



## **State of the City of West Lafayette 2012 February 4, 2013**

Welcome to the City of West Lafayette's 2012 State of the City address. This is my fifth report to you on the condition of our community. I've never been more encouraged by where we are and excited by where we are headed. The reason for my optimism, especially in light of our nation's continuing economic woes, revolves around these three words: save, build and grow. It's what we have been doing and it's what we will continue to do.

Our City's foundation consists of ordinances and administrative fiscal policies that support its structure. The infrastructure includes the roads, sidewalks, sewer lines, wastewater utility and public works projects. The City also has security, a highly skilled public safety component. Last but not least, we have personal offerings, like our parks and recreational programs that add to the quality of life in our community.

As we take a look at our City departments, there are proud accomplishments and exciting plans to share as we work together to continue saving, building and managing our growth for future generations. With a nod to our dedicated Police Department and Police Chief Jason Dombkowski, I am very pleased to share there were no homicides in West Lafayette in 2012. The most current five-year FBI Uniform Crime Reporting statistics show West Lafayette has the lowest combined rate of violent crime and property crime compared to any Big Ten university city and compared to any of the university cities or towns in Indiana. An impressive ranking!

Here's more good news: our fine men and women in blue responded to 24,197 calls for service last year, a two percent decrease from 2011. Criminal arrests increased two percent, up 1,597 from 1,572 in 2011. Juvenile arrests decreased five percent, down to 53 from 56 in 2011 and alcohol arrests decreased 17 percent. Traffic enforcement has been a priority with a focus on school zone safety. Officers issued 1,234 traffic citations last year, an increase of five percent from 2011. Traffic crashes increased three percent while alcohol related crashes decreased and thankfully, no fatal crashes occurred.

The Police Department's new vehicle lockout assistance service proved to be a useful and appreciated program with officers unlocking 814 vehicles for our citizens. This type of service is evidence of how our police force has grown in the type of quality of life enhancement service offered. Our Neighborhood Resource Team continued to grow in addressing quality of life issues in our neighborhoods, with the Team responding to 2,398 calls last year, focusing on code enforcement, parking violations and animal control issues, along with issuing 19,189 parking tickets.

Moving on to our firefighting team, West Lafayette is fortunate to have a very skilled, proactive Fire Department led by Fire Chief Tim Heath. In 2012, our firefighters responded to 1,785 calls, including 60 reported fires, but no arsons. Always looking for ways to grow while saving taxpayers' money, Chief Heath led the charge in pursuing and receiving more than \$25,000 in equipment grants. With federal funds, a Polaris Ranger was purchased and used on several occasions by the Fire Department to perform rescues and fire suppression on the 22.5 miles of trails throughout the City. Other grant dollars provided for 75 smoke detectors to be distributed in the community.

Our community grew a bit larger late last year with a ribbon cutting at Fire Station #3 at 1100 Kalberer Road. This state-of-the-art building was constructed not only for today, but for future generations. It is a great example of responsible growth for the betterment of our entire community. Station #3 will house two trucks and five firefighters per shift.

Speaking of responsible growth, the Fire Department saw four individuals retire from service last year with five new firefighters coming on board, putting the Department at full staff. The Department's command structure was reconfigured last year. This change defined and refined the roles our command staff plays on all fire ground control activities.

I am extremely proud of Chief Dombkowski and Chief Heath's vision, leadership and caring commitment in providing these essential services for our citizens. They, along with our two teams of dedicated public safety professionals, have contributed immeasurably to our building, saving and growing for the future.

Our community streets have seen a wide variety of activity this past year. From more than 271 tons of asphalt used to repair potholes to two street sweepers collecting more than 718 tons of debris in 1,474 staff hours to more than 698 tons of leaves being collected, it's been a busy year for Street Commissioner David Downey and his team.

Growth and quality of life enhancements go hand-in-hand with West Lafayette's green initiatives. To that end, I'm pleased to share that 946 tons of yard waste and 2,631 tons of recycled items were collected last year with the percentage of items saved from the landfill increasing to 42 percent of the total collected. Responsible growth continued in the recycling arena with the City's purchase and distribution of 5,000 recycling carts to residents whose commitment to helping build our green initiatives resulted in our recycling rate going up 26 percent.

