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County Commission honors Mayor R. Gerald Hethcoat



Before the start of the meeting, three mayors and a voter sat on one row. Seen here are (from left) current Williston Mayor R. Gerald Hethcoat, incoming Williston Mayor Jerry Robinson, Inglis Mayor Drinda Merritt and Levy County voter Renata Cannon.

Story, Photos and Video

By Jeff M. Hardison © March 21, 2018 at 4:28 p.m.

BRONSON –The four members of the Levy County Board of County Commissioners who were present for the regular meeting on Tuesday morning (March 20) honored outgoing Williston Mayor R. Gerald Hethcoat with short speeches and the presentation of a plaque.

https://youtu.be/eEy_Q8NjOug

In this video, Levy County Commissioner Matt Brooks shares some of his thoughts about why he respects and appreciates the work done by Williston Mayor R. Gerald Hethcoat.

County Commissioner Mike Joyner was unable to be present.

Mayor Hethcoat is retiring in April, after a long, honorable, positive and storied career in municipal politics.

Levy County Commission Chairman John Meeks opened the period for comments

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from the Commission about the mayor.

“We are here to honor a man who has given selflessly for 40 years of community service, and he is retiring,” Chairman Meeks said. “He’s still going to be around, and we know we can count on him.”

Meeks said he is sad to see the longtime mayor of Williston choose to retire.

Mayor Hethcoat always has been “the voice of reason” Meeks said he saw during his tenure on the County Commission. He half-jokingly mentioned that Williston (like every city) puts upon the County Commission that they are treated like “the red-headed stepchild.”

“We still are,” Mayor Hethcoat jokingly said in response.

Mayor Hethcoat also has served as the fire chief of that city, Meeks said, and he has been a mentor for many people and an excellent representative of that city.

County Commissioner Matt Brooks, who served with Mayor Hethcoat on the Williston City Council before Brooks was elected as a county commissioner, spoke next.

Commissioner Brooks said he knows the mayor prefers not to be recognized as he was happening Tuesday.

“If you look up in the dictionary of the word ‘public servant,’ there is probably a picture of the mayor next to it,” Brooks said.

Levy County Property Appraiser Oz Barker who was in the audience said “Amen.”

“He has always selflessly given of his time,” Brooks said. “

The mayor has organized the recognition in Williston the National Day or Prayer, Brooks said, adding that he has seen the mayor exemplify Christian practices that he holds true.

Hethcoat is a big supporter of veterans, Brooks said. The mayor organizes Veterans Day activities in Williston year after year.

Mayor Hethcoat helps organize many community events to bring together the residents and visitors of Williston, Brooks said.

Not only is Mayor Hethcoat a leader in Williston, Brooks said, but he is a leader in Levy County. And Hethcoat goes to Tallahassee, not just to speak with this area’s senators and representatives, but to share with neighboring districts information about Williston.

He makes sure other state leaders know where Levy County is and what the people of this area stand for, Brooks said.

County Commissioner Lilly Rooks said she feels that Mayor Hethcoat has been a great leader, and a wonderful friend.

“You continue to put the people first,” Rooks said.

She told the mayor “Thank you” for all that he has done over the past several decades.

County Commissioner Rock Meeks said he is thankful to the mayor for the times he helped him.

“When someone says ‘Williston’, Gerald Hethcoat is what comes to mind,” Commissioner Meeks said. “I mean, without a doubt, I thank you for your leadership and your Christian values.”

The mayor shared with the County Commission that he thanks the county leaders for the plaque.

When Mayor Hethcoat does something for the people of Williston or for the people of Levy County, he said, he is “... not doing it for publicity or for honor or glory.”

Instead, Hethcoat is doing it because it is something he sees that needs to be done for

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people.

Almost within the same breath when he said “Thank you” for the plaque and recognition, the mayor asked the County Commission for a favor for the people of Williston.

On Saturday (March 24), the city of Williston is having a clean-up day. The mayor asked the county to waive the tipping fee at the solid waste transfer station (the dump). The County Commission approved hearing a non-agenda item.

On a motion by Commissioner Brooks, seconded by Commissioner Rooks, the county agreed 4-0 to waive tipping fees for the clean-up of Williston on Saturday.