

## NITRO'S 2010 CALENDAR FEATURES RECOVERED VINTAGE CITY PHOTOS PICTURES NEARLY SENT TO GARBAGE DUMP IN 1960S

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In the mid-1960s, **Nitro** resident Kermit Thompson happened to be traveling past the old Eighth Street Grocery Store in **Nitro**, when he noticed a 55-gallon drum containing old, black-and-white photographs, sitting next to the store.

The grocery store was having some new shelving installed, and the owners were throwing out some items, including the photographs, some of which date back to the 1900s.

Thompson, then a salesman for Southern Supply Co., asked the store's owner if he could have the old photos. He was given permission and began to rummage around, retrieving as many of the photos as he could.

The photos show **Nitro** as it was in the 1900s, when it served as a munitions factory during World War I. The photos capture the daily lives of those who lived and worked in the town at that time.

Thompson held on to the photos and is now sharing a portion of his collection with **Nitro** residents. A selection of the pictures is displayed in the City of Nitro's 2010 calendar, which has been mailed to residents.

**Nitro** Mayor Rusty Casto knew about the photos and wanted to illustrate every month of the 2010 calendar with them.

"I called Kermit, and he graciously let me make copies of them and use them," Casto said.

The photos selected for the calendar show such scenes as women workers from "Plant C" participating in a parade in 1918 at the corner of 21st Street and Second Avenue.

A photo from 1910 shows students in a one-room schoolhouse at the top of 11th Street and Third Avenue. There is a shot of the old **Nitro** Motel as it burns to the ground on Sept. 12, 1928. The motel is where the present day First Presbyterian Church stands.

Thompson, who has always had an interest in Nitro's history, remembers the day when he spotted the old photos being discarded.

The owners of the Eighth Street grocery were installing new shelves and were apparently discarding some items they didn't think were important.

Thompson spied the photos lying on top of some rubbish in the barrel and asked for them.

The storeowner said, "Well, Ok, if you'll hurry, you can have those on top," Thompson said.

He didn't have long to harvest the photos, as the storeowner was anxious to take the debris to the city landfill. Many more were in the barrel, but the storeowner, who was in a hurry, told Thompson to leave.

"I retrieved about 50 of them," Thompson said.

Those 50 photos were near the top of the barrel, but there were many more that were not saved.

The grocery store owner "threw away a treasure trove, but thankfully, Kermit got a few of them for us," Casto said.

The photos depict **Nitro** residents engaged in sports, parades and other activities. It wasn't all about the manufacture of gunpowder.

"They had a lot of fun - it was a diversified place," Thompson said.

Casto chose the pictures to run in this year's calendar.

"Next year, I'll use the rest of them," Casto said.

This year's calendar is dedicated to the memory of "Nitro's No. 1 Fan," Eugene Booth. Booth, who had cerebral palsy, was a fixture at **Nitro** sports events. He died last August.

Each calendar also lists the days for trash pickup in different areas of town. The calendars also list city council members and their phone numbers and e-mail addresses.

Contact information for the police and fire departments are also listed in the calendars, as are numbers for various **Nitro** city departments. **Nitro** residents can also learn about what to do in emergencies by reading their calendars.

A history of the town is also included.