

December 2019 Column

A few random thoughts as the Christmas holidays approach at maximum velocity...

- It has occurred to me that I have begun my farewell tour. Every annual event I participate in for the next year will be my last as mayor. If you're into sports analogies, my term is now late in the 4th quarter, or bottom of the 9th inning, or coming off the back stretch, and heading for the tape.

I've already presided over my last Christmas Parade as mayor – assuming there is no run-off in next year's mayoral election. What a night it was! I think we broke the attendance record again this year. Central Park was packed! Thanks to all the city staff who worked so hard to make it all come together. I also want to thank all the individuals, groups, clubs and organizations for their beautiful entries in the parade.

I'm telling you, folks, that parade was truly outstanding. We always have visitors from out of town that tell us our parade is right out of a Hallmark movie. Every year, the judges have a harder and harder time deciding on the winners. Every year, the entries are bigger, more imaginative, and better lighted.

- The new year is going to bring us a new City Manager. As you may already know, his name is Steve Parker, and his official start date is Monday, January 6th. I think folks will really like Steve. He is a real "people person" who will not hesitate to greet you, shake your hand, and listen intently to your concerns. He is a true professional who wants to make this city the best it can be.

- Man, time flies! Can you believe that it's been nearly 10 years since Caterpillar came to town? Do you know what that means? It means that the property tax abatements will be coming off! The real estate abatement will be coming off next year, followed by the building, plant and equipment a year later. That will be a significant boost to our city tax revenue.

I remember several people in the community did not support those tax abatements. In today's world, economic development requires incentives like tax abatements in order to remain competitive. The truth is that Caterpillar would never have come here without them... now look at what is about to happen. Not only do they employ over 1,800 people, they will be making a substantial contribution to our general fund budget as well... So, yeah, I guess it was worth it...

- Remember when we were promising that Caterpillar would attract some of their ancillary vendors to Seguin? Well, that just happened in a big way with the announcement of United Alloys coming to town. Their main mission is to supply Caterpillar with the frames, housings and custom trailers for the electrical generation sets that Cat is now assembling at their plant.

United Alloys is a quality company that will have a workforce of 200 people, and an average worker's wage in excess of \$52K per year. Many of those workers will be highly skilled welders, making SISD's welding and vocational programs even more valuable.

- It's Christmas time, and I feel there is so much to be grateful for. We are living in a time of unprecedented prosperity. Our freedoms and our free enterprise system have created opportunities that are only dreamed about in the rest of the world. With that in mind, here is an excerpt from my prayer I say every year for our city:

Lord, we thank you for our clergy, teachers, physicians, businessmen, engineers, public servants, farmers, mechanics, artisans, and workers of every sort whose honest work in a free land rewards them and their families with the fruits of their labor, and enriches our community and our nation beyond measure.

Don't forget to share some of that prosperity and goodwill with those who may have fallen on hard times. Even in the best of times, tragedies occur, and there are people in need, so spread that Christmas Spirit around!

Merry Christmas, Seguin!

Gosh I love this town!