

State of the City | City of Kettering

Kettering Mayor Don Patterson recently gave his annual State of the City presentation, celebrating the successes Kettering enjoyed in 2016 and announcing the major city projects & initiatives which will take place in 2017.

The text of the Mayor's State of the City presentation appears below the following the video of his presentation.

I'm Kettering Mayor Don Patterson, and on behalf of the entire Kettering City Council, it is my honor to share with you the State of City.

Updating you on the State of the City is one of the most important responsibilities I fulfill as your Mayor. Our priority is to serve our citizens and be wise stewards of our resources. I feel it is imperative to talk openly with you about our Kettering's successes, challenges and plans for the future. In recent years Kettering City Council placed a focus on transparency because we believe it is your right to understand how your tax money is used to better our community. Whether you are looking for detailed information on city spending, a searchable database of city salaries or archived video of every City Council meeting, our website provides you this information and more. I hope you will also find that this State of the City presentation is the latest in our ongoing commitment to being as open as possible with our citizens.

The purpose of this State of the City address is two-fold. I hope that you will share with me in celebrating the successes our community enjoyed in 2016. And likewise, I hope that you will listen for opportunities to help us build more success in the future. Citizen engagement, meaningful dialogue and active participation in leadership of our community are essential. I can assure you that I and my fellow members of City Council truly enjoy hearing from the residents we represent. We encourage you to join us for a City Council meeting. If you have questions or concerns, give us a call or reach out with an email. After all, we are here to serve you.

We at the city look at several factors as we evaluate the vitality of our community. By all measures, the state of our city is strong and growing stronger. Real estate data shows that the average home sale price in Kettering is climbing and days on the market declining. The unemployment rate in Kettering at the end of 2016 was 3.7%, well below the average for the Dayton region, the state of Ohio and the national rate. Finally, our income tax revenue is growing. This is a sure sign that our residents are taking home more in their paychecks and that our businesses are succeeding.

Kettering is home to thriving businesses.

Our largest employer, Kettering Health Network, chose the Kettering community as home for their brand new, regional, state of the art Cancer Care Center. With a presence throughout the area, we know that a decision could have been made to locate this facility elsewhere in the Dayton region. We are proud that because of the strong working relationship with the City and strong ties to the Kettering community, this signature facility is right where it should be – on the flagship Kettering Medical Center campus.

The construction of the pedestrian walkway over Southern Boulevard that became a reality as part of the Cancer Care Center project is very significant to the city. This amenity greatly enhances the safety and comfort of all of the employees and visitors to the campus, and improves safety of all traveling to and through this portion of Kettering.

Not only is Kettering Medical Center our largest employer, they are an anchor and a vital community partner. For decades they have consistently demonstrated their commitment to Kettering. They are a signature sponsor of Frazee Pavilion. They are major supporter of the new Veteran's Plaza at Delco Park. Everywhere you turn, Kettering Health Network is woven in to the fabric of the Kettering community and we thank them for it.

The expansion of the Kettering campus represents their continued commitment to providing not only exceptional health care and high quality jobs, but now more importantly access to advanced cancer care. I certainly hope our citizens recognize the significance of having this exceptional level of expertise right in their backyard.

Kettering has focused our resources on economic development and there is strong momentum for continued reinvestment throughout the city. I'd like to highlight a few projects that demonstrate our commitment to keeping and expanding jobs here in the Kettering community.

Alternate Solutions Health Network began work in 2016 on a major relocation and expansion in to a new facility in the Kettering Business Park. The expansion will allow a projected growth in employment of more than 340 jobs in the next five years. Owner David Ganzarto credits our economic development team with helping Alternate Solutions Health Network identify potential Kettering properties in line with their needs and says that the City of Kettering has a structure and

environment that was very favorable for the expansion.

This reinvestment is critical to the ongoing success of the Kettering Business Park, a city operated economic development project at the site of the former Gentile Air Force Station. We are thrilled that Alternate Solutions Health Network chose to relocate and expand here, continuing to call Kettering home.

Another example of our economic development success in 2016 was the grand opening of Xerion Advanced Battery Corporation at the Miami Valley Research Park. The high-tech company moved their lab and employees from Illinois and is already planning for an expansion of space and jobs here in Kettering to accommodate production.

