

AS WE DRAW THE YEAR TO A CLOSE

by Dave Earling

Phew! We are about to close-out a very busy year. For me, it has been fast forward the entire time. That is not a complaint, merely a reflection of the pace we have maintained. Because of my 12 years on the Council, I thought I had a pretty good handle on what the pace of the Mayor's office would be, and I was close. My major miss was thinking there would be occasional "lulls" in the schedule, on that point I was wrong! The last lull was between Christmas and New Year, a year ago!

The difficult budget process is finished (kudos to the Council), several large public works and parks projects are completed (including Main Street), and we have settled all of our union negotiations. The two year process developing the strategic plan is almost ready to present to the Planning Board, Economic Development Commission and City Council. We have new owners of Old Milltown and the Antique Mall, and we have recruited new businesses to many of our several business areas.

City staff has been successful in assembling \$14M in grants which will bring new projects to improve our city, Sound Transit will be providing expanded parking for the Sounder Commuter Rail Service, and we will provide two major projects on Highway 99, including a beautification project in the International District and a major transportation improvement in the area of 228th and the Highway. If the legislature approves, we are very high on the "to be approved list" for a \$500,000 improvement to City Park.

Toward the end of the year, the Community Development Department brought Roger Brooks to Edmonds to speak. A Puget Sound resident, Mr. Brooks has gained an international reputation for giving communities creative ideas and invigorating "easy" to "complex" concepts and goals for cities to work toward. Mr. Brooks provided a number of potential solutions for ways in which, in the short-term, we can invigorate Edmonds specifically. With the above mentioned strategic plan moving forward, we can integrate his ideas and at the same time look to our city's long-term needs too.

Reaction was so positive from Mr. Brooks' first presentation among the business community, council and public, we will have him back during the first quarter of 2013. Also in 2013 we will implement a two year re-write of our City Code, begin a study of the SR 104 corridor and work on several legislative issues in Olympia... it will be a very busy first part of the year!

We all know Edmonds is a marvelous city with an excellent quality of life and high levels of community involvement. We have gained dramatic improvements in attracting quality small businesses to the city as well as a growing reputation as a quality arts community. The Edmonds School District has had dramatic improvement in test scores and the addition of Swedish/Edmonds has brought an uplifting shift in perception of our local health care. Yes, we have a marvelous community.

I look forward to working with the community to sustain these qualities and yet look to the future. But before we get there, I wish you and your family a joyous holiday season. It is a wonderful time to pause and reflect.