

Dear Citizens,

I would like to take this opportunity to give you, the taxpayer, an update on the City's recent fiscal responsibilities. While our budget has increased, we were able to decrease the levy for the City of Gretna by almost 3%. With the valuation increases throughout the metro and the incremental growth, the valuation of our community has increased. That said we were able to lower our levy for the first time in 13 years, keeping the city of Gretna the second lowest levy of all cities in Sarpy County, slightly lower is the city of Papillion.

Previous Gretna administrations have always been very fiscally responsible, as noted by outside financial firms and our strong rating by Standard's & Poor. We will continue this focus of doing things efficiently, within our means and respecting the citizen's tax dollars. Another important note is we continue to diversify our tax revenue with an increased sales tax base driven by the newly annexed areas especially along the I-80 corridor. A portion of this revenue comes from outside of Gretna and this allows us to not rely as much on property tax from our citizens. Our property tax revenue is only around 25% of all our revenue. As a percent, the city of Gretna's portion is just under 20% of the full levy amount.

The challenges in our community is the growth of the infrastructure and capital outlays required with servicing the newly annexed areas. While we do have a larger valuation, quite a bit of the acquired infrastructure was in need of repairs or replacement. Like all households have experienced, the cost to run a community has increased as well. While we would like to keep the budget the same amount, we need to pay our employees fair wages, the cost of infrastructure has risen quickly, inflation has effected everyone and government is no exception.

Important to note, a number of the newly annexed residents may see an increase in their tax amount from the previous year. That's not because the City's taxes are higher than the SID's they were in. When Sarpy County contested the Nebraska Supreme Court's ruling, it pushed the ruling past the date needed for the annexed areas to be placed in Gretna's taxable area. The short story is last year citizen's in SID's did not pay their SID rate or the city of Gretna's. Generally the city's levy rate is about half of most of the SID's. This was challenging as the city took over servicing all these newly annexed areas, without any of this property tax revenue to do so.

Going forward we will continue to be fiscally conservative, leverage our location on the I-80 corridor and while increasing our quality of life, growing our community, doing so within our means.

Sincerely,

Mayor Mike Evans

