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From the Mayor's Desk

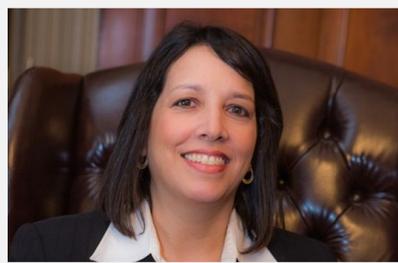


Photo Courtesy: John Andrews

Dear Friends,

I hope everyone is ready to enjoy time with family and friends this Thanksgiving week. As we enjoy this wonderful time of the year, I hope everyone remembers the less fortunate among us and helps out in anyway possible.

There are plenty of opportunities for charitable endeavors in Salem. One such initiative that we are undertaking is the shoebox campaign. We are asking residents and City workers to put together a box of toiletries in a shoebox or something similar. The box will be given to a Salem child in need.

Thanksgiving is also a big week for our Salem High

School Witches football team as they prepare for the 117th meeting against archrival Beverly. This year's game will be at Bertram Field here in

Salem. It would be great to have as much fan support as possible to root on the team, especially the seniors who will be playing in their last game.

I want to congratulate our three new City Councilors, Steve Lovely in Ward 3, Steve Dibble in Ward 7 and At-Large, Jerry Ryan. I'm also looking forward to continuing to work with City Councilors Robert McCarthy, Heather Famico, David Eppley, Josh Turiel, Beth Gerard, Arthur Sargent, Elaine Milo and Tom Furey. I'd like to thank Councilors William Legault and Todd Siegel for all their contributions to our City.

This month, the City Council passes the tax rate for the Fiscal year. Salem has been a fiscally responsible city over the past 10 years

and among communities on the North Shore, Salem has the second lowest average tax bill increase since 2005.

This year, the tax rate – \$15.67 for residential and \$29.55 for commercial – is well under the City's allowable levy capacity and is a reduction of 4.5% from last fiscal year's rate.

Because values are up, though, the average residential bill will change by about \$98.

It has been great to see the on-going rollout of the new trash and recycle toters. As is the case with all transitions, there have been some challenges at times, but the program has generally been with approval and is creating cleaner streets and sidewalks city-wide.

Have a wonderful and festive holiday and enjoy the short week!

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LED Lighting Coming to Salem

The City of Salem is in the process of replacing nearly 3,500 street-lights across the entire City with LED fixtures. These high-efficiency fixtures last longer than conventional ones and use far less energy. They also provide a cleaner and better light for public safety, drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

The City's contractor, Siemens, got started on the installations last week and they are expected to last for another three or four months, weather depending. Installation hours are from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., so you may see Siemens' bucket trucks on your street over the next couple of months. In all

they will have three to five trucks working in the City each day. This project will save tax dollars, improve public safety, and help reduce the City's overall carbon footprint.

Applying for a Board or Commission

Salem Mayor Kimberley Driscoll announced that her Administration is seeking interested applicants to fill vacancies on a number of City boards and commissions.

Those interested in being considered for a seat should fill out application form available at <http://www.salem.com/mayors-office/files/application-board-or-commission-appointment> and return it with an up-to-date resume to mayor@salem.com, by fax to 978-744-9327, or by mail to Office of the Mayor, Salem City Hall, 93 Washington Street, Salem MA 01970.

Additional details about these and all City boards are available online at <http://www.salem.com/boards>. The following boards and commissions have vacancies: Beautification Committee, Bicycle Advisory Committee, Board of Health, Conservation Commission and Council on Aging Board.

Working for You: Deb Jackson



Deb Jackson is in her 16th year as the Chief Assessor for the City of Salem.

A life-long resident of the North Shore, Jackson currently resides in Salem.

Jackson started working in the banking appraisal business before jumping over to the property side of the industry in municipal government.

“I was on the Board of Assessors. When the job came open, I happily took it,” said Jackson.

As the Chief Assessor, she works for the Board of Assessors to oversee all aspects of the department, including property valuations and helping to implement the tax rate.

“I like to say that our department is the ‘guardian of fairness.’ We want to treat all properties equitably across the board,” explained Jackson.

