



State of the City Address – January 14th, 2019

It is my honor to deliver this State of the City address for the second year. We have had many accomplishments this past year, but also recognize that work continues to be done.

I believe Citizens in a community can feel a few different ways about where they live. They can feel Proud, Discouraged, or Content, Involved, Forgotten or Excited. I understand there is a lot more, but I want Rock Island Citizens to feel Proud, Involved and Excited about our City. Pride in our Community, Involved in Decisions and Excited about Living and the Future of Rock Island. Excitement is the goal, but if we have the first two, (Pride, Involved) we will always continue to move forward. Those in charge of moving us forward include hundreds of City Employees, Directors, the City Manager, and your Elected Officials. I feel extremely confident that we have the right people in place to make the necessary changes the Citizens of Rock Island deserve.

First I'll go through what has transpired this past year in each department and then conclude with a look into 2019.

Our Community Economic Development Department has seen many accomplishments this year. The CED Department is responsible for many different aspects, such as Developments, Inspections, Zoning, CIRLF loans, Façade Grants, Building Permits, HUD Grants, and Community Activities.

This past year, they -

- Had developments that have brought 300 jobs to the community
- New investments topping \$27,000,000
- Handled 3,000 permits, 3,200 building inspections, 1,300 housing permits, 2,400 nuisance violations and over 700 health inspections
- They oversaw the 30th Street / 14th Avenue Pocket Park project
- Garden Sites Program that produced food valued at over \$65,000
- 11 façade grants for \$65,000
- Over \$1 million in HUD grants (Douglas Park, Cameras, Sidewalks)
- Demolition of several blighted houses and the former Case and Norcross factory buildings
- 37 housing rehab projects \$187,000 (loans or grants)

- Conducted a Summer Archaeology Program with MLK and aided in the Douglas Park mural
- Translated Home Rehab Brochures and other City documents to four different languages
- Partnered with other Illinois cities for a Lead Based Paint Grant (received \$2.4 million over three years)
- New Enterprise Zone
- Two Opportunity Zones
- Updated downtown streetscape plan
- More involvement in neighborhoods
- Open house for refugees and immigrants
- Town Hall meeting (Unplugged)

These are all very positive for Rock Island, and I commend the work from every employee that made these things happen.

Before we move on, I want to take a moment to acknowledge a man this department and the entire City recently lost. Lt. Colonel (ret.) Thomas Ayers passed away at his home December 25th after a tough battle with cancer. Tom's contributions to Rock Island the past 18 years as the Chief Building Official and his service to our country are extraordinary. Our condolences go out to Tom's wife, children, father, family, and friends.

POLICE DEPARTMENT:

- As of November 30th, 2018, a comparison of Part 1 Uniform Crime Reports Offenses (Murder, Criminal Sexual Assault, Robbery, Aggravated Assault, Burglaries, Thefts, Motor Vehicle Thefts, and Arson) are 9% lower than 2017, while Part I crimes designated as Violent Offenses (Murder, Criminal Sexual Assault, and Aggravated Assault) are 35% lower than 2017
- Installed additional intersection cameras at four locations that can be used for traffic and criminal investigations
- Revamped their recruitment program, being able to increase the number of new police applicants for 2018 to 317, compared to 196 in 2016
- Was awarded re-accreditation in 2018, being certified as a Tier II Accredited Police Agency through the Illinois Law Enforcement Accreditation Program. Rock Island is the only police agency within the Illinois Quad Cities to be accredited and has been since 2013
- Reorganized the structure of the department to create the Tactical Operations Division, whose focus is the investigation of violent and firearms related crime
- Police Officer Doug Williams was honored as 2018 Police Officer of the Year at the Knights of Columbus Civic Awards ceremony

FIRE DEPARTMENT:

- Conducted the Operation Prom program at Rock Island High School
- Was designated as a Five-Star Fire Safe Community by the Northern Illinois Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board
- Partnered with Red Cross Quad Cities for “Sound the Alarm” campaign, as well as the Illinois Fire Safety Alliance, to install free smoke alarms
- Five probationary members successfully completed Basic Firefighter Academy training
- Firefighter Cody Bower was honored as 2018 Firefighter of the Year at the Knights of Columbus Civic Awards ceremony
- Upgraded fire reporting software to be more user-friendly and to streamline the submission of reports to FEMA
- Continued community outreach to train citizens in CPR
- Received the 2018 EMS Bronze Award from the American Heart Association’s Mission: Lifeline Program for outstanding care of patients suffering from cardiac arrest, stroke, and heart attack
- All Fire Department Paramedics successfully recertified in Advanced Cardiac Life Support

PUBLIC WORKS:

- City staff implemented the flood strategy plan as the river rose, which included installing pumps and closing gatewells
- The Municipal Services Division partnered with the Rock Island - Milan School District to replace sidewalks in front of the Math and Science Academy and Frances Willard schools
- LED light conversions were completed to City owned lights in the Southwest Industrial Park and several other locations
- Work on the Long-Term Control Plan (LTCP) continued and was completed in 2018
- Construction of the new Water Filtration Facility, which is replacing the 109-year-old filtration building, is now over 50% complete
- The Engineering Division is managing two major resurfacing projects on 18th Avenue from 17th Street to the Moline Border and 38th Street from 7th Avenue to Blackhawk Road
- The Engineering Division also assisted and managed several Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) projects for CED, which included: fiber optic line and security camera installation and sidewalk repairs near Longfellow School
- New management group running Sunset Marina (F3)

