

To the citizens of Chattahoochee Hills;

I wanted to share some quick thoughts on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the incorporation of our great City of Chattahoochee Hills.

It's an amazing story – one that's brought to you almost entirely by the hands of your neighbors – people who volunteered their time, energy and means to protect the unique landscape that is now our City.

We are truly blessed with natural beauty here – thousands upon thousands of acres of rural forest and farmlands, dotted with families both new and firmly rooted here, drawn and maintained by all that our city offers. We've seen everything around us – everything around Atlanta – slowly subsumed by suburban sprawl, and recognize that was likely to happen here as well. But we've intrepidly charted an alternate course, and it's starting to work.

It hasn't been easy, of course. We certainly don't fit the model of any city that I've ever seen, and in trying to break the mold for how development has always happened in the Atlanta Metro area, we've laid a firm foundation for a place that will always be beautiful and special.

But our greatest asset isn't the land that we're working so hard to protect – it's the people that have come together to do that work. I have never seen a place with the level and intensity of volunteerism that Chattahoochee Hills has. From our churches outreach programs, to our schools, our library and children's programming, our arts community, our parks and roadsides, our government – in so many ways and places – this community gives back and makes things happen. If it weren't for that activism, Chattahoochee Hills wouldn't exist. We had the conversations that shaped our unique development. We've sat through countless meetings and gone through the tireless committee research that led to our city status. We rallied to purchase our beautiful parks and fund our schools. It's all of those volunteers; those commissioners, committee members and elected officials – you – WE have made this place what it is.

And what an amazing place. In these 10 years, we've managed all of this, and we've managed it well. It's pretty phenomenal when you think about it. We stood up and equipped a fully operational Fire Department, Police Department, and Public Works Department – from scratch. We've taken over our Planning and Zoning, set up a Municipal Court, and equipped and staffed a City Hall – from the ground up.

And in spite of our incredibly limited tax base and financial resources, we've managed to turn around and stabilize our budget, and get all of the equipment needed to support our amazing staff in place. And we're constantly improving. We'll be paving more roads in the next 12 months than we have since the city's founding thanks to improved finances, along with the TSPLOST. Our new grader will have our gravel roads shipshape by the end of summer. Our parks, too, are amazing and constantly progressing, welcoming hundreds of residents every month. And soon, we'll have backup emergency medical transport – hour-long waits for an ambulance in an emergency should become a thing of the past.

Our zoning is working as well. The limited and controlled development that we have is a huge shot in the arm to our tax base, and disrupts a tiny portion of our land – especially when compared with traditional sprawling development that we see in cities and counties all around us. The path to most of our land being permanently preserved in its rural state – at least 70% or more – is clear and in sight. The fact that we are making it happen makes us totally unique in the Atlanta area, and everyone's quality of life will benefit as a result – that outcome alone makes all of the hard work worth it.

Of course, there is still much work to be done – many areas where we can improve. Your city government – elected officials and staff – are all committed to continuing that improvement, and grateful for your ongoing patience and support as we make it happen.

And as always, it will be a group effort – we couldn't do it without of the incredible community support we get! There are so many people that need to be thanked for their efforts in making this happen – but I don't possibly have enough space here to list them all. Suffice it to say, THANK YOU to all of you – to everyone who has had a hand in the creating and success of the City of Chattahoochee Hills, and continues to pitch in as we move forward. It's been an amazing ride these past 10 years, and we're committed to making the next 10 (and 100!) continually better for you. We can't do it without you!

Thanks again!

*Tom*

**Tom Reed – Mayor, Chattahoochee Hills GA, USA | +1.770.463.0100**