

2016 City of Sidney Calendars Ready for Citizen Pick-Up

By Mike Barhorst

Since 1976 – the year of this Nation’s Bicentennial – the City of Sidney has produced and distributed an annual calendar. In those early years, it took the form of an annual report. In later years, the calendar had an annual theme.

I am delighted to report that the City’s 2016 annual calendar is printed and ready for distribution. This calendar is a continuing effort by the City Council and our Staff to provide residents with relative happenings and the dates of important events within the community.

In the early years, the calendar was mailed to every household within the City limits. With the onset of the Great Recession, Council discussed abandoning the calendar, but ultimately decided to retain the calendar and simply save the cost of mailing – the greatest portion of the cost of producing the calendar.

Due to continuing budget constraints, this year's calendar will once again not be mailed directly to residents, but rather available for pick up at various locations throughout the community. Those locations include:

- Fire Station # 1
- Police Department
- Municipal Court
- Service Center
- Shelby Public Transit
- City Hall Revenue Collections Office
- Senior Center
- Amos Memorial Public Library

Once supplies at these locations are exhausted, additional calendars will be available while supplies last at City Hall. We typically print 5,000 calendars, but the number dwindles quickly.

In addition to holidays, other important dates are also noted within the City calendar. Information about meetings of City Council as well as the numerous City Boards and Commissions that hold regularly scheduled meetings are all included within the calendar.

The calendar also notes winter yard waste pick-up dates as well as any changes in solid waste collection routes due to holidays. New to the calendar this year are the dates for both the spring and fall mulch giveaways – an event that has proven popular for residents.

At the time idea of the calendar was conceived, it was the responsibility of City Clerk Jocele Fahnstock. Jocele left the Clerk’s position the very next year, and the task was assumed by the individual in the Assistant City Manager’s position. When Jocele returned as City Clerk in 1994, she resumed production of the calendar, and it has remained the responsibility of the City Clerk since.

The Clerk has, of course, enlisted the assistance of other members of the staff who have expertise in the topic(s) being explored in the calendar. The calendar being distributed this year is the inaugural effort of current City Clerk Kari Egbert. Because of the calendar’s production schedule, former City Clerk Joyce Goubeaux had completed most of last year’s calendar prior to retiring from office.

The theme of the calendar this year is financial transparency. The City of Sidney has long been recognized by the Auditor of State’s Office and the Government Finance Officers Association for “excellence in financial reporting”.

In addition to the recognition from the State Auditor’s Office, the City has, for the last 17 consecutive years, received the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) their *Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting*. The GFOA has also awarded the City of Sidney their *Distinguished Budget Presentation Award* for the past 18 consecutive years.

Interestingly, only 24 such awards were presented last year, with only 16 of those presented to municipalities. The remainder were presented to colleges and universities.

Taxpayers have a right to be skeptical. Governmental agencies are not always as forth-coming and as transparent as they should, and indeed, need to be. Local citizens can rest assured that the City of Sidney is well-managed, and utilizes outside agencies whenever practicable to review our practices and recommend changes. In the case of the above cited commendations, our Finance Department has often been used as a model for other communities.

I trust that you will find the information contained in this year's calendar both informative and helpful to your understanding of City operations. As always, should you have any questions about City operations – financial or otherwise – do not hesitate to contact your City Council representative or the pertinent member of the City staff.