The role of the Assessor’s Department is a very important one in the City. Its day-to-day operations are somewhat the same from year to year, as Jackson pointed out.

“It is a cyclical job sometimes, updating photos and making sure databases are up to date.”

“Every year we analyze sales and assess sales ratios. It’s a statistics-driven field,” Jackson continued.

Jackson’s department is responsible for assessing residential and commercial properties.

“We make sure all exempt properties are properly assessed. There are all kinds of different properties. We compare sales analyze income and expenses among commercial properties,” said Jackson.

While the day-to-day aspect of the job can be tedious, Jackson said she takes great pride in helping residents.

“We manage elderly exemptions, working with the Council on Aging. We often help taxpayers who will come to us with questions,” said Jackson.

Under Jackson’s command is Assistant Director James Bond, Assistant Assessor Stephen Cortez and clerks Delinda Dell’Orfano and Gloria Felix.

“James and Stephen are relatively new to the field. Educating them and allowing them to gain experience to move up in the industry are two things that are very important to me in my role as their supervisor,” Jackson commented.

The Board of Assessor’s is a three-member board that meets weekly from January through April to review abatements. The Board meets throughout the year, working closely with Jackson to sign off on business decisions in the Assessor’s Department.

“In the end, it’s the Board who has the final vote. They have the authority,” said Jackson.

The three members are Richard Jagolta, Jr., Damian Johnson and Robert Millerick.

Minutes to the last meeting, Nov. 12, can be found at [http://www.salem.com/sites/salemma/files/minutes/assessors_meeting_minutes_nov_12_2015.pdf](http://www.salem.com/sites/www.salem.com/sites/salemma/files/minutes/assessors_meeting_minutes_nov_12_2015.pdf).

Santa's Arrival at the Hawthorne and Holiday Tree Lighting

Join Salem Main Streets and the City of Salem as we combine two of our most beloved annual traditions – Santa's Arrival and the lighting of Salem's Holiday Tree – into one evening. Santa Claus will arrive at the top of the Hawthorne Hotel (18 Washington Square W) promptly at 6:00 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 27, with assistance from the Salem Fire Department, of course. Bring the whole family out for carols, festivities, and fun!

Santa's arrival will be followed by a procession down the Essex Street Pedestrian Mall to Lappin Park (next to the Bewitched Statue at the intersection of Essex Street and Washington Street), where we will join Santa and Mayor Kimberley Driscoll for the Holiday Tree Lighting.

In addition, Salem Collective of Artists and Musicians (SCAM) is leading a project to make lanterns that will make our procession down the Essex Street Pedestrian Mall more festive. A free workshop will take place at the Salem Arts Center (179 Essex Street) on Sunday, Nov. 22 from 2 pm to 5 pm, so you can make your own lanterns in advance of the Tree Lighting! Workshop attendees are encouraged to bring clean, empty, clear (or translucent) 2-liter or half-gallon plastic bottles that can be "up-cycled" into handmade lanterns. Even if you can't make the workshop, please feel free to bring your own lanterns or lights from home for the tree lighting.

Salem Main Streets would like to thank the City of Salem, the Hawthorne Hotel, MeetingHouse Church, North Shore Marine, All Star Collision & Towing, the Salem Common Neighborhood Association, and the many other community partners who make these special events possible. Lights and decorations for the Holiday Tree were made possible by individual contributions and donations from a number of local businesses, including significant donations from Salem's October visitors.

For more information about any of these events, contact Kylie Sullivan, Salem Main Streets Executive Director, at (978)744-0004 or kylie@salemmainstreets.org, or visit <http://salemmainstreets.org/festivals/holiday-happenings/santa-arrives-in-salem/> and follow Salem Main Streets on Facebook and Twitter.

About Salem Main Streets

Salem Main Streets' mission is the continued revitalization of downtown Salem as a vibrant, year-round, retail, dining and cultural destination through business retention, recruitment, and the promotion of the downtown district. SMS produces and supports numerous community events and initiatives throughout the year, including the Salem Farmers' Market, Salem Arts Festival, Salem's So Sweet, and the October Information Booth. SMS operates thanks to the generosity and partnership of the City of Salem and Mayor Kimberley Driscoll, the Salem Chamber of Commerce, Destination Salem, and many other local business sponsors and community volunteers.