

Dear Keo Residents & Keo Water/Sewer Customers,

Happy, belated New Year! I hope this note finds you all happy and well. Our community has, thankfully, remained vibrant and active throughout this last year. I want to take this time to inform you of the progress and changes we have made, as well as plans for 2022.

Water & Sewer Services-We have completely overhauled our water treatment plant using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant funds. We are producing excellent water and removing the iron. We have repaired 26 leaks in the system and started to change out the old, inefficient water meters. We received a \$300,000 grant to have 300ft of collapsed gravity sewer line on Oak St., repaired. Project expected to start this summer. We have a new billing system and bookkeeper, Cindy Nichols. We are returning to the postcard style of bill, which saves postage and will be easier to understand. The Water & Sewer office is now located in Keo City Hall, 226 Main St. (501-842-0100). You can pay your bill in person, ask questions or visit with us, most Mon-Wed-Fri mornings 8am-12pm.

Streets-We had a large portion of Fordyce St, repaved and numerous potholes fixed around town. New street and traffic signs were replaced. We still have work to do on drainage issues and repairs to roads affected by farm trucks.

Mosquito spraying-This year, we are eliminating mosquito spraying outside the city limits of Keo. This will help keep costs down. You will notice on your January bill, that arrives in February, the fee is removed from customers not on the spray route.

City Clean Up Event-In 2021, to Celebrate 501 (May 1st) we had sponsorship from First Electric Co-op for a dumpster. CAPDD Lonoke also provided an E-waste and tire recycling trailer. We are hopeful to make this annual event.

Internet-New equipment was installed by Aristotle, but I am receiving mixed feedback on the quality of service/support. Centurylink also remains an option. The areas served by First Electric Co-op can now receive fiber optic internet. We are continuing to work with Connect2First and Judge Erwin to provide their internet service as an option to our entire community.

Parks-The city has been awarded a \$75,000 FUN Park grant, by AR State Parks to build a new playground and refurbish the basketball court. The playground will be ADA compliant and have safer surface material. We want everyone to feel welcome, have a safe place to gather, play and enjoy the outdoors. Project expected to start this spring. The Veteran's Park has been thoroughly cleaned and paint touched up. New benches should be installed within the month.

Tornado Siren-The city has been awarded \$13,200 for an AR Rural Community 50/50 matching grant to purchase a new tornado siren. The equipment has been ordered.

Communication-We have a new website for our city www.keoar.com. You can subscribe to get email and/or text alerts for water/sewer or emergency notifications. Visit the site and links to learn more about current events, local businesses, Keo's history, or pay your water bill online. Additionally, the NextDoor app is useful for notifications, concerns/questions and for sale items. There are options to view just Keo or to include the surrounding areas. Approved council minutes continue to be published in the England Democrat and will be uploaded to www.keoar.com also.

Keo Volunteer Fire Department-The FD meets and practices every other Thursday night at 7pm. There are 8 volunteers presently and only a few that live in Keo. They are always looking for volunteers. Chief Martin would like to remind everyone to remain safe and alert when burning leaves and limbs. For all emergency matters, dial 911 to have your call dispatched to the appropriate service.

Trash Service-ZTS/Zella's is our garbage collection provider. Their trucks serve this area each Wednesday, unless it is a holiday week. The city is working with ZTS to provide a large rolling can to each household, at no additional cost. More to come. Recycling of plastic and metal is available in England at the end of the skate park.

City of Keo-Keo City Council has 5 seats, recorder/treasurer and mayor. Council Members include: Jerry Morton (501-590-2977), David Lanehart (501-658-2144), Ty Tolbert-Johnson (501-285-0370), Lynda Staton (870-674-8888), Chris Collins (501-407-6543), Recorder/Treasurer Clara Hughes (501-842-0100) and Mayor Stephanie White (501-285-5051). The city council meets on the 4th Monday, each month at 7pm. The next meeting is Monday, February 28, 2022. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend. Your feedback is valued. Keo Water & Sewer is open M-W-F 0800-1200 and can be reached at 501-842-0100 for billing or service questions. Chris Collins is the water/wastewater operator and can be reached at 501-407-6543 for leak reporting or water quality concerns. Constable Tim Collins can be reached at 501-786-2140 for assistance with non-emergent matters. We have several local businesses and restaurant, please consider supporting them by eating and making purchases close to home.

We want to continue to work to improve the quality of life and services offered in Keo, so that all may want to live, thrive, raise families, grow old and do business in Keo. As well, we are a diverse and inclusive community where all are welcome. If you have ideas to make Keo even better, questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to call, text or email me. I can be reached at **501-285-5051** or **keomayor@gmail.com**. I remain committed to working hard for our community and feel honored for this opportunity to lead and serve.

All my best,

Stephanie White
Mayor of Keo