



# KEISER NEWS

# 2025

## "Small town, big heart - that's Keiser!"

January Newsletter

Vol 21

### FROM MAYOR RICK CREECY

As I sit here reflecting on the accomplishments of 2024, I'm reminded of how far we've come—and how far we still need to go. Keiser is on the path of progress, but our work is far from finished. Over the past two years, we've submitted 63 grant applications and secured funding for 21 of them, totaling an impressive \$4.4 million. While this is a tremendous achievement, it's only part of what we need to accomplish the many projects we've planned to enhance life in Keiser for our residents.

One of the most significant steps forward in 2025 will be the start of replacing of our 51-year-old sewer system. This aging infrastructure has served the community for decades, but it's time to lay the foundation for a brighter, more sustainable future. This project is critical for our city's ability to grow and thrive. With the surge of jobs in Mississippi County, driven by the steel industry and the arrival of new companies, we want to ensure Keiser is well-positioned to capture some of this growth. This isn't just about infrastructure—it's about creating opportunities and building a community ready for the future.

We are also optimistic about resolving the long-standing drainage issues in the Circle. The \$500,000 grant we submitted for this purpose could finally bring relief to residents who have endured this problem for far too long. In addition, we are pursuing a \$250,000 grant to install a water aerator in our water system. This project will significantly improve water quality by removing iron, but it will take time to secure funding and implement the changes, with 2026 being the earliest we might see progress on this front.

At the heart of our community, the City Park will continue to transform in 2025. New playground equipment, funded by a \$100,000

state grant, will be installed early in the year, weather permitting. This addition will expand our park's recreational offerings and create a fun, safe space for children and families. The park bathrooms, which have been out of use for far too long, will be renovated and made functional once again, thanks to another recently awarded grant.

One of the most exciting additions to the park will be the new bike and walking track, scheduled for completion mid-year. This track will circle the park, providing a safe and enjoyable space for walking, jogging, and biking. While I was disappointed that we couldn't begin work on the fishing pond in 2024, I remain hopeful that 2025 will be the year this long-awaited project finally gets underway. To support the growing use of the park, I also plan to pursue funding for a 50x250-foot parking lot, ensuring visitors have better access to all the wonderful amenities we're adding.

Beyond infrastructure and recreation, our local economy is growing as well. A new diner is opening in Keiser, and I encourage all of us to support this new business. Small businesses are the backbone of our community, and by dining locally, we can keep more of our hard-earned dollars right here in town.

Looking back on 2024, it's clear that we've achieved a great deal, but there's so much more to look forward to in 2025. From improving our infrastructure to enhancing our community spaces and supporting local businesses, Keiser is moving in the right direction. I hope you'll join me in celebrating these milestones and embracing the exciting changes to come. Together, we're building a brighter, stronger future for Keiser. Keep an eye out—2025 promises to be an exciting and productive year for us all!

City Council meeting on the 3rd Monday of each month at 6:00 pm. All welcome.

Follow us on Facebook and at our website

Water bills due the 16th of each month. Late charges will be applied on the 17th and shutoff on the 27th unless the 27th is Friday.

Remember riding ATV's on city streets is a violation of state law and will be enforced.

Remember the city has a leash law. If you are walking your dog in the city limits they MUST be on a leash. No exceptions.

If you have not yet registered your dog or cat. Please come to City Hall and do so.

You can buy 40 gallon garbage bags at City Hall. There are 50 in a roll and the cost is \$10.00 per roll.

Home owners and contractors are required to notify city hall before any mechanical excavation can be done.

City Hall—870-526-2300  
**New City Hall Hours**  
Hours 8:00am to 4:45pm M-F  
Closed 12:00 to 1:00 for lunch

# 2024 Year in Review

As 2024 draws to a close, the City of Keiser proudly reflects on a year filled with progress, growth, and a deep commitment to enhancing the quality of life for its residents. Significant strides were made in addressing longstanding infrastructure challenges, including being awarded a \$3.2 million grant and a \$1.1 million loan to completely replace our 51-year-old sewer system. Additionally, the city secured a \$550,000 loan to begin work on this critical project, which includes a new lift station on Main Street. These efforts represent a phased and sustainable approach to revitalizing essential services.

Public safety saw remarkable advancements with the hiring of Police Chief Jerry Hamilton, whose leadership has strengthened trust and safety within Keiser. Officer Paul Borden joined the force as a second full-time officer, and a part-time officer was also hired to provide additional coverage. Our fire department also played a vital role, responding to emergencies on Interstate 55 and supporting neighboring rural communities with steadfast dedication.