A drop-off site south of State Street is planned for residents in multiple unit housing complexes. Future recycling of electronic equipment is planned as part of the City's overall recycling mix, due to these items being prohibited from the landfill. The Pollution Prevention Department, under the umbrella of the Street Department, now has a new street sweeper to aid their efforts.

We have multiple examples of fiscally responsible, strategic growth in the many projects City Engineer Dave Buck and his talented team worked on last year. Cumberland Avenue reconstruction (phase 2)

stretches from Salisbury Street to Yeager Road and contains two roundabouts at Yeager Road and Manchester Street. This project was both on time and under budget, at \$3.6 million, well under the \$4.4 million budgeted. Yeager Road reconstruction (phase 1) involved widening this road to five lanes from US 52 south to Northwestern Avenue. A new trail, sidewalks and street lights will improve the entire length of this project. Completed two months ahead of schedule, this work was done well under budget at \$2.4 million.

Our Engineering Department team oversaw more than \$1.1 million in street resurfacing and ADA-compliant sidewalks and ramps, as well as street repairs. Work was completed on South Chauncey Avenue, Dehart Street, Connolly Street, Rose Lane, South Street, Salisbury Street, Ravinia Road, Soldiers Home Road, and Hartman Court. Strong evidence of West Lafayette's growth, particularly when our nation and state are barely out of a recession, is found in the dollar amount of \$64,788,000, the highest construction dollar value ever recorded in the City of West Lafayette. Building permits totaled 423, plan reviews totaled 450, and building inspections totaled 986.

West Lafayette's growth is closely tied to the completion of US 231. Special appreciation goes to Indiana's former governor and Purdue University's new president, Mitch Daniels. Thanks to his leadership and commitment to this major road project, US 231 now provides our City with tremendous opportunities. In the coming years, we expect to see explosive change surrounding this new road that is the major new entrance, the front door, to West Lafayette.

Growth is inevitable, whether it's done with a positive approach using vision, planning and structure or a negative approach of unmanageable chaos. Expanding city boundaries through strategic, thoughtful, controlled growth measures is paramount. We are taking a laser-like approach regarding the expansion of our city boundaries to help minimize problems and maximize benefit. All the opportunities annexation affords West Lafayette lie at the front door of our community. The continued cooperation of the City and Purdue University's public safety departments are very much part and parcel of successful future annexation opportunities.

Our innovative, proactive Wastewater Utility team and all they have accomplished under Director Dave Henderson's leadership contribute to the infrastructure. Dave's ongoing goal was to manage our continued unprecedented growth with responsible spending. The hard work and progressive talent of our Wastewater crew means that 2.36 billion gallons of wastewater was treated at our Plant in 2012. The Western Interceptor was put into service, reducing combined sewer overflows, providing capacity for growth in the City and eliminating three lift stations.

With Aeration Tank #5 added, capacity at the Wastewater Plant increased 17 percent last year. Our digester project that harnesses wastewater, grease, waste and food scraps to produce electricity was recognized with a Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence in Renewable Energy. Nineteen percent of the Plant's power now is generated onsite. The City will be building a new regional lift station at the Purdue Research Park this spring. Because of Dave Henderson and his team's "green" vision and

innovative approaches, we are prepared to grow and continue serving residents, businesses and the community at large.

Our community is proud to offer amenities to make it interesting and valuable. To that end, the City's Parks Department under the wise and steady leadership of Parks Superintendent Joe Payne has experienced plenty of progress. Honoring a long time Parks advocate, the Paula R. Woods Park was dedicated last July. West Lafayette's part of the Wabash Heritage Trail network was completed with a new trail constructed along North River Road and through Happy Hollow Park to Rose Street.

Part of building and growing is spearheading new initiatives. A first for any trail in Indiana, West Lafayette soon will boast the installation of new trailhead and interpretive signs with 19 miles of paved trails and more than five miles of footpaths for community enjoyment. Joe and his team didn't stop there. Parks Department staff oversaw the installation of the Celery Bog webcam in the Nature Center, registered 3,950 residents for Morton Community Center programs and classes and prepared and maintained Riverside Skating Center for 14,470 people to enjoy.

