

## Mayor's Report for September 2014

On September 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> the Boy Scouts put flags up along Main Street in addition to the 684 flags they placed on Art Hill in St Louis – the flags were placed on Art Hill to coincide with the release of the book “Under One Flag”. Local author and photographer Tom Rollins was a driving force behind the story. See [www.underoneflagbook.com](http://www.underoneflagbook.com)

Mozel had a moving memorial to veterans and first responders at their Columbia location on September 11<sup>th</sup>. Many of Columbia's emergency responders and elected officials were in attendance.

Movies at Metter had a nice attendance despite the cold, misty weather. A big “Thank You” goes to Will Trowbridge for providing last minute Audio/Video services (needed due to a last minute cancellation) and to the Kiwanis for providing concessions for our movie watchers.

Columbia's FestiFall celebration had beautiful weather and over 1,000 folks in attendance! Thank you to all of the sponsors and to Jackie Hausmann and Nancy Long for coordinating the event again this year. It's a favorite of many of our residents!

I attended the 9<sup>th</sup> annual Helping Strays Mutt and Me run/walk. Helping Strays the Monroe County Humane Society is getting ready to break ground on their new facility between Columbia and Waterloo. More information can be found at [www.healpingstrays.org](http://www.healpingstrays.org).

Metter Park was blessed with the Christian Music Festival. Great music, food and just hanging out. Local and regional bands entertained with a variety of Christian music. Beautiful event and great weather. They may have had an “in” with the weather.

Shrimp boil on Main Street. If you have not been to a Who Dats shrimp boil, well you've been missing out.

Songs-4-Soldiers was a tremendous success again this year. Attendance was great, the music was entertaining and the weather cooperated for this event, which brings attention to the needs and issues affecting our soldiers as they transition back into civilian life. Dustin Row, all of the event's sponsors and all those who helped make this event a success are to be commended for a job well done!

I, along with other municipal officials, attended the Illinois Municipal League Conference. The conference included over sixty (60) educational sessions – sessions were held on roads, parks, liability issues, legislation, transparency, technology, economic tools, planning, emergency management and many others issues pertaining to municipal governing. What a great educational and networking opportunity. I was also elected as a Vice President of the Illinois Municipal League. Columbia has a state-wide voice in the many issues affecting local municipalities.

The Illinois Municipal League Risk Management Association (the city's insurer) held their quarterly meeting to review the organization's status. The organization is financially strong and growing, and coverages are also expanding to better insure the city.

We hired a temporary Full-Time Paramedic to help with the staffing of our Emergency Medical Services Department. We need to keep our emergency services running strong.

Taxes – hate them or love them, they’re needed to help pay the bills. In these challenging economic times, along with the uncertainty of state and federal government funding sources, cities like Columbia are looking for more stability in their revenue streams in order to replace any state and federal reductions. Yes, there is a referendum for a .25% (a fourth of a penny increase) of the city’s share of sales taxes in November – this amounts to 25 cents on a \$100 purchase. This will help fund Columbia’s emergency services with the (sales tax) revenues generated by all who shop and eat in Columbia, as opposed to local property taxes which are paid only by city residents and property owners. Food for thought...let others help pay for your emergency services.

State legislators continue in their efforts to pass unfunded mandates. The latest is a restriction on water and sewer tap-on fees which, if passed, would lead to an increase in water and sewer rates to our current users – tap-on fees are charged to new users to help cover the cost on system upgrades and expansions due to increased volumes.

The private road next to Mc Donald’s, Taco Bell, Firestone, the office building (across from Firestone), the Post Office and the Sinclair complex will soon be improved. The developer is working with the businesses to complete the new road. Once brought up to standards, the city will maintain the road into the future.

We approved an annexation agreement that will result in the construction of a new office building adjacent to Route 3 on the north side of Columbia. The developer plans to build a multi-story building that will house medical and business offices – a restaurant may also be included. The drawings are beautiful.

New lighting is currently being installed at the Columbia American Legion Memorial Park fields. The Columbia Athletic Association received a grant to pay for the lighting. Brighter days, or should I say nights, are in store for baseball in Columbia.

### **Chamber of Commerce – Ribbon Cuttings**

**Bob Brockland Buick GMC, Inc.:** Buick and GMC auto sales and services, located at 580 Old State Route 3.

**Pro Rehab:** Out patient physical therapy, located at 1260 Columbia Centre.

### **Upcoming Events**

#### **October**

- 9 (5 - 9 pm): Witches Ghoulish Night Out – Main Street Merchants
- 10 (Starts at Dusk): Movies at Metter - *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs 1*
- 11 (7 – 10 pm): Columbia Athletic Association Mouse Races – ICS Gym
- 17 (6 – 8 pm): Trunk-or-Treating – Monroe County/HTC YMCA
- 18 (8am – 1 pm): Electronics, Battery & Appliance Recycling – DOPW Parking Lot
- 18: Taste of Scouting Cooking Competition – Legion Park
- 18 (6 - 10 pm): Columbia Ice Hockey Trivia Night – American Legion
- 19 (9 am – 4pm): Open House - Columbia Airport
- 19 (4 - 5 pm): Walk to Remember – ICS Parish
- 24 (7:30pm): Helping Strays Humane Society Cosmic Bingo – Turner Hall
- 25 (10am – 12:30pm): Halloween Hi-Jinks & Costume Contest – Main Street Merchants
- 25 (noon – 6pm): Chili cook-off, 7pm featuring *Lion King* – Hope Church
- 31 (5:30 – 7:30pm): Scare Square & Pumpkin Glow – City Hall

Details can be found at <http://www.columbiaillinois.com/calendar.aspx> or City Hall.

Remember if you are not involved, you are missing out. So GET OUT and GET INVOLVED!

Columbia is the “Outstanding Community Volunteerism” 2010 Governor’s Cup Winner.

If you have any questions, concerns, comments or just want to chat please contact me at (office) 281-7144 ext. 109, (home) 281-5199 or [khutchinson@columbiaillinois.com](mailto:khutchinson@columbiaillinois.com).

Sincerely,

Kevin Hutchinson, Mayor