

# **STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS**



**Mayor Robert M. Eschbach**

**October 19, 2017**

## **STATE OF THE CITY**

**October 19, 2017**

### **Introduction**

Thank you all and thank you to the Ottawa Area Chamber for hosting this State of the City event. The Mayor has a statutory obligation to report on the State of the City annually, and I use this gathering to fulfill that obligation.

It would be impossible to report on the last twelve months of happenings in Ottawa without addressing the tornado of February 28, 2017. As so, I am going to talk about that in some detail, and abbreviate much of what I typically address.

### **The Tornado**

On Tuesday, February 28, 2017 at 4:41 p.m., an EF-3 tornado touched down in an area just west of Buffalo Rock State Park. The first area of significant damage was around the LaSalle County nursing home and the LaSalle County highway department, which was essentially flattened. The tornado continued into Naplate producing widespread damage to dozens of homes. Moving south and east it struck the Pilkington glass factory destroying a 400,000 square foot portion of that facility. The tornado crossed the Illinois River and moved through the south side of Ottawa causing widespread damage to businesses and homes. The tornado then again crossed the Illinois River and destroyed several homes along Canal Road and downed 31 power poles in that area. As it exited Ottawa it dissipated in an area northwest of Marseilles. The tornado's path was 11.5 miles long and 800 yards wide, with winds as high as 155 mph. It ended 18 minutes after it touched down, at 4:59 p.m.

### **The Relief and Response Effort**

In the immediate aftermath, our first responders performed flawlessly. In a matter of minutes the police had secured the affected area. More than 60 officers from over 20 different agencies responded. There was no theft or looting and contractor fraud was virtually eliminated. 21 Fire departments, 2 Technical Rescue Teams, 130 Firefighters, 18 Ambulances, 30 Paramedics/EMTs, MABAS Division 25 IMAT team, 5 MABAS Light Towers were deployed that evening. The fire department deployed on foot, and by midnight had performed search and rescue for every household in the area. They effected dozens of rescues as people were trapped in automobiles and buildings. Sadly, two people died and

## STATE OF THE CITY

October 19, 2017

dozens were injured. After viewing the damage, I could not believe there weren't more injuries.

It was impossible to navigate the streets with downed power lines, trees and building debris. That evening and into the early morning hours all efforts were focused on clearing the streets. A massive mutual aid effort by the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS), Illinois Public Works Mutual Aid Network (IPWAN), and the Illinois Law Enforcement Alarm System (ILEAS), allowed our city to confront and resolve the multitude of problems in the immediate aftermath of this disaster. Thank you to all those who unselfishly gave of their time.

Remarkably, by Wednesday late in the day, the streets were passable. Ameren deployed 450 crews with all equipment. By Friday almost all the power was restored.

The aid we received is a result of our membership in IPWMAN (Illinois Public Works Mutual Aid Network) was amazing. Our Public Works Director, Gary Scott received a call offering aid within minutes of the event, and crews and equipment from four agencies were in Ottawa by 9:00 p.m. that evening. By the second day, six agencies were on the ground with three tree crews, with chippers, two aerial trucks and nine dump trucks.

In the end, over 13 days, mutual aid provided 3,238 man hours with equipment utilization valued at over \$154,000.

The initial estimate of residential units affected was around 500 buildings. Since the storm our building department has issued about 1000 storm related building permits. There was significant damage outside the path of the tornado, mostly from hail and strong winds. This does not include Pilkington's loss. Pet Smart lost a 1,000,000 square foot roof to hail damage. As of today we are tracking about \$38.5 million in storm related damage.

Last year, I was pleased to highlight the major commitment to Ottawa of Pilkington with its \$25 million investment in a new replacement batch plant.

I want to again focus on Pilkington for a moment. As we all know, the Pilkington plant was badly damaged by the tornado in February. It is hoping to be back in full production by mid-December. In addition to the necessary extensive tornado repairs, the company has also expedited the planned rebuild of the melting furnace while updating ancillary process equipment – both additional major investments. Yet, despite being out of production for nearly

## **STATE OF THE CITY**

**October 19, 2017**

nine months, Pilkington has not laid off a single employee. Not one! I am proud to recognize Pilkington as a truly outstanding Ottawa corporate citizen.

During the aftermath of the immediate recovery, the American Institute of Architects, deployed teams of engineers and architects to assist our building department with damage assessments. Inside of three days, they evaluated more than 200 seriously damaged buildings. Shortly after, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources deployed their Urban Forestry Strike Team to assist in evaluating the damage to our urban tree canopy. They have since forwarded a very detailed report with recommendations that our city will benefit from as we continue our long term recovery. Both organizations had participated with recovery efforts after the Coal City, Washington & Rochelle tornados, and both noted how well Ottawa responded and recovered, in comparison to other communities.

### **The Recovery Process**

As the long term recovery moves forward, I am pleased and proud of how this community shouldered such a catastrophic loss. There are so many instances of people helping people and generosity towards those less fortunate.

Within days, and with the assistance of the staff at North Central Illinois Council of Governments and the Ottawa Chamber, a crisis hotline was set up and arrangements made to use the former WalMart building as a donation center and Multi-Agency Resource Center (MARC). Initially 331 requests for assistance following the tornado were received. The needs of at least half of those cases were met by one or more of the dozens of volunteer service organizations that arrived in Ottawa and Naplate, some the same night, some in the days following the tornado, such as Team Rubicon, Disaster Relief Service Initiation (DRSI), American Red Cross, Salvation Army and numerous religious affiliated organizations.

The community quickly rose to the task of providing monetary support to tornado victims. Individuals and agencies have raised over \$300,000. The funds are being administered through the Starved Rock Country Community Foundation. A special Funders Forum committee was appointed by Mayor Rick and me. That committee reviews all claims and recommends disbursements to those in need. To date approximately \$117,000 has been approved for payment to those truly in need.

## STATE OF THE CITY

October 19, 2017

The LTRG Group meets weekly, case managers are still working with homeowners and submitting cases for approval for payment to the Funder's Forum. The Starved Rock Country Community Foundation releases payment within 24-48 hours of notification of payment approval. There is approximately \$183,000 remaining in the fund. Donations are still needed as there are several large requests for assistance still pending.

The Long Term Recovery Group continues to work to provide needed services and funding for Ottawa and Naplate residents in need.

### Camp Noah

Camp Noah was put on in August through the LTRG to aid children in the area who were affected and even traumatized by the tornado. The camp, with materials provided by Lutheran Social Services, was five days long and taught children how to acknowledge their fears and implement strategies and then given storm preparation backpacks to help them face those fears in the future. We had confirmation that the camp was successful on day five when one of the kindergarten children stood up to inform the class that he had used his backpack to get his family into their safe space during a severe storm which took place on the evening of day 4. The camp was a huge success and would not have been possible without the many volunteers who donated a week of their time to help these children know they are safe at home and in their community.

There were some silver linings, so to speak, that followed the tornado. Many homes ended up in better condition than before the tornado. There are some beautiful brand new homes now under construction. And at the UAW Center on the south side a new bigger and better hotel is rising where the older motel-type building was destroyed.

Also, as a result of the IDNR Strike Teams work, which I mentioned earlier, the City has received two grants to replace lost trees in the tornado areas. The first is \$5,000 from Trees Forever, and the second is for \$14,000 from the Morten Arboretum. I am very pleased to have the opportunity today to announce a major Ottawa tornado relief grant from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. This grant of \$534,000 will allow the City to repair its many streets damaged by the tornado. City staff and Kevin Lindeman at the North Central Illinois Council of Governments deserve a good deal of credit for helping with the application process. However, a huge amount of credit for this grant must go to Jeff Torricelli,

**STATE OF THE CITY**  
**October 19, 2017**

the City's Springfield lobbyist and consultant, who began making Ottawa's case for funding to the State on the very morning after the tornado hit.

So much more can be said about how this community came together in response to this tragic event. Unlike my past addresses, I'm not mentioning a list of names today, because there too many. Suffice it to say I am very grateful for, and proud of, all of our City employees, our neighboring communities, and our citizens who rose to the occasion and continue to do so. Thank you to all.

**CITY OF OTTAWA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS**

**Overview of Business Community Economic Progress**

The City of Ottawa continues to pursue its aggressive and diversified three pronged approach to attracting new business and new jobs. We focus on the following three general areas:

- A. The Ottawa Industrial Park and the areas set aside for industrial and distribution growth on the north side of Ottawa.
- B. Retail and hospitality growth on the north side with special focus on the Interstate 80 and Norris Drive corridors.
- C. Downtown Ottawa

**Ottawa Industrial Park**

The Ottawa Industrial Park on east Route 6 continues to be one of the most attractive industrial parks in the State of Illinois. Efforts to market the park will be supported by a new economic development website now under construction and the quickly growing marketing ability of the North Central Illinois Economic Development Corporation. Only a year old, the NCIEDC has a dynamic new website of its own and is very aggressively marketing our region – Putnam, Bureau and LaSalle Counties – to site selectors and developers. I sit on the Board of this Corporation, representing the City. Because it is marketing the area and our industrial sites as never before, I encourage the Ottawa business community to seriously consider investing in this new corporation.

## STATE OF THE CITY

October 19, 2017

### Growth on North Side

Steady growth continues on the north side of Ottawa in the I-80 and Norris Drive corridors. Some of the growth highlights in this area include the following:

- **Gailey Eye Clinic** has opened a beautiful new facility with plenty of parking on West Stevenson Road.
- **Comfort Inn** has undergone a major facility upgrade and looks very nice.
- **Verizon's** new stand-alone retail store at Columbus and Etna Road is nearly complete.
- The **Dairy Queen Chill and Grill** opened earlier this summer to much fanfare.
- The new **CVS** store now under construction at Columbus and Norris Drive will bolster pharmaceutical competition in Ottawa.
- The rebuild of **McDonald's** on Norris Drive has gone very quickly. The new McDonald's should be open in about a week and will feature a more efficient drive-through pattern.
- Nearby is the new location of the **Family Video** store.

### Downtown Ottawa

The City's ongoing effort to preserve its historic commercial buildings and beautify the downtown continues to fuel rapid growth. Ottawa has truly become a regional destination for unique shopping and dining.

### Carson and Woolworth Buildings

We have some very exciting projects going on right now in downtown Ottawa. The major historic commercial building renovation project underway is the transformation of the former Carson's and Woolworth buildings into new retail, dining and event space by CL Enterprises. This \$5 million plus project will create thousands of square feet of retail or restaurant space on the ground floors of the Carson and Woolworth buildings. Some of this new space will open onto to Jackson Street across from Washington Square. The second floor of the Carson building will be transformed into 13,000 square feet of event space to be used for everything from wedding receptions to theater and other entertainment.

## **STATE OF THE CITY**

**October 19, 2017**

A wonderful aspect will be the opening of this space onto the roof of the adjacent Woolworth building which will feature perhaps a bar and café, along with roof-top gardens – all overlooking beautiful Washington Square. Interior demolition will soon be underway with completion scheduled for late summer of 2018.

In order to complement this exciting development, the City will be considering the transformation of the 100 block of Jackson Street which runs along the south edge of Washington Square into a festival plaza. This project will play a major role in attracting the visitors and tourists to the downtown which are the life blood of our new shops and restaurants.

### **Little City Site**

Another very exciting, million dollar plus project is the construction of a new building on the site of the former Little City building. In fact, I am very pleased today to be able to share the visual of this creative project. The three story building will feature retail and restaurant opportunities on the ground floor plus five or six very nice loft apartments on the second and third floors. While this architecture is not exactly the traditional Victorian, turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century type we are used to seeing in the downtown, it respects the neighboring buildings, is very attractive and makes a strong statement about downtown Ottawa's progressive spirit.

I am very pleased to have with us today the investors who are making both of these wonderful projects possible. Let me introduce Inga Carus, the "C" of CL Enterprises and her husband, Peter Limberger, the "L". Also with us are Nathan Watson, General Manager for Real Estate Development of CL Enterprises, who I know provides much of the inspiration and energy behind these projects.

Downtown beautification continues to move ahead with two major projects:

### **Streetscaping on Columbus Street**

The southern entrance to downtown Ottawa will be dramatically enhanced with the completion of the current streetscape project on Columbus Street from Main to Lafayette Streets. This project is funded largely with an \$800,000 grant and will feature more than twenty new trees, hundreds of beautiful perennial plants in sidewalk and 20 bump-out plant

**STATE OF THE CITY**  
**October 19, 2017**

beds, and the installation of historic period lights. Although this is an IDOT rather than City of Ottawa managed project, we are still hoping it will be completed soon.

**Canal Street Art Trail/Bike Path**

Running along Canal Street from Madison north to the I&M Canal Tow Path is the Canal Street Art Corridor. This seven block walking trail is under construction, with four blocks completed or nearly completed. It will be attractively landscaped and will feature a variety of pieces of public art. Already, it boasts a beautiful butterfly garden planted by Ottawa's Master Gardeners, as well as a display of architectural artifacts from the old St. Xavier school and convent that was demolished decade's years ago. Ultimately, this new trail will connect the Canal with the Illinois riverfront.

Another project of note is the development of the parking lot adjacent to the AT&T building in the 400 block of West Madison Street which is now being resurfaced and landscaped.

I am very pleased to be able to report the revitalization of the downtown continues to move forward with the attraction of these new businesses:

- **Rubenesque** -- a plus sized fashion boutique located on the southwest corner of LaSalle and Jefferson Streets seems to have found an under-represented niche in the Ottawa market.
- **A Mess of Things** – features at least a dozen vendors offering vintage, shabby chic, repurposed, recycled, home décor, clothes, accessories and many more items at the southeast corner of LaSalle and Jefferson.
- **Kristine's Shower** – local family business offers handmade, richly scented skin products such as bath bombs – in fact, I have been told this business has made by hand more than one million bath bombs during its existence. It is located at the southwest corner of LaSalle and Main Street and smells great.
- **Juniper & Mae/Milk Moustache** – very attractive and successful boutique and children's apparel store which has expanded from Princeton to Ottawa at 721 LaSalle Street.

## STATE OF THE CITY

October 19, 2017

- **Iconic** – boutique which has relocated to 617 LaSalle and expanded its offerings to include children’s apparel. Located in historic commercial building beautifully restored by Mike Godfrey.
- **Say I Do and More** – one stop shop for all event planning needs, especially weddings, offering affordable high quality photography, decorating and baking services. It is located on West Man Street next to Kristine’s Shower.
- **Downtown Nutrition** – promotes its mission of encouraging healthy lifestyles by offering delicious and nutritional shakes, teas, nutritional bars and more – located on the 200 block of W. Main Street.
- **Pink Chihuahua** – intriguing restaurant at the northeast corner of LaSalle and Madison Streets which prides itself on creating works of food art with tapas or small bites along with unique entrees of American, Spanish and European food.
- **Thymeless** – opening within weeks in the former Rowhouse restaurant – another beautifully renovated historic building. Will feature farmhouse, vintage and rustic décor items.
- **Heartland By Hand**—opening in the spring of 2018 at the southeast corner of Clinton and Main. Hank and Caroline Wolf, who have moved to Ottawa from the Chicago area, are putting in an incredible amount of time and money to beautifully restore this building which will feature a wide array of art related merchandise and services as well as new high quality downtown residential living on the second floor.

In addition to these new businesses, the **Tangled Roots Brewing Company** has taken a major expansion step by doubling its downtown brewing capacity, establishing a bottling operation in the Carson building and distributing its Ottawa-brewed craft beer across much of Illinois – including the Quad-Cities, Bloomington-Normal, Peoria and the western suburbs – even at the Norway Store in Norway, Illinois

Clearly, downtown Ottawa has become the heart and soul of our Ottawa community. The success, though, of its many unique shops and restaurants, depends heavily upon an ever increasing number of visitors and tourists. One of the most effective means of

**STATE OF THE CITY**  
**October 19, 2017**

attracting these new visitors is through festivals and celebrations. While our established festivals continue to do well, let me focus on a couple of newer ones:

- **Starved Rock Country Brewfest** – This brand new craft beer event was launched on the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend this year. It attracted more than 800 craft beer lovers, many from the Chicago area, who paid up to \$40 for admission tickets. They enjoyed 60 different craft beers produced by 30 breweries. The City was greatly assisted by a consultant who puts together many of the major craft beer festivals in the Chicago area.
  
- **Chris Kringle Market** -- Last year, I told you about plans for a new Chris Kringle Market which was held during the first weekend of December on Jackson Street next to Washington Square. Since this event proved to be a great success – even featuring some evening snowfall to add to the holiday ambiance - we are significantly expanding the event this year. It will be held Friday, Saturday and Sunday of both the first and second weekends of December. The number of unique vendors in traditional wooden huts has doubled to twenty. I want to thank the carpenters of Carpenters Local 195 Apprenticeship program and Illinois Valley Labor Management for stepping forward to donate their time and talent to construct ten new huts for this event.

An important part of the market will be its holiday atmosphere – unique handcrafted gifts and works of art, German and Mexican holiday foods and beverages, delicious baked goods, holiday season music, hot roasted chestnuts, wonderful decorations and new city light pole banners, thousands of lights, strolling carolers in period costume, horse drawn rides, reindeer and more. As the Chris Kringle Market continues to grow, I expect it to be the center piece of our efforts to make downtown Ottawa the best place throughout Starved Rock Country to shop for unique and special Christmas gifts. I invite everyone to encourage their family and friends to join us for a wonderful Holiday Season in downtown Ottawa.

## STATE OF THE CITY

October 19, 2017

A significant part of our downtown success is due to the improved appearance of many of the commercial buildings. Many of these improvements have been supported by the City's Façade Improvement Program. This program is funded by the downtown TIF and provides matching grants to building owners who are willing to invest in the improvement of the facades of their downtown commercial buildings.

The most recent example is the Buchner & O'Toole title company (photo) in the 200 block of Madison Street.

I am pleased to report that the downtown façade investments spurred by a partnership with the City has increased steadily from \$95,000 in 2014 – 2015 to \$310,000 in the current 2016 – 2017 time frame. Altogether, since the program's beginning, more than \$1 million dollars of improvements have been encouraged with a number of projects in the works.

### Tourism

Ottawa continues to benefit from steady growth in its tourist industry which is critically important to the success of especially our many downtown Ottawa shops and restaurants. Given Ottawa's position as the gateway to Starved Rock Country, its proximity to the Chicago area and status as a destination for unique shopping and dining, the case can easily be made for tourism to be Ottawa's fastest growing industry. This assumption is supported by the 2016 tourism economic impact in LaSalle County which show travelers to have spent \$189 million here which supports 1,400 jobs, provides \$36 million in payroll and generates \$3.76 million in LaSalle County local tax revenue.

### Ottawa Visitors Center

The Ottawa Visitors Centers plays a key role in promoting Ottawa tourism. It had some major accomplishments this year.

**State Tourism Awards** – The Visitor's Center was recognized at the Illinois Excellence In Tourism Awards Dinner for:

- Best Social Media Marketing for its live Facebook entries at the Riverfest.
- Best Tourism Marketing Campaign in the under \$500,000 budget category for its "Live Buffalo, No Bull" campaign

## STATE OF THE CITY

October 19, 2017

### **Travels with Darley coverage**

The “Travels With Darley” program is a popular travel show hosted by Darley Newman and viewed by millions of people on PBS television and on the web. In fact, her show is carried by 96% of the PBS channels in the United States. Thanks to the work of Curt Bedei, the OVC Executive Director, Darley brought her production team to Ottawa to film a segment about Ottawa for her show which aired in May of this year. Since May, via social media, video and travel websites, this “Ottawa and Beyond” episode has reached 52 million impressions – giving Ottawa major visibility.

Interestingly, at the Visitor’s Center inquiries about Ottawa from people who have just moved to Ottawa, or are in the process of moving or are considering Ottawa have significantly increased from just a couple per month to more than twenty per month. It is my understanding that similar inquiries at the Ottawa Chamber have also increased.

### **Reddick Mansion**

Perhaps more than ever, the Reddick Mansion with its beautiful grounds and growing number of sponsored events, is a popular tourism destination. It remains the crown jewel of Ottawa’s historic architectural heritage. I am very pleased to be able to say this year that after prolonged negotiations, the City of Ottawa and the Reddick Mansion Association reached a landmark agreement about the Mansion’s future. The City has transferred ownership of the Mansion to the Association. In return, the Association has agreed to move quickly to begin the effort to properly restore the Mansion’s exterior. The Association has lovingly restored and tended to the Mansion for decades. I know the Reddick Mansion Association will fully embrace its new role and continue this vital commitment for many years to come.

### **American Duchess**

I used this opportunity last year to announce the good news that Ottawa had been chosen as a stop for the *American Duchess* cruise ship. Unfortunately, the ship’s owner, the American Queen Steamboat Company was not able to complete its expansion from the Mississippi River to the Illinois River in time for the 2017 season. However, the Company is now marketing nine day St. Louis to Ottawa and Ottawa to St. Louis voyages for August of

## **STATE OF THE CITY**

**October 19, 2017**

2018. The trip to Ottawa begins with a stay at a boutique hotel in St. Louis and then a cruise to Alton, IL, Hannibal, MO, Havana, IL, and Peoria before reaching Ottawa. The reverse trip package actually begins with a stay at the Drake Hotel in Chicago. We appreciate this opportunity to introduce several hundred affluent visitors to downtown Ottawa.

### **Dayton Bluffs Nature Preserve**

Four years ago, The Conservation Foundation purchased 253 acres of farm and woodland between the Fox and Illinois Route 71 NE of Ottawa for conservation and native restoration purposes. Named the Dayton Bluffs Nature Preserve and including a full mile of Fox River shoreline, the City of Ottawa partnered with the Foundation to lease the Preserve for twenty years at a minimal rate and annexed the property to the City. The Foundation was to spend the first three years working aggressively to eliminate non-native species while pursuing native plant restoration.

This was an especially important year for the Preserve as in May the City of Ottawa officially took responsibility for its continued development. This development will be guided by a master plan which focuses on passive outdoor recreation developed in partnership with the Conservation Foundation. The creation of the plan featured much public involvement and was guided by Upland Design, a Chicago area company with great experience in conservation property planning.

I would like to especially commend the work of an incredible corps of Ottawa area volunteers under the leadership of Dr. Dave Manigold who have worked very hard to restore the Preserve and make it such a valuable resource for Ottawa and area residents. In particular, their work this year in restoring the pioneer cemetery – the final resting place of many very early settlers tragically killed by a cholera epidemic – has been absolutely outstanding.

### **America In Bloom**

For the past five years, Ottawa has been entered in the America In Bloom national competition and has done very well – receiving the top Five Bloom rating in all years except

## **STATE OF THE CITY**

### **October 19, 2017**

the first year of entry. Over the years, a number of top national awards have been received including special recognition for the Most Dynamic Transformation of a Downtown Streetscape.

The 2017 America In Bloom competition was especially successful as Ottawa not only won the national championship in its population category but also the national award across all population categories for Historic Preservation. Special recognition was also received for the Ottawa Is Blooming Committee's support of Project Unify at Central School which focuses on creating an environment for the inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities with the rest of the student body through gardening.

Ottawa's past competitive successes plus the awards won this year qualify us to now compete at the Circle of Champions level which will pit Ottawa against top cities across the nation in all population categories. The AIB judges this year were particularly impressed by Ottawa's determination to press forward with community improvements despite its great commitment to tornado relief and recovery.

Ottawa's participation in the America In Bloom program has brought it a great deal of national recognition – particularly within the horticulture sector – which has supported our vital tourism industry. It has also encouraged us to complete many projects which have improved our community.

### **New Building**

Although the residential startups were slightly less this year at 27, the total dollar value was almost identical from last year at \$6,335,990. On the commercial front we had a healthy year with 7 new commercial buildings valued at \$10,000,000.

**Heritage Harbor of Ottawa** continues to grow with over six million dollars in sales this year. The Villas at Heron's Landing are under construction with a new rental product, Harbor Cottages, soon to be released. Under design is an Active Adult product, called Port Place, which will offer an elegant design for those looking to downsize with low maintenance living. Due to full capacity, the marina will soon be adding more boat slips. Something Heritage Harbor does not get enough credit for is the economic benefit Ottawa receives because of the

## STATE OF THE CITY

October 19, 2017

hundreds of thousands of dollars it spends each year in marketing Ottawa and Starved Rock Country.

### CITY SERVICES

#### **Playground and Recreation Board**

- Improvements at Whitney field
- Pickle ball courts at Lincoln Douglas complex tennis courts. Pickle ball courts show a need being fulfilled after interest from residents.
- Our entire summer rec program of camps and parks brings so much fun to so many of the youth of Ottawa.
- Riordan Pool attendance shows continued popularity of the community pool.
- Online registration for Summer Recreation makes it easier for the community participate and sign up for programs.
- Updating Ottawa Recreation Website.
- Ottawa Soccer League use of former Central School property
- This summer many girls benefited from the fourth fast pitch softball field at Peck Park

#### **North Central Area Transit (NCAT)**

With the current year to date ridership totals of 44,588 rides NCAT is on pace to provide in excess of 55,000 rides annually to LaSalle County residents. This, despite financial delays from the State in funding that caused the program to reduce hours and limit rides to residents at the beginning of 2017.

NCAT began providing Medicaid rides in December, 2016. Approximately 4,700 Medicaid approved rides have been provided this year. Ridership numbers continue to support the enormous need for public transportation throughout LaSalle County.

#### **Public Works**

- New Position Filled – Assistant Public Works Director – Debra Ness
- Vehicle and Equipment Upgrades
  - Vehicle and Equipment Replacement Schedule Development (Complete for Budget)

## STATE OF THE CITY

October 19, 2017

- New PW Logo Design – River Theme from Water Towers
- Add Rooftop Safety Lighting to All Vehicles
- Add 2017 Arrowboard Trailer for Work Safety
- Purchases last 2 years increase average age of fleet from 1998 to 2009
  - Add 2017 Vactor – Water and Wastewater Now Don't Compete for Use
  - Replace Six (6) 1990-1998 trucks with 2017 Pickups
  - Add Two (2) 2017 Admin Vehicles
  - Trade in 1991 Case Loader for 2017 Cat Loader
  - Trade 2000 and 2008 Sweepers for 2016 Pelican Sweeper
  - Replace 2003 Crane Service Truck for 2016 Crane Service Truck
  - Auction Twelve (12) Units as Surplus

### Streets

The 2017 Street Paving Program included the resurfacing of 45 blocks among 15 different streets. Additionally we did about 22 blocks of curb replacement, 25 sidewalk ramps and 2 brick street intersection restorations – all at a cost of about \$1.4 million.

### Parking Lot Rehabilitation & Resurfacing

Lot located between Madison St. & Jefferson St. along east side of Canal St. (currently under construction) \$ 50,000

Lot will provide 58 off-street parking spaces.

- Filled New Position – Laborer – Dean Alcorn
- New Concrete Pad for Tree/Lawn Debris Dumpsters

### Water

- Engineering Evaluation of West Water Tower after Tornado
- Filled New Position – Laborer II – Shaun Wilson – Transferred from Parks Division

## STATE OF THE CITY

October 19, 2017

- North Water Loop Installation completed on West Etna Road
- Southside Water Main Replacements (90% Complete)
- Fixed Base Meter System (Future Planning)
- I-80 Corridor Water System Expansion (Future Planning)
- Rt. 71 Corridor Sewer System Expansion (Engineering and Easements)
- Oak Lane Water Extension (In Progress)
- Repair Damaged 14" Main -- Crossing Under Fox River
- Rehabilitation of Pressure Regulating Valves at WTP

### Sewer Collection/CSO

- This year the Southside Interceptor and Lift Station Conversion project was completed. The interceptor runs all the way from Pembroke subdivision to the wastewater treatment plant. It allowed us to eliminate five lift stations by converting to a gravity sewer system. The goal is to help stop sewer backups on the south side.
  - Remove Deer Run, James Court, Dairy Lane, Pembroke and Luke Street Lifts – Convert to Gravity Sewer
- Separation of Combined Sewers at Main and Columbus (Completed)
- Install Flood Protection Backflow Valve at High School – Limits Sanitary Sewer Overflow from River Entering Into Sewer System
- Oak Lane Sanitary Sewer Extension (In Progress)

### Wastewater

- Flood Prevention Levy Wall completed
- Lift Station SCADA Control Panels (90% Completed)
  - Upgrade Control Systems from FM Radio to Cellular for consistent communications and to prepare for Fiber Optic Telemetry
  - Added Updated SCADA Control Cabinets to three (3) Lift Stations – 1 Remaining
- Sludge Removal and Lagoon Dewatering (Completed)
- Plant Entrance Gate Automation and West Fence Gate Install

**STATE OF THE CITY  
October 19, 2017**

**Parks**

- Trees/Sod – Bike Trail, Columbus Street (West)
- Eagle Scout Project – Thornton Park – Rehabilitate Facilities for Local Use
  - Painting Bike Racks, basketball poles, backboard, rim, and striping the court
  - Painting of 4-square areas to replace middle tennis court
  - Recondition West benches by placing wooden planks on concrete structures
  - Reinstall benches that jut out of wall structure -- 4x4 beams through the wall's openings and fastening planks

**Fire Department**

- December 16, 2016: Live fire training result of City acquired property
- February 28, 2017: Ottawa Tornado MABAS 25/multi-jurisdictional response
- May 6, 2017: delivery of a new E-1 fire engine
- May 23, 2017: delivery of Clarke Custom boat for river response
- June 9, 2017: I-80 and Rt. 23- Ottawa Fire and MABAS 25 Haz Mat response
- August 14, 2017: Joint training with Wallace and Naplate
- September 13, 2017: Department of Homeland Security with Enbridge (IL River spill)
- October 2, 2017: Joint vehicle extrication/rescue training with Wallace and Naplate
- Training Program improvement to exceed ISO Standards
- New Officer Development Training Program
- Increased role in MABAS 25, including SOP development
- Public education ranging from all elementary schools to corporate partners such as ADM, Pilkington, La Salle county and the YMCA

The Ottawa Fire Department, in partnership with the Wallace Fire Protection District and Naplate Fire Department are searching for a training site location. If anyone has a site that may meet this need, please contact Fire Chief Steve Haywood.

<u>Year</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017 (thru September)</u>
Total Calls	4,220(new record)	3,173 (projected at 4230)

**STATE OF THE CITY  
October 19, 2017**

Structure Fires	29	28
Still Alarms	216	203
Panel Alarms	210	156
991 Ambulance	3,046	2,240
Transfers	719	652
Mutual Aid	44	22

**Police Department**

The Ottawa Police Department, under the leadership of Chief Brent Roalson, has continued to maintain its long time standing as one of the most professional and progressive law enforcement agencies in the area. This is done, among other things, through the continued support of established, successful programs such as the Peer Jury, aimed at keeping young, first time offenders out of the juvenile court system, and programs such as the Ottawa Police Department's Child Abduction Response (CART) Team, intended to create quick, structured investigative and search process meant to bring endangered children home safely. Most recently the Ottawa Police Department has created and implemented a Crisis Intervention Team (CIT). All employees will be trained in CIT by the end of 2018. This training better equips officers and telecommunicators in handling the calls for service dealing with the mentally ill and helping start a process in developing long term plans for those in need of additional services.

**Retirements, Promotions and Recognitions**

December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017 **Sgt. Darrin Schmitz** will concluded his 28 year career with the department. He has worked as a patrol officer and as a patrol supervisor.

On January 3<sup>rd</sup> 2018, Telecommunications Supervisor **Eddie Wielgoploan** will conclude 16 years with the Ottawa Police Department.

On October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017 Detective Corporal Mike Cheatham a 16 year veteran of the Ottawa Police Department was promoted to the Rank of Sergeant. Sgt. Cheatham will remain as the supervisor over the investigations unit.

On October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017 Officer Scott Harden an 11 year veteran of the Ottawa Police Department was promoted to the Rank of Corporal. Corporal Harden upon promotion was assigned to a shift as a patrol supervisor.

**STATE OF THE CITY**  
**October 19, 2017**

**CITY FINANCES – FY 2017 and 2018**

- The City of Ottawa does not have excessive surpluses, but operates in adherence to its budget, effectively deploying collected revenues and grant funding
- The City's General Corporate Fund (the City's main operating account) is operating with a balanced budget
- Tax revenues for the current budget ending April 30, 2018 are projected to comprise 74% of total General Fund Revenues (the City's main operating account). This is consistent with prior years.
  - Approximately 11% are from Property Taxes
  - Approximately 38% are from Sales Taxes
  - Total budgeted General Fund Revenues for FY 2018 of \$15.8 million is nearly identical to FY 2017
- Sales Tax Revenues are accounting for an increasing portion of the City's General Fund tax revenues
- When considering all City Funds, Property Taxes account for a larger portion of overall revenues
- The Equalized Assessed Valuation (EAV) which forms the basis of Property Tax revenues is projected to increase this coming year for the third year in a row after the 5 prior years of successive modest declines
- The City has effectively utilized Tax Increment Financing Districts and Enterprise Zones incentives to encourage new business development
- The City has consistently funded each of its employee pension fund obligations the actuarially recommend amounts
- The City consistently operates its business-type activities, primarily its water and wastewater treatment operations at a modest profit
- The City's outstanding debt is significantly below the State imposed limit and all obligations have been paid as agreed

## STATE OF THE CITY

October 19, 2017

- The City has prudently managed the resources available to it, stayed within its budgetary projections, proactively sought grant funding, and effectively utilized debt for financing necessary projects

### **Restoring the Illinois & Michigan Canal**

Few Ottawa projects over the years have been more exciting for me than the work being done to restore and re-water a major portion of the I&M Canal through Ottawa, roughly from Fulton to Guion Streets. Looking at this photo of a restored canal in Indiana will give you a sense of just how impressive this stretch of the Canal will look in Ottawa in the near future. Without a doubt, the beautifully restored Canal will be a significant tourism attraction.

However, even more importantly, it will provide a whole new realm of outdoor recreation for the people of Ottawa. Canoeing, kayaking, paddle boating, ice skating – even model powerboat racing and more – will all be wonderful outdoor activities – not to mention the creation of a much stronger and more widespread understanding of the vital role the Canal has played in the history of Ottawa and the nation.

This is a project I am deeply committed to. I talked about re-watering the canal at my first State of the city address. I hope next year at this time we can all dip our toes into the waters of the canal.

The re-watering project would be expensive if the City had to pay for it all. But, I am very pleased to report that we are making very good progress in obtaining in-kind commitments for significant portions of the project.

- An engineering unit from the United States Army Reserve – supported by a contingent of U.S. Marines – will be in Ottawa next summer to use their heavy equipment to move tons of earth to restore the original shape of the Canal bed. This will be an official federally funded training exercise approved by the Pentagon. This commitment alone is worth several hundred thousands of dollars.
- Of course, a key to the success of the project will be a source of continual fresh water flow into the Canal. At the moment, the U.S. Silica Company directs its completely clean discharge water into the Canal where it flows to the west and eventually into the Illinois River. The company has agreed to let us pump a small portion of this water

## STATE OF THE CITY

October 19, 2017

eastward to rewater the Canal. U.S. Silica will also assist with the pipe needed to convey the water.

- As the Canal is owned by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), a permit needs to be obtained from this agency. Up until now, McClure Engineering has, on a volunteer basis, provided a preliminary engineering plan, donating over \$25,000 of their time. Now the City Council has hired McClure Engineering to complete the design.
- Over the past years various contractors and representatives of the building trades have indicated a willingness to donate labor and equipment for the rewatering project. I hope in the next few months we can reconnect and firm up commitments. We will need to trench in a pipeline, pour concrete, install a pump and a variety of other work where donated time, talent, equipment and materials will be appreciated.
- Finally, there are some things we will just have pay for, like boring the pipeline under several railroad crossings. For those who can't contribute to this project in-kind, cash is always gratefully accepted. I hope that everyone here will consider supporting this effort.

Next year is the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Illinois Statehood. The canal played a big role in the development of Illinois and the City of Ottawa. Let's make this a community project, a bi-centennial project, and let's get it done.

### **Conclusion**

I would like to conclude my remarks by sharing what I call a little "happy story" that occurred last week. These happy stories are the sort of small, but significant sorts of things that happen regularly here in Ottawa.

Last week I was invited to join my friends Bob and Judy Kucera for a brew at the Lone Buffalo to celebrate Bob's birthday. Judy then took us across the street in front of the Roxy Theater and presented to her husband a memorial bench that she purchased in his honor. On the bronze plaque is one of Bob's famous one-liners, a sentiment I think most of us share:

"Any day in Ottawa is better than most elsewhere."

## STATE OF THE CITY

October 19, 2017

### **APPENDIX**

#### **HR Imaging Partners**

Hr Imaging continues to make its complete transition from traditional silver-halide photographic products to electronic ink printing by adding a second printing press this winter. Currently, its seasonal and non-seasonal employment stands at 225. They help provide fine photographic products to schools in eight states with projected growth soon into South Dakota and Kansas.

#### **OSF HealthCare Saint Elizabeth Medical Center**

OSF continued to achieve high standards in quality and safety this past year – achieving one of the only “A” ratings in the Illinois Valley area and achieving Joint Commission accreditation for meeting high standards of quality care. In an effort to provide more local access to care needed by the community, OSF has continued to recruit physicians and advanced practice providers, add specialty clinics and implement technology to connect patients locally with providers to enhance medical care.

#### **Bill Walsh Automotive Group**

Bill Walsh Automotive Group continues to be a critically important driving force in our Ottawa economy.

Supported by an expanded internet department which has pushed its sales reach across the nation, Bill Walsh sales locally and outside LaSalle County continue to run ahead of the national trend. Significant improvements have been made in the Bill Walsh Body Shop with new management, new equipment and renewed Direct Repair Relationships with all major insurance companies. A brand new and expanded Business Development and Customer Care Center opened this year with 14 full-time associates working six days per week. The Bill Walsh Automotive Group continues to win major achievement awards from almost all of its manufacturers for customer satisfaction and other positives – including now being ranked as the No. 1 Toyota dealership for customer satisfaction in the entire Chicago Region. ToughRigs, the accessory and upfit company at Bill Walsh, doubled in size in the last nine months and has achieved Diamond Status as a WeatherTech distributor based on sales volume. Coming soon may be a possible new, exclusive ToughRigs showroom in Ottawa. In

**STATE OF THE CITY**

**October 19, 2017**

order to better serve its customers in Ottawa and beyond, 2018 will see a focus on continuous facility and equipment investment.