Thanks to the West Lafayette Community School Corporation generously allowing the use of their facilities, 2,100 youngsters participated in all kinds of recreational programs last year. Thirty-four local artists and hundreds of guests enjoyed Art on the Wabash in Tapawingo Park. Thanks to the caring commitment of our Tree Fund Committee who contributed 930 hours toward growing our City through trees, 516 new street trees were planted and West Lafayette was again recognized as a Tree City USA.

With great appreciation for the invaluable contributions and visionary thinking of City Engineer Buck, Street Commissioner Downey, Wastewater Utility Director Henderson and Parks Superintendent Payne, we are saving money while building and growing West Lafayette. Our Development Department is one of our remaining departments that I am pleased to recognize for all of Development Director Chandler Poole and his team's innovative work.

Purdue Research Park certainly continues to grow and expand its international and national footprint, welcoming companies from Israel and Italy last year. Our Redevelopment Commission worked with Purdue Research Foundation to create an incentive package that attracted a new clean fuel engine testing facility for Caterpillar. Automotive Robotics Proving Labs will break ground this year.

The expansion of the Levee/Village Tax Increment Finance District includes the New Chauncey neighborhood and the Northwestern Avenue corridor. City Council-approved Wang Hall is a partnership between Purdue and Purdue Research Foundation as a new development in the Northwestern Corridor. The 720 Building is a Council-approved mixed use project that will have a grocery store near campus. Community input was a critical factor in moving both projects forward.

Sagamore Commons now is fully developed with a multi-million dollar IU Health Building, Mike's Carwash, Farmers and Merchants Bank and Miracles Fitness. Faith West is being developed by Faith

Ministries as a mixed use facility that will have housing and a community center located on the first floor. As a finished project, Chauncey Square is a gem in the efforts to redevelop and stabilize the near campus areas of West Lafayette.

Chandler and his team were key players in the inaugural Purdue Boilermaker Half Marathon, a partnership between the City, Purdue and Lafayette with more than 2,500 people participating from 30 states and three countries.

Saving, building and growing extend into our public art initiatives. Two art installations happened last year with a *Point of Departure* located outside of Greyhouse Coffee with Greyhouse paying for the sculpture and the City handling the installation. Today, it is at the center of activity in the Village. *Delight of Accomplishment* is a mural gracing the walls of the Chauncey Village Walkway, the former Gumball Alley as the final part of revitalizing the former stinky alley into a clean and colorful pedestrian walkway in the Village.

Thanks to the hard work of those leading the Sagamore West Farmers' Market, the event marked its eighth year in 2012 with vendors and the community making this event a true gathering place. Hats off to Chandler and his proactive, talented team for positioning West Lafayette as an appealing location to live, work and play.

Due to the growing demands of technology, we created an IT Department, headed by hard working IT Director Anthony Newman. The business of your local government is being enabled by technology instead of technology driving our business changes.

With a centralized plan, wireless access points are being deployed to all City owned buildings and parks, including free wireless access at the Village. Security assessments are being performed as well. We recently launched a pilot program, co-locating West Lafayette's server at Purdue, as a savings step and is yet another great example of the strong partnership between the City and the University.

Finally, I am very pleased to share with you that our fiscal condition is very strong. We save. We build and we grow. We are successful with this approach because of Clerk-Treasurer Judy Rhodes' financial expertise and wise counsel on all money matters. Her deep and broad knowledge of municipal finances is why we have maintained our General Fund reserve in a strong and healthy condition, with increases happening even during the thick of the recession. A true achievement indeed!

Generational upgrades have been implemented as well. The fact that West Lafayette enjoys and benefits from a AA bond rating is nothing shy of incredible and a testament to how highly regarded our City is for its responsible fiscal management.

In concluding my comments, I want to spend a few minutes talking about the key role our partners play in our success. Our partnership with Purdue University and the Purdue Research Foundation is instrumental

in our ability to continue growing responsibly. We appreciate our partners and thank them for their continued commitment to our collective success.

Finally, a heartfelt thank you to our City Councilors who labor mightily to make everything work well in our City. Thanks also to the Board of Public Works and Safety, the Redevelopment Commission and the Parks Board for their leadership and vision and to our many volunteer committees who serve as the lifeblood of the City's many initiatives.

To all West Lafayette residents, our constituents, I salute and thank you for your caring commitment to our community and for the ideas, concerns, questions, opportunities and challenges you provide me and my team week in and week out. Working together, we will continue saving, building and growing to help ensure the future success of the community we love.