Revitalization of the city park was another significant achievement. The new walking track and senior area, funded through grants, will soon feature exercise equipment, picnic tables, and park benches. These improvements are part of a broader vision that includes a new fishing pond, upgraded playground equipment, and a trail expected to open in 2025. These efforts reflect Keiser's commitment to creating recreational spaces where families can connect and thrive.

Keiser Library remained a cornerstone of community engagement, promoting literacy and lifelong learning through various initiatives. Events such as the Free Flu Shot Clinic highlighted the library's role in fostering wellness and providing essential services. These efforts reinforced the city's focus on

education and community well-being.

In 2024, the city also took significant steps to address housing needs and attract new residents. The annexation of 25 acres west of town will pave the way for new homes, while the demolition of the old school system will create space for a new subdivision on Main Street. These developments align with Keiser's long-term goal of increasing homeownership by 25% over the next decade.

Throughout the year, the city's community spirit shone brightly in events such as the Keiser Fall Festival, which brought residents together and showcased partnerships with local law enforcement. Small but impactful initiatives, like providing free blue dye tablets to detect water leaks, reflected Keiser's dedication to improving daily life for its residents.

While 2024 has been a year of tremendous accomplishments, the work is far from done. The coming year promises to build on this momentum, with plans to expand disaster preparedness, improve public safety, foster economic development, and continue enhancing public facilities. The vision for Keiser's future includes attracting new businesses, creating a thriving environment for families, and ensuring the city remains a vibrant and welcoming place to live.

As the city celebrates these achievements, heartfelt gratitude goes out to the staff, community volunteers, and residents who made them possible. Together, Keiser has demonstrated that by working as one, it can achieve great things. With optimism and determination, the city looks forward to another year of progress and opportunity.



## *Jerry Hamilton - Chief of Police*



## *Penny Wilbanks - Recorder/Financial Director*

From the outside, the city hall may look like a busy but orderly hub of civic activity. To a City Hall Coordinator/Treasurer, however, it's a balancing act. It's a mix of phone calls, emails, bill paying, payroll, and the list goes on. My role is to try and keep everyone happy. My job is to create a friendly atmosphere here in the office to make people feel welcome. My job is to keep the finances straight to the best of my ability. Also to keep good records. I don't do this on my own. I have great people I work with on a daily basis. We work together as a team to make everything go as smoothly as possible for the City of Keiser and it's citizens.

Each day begins with emails and phone calls; with a busy schedule to balance throughout the day. I must prioritize what's most important for the day.

In between phone calls and all the other tasks, I must also show a friendly face to the customers that come in to pay bills, or to buy trash bags. I'm learning new things every day. It's a never-ending process. Always

open to learning.

As the day winds down, I balance cash, record books, and make sure everything is completed for the day.

No two days are the same. I must switch back and forth from different tasks.

I must interact friendly with everyone I meet whether it be a customer, a council member or just a general person.

I must be precise in every avenue I take. The money must be right down to the penny. My numbers must be correctly entered.

Being a City Hall Coordinator/Treasurer is both challenging and rewarding. It's all about finding the balance between serving the public, supporting city leadership and keeping the machine of local government running efficiently. Behind every smooth council meeting, approved permit, or resolved neighborhood dispute is someone quietly ensuring that the gears of the city keep turning.

## Neal Brown—Director of Public Works

### **Keiser Public Works Department: A Year of Progress**

The Public Works Department has been hard at work this year making improvements throughout Keiser. Here are some of the highlights:

**New Lift Station at the Lagoon:** This new station has significantly improved the management of our sewer system, increasing efficiency and reliability.

**Double Pumps at All Stations:** All of our lift stations now have two pumps, providing crucial backup in case of failure and minimizing potential disruptions.

**New Park Equipment:** Our parks are now home to brand new equipment, making them more enjoyable for residents of all ages.

**Tree Planting:** We've added new trees to our community, enhancing our green spaces and providing shade and beauty.

**New Bridges:** Several bridges in Keiser have been replaced or upgraded, ensuring safe and reliable

travel for everyone.

While we're proud of the progress we've made, we're not done yet! Next year, we plan to continue our work on the sewer system and address some of the drainage issues that affect our town.

### **A Big Thank You**

None of these would have been possible without the dedication of our Public Works team and the leadership of Mayor Rick Creecy. We also want to thank all the residents who have provided feedback and support throughout the year. We're committed to making Keiser a great place to live, work, and play. We look forward to continuing to serve our community in the years to come.