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT:

- Worked closely with the Rock Island Public Library to install a new Time Management System and Self-Service Printing System for public use
- Worked with the Police Department and CED to install 34 new public safety cameras at four busy intersections in Rock Island along 11th Street and at the Arsenal Bridge entryway

- Upgraded the Finance Department's Utility Billing System to meet current security standards
- Implemented new communications technologies for both waste water and water filtration systems for Public Works
- IT continues to explore and implement technology solutions that address open data, transparency in local government, smart city initiatives, the Internet of Things, cloud computing, and community engagement

FINANCE DEPARTMENT:

- The City's bond rating was updated in November and the negative outlook was removed. The rating is A2 (stable), which is in middle of the Investment Grade category
- The City's CY 2019 budget was approved with a mix of expenditure reductions, revenue increases and use of reserves
- The City received the General Finance Officers Association (GFOA) award for its audit and budget documents
- The Finance Department made it easier for businesses to remit its local taxes and reports to the City – they can now do so through the website

HUMAN RESOURCES:

- Human Resources held its eighth annual Benefit Fair in April 2018. This event is in partnership with Rock Island County. There were 68 vendors, 170 City employees and 173 County employees in attendance this year
- Maintained a flat renewal for the Commercial Insurance program
- Key staff hires this past year include: Development Program Manager, Fleet Manager, Utilities Superintendent, (7) Police Officers and (8) Firefighters
- Introduced the 360-degree reviews for non-affiliated employees and managers, which was a City Council management objective

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. COMMUNITY CENTER:

- Received a new \$121,000 State grant to serve youth ages 11 – 17
- Improved youth literacy rates in Summer Day Camp and Afterschool Program, partnering with Spring Forward
- Revitalized Family Fun Day and reintroduced The Drill Team Showdown with the Metropolitan Youth Program
- Served over 2,000 youth in 2018

LIBRARY:

- Programs drew a record of nearly 19,000 people in 2018 - which is a 10% increase from prior years

- Refreshed furnishings in the Children's Room at the Downtown Library, thanks to a grant from the Library Foundation
- Launched #RockTownReads initiative with community partners such as the MLK Center, Spring Forward Learning Center, and the Rock Island-Milan School District
- Implemented "Rocket into Reading", a new literacy program for children ages 6-10
- Staff attended nearly 150 outreach programs in 2018, many of which promoted library card registration
- Expanding upon their collections, the library now circulates Wi-Fi Hot Spots and board games and has also implemented the first Seed Library in the area to encourage community gardening and the sharing of seeds
- Community-based strategic planning for the library was a success! The plan is complete and will be implemented beginning in January 2019

PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT:

- Phase 1 of Douglas Park - Big diamond, parking lot, concession stand / press box, batting cage and community playground - were all completed
- The First Tee Learning Center / Short Course / Driving Range project completed at Highland Springs
- 36,891 visits to White Water Junction, over 200,000 visits to RIFAC, over 45,000 visits to Saukie & Highland Springs Golf Courses, over 15,000 at Red, White & Boom, and they held the 62nd Annual Starlight Revue Concert Series
- Over \$30,000 was raised through local sponsorships to the Parks Programs
- Completed a reorganization of Park Maintenance Division into Public Works. This resulted in Public Works being able to fill vacant positions at no increased expense to the general fund and it has given the Parks & Recreation Department more maintenance resources
- Completed the installation of a new ADA shelter and playground at Hodge Park
- Completed Phase 1 of tuckpointing at the Hauberg Civic Center and repaired all plumbing in the mansion
- Renovated the bathrooms and concession stand at the Alan Campbell Sports Complex
- New ADA bleachers were installed at Ben Williamson Park
- Douglas Park and the Rock Island Independents football team were designated into the NFL Hall of Fame traveling museum
- Speaking of NFL, we are hosting several draft picks on Day Three

As you've just heard, a lot of work has been done this past year and I'm honored to work next to so many good people.

It's easy to talk about accomplishments, now let's look at some hard realities. We need more development. Whether it is for the Watchtower location, our Downtown or beyond, we need more. We need to find a way to stabilize our budget. As of right now our financial position is solid, but that will not continue if we don't commit to making difficult decisions. Expenses are rising, and revenues are flat. Everyone knows that's a recipe for financial failure and we cannot

go on without expense cuts that might affect our core services. We've been asking departments to do more with less and we're going to have to continue this to produce a balanced budget each year, without using reserve funds. It will not happen if we continue to handle our business as normal.

There are many positives on the horizon. We just need to keep collecting wins. The number of wins will outweigh the one big score and we are in a great position to do that. There will be more community outreach for ideas. We started a new task force called Technology and Sustainability. We will continue to grow and foster partnerships and will always look for new opportunities that benefit this City. The resilience of Rock Island's residents is great and our community pride is strong.

Thank you all for your time. I look forward to bringing excitement to Rock Island in 2019.

"This Town Rocks!"