I've mentioned several of the large business expansions and relocations that happened in 2016, but I want to make sure you hear about some of the small business growth as well. State Farm insurance agent Becky Taylor relocated her business from a neighboring community to Kettering because, as she said, the Kettering community is growing and the city is committed to making improvements to attractions for Kettering citizens. Prime Controls, Inc., a leading developer and manufacturer of high quality metal sensors and controls, recently announced plans to expand their Kettering headquarters. And NanoSpere, a design and manufacturing company dedicated to improving durability, reliability and functionality of composites using nanotechnology will double their facility size in the Kettering Business Park.

Our small, independent business owners who employ your friends and neighbors are just as critical to the success of our community as our largest employers. Every opportunity I have I try to encourage our residents to support Kettering businesses of all sizes and types. Each time you shop, dine or select a service expert for your home or car you have a choice to select a Kettering business.

Certainly I couldn't conclude the highlights of economic development in 2016 without talking about Town & Country Shopping Center. What a difference a year makes! Not only that, but what a difference persistence, belief in a dream and reinvestment make. The revitalization of Town & Country was a long time coming. We are grateful to the management and ownership of the center for their commitment to the Kettering community. We are also grateful to the Kettering Development Corporation for their support of the project. It has been exciting to watch the transformation of Town & Country during the past year. New businesses TJ Maxx, PetCo and Chik-fil-A received a warm Kettering welcome. Retailers like Trader Joe's, Senses and Tuesday Morning opened in to newly expanded spaces. Familiar favorites like Artisan's Group, Steinmart, Figlio and Marion's are enjoying the increase in retail and restaurant traffic. On all accounts, the merchants in Town & Country are benefiting from the revitalization efforts and the Kettering community is proud of the renewed vibrancy of our commercial downtown.

The City of Kettering remains committed to acting as a catalyst for reinvestment in Wilmington Pike for both economic purposes and for the impact the corridor has on our residents as well. The landscape of this critical thoroughfare continued to evolve in 2016 as a result of the Wilmington Pike Improvement Plan, a strategic plan to improve the corridor adopted by Kettering City Council. The city purchased and demolished several properties to make way for new development. Businesses like Sky Asian Cuisine and Wendy's reinvested in properties along Wilmington Pike. 2017 will be another year of major reinvestment in the Wilmington Pike corridor. Construction is currently underway on a brand new Grismer Tire location on the site where the vacant Burger King was demolished. Likewise a new residential development, to be known as Key Terrace, is under construction. And this spring the City will begin on major street-scape improvements on the Wilmington Pike corridor between Stroop and Marshall Roads. Both sides of the street will have new streetlights installed and abundant street trees planted. On the west side of the corridor a brand new 8 foot multi-use path will be installed, offering a connection to existing regional bike-ways and improved pedestrian access to businesses.

We look forward to a year of continued business growth in 2017. Tenneco recently announced plans to significantly expand their Kettering plant and double their workforce bringing more than 400 new jobs to our community.

Kettering is home to a robust business community. I'd like to thank our business leaders and all who are employed by companies in the city. Over the years our skilled workforce, excellent location, prime commercial properties and our strong city services and amenities have made Kettering the ideal place to start and to grow a business. We truly treasure our Kettering companies.

Kettering is home to welcoming neighborhoods.

The City of Kettering is committed to supporting residential development that ensures families looking for affordable homes with modern amenities have options here in Kettering. Construction is underway on the Prugh Woods development located at the intersection of Dorothy Lane and Prentice Drive near the Kettering Recreation Complex. The access road and the first model home are nearly complete. The Prugh Woods development will include more than 30 single family homes and a new access road to the Kettering Recreation Complex from East Dorothy Lane, which will be named Prugh Woods Drive. A multi-use pedestrian/bicycle pathway will be constructed along Prugh Woods Drive.

Remaining roadwork and the construction of new homes will continue in to 2017 as the home sites are sold. Another new neighborhood is in Acorn Walk, the 32-acre development located near the Kettering Business Park. The community includes a 24-unit affordable senior housing community and new construction duplex or single family homes. In 2017 construction will begin on Gentile Park, a new city park immediately adjacent to Acorn Walk, making this a highly desirable neighborhood. Finally, the centrally located Ashton Gardens condominium complex in Lincoln Park will add eight new residential condominiums in 2017.

