

As we enjoy our last few weeks of summer vacation and ready ourselves for a new school year to begin in our community, I wanted to take an opportunity to cover a few topics that might be of interest to our residents.

But first, I want to give a heartfelt thank you to all of the District 3 residents who hosted or attended a National Night Out Party on August 3rd. Because of you, District 3 had the most parties, with 18 total, of any district in the City. I am so proud of our constituency for understanding and embracing their role in preventing crime in their communities.

With the end of summer vacation comes the final part of our City's fiscal year, which runs from October 1st to September 30th. The City began its budget discussions back in April with our first budget workshop on April 26th. On June 21st, another workshop was held with a presentation by the City's CFO, Rebecca Sutton, and her staff. And on July 12th, a work session was held in order to give staff a chance to present ideas to the City Council for enhanced revenue generation in the form of some increased user fees. On July 26th, City Council voted on the proposed millage (tax) rate of 5.65 (\$5.65 per \$1,000 of taxable value), which is the same rate we have had in the City of Orlando for the past two years. And on August 16th, the Mayor will present his proposed budget to the Council for our consideration.

Our budget hearings will then take place at City Hall in the Council Chambers on Monday, September 13th at 5 p.m. and Monday, September 20th at 5 p.m. It is not until after the second hearing that the final vote for both the City's 2010-2011 budget and tax rate will be taken. With that in mind, please consider attending one or more of these meetings in order to provide your input. For more detailed information, please visit the Mayor's budget webpage at www.cityoforlando.net/budget.

It is my opinion that throughout these workshops and conversations about budgets, unfunded mandates, pensions, buyouts, fee increases, and constitutional amendments, the City must take a long and careful look at the big picture and make some difficult policy decisions on how dollars will be generated and spent here in the City of Orlando for the foreseeable future. Decisions made by policy makers 25 years ago are affecting the way that we do business today in the City of Orlando. Rather than continue the cycle of allowing our successors to deal with the ramifications of our actions, I am hopeful that we can make the difficult decisions now in order to protect our City's future, a City that will be my home and my family's home for many generations to come.

As we talk about the taxes you pay to the City of Orlando, I think it is also good to point out that for our City residents, your TRIM notice also includes the millage rates and the taxes levied not only by the City, but also by the School Board, Orange County, the Orange County Library System, and the St. John's River Water Management District. For example, on a home with a taxable value of \$150,000 in the City of Orlando for

2010, a resident is estimated to pay approximately \$1,150.00 to the Orange County School Board, \$850.00 to the City of Orlando, \$670.00 to Orange County, \$58.00 to the Orange County Library System and \$63.00 to the St. John's Water Management District. With this information, I encourage you to learn more about what services you receive from each of these entities and to share your comments and concerns with all of your elected officials before final budget votes are taken.

On a lighter note, if you are looking for some family-friendly culture before the busy fall season starts, check out "Knuffle Funny, the Art and Whimsy of Mo Willems," on display at the Orlando Museum of Art through August 29th. Willems, the creator of cartoons such as *Codename: Kids Next Door* as well as author and illustrator of children's books such as *Knuffle Bunny*, *A Cautionary Tale* is an artist that will engage all members of the family. For more information check out the museum's website at www.omart.org.

The Orlando Fire Department will be holding its next Citizen Fire Academy beginning September 1st, with a ten-week program designed to give our City residents a glimpse of all of the different aspects of what our firefighters accomplish on a daily basis. For more information, please contact their public relations division at 407-246-3128.

Also for the youth of our community, both the Orlando Fire Department and the Orlando Police Department have year-round explorer programs that give young adults a chance to learn the inner-workings of both of these challenging, but rewarding professions. For more information about the Fire Explorers, please contact Senior Adviser, Aaron Stover at aaron.stover@cityoforlando.net. And for the Police Explorers, please contact Officer Scott Daniels at scott.daniels@cityoforlando.net.

And speaking of our students, August 23rd begins the new school year for our Orange County public schools. Please remember to take extra precautions when driving during school hours as pedestrian and bicycle routes as well as school bus stop locations may have changed since last school year.

As always, thank you for support and I look forward to hearing your thoughts on our budget process moving forward.