponsoring a benefit for Mr. Bob Muir (a long-time resident) to help pay for specialty medication from a very recent and life-threatening diagnosis.

Plate Lunch Menu: Pork steak, chicken, red beans and rice and a roll. \$15 All proceeds will go to help pay for the required medication for Mr. Bob.

## **ADMINISTRATION**

Six months into my term as Mayor and even though I deal with what some would call “complaints”, I consider most of them concerns. The overwhelming support and words of encouragement even from those that have concerns help me stay focused on the job at hand. Even as I make hard decisions, those decisions are based on one principal. “Its not about me, Its not about now, Its about the town of Iowa and its future”. I trust that this is a saying we can all get behind to make our community stand out from any other community in South West Louisiana.

**Mayors Chat:** As a reminder prior to each council meeting, I am making myself available for open conversations starting at 5:30 and ending at 6:30 pm. I simply request that we have respectful conversations, regardless of the topic.

Mayor Watkins