## City Hall Hours



**Monday - Friday from 8:00 - 4:45**

**Closed for Lunch from 12:00 - 1:00**

**Happy New Year**



***City Hall Hours***



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**Closed for Lunch from 12:00 - 1:00**

## History of New Year's

The celebration of the New Year is a tradition that dates back thousands of years, rooted in history, culture, and human ingenuity. Across the globe, people mark the end of one year and the beginning of another with rituals that reflect the universal desire for renewal, hope, and new beginnings. The origins of New Year's celebrations can be traced to ancient Mesopotamia around 2000 BCE. The Babylonians celebrated the New Year during the vernal equinox in late March, a time symbolizing rebirth as spring began. Their festivities, known as **Akitu**, lasted 11 days and included rituals to honor the gods, reaffirm a king's divine mandate, or crown a new monarch. Similarly, ancient Egyptians linked the New Year to the annual flooding of the Nile, which brought fertility to the land, while the Chinese celebrated based on the lunar calendar with festivals to drive away evil spirits and bring good luck.

The date of the New Year as we know it today—January 1—was established by Roman emperor Julius Caesar in 46 BCE under the Julian calendar. This date honored Janus, the Roman god of beginnings and transitions, who was depicted with two faces looking to the past and future, embodying the spirit of reflection and forward-thinking. Romans marked the occasion by exchanging gifts, decorating their homes with laurel branches, and offering sacrifices to Janus. During the Middle Ages, however, January 1 fell out of favor in Europe as the Catholic Church tied New Year's Day to religious observances like Christmas or the Feast of the Annunciation. It wasn't until the adoption of the Gregorian calendar in 1582 by Pope Gregory XIII that January 1 was restored as the start of the year, a tradition that gradually spread worldwide.

Today, New Year's celebrations vary widely across cultures. In Spain, revelers eat 12 grapes at midnight, one for each chime of the clock, symbolizing luck for the year ahead. In Scotland, the Hogmanay festival features "first-footing," where the first visitor of the year brings symbolic gifts like coal, bread, and whisky to ensure prosperity. In Japan, **Ōmisoka** marks the end of the year with thorough house cleaning and a meal of **toshikoshi soba**, symbolizing

longevity. Meanwhile, the Chinese New Year, celebrated later in winter or early spring, features dragon dances, fireworks, and red decorations to usher in good fortune and prosperity.

In modern times, the New Year combines ancient customs with contemporary festivities. Fireworks illuminate the skies of major cities, from Sydney to New York, while millions participate in countdowns and symbolic traditions like toasting with champagne or making resolutions. The tradition of New Year's resolutions dates back to the Babylonians, who pledged to their gods to repay debts and return borrowed goods. Today, resolutions reflect personal aspirations, from improving health to learning new skills, offering individuals a fresh start.

At its core, the New Year is more than just a date on the calendar. It is a collective celebration of time's passage and humanity's hope for renewal. Whether through ancient rituals or modern fireworks, people have always sought to reflect on the past and welcome the future with optimism. As we prepare to ring in another year, we join a tradition that has endured for millennia—a testament to the resilience and hope of humanity. Here's to embracing the opportunities of the New Year, building on the lessons of the past, and stepping boldly into the future. Happy New Year!



# TAX Time is Coming Soon...

## As 2024 Comes to a Close: Preparing for 2025 Tax Season

As 2024 winds down, it's time to reflect on the year's accomplishments and turn our focus to the responsibilities ahead—including tax season. With 2025 just around the corner, preparing for State and Federal income tax filings should be on everyone's to-do list. Though filing taxes can sometimes feel like a chore, understanding the history behind our income tax system and taking proactive steps to prepare can make the process more manageable and even rewarding.

The history of income taxes in the United States is deeply rooted in our nation's development. The first federal income tax was introduced in 1861 to help fund the Civil War. Although this tax was repealed later, the groundwork had been laid for the system we know today. In 1913, the 16th Amendment was ratified, giving Congress the authority to levy a federal income tax. Since then, income taxes have become a cornerstone of funding for government programs, from infrastructure and education to defense and public health. State income taxes, introduced by individual states over the years, play an equally important role in funding local services.

As tax season approaches, here are some tips to help you prepare and make the filing process smoother:

### Start Early and Get Organized

Begin gathering all necessary documents, such as W-2s, 1099s, mortgage interest statements, and receipts for deductible expenses. Keeping everything in one place will save time and reduce stress when it's time to file.

### Review Last Year's Tax Return

Looking at your previous year's return can help you remember deductions or credits you claimed and identify any changes to your financial situation that might affect your taxes this year.

### Track Your Deductions and Credits

Many people overlook potential deductions and credits that could reduce their taxable income. Charitable donations, medical expenses, education costs, childcare expenses, and energy-efficient home improvements are just a few examples to consider.

### Stay Updated on Tax Law Changes

Tax laws can change from year to year, so it's important to stay informed about updates that could affect your filing. For example, changes to standard deduction amounts or new tax credits could impact your return.

## Maximize Retirement Contributions

Contributions to retirement accounts like IRAs or 401(k)s not only help secure your financial future but can also lower your taxable income.

## Consider Professional Assistance

If your financial situation is complex—such as owning a business, managing investments, or handling rental income—consulting a tax professional can ensure accuracy and maximize your refund.

## Explore Filing Options

Whether you file online, use tax software, or work with a tax professional, choose the method that best suits your needs. Filing electronically is often faster and more secure, and it allows for quicker processing of refunds.

## File Early and Avoid Penalties

Filing early has multiple benefits. It gives you time to correct errors, reduces the risk of identity theft, and provides peace of mind. If you owe taxes, filing early also gives you time to plan your payment.

## Prepare for Changes in State Taxes

Some states have introduced new tax credits or adjusted brackets. Make sure you're aware of any changes to state tax requirements to avoid surprises.

## Check Your Withholding for Next Year

After filing, take a moment to review your withholding amounts for 2025. Adjusting your W-4 now can help ensure you're not overpaying or underpaying taxes throughout the year.

Filing taxes is more than just a requirement—it's an opportunity to take stock of your finances and even identify ways to improve your financial health. By organizing your documents, staying informed about changes, and exploring deductions or credits, you can make the most of the process and avoid unnecessary stress.

As we say goodbye to 2024 and welcome 2025, let's take the time to prepare and ensure a smooth tax season ahead. With a little effort now, you can file your taxes with confidence and peace of mind, ready to take on the new year!



# Keeping Keiser Looking Good

A clean, organized, and well-maintained Keiser is more than just visually appealing—it is the foundation of a thriving, safe, and prosperous community. When our streets are tidy, our public spaces are inviting, and our homes are in good repair, it reflects the pride and dedication of Keiser’s residents. This care and effort foster a sense of unity and progress that benefits everyone who calls Keiser home.

Maintaining a clean and organized city enhances community pride and encourages residents to take an active role in preserving its charm. A well-kept town shows that its people value their environment, creating a positive atmosphere that inspires others to contribute. This pride in our community also makes Keiser more attractive to visitors and potential new residents, boosting its reputation as a welcoming and vibrant place to live.

Cleanliness and organization also promote public health and safety. Removing litter, managing waste effectively, and keeping public spaces free from hazards prevent pests, reduce pollution, and create a healthier environment. When homes are in good repair, issues like structural weaknesses, mold, or outdated systems are addressed, ensuring safer living conditions for all residents.

Economic benefits are another key advantage of a well-maintained Keiser. Clean, organized neighborhoods and

well-kept homes contribute to higher property values, which benefit homeowners directly and enhance the town’s economic appeal. These improvements attract businesses, investors, and visitors who support local development and create job opportunities. A thriving local economy ensures better resources and services for the entire community.

Keeping Keiser clean and in good repair also sets a positive example for future generations. When children see their families and neighbors caring for their surroundings, they learn values of responsibility, respect, and stewardship that will shape the city’s future. A well-maintained Keiser today ensures that it remains a great place to live for decades to come.

Finally, a clean and organized Keiser feels safer and more secure. Homes and public spaces in good condition deter criminal activity and signal that the community is vigilant and well cared for. This sense of security allows residents to feel confident and at ease in their environment.

By working together to keep Keiser clean, organized, and well-maintained, we create a thriving, healthy, and welcoming community. Let’s take pride in our city, ensuring it continues to grow and prosper for current and future generations.

## January 2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1 New Year’s Day	2	3	4 Nat'l. Spaghetti Day
5 Nat'l. Bird Day	6	7 National Bobblehead Day	8	9 Law Enforcement Appreciation Day	10	11 Nat'l Milk Day
12	13	14	15 National Hat Day	16 <b>Water Bill Due</b>	17	18
19 Nat'l. Popcorn Day	20 Inauguration Day Martin Luther King Jr.	21 Nat'l. Hug Day	22	23 Nat'l. Pie Day	24 <b>Council Meeting</b>	25
26 Nat'l Spouses Day	27 <b>Cutoff Date</b>	28 Data Privacy Day	29	30	31 Nat'l Hot Chocolate Day	



# City Fun Page

## New Year

D R H L H H M I D N I G H T W F P H V I  
D E E N Z I W A H J T F I R E W O R K S  
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First-footing	Firecrackers	Celebration
Resolutions	Prosperity	Reflection
Fireworks	Champagne	Countdown
Mistletoe	Ball-drop	Midnight
Parades	Parties	Grapes
Kisses	Envelopes	Cleaning
Toast	Noise	

### Contact Us

City Hall—870-526-2300 Email—[cityofkeiser@gmail.com](mailto:cityofkeiser@gmail.com) Mayor—[rjc.cityofkeiser@gmail.com](mailto:rjc.cityofkeiser@gmail.com)



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