

Part II, Welcome to 2015!
Mayor Dave Earling

Okay so in my last column I let you know "it's always sunny and 82 in Edmonds". Since then I've had several comments made to me about my favorite Edmonds saying, all in good humor, some of which I could print... others, not so much! In that column I also recounted some of the challenges we will be addressing this year. Many, as you may recall, focused on escalating costs the city is facing – long-term funding issues.

As promised, this week I want to focus on some of the positive news we've had or anticipate this year.

With the improving economy and the hard work done in economic development, city revenues are stronger. For example; sales tax revenues were up in 2014 over 2013 by a little over \$500,000 and, with expanded construction, development-related revenues were also up nearly \$600,000. These are big numbers but as I mentioned in my previous column, our expenses also continue to rise. Even so, we do expect a continued strong economy in 2015.

Other upbeat news includes major projects from the Parks Department and Public Works. From Parks we will have the long-awaited spray pad completed at City Park and major construction will begin at the former Woodway High School to build soccer fields, walking trails and play areas. The project is funded through a partnership of the City, the Edmonds School District, the State of Washington and the Verdant Health Commission.

From Public Works and Engineering we will have some "unsexy" projects like water and sewer line replacement. And, with the round-a-bout completed, a new major project will begin on Highway 99 at 228th with safety improvements which will include a new east/west connector for our city.

Additionally, we will continue with the street resurfacing program we began last year after five years of lack of attention due to financial constraints; and we will also continue the Safe Routes to School sidewalk program with two new sidewalk installations.

Moving forward, staff will continue to seek funding in Olympia through a state transportation package for an alternatives analysis to resolve the long-term train/safety/access/ferry conflicts we face at Main and Dayton Streets. As part of that package we are also seeking \$10M to make long-term improvements to our two mile stretch of Highway 99.

On the communications front, we are upgrading and expanding our efforts to more effectively communicate with the public. Besides regular columns in MyEdmondsNews and The Beacon, and successful Town Hall and State of the City events, we have just launched a new Facebook Page <https://www.facebook.com/cityofedmonds?ref=hl> and are about to launch our new City website. We are also working with a consultant to find other new and efficient ways to get information to you. It will be a very busy year!

In closing, I want to invite you to my 2015 State of the City Speech on February 12th at the Edmonds Theater beginning at 8:30 a.m. We will have two guests on the program; Rick Steves, from Europe Through the Backdoor and Diana White, President of the Edmonds School Board. We will provide a snapshot of Edmonds as we prepare to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the founding of our city. I hope to see you there.