

Around Town

For Release 12 noon Wednesday, July 11, 2007

By Billy Ray McKelvy

De Queen Mayor

City employees use maps everyday, whether it is for locating addresses or looking up zoning classifications for permissible uses.

The city's main map is now in the process of being computerized. Jim von Tungeln of Urban Planning Associates in Little Rock, is in the process of digitizing a map which shows all city streets and subdivisions.

The city's most recent map was done by an engineering firm in the 1980's. In those days, maps were drawn by hand. When maps needed to be changed, a whole new map had to be drawn to make corrections.

Geographic information systems (GIS) software is being used to produce the new map. The software will allow layers to be added to the basic map to display different information. One layer can be used to show the city's land use zones. Another layer might be dedicated to closed streets and alleys or to show streets that are dedicated but never constructed.

The new map will be available in several formats, including wall maps, digital maps that can be e-mailed, viewed on a computer screen or printed on letter-size paper.

In the process, the creators of the new map will verify city limits lines to make sure they reflect any annexations and ensure they agree with center-line maps of state highways.

The first draft of the new map has been received and it is hoped that the project will be completed by the end of the year.

The new map will be more accurate because it reflects changes that have been made over the past 20 years. Once the map is digitized, it will be much easier to update in the future.