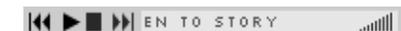




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Mayor: Big strides seen in San Jacinto



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By GAIL WESSON
The Press-Enterprise

Despite uncertain economic times elsewhere, Mayor Jim Ayres reported Thursday the city of San Jacinto remains on solid financial footing with the largest reserve in city history.

Sales tax revenue that has set records for six quarters in a row and a substantial list of transportation safety improvements from repaved streets to new sidewalks and traffic signals have been completed or are in the works, Ayres said.

"With the opening of three new shopping centers this past year, our sales revenue has reached new heights and all indications are that even in this gloomy economic time will continue" into 2009, he said.

The city is on track to reach \$2 million in sales tax revenue this year, which he called "a great step forward" for the city.

Ayres made his remarks at the annual State of the City dinner at the Assembly of God church in San Jacinto.

Among new developments, he mentioned the Ramona Crossing Commercial Center, a new Auto Zone on South San Jacinto Avenue and the Parkside Medical Clinic on Esplanade Avenue, which is almost finished.

The mayor also listed about \$17 million in transportation improvements that include 81 lane miles of repaving, seven miles of new sidewalks and 17 new signals completed in the past 24 months.

In the downtown area, signals, medians to limit turns and new sidewalks make foot traffic much safer among San Jacinto High School, Monte Vista Middle School and San Jacinto Elementary School along Ramona Boulevard, he said.

In the coming year, the city has plans for another \$40 million in work along the Ramona Expressway, more signals and sidewalks for downtown.

A 1,700-acre area christened the San Jacinto Gateway west of Sanderson Avenue along the Ramona Expressway presents another opportunity for economic development.

Zoned for commercial, offices and residential use, the site is at the cross hairs of the proposed Mid-County Parkway and realignment of Highway 79, Ayres said.

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