Because the City believes that the strength of our neighborhoods is intrinsically tied to the strength of our community, we offer several programs to encourage reinvestment in residential properties. In 2016, our Community Development Block Grant programs assisted qualified homeowners with home improvement programs, down payment assistance, and foreclosure counseling. Fourteen Kettering home owners received financial assistance with home rehab projects. The dream of home-ownership became a reality for eleven residents who received down payment and closing cost assistance. Foreclosures in Kettering are down compared to recent years, still more than 200 Kettering residents accessed our foreclosure counseling program. The City also funded the construction of two new, owner occupied single family homes. Sometimes maintaining the strength of our neighborhoods means removing blighted properties. In 2016 we initiated a partnership with the Montgomery County Land Bank for the Neighborhood Initiative Program which will bring in up to \$264,000 in grant funds for demolition of blighted properties. Kettering will also provide project administration services on behalf of the Land Bank to our neighboring communities of Miami Township, Riverside, and West Carrollton. In Kettering we demolished four blighted residential properties last year and 2017 will see the demolition of several more, permanently removing the negative impact on property values in the surrounding neighborhood.

Another area of focus for the City with tremendous impact on our neighborhoods is property maintenance. Through November of 2016, our systematic property maintenance inspections found more than 2400 violations. Though this number is certainly higher than we'd like, the very good news is that 98.7% of our property maintenance violations are resolved without the need to go to court. Of the more than 1300 complaints for tall grass received in 2016, better than 80% are resolved in a timely manner by the property owner. While violations resulting from improper parking of vehicles, storage of trash receptacles and maintenance of grounds are up, exterior building violations from issues like siding, roofs and windows are down considerably. Clearly, we are making progress improving property maintenance, but we can do better. We have to do better, because the aesthetic appearance of our neighborhoods is tied to property value, public safety and quality of life.

In 2017, our property maintenance division will take a three pronged approach to addressing this critical issue in our community. We will maintain our focus on inspections and compliance. We will increase our community education efforts so that all of our residents understand our property maintenance standards and understand how they can assist us by reporting concerns in their neighborhoods. Finally, we will build upon efforts to build community and neighborhood pride, establishing a culture that it is both the responsibility and the expectation in Kettering that properties are maintained according to our community standards.

One great example of how the City engages our residents to create a culture of community pride is our Cities of Service initiative. Cities of Service is a national program I initiated here in Kettering five years ago that uses service to the community as a resource to revitalize neighborhoods. The effort is so strong that Kettering won the 2016 Innovative Program Award from the National Association of Volunteer Programs in Local Government for our efforts with the Cities of Service Project. In 2016 the Cities of Service Project focused on the Berwin Park neighborhood. Together with residents and adjacent business owners, the City conducted a neighborhood cleanup and removed 1.75 tons of brush. Volunteers installed 25 storm drain markers in the neighborhood in conjunction with the Little Miami Watershed Network project. The City assisted residents to organize a neighborhood garage sale, worked with Red Cross to arrange for the installation of 28 free smoke detectors, and completed 9 requests for property maintenance assistance. The effort drew to a close as we celebrated the neighborhood by holding a Block Party in Berwin Park. In 2017, the Cities of Service initiative will focus on the Oak Park neighborhood.

The success of this initiative is truly a community-wide effort. We rely heavily on support from various organizations, service clubs, neighborhood volunteers and individuals to help with the many activities. We also depend on help from area businesses to provide manpower and resources to continue this worthwhile project. We are very fortunate to be part of a community that realizes the importance of strong and vibrant neighborhoods where people look after one another. If you, your organization, or business would like to join our effort, I encourage you to contact our Volunteer Office.

Another initiative critical to celebrating community pride in Kettering is the Neighborhood Pride Awards Program. Each year the Neighborhood Pride Awards recognize Kettering home and business owners for exceptional efforts to improve and maintain their properties. The winners epitomize the positive impact that investment in property appearance has on our neighborhoods. Thirty-six property owners received this coveted award in 2016.

There's one more opportunity to build neighborhood and community pride, and it's one you can help us accomplish. How many of your neighborhoods host an annual block party? Block parties offer an opportunity for neighbors to get to know one another and develop the kind of supportive relationship many of us remember from the neighborhoods where we grew up. Maybe you will meet an older neighbor who could use some help raking leaves or shoveling snow. Maybe your children will make new friends. Maybe you'll learn about a book club or walking group. At the very least you'll become more familiar with your neighbors and build the kind of bonds that are critical to a sense of belonging. The City believes so strongly in the power of these gatherings that we offer assistance with everything from planning, to road closures to participation by our police and fire departments. Please help us build the strength of our neighborhoods and our sense of Kettering community pride by hosting a Block Party in 2017.

