

In one of the fall articles, I mentioned my hope for cooler weather and I think it is sufficient to say that in the beginning of 2010, I certainly got my wish!

While the cold weather was little more than an inconvenience to most of us, please note that due to the duration of the unusually cold temperatures in Central Florida, residents may observe fish kills in Orlando lakes and other waterways. The exotic fish species, blue tilapia, also known as “Nile Perch,” found in local lakes, can die when water temperatures drop into the 50s. Please contact the Stormwater Hotline at (407) 246-2370 if you notice this occurrence in any of our City lakes.

And if you haven’t already done so, please consider signing up for our City’s Lake Alert Program. Lake Alerts are e-mailed to you by our Streets and Stormwater Division and provide seasonal or localized warnings and updates for City of Orlando lakes. Here you will find information related to lakes where water quality is a concern, as in the case of a sanitary overflow or following an atypical rainfall. You can sign up to receive City-wide alerts or can specify a certain zip code in order to receive notices only pertaining to the lakes in your community. For more information about our City lakes, visit www.cityoforlando.net/lakealert.

Another way to receive up to date information about your City, its departments and programs, is to sign up for the Mayor’s City Academy. This program is held once a year in the spring. Participants meet every Thursday from 5:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. during the 10-week program, which begins March 18, 2010. For more information or to sign up, please visit www.cityoforlando.net or call 407-246-2169.

Or if you are interested in learning about the inner-workings of our Orlando Police Department, please sign up for their 50th Citizens Police Academy beginning March 23. Classes take place every Tuesday evening beginning at 6:30 p.m. for 14 weeks. This is truly a one-of-a-kind way to gain a better understanding of the role and responsibilities of the different divisions of our police force. For more information or for an application, please call 407-246-2461.

To hear the Mayor report on the past year in the City of Orlando and to find out what his goals and ideas are for the upcoming year and beyond, please join him for the Mayor’s State of the City address taking place on Thursday, February 18 at 10 a.m. here at City Hall (400 South Orange Avenue) in the Commission Chambers.

February also brings some fun, free events to the City and its residents. Please join us here at City Hall Plaza on Sunday, February 20 from 2 p – 10 p for the City’s annual Blues BQ featuring a live concert by rock/ blues great John Mayall and blues artist Shemekia Copeland, daughter of legendary blues guitarist Johnny Clyde Copeland. And of course, great barbecue will also be

available for purchase from Porkie's Original Barbecue, Sonny's Real Pit Barbecue and newcomer Four Rivers Smokehouse. Also, February brings us ArtsFest 2010, coordinated by United Arts of Central Florida. From February 5-14, enjoy 205 free events taking place in 75 venues across 4 counties. For more information as well as a schedule of events and locations, visit www.unitedarts.cc.

Someone once said that, 'when you look at a city, it's like reading the hopes, aspirations and pride of everyone who built it.' Thank you for your continued contributions to building up our great community and for the opportunity to serve as your city commissioner- it is truly an honor that I never take for granted.