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City of Branson

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City to begin spring Citizens Academy March 22

Classes give citizens insight into city government

Branson residents can learn more about the workings of city government, its projects and its goals by signing up for the next Citizens Academy. Classes begin Monday evening, March 22, and citizens can begin registering now.

The Academy is an eight-week session designed to provide citizens with a close up view of all facets of city government – from emergency services and transportation to the business of water and budgeting your tax dollars.

The Academy is set to begin Monday, March 22 at Branson City Hall and continue each Monday night through May 3. The sessions will run from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. The eighth and final session will be on Tuesday, May 11, which is a regular Board of Aldermen meeting, and the participants will be recognized by the Mayor and Board for graduation from the Academy.

Branson Public Information Director Jerry Adams said the city conducts a Citizens Academy each spring and fall. Classes are limited to 15 participants, and there is no cost.

"The idea is to give citizens a behind-the-scenes look at city services, and an opportunity to interact with the employees who deliver those services," said Adams. "We hope it results in greater awareness of how those services work and how the functions of city government impacts their daily lives."

Putting on heavy fire clothing and holding a fire hose will help the participants understand how much strength and endurance a firefighter needs to battle a blaze. Touring water and wastewater facilities helps citizens understand the technical expertise and the 24-hour monitoring required by public works employees. Seeing the city's environmental programs will let citizens understand the emphasis placed on protecting our land and water resources.

Past graduates of the Academy have high praise for the program.

It's been a tremendous experience," said Brooke Lewis of Branson.

Luise Bird commented that "This program was a great treasure."

Mindy Honey, a reporter for the Branson Tri-Lakes News, who went through the fall Academy said, "It was an eye-opening experience. The amount of work and activity that goes on, on a day-to-day basis, is incredible, and oftentimes goes completely unnoticed by residents."

To sign-up for the Citizens Academy starting March 22, contact Jerry Adams at Branson City Hall, 337-8526 or e-mail at jadams@bransonmo.gov. A schedule of the spring Academy is also on the city's website. On the home page, click Citizens Academy.