Kettering is home to everyday heroes.

We are exceptionally proud of the men & women who serve in our police and fire departments.

Certainly the most significant projects related to city services in 2016 were our new fire stations. It was my honor to preside over official ribbon cutting ceremonies for both Station 32 on Far Hills Avenue and Station 36 on Hempstead Station Drive. The new stations are a tribute to the careful planning of our administrators and the engagement of our residents to ensure that the facilities reflect the standards of our community. Construction is underway on Station 34 on Woodman Drive near Tenneco, and is scheduled to be complete in 2017. Construction of Station 37 on Dorothy Lane near Southdale School will begin this summer.

Beyond new station construction, another success for our Kettering Fire Department in 2016 was an upgrade from Class 3 to Class 2 in our Insurance Services Office or ISO rating. Our Class 2 rating places Kettering in the top 2 percent of nearly 49,000 ISO rated fire departments. This new classification is a testament to the City of Kettering's commitment to provide outstanding emergency response services – enhanced since our last rating by our new fire station construction, fire apparatus replacement, transition to a comprehensive 24/7 staffing model, upgrading of technology and investments in training and professional development.

In addition to the improvements mentioned above, the Kettering Fire Department integrated a computerized dispatching software system in 2016 which reduces call processing time and overall emergency response times. This software automates the dispatching process to allow emergency dispatch personnel to remain on the phone with distressed callers to give lifesaving instruction while the software dispatches the appropriate emergency crews.

The Kettering Fire Department proudly responded to more than 8,600 calls for emergency service in 2016. This total represents an increase of nearly 200 calls for service over the previous year. In addition to responding to these calls for emergency service our members proactively attended nearly 7,500 collective hours of training in 2016.

The Kettering Fire Department continues to evaluate the needs of the community and strives to shape the Emergency Response Model to meet the community's needs in a timely and cost effective manner. As part of this commitment, City Council recently approved the addition of 13 new career Firefighter / Paramedics to the Kettering Fire Department in 2017.

In addition to our Kettering Police Department welcoming 5 new patrol officers, 3 dispatchers and 1 uniformed deputy bailiff to "Ohio's Finest" in 2016, we also invested in a number of technological improvements.

One of the more significant changes was the replacement of every radio in the department including handheld radios, those inside each police vehicle, and the radio equipment in dispatch. The new system installed, called MARCS, provides statewide, secure, reliable public service wireless communication for public safety and first responders.

In 2016, the Kettering Communications Center handled more than 88,000 calls; and 19,315 of those came in through 911. Dispatch installed the Airbus Vesta 911 system. This system was designed to keep up with the evolving environment of public safety communications, and offers a number of new technological features to our dispatchers.

Another significant update to our fleet of police cruisers in 2016 was the installation of cruiser-cameras. The new system offers a number of camera angles and allows officers to record videos in HD. The system also includes a very sensitive microphone which each officer wears on their uniform.

Our K9s got a new ride in 2016 when we introduced new vehicles for our K9 officers. The split rear seat enables a K9 officer to transport both a prisoner and their K9 partner. Previously K9 officers would have to have another cruiser transport prisoners due to the entire rear seat being used for the K9.

The Kettering Police Department responded to community needs in 2016 with the expansion and introduction of several critical programs. As a result of resident

concerns and regional increase in drug traffic, we expanded our narcotics vice unit and placed a focus on patrolling the regional corridors that run through the city. We created a new School Resource Officer position dedicated to Fairmont High School. And in an effort to build positive relationships, particularly with our youth, the Kettering Police Department held special events, community open houses and educational sessions throughout the community.

In 2017 we will continue to invest technology and personnel for our Kettering Police Department. We will fill Dispatcher, Jailer, Court Security and Patrol Officers. And we will install a new Computer Aided Dispatch System as well as an enhanced Records Management System.

Certainly police and fire come to mind immediately when you think about public safety. Other city services, like snow removal and roadway maintenance also play a part in keeping our community safe.

Kettering is home to exceptional city services.

The City of Kettering invested in several significant infrastructure improvement projects in 2016. We resurfaced the entire length of Stroop Road, from the western border on South Dixie Highway to the eastern border at Dorothy Lane. We conducted a citywide traffic signal system upgrade on 75 traffic signals. We added shared use paths on both Smithville Road and Stroop Road. We re-invested in infrastructure in our residential areas with resurfacing projects and repair of curbs, driveway approaches and sidewalks in several neighborhoods.

Reinvestