

## **Kenny Howell**

*Managing Editor*

Mt. Juliet Mayor Ed Hagerty stopped by the Mt. Juliet Chamber of Commerce luncheon Wednesday to praise the city's successes, and look forward to the future.

"We can make 2014 an even better year," said Hagerty.

One of the reasons Hagerty says the future looks bright is the possibility of corporate offices being relocated to Mt. Juliet. Hagerty said there are currently two Fortune 100 companies looking to open offices in Mt. Juliet.

"We are going to reel in one or both," said Hagerty.

Hagerty went over the future development of Providence Central and what it will mean for the community. It will possibly bring corporate offices, more retail, more rooftops and a new interstate interchange at I-40 and Central Pike.

Hagerty went over some of the achievements in growth the city has seen over the past year, with nearly 400 housing permits issued, and nearly 250 business licenses issued in 2013.

Sales tax revenue in the city has increased every month over the previous year for four straight years.

Hagerty broke down how the revenue is used, and praised the city for their expenditures, which just has 5.4 percent of debt service.

Hagerty praised the Mt. Juliet Police Department, which holds a 52.9 percent solvability rate. The city also saw a drop in automobile accidents and drug arrests in 2013.

Hagerty talked about the new police department building, which will be located on Charlie Daniels Parkway. It will give the MJPD much more room, and will free up space in the existing City Hall so more departments can be housed in the existing building.

“We will gain effectiveness by getting these under one roof,” said Hagerty.

The amount of property tax collected for 2013-2014 should be 1.48 million, which will all go for the emergency services fund and the Fire Department of Mt. Juliet.

Since opening in September of 2013, the Fire Department of Mt. Juliet responded to around 300 calls. Hagerty said to expect a north side station sometime in 2014-15.

Hagerty praised the expansion of walking trails throughout the city, including the expansion of the Town Center Trail, which will run from Willoughby Station to the train station, and tie into the sidewalks along N. Mt. Juliet Road.

Also a big addition to the Parks system will be 12 acres at the corner of N. Mt. Juliet Road and Old Lebanon Dirt Road. Part of the land will be developed, and will include the offices of The Chronicle of Mt. Juliet and Robinson Properties, as well as other office and retail space. The

other 12 acres will have walking trails, an event landing, an observation deck, a boardwalk, picnic area, an exercise station, and a pavillion.

Hagerty went over the important Public Capital Work Projects that will be ongoing in 2014. The Eastern Connector will continue to be built, and will run from the Beckwith exit on I-40, all the way to Lebanon Road. There will be signal improvements in the Providence area to help traffic move smoother through the area. There will also be lots of improvements to the sewer system in the area to help keep up with growth.

Hagerty then turned his attention to Lifestyle Communities, the new development geared toward young professionals being built in Providence. Hagerty said it captures a key demographic that Mt. Juliet desperately needs.

“We can’t be a city of empty nesters,” said Hagerty.

He said it gives people 25-35, a campus like feel that will give them a place in Mt. Juliet to live before they might buy a single family home and start a family in Mt. Juliet. The development will have an onsite restaurant and many other amenities.

Hagerty closed by giving a look at some businesses that will be coming to Mt. Juliet in 2014 like Gander Mountain, The Body Shop, Tire Discounters and Ascend Federal Credit Union. Large employers like CEVA Logistics and Hollister will bring many jobs to the area, around 1,000 for just CEVA alone. He also talked about the continuing effort to develop the downtown district, which includes business development and beautification in the area.

“It’s you that have put this city in high demand,” Hagerty told the business leaders and citizens in attendance.