

State of the City Address--2013

Ladies and Gentlemen of the City Council and fellow citizens, as Mayor I am honored to report to you about the state of the city and its future needs. I am grateful for the opportunity that the citizens have given me to serve the City of Centerton and I look forward to the next two years as an opportunity for all of us to make a difference in our community.

First of all I am happy to report that construction has started on Highway 102 and, this project will be an important change to the infrastructure of our city on the eastern side of town. This project will help ease traffic and will handle the daily traffic flow of 18,000 to 20,000 vehicles a day. I have also initiated a campaign to attract business to this area, and have written 30 letters to date and have a goal to help attract 5 new businesses this year.

There have been several new businesses open last year to include the Centerton Animal Hospital, Shipley's Donuts, and also a new Casey's store is being constructed. Building is very strong with over 100 new housing starts in the year 2012, and this trend is continuing into 2013.

I would like to update you on the various departments within the city, and I would like to start with the Planning Department, over the past year this department along with the Planning Commission has been very busy reviewing several projects and subdivisions in the area. The Planning Department hired a new Planning Assistant which will help with the day to day operations of the department and also help with new projects as they come to us. Goals for this year will be continued work on a new GIS system, and to get a lot of our information online to help the public. This department will also work with city staff to update many outdated codes and bring the codebook up to standards.

Next is our Street Department, this crew has been working very hard in our city with several overlay projects, and also completing a lot of much needed work on many of our roads. Recently this department has completed major road renovations on Kimmel, Buckhorn Flats, Holloway, Seba and Keller roads just to name a few. This department has recently hired an employee to take care of maintenance on our parks. The department has also worked very hard cleaning out a lot of ditches and clearing brush to help improve the drainage in town, and is always looking for ways to improve the roadways for our citizens.

A new building is being constructed for our police department and is near completion, also the department recently increased staff to include a new part time officer, and another officer has been added and also the fleet of vehicles has been upgraded by adding several new vehicles to replace an aging fleet. This change alone will save money in overall maintenance costs, and a vehicle rotation plan has been implemented. Salaries for this department have been increased to match other area cities and also help the department to retain good officers and attract certified officers.

Next I would like to thank the men and woman of the Centerton Volunteer Fire Department; in 2012 the department received 689 calls for service, which was increase from 2011. The department has been able to upgrade equipment to include radios for each member of the department, with over half of them being new digital equipment. The overall number of volunteers has also been increased to 45 in 2012, and the department was able to hire the first paid employee, with the additional of Delton Bush, Fire Chief. The department will be replacing an aging support truck, and is currently studying the possibility of adding Advanced Life Support Ambulance service to the department. The department also completed the 2 substations, and has been able to obtain 2 additional tanker trucks to house in these stations.

The Building Inspection and Code Enforcement have been very busy, with a large number of inspections completing over 4000 inspections in 2012. Currently Cherie Vaughn, the permit clerk is being trained to become the backup inspector in the event our inspector is on vacation or in training, this will insure we continue to inspect projects in a timely manner. Also code enforcement calls have been on the increase and all issues have been taken care of in a timely manner.

Animal Control has been very busy in 2012, and has done an excellent job adopting found animals and also getting the pets back to their owners. The department has utilized a Face book Page and has over 1000 followers and also entered into agreements with surrounding towns to include Cave Springs and Bethel Heights and is currently working with Little Flock and Highfill to receive their pets also. The shelter has received a grant in 2012 and was able to secure funding to replace a fence on the property, and also to install cameras to help deter people from dumping animals.

The Bentonville School District is considering placing a 2nd High School on property owned by the district on Gamble Road, and currently working on a 5000 square foot addition to Centerton Gamble School. The city has also applied for a Safe Routes to School grant to place sidewalks from Gamble School, south to Seba Road.

The City has also received a grant from the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism in the amount of \$250,000 which will be used to construct ball fields at the site of the Centerton Sports Park. The city is also planning on adding a park on Cass Street and also complete a walking trail around the Centerton Lake, when the highway project is completed.

The City has increased in activities in 2012, and during the months of March thru December including a Spring and Fall Fest, in additional to a monthly community pancake breakfast sponsored by the Centerton Area Chamber of Commerce. A few other things that occurred recently is we upgraded the city website to make it easier for citizens to get information and also there is a complete list of businesses in our city on there to include a website if one was located, we also continue to use our Face Book page for the city and also the Animal Shelter and thru these resources we have been able to increase our adoptions and also open the lines of communications up between city hall and our citizens. We also place current events and things happening currently in the city for

example if the power goes out, I have a direct contact with the utility companies and I can notify the citizens right away and an estimate on when the situation will be under control. This year we are also part of BC Alert which is a county wide notification system and we will work on getting our citizens signed up, this service will provide life saving information and can also be used to notify citizens in the event of an emergency.

Lastly, no administration is complete without a loyal staff of great employees, and our city has many dedicated and hard working employees from the Department Heads all the way down to the actual troops that carry out the daily activities and duties to help keep our city running smooth and efficiently. Thank you for a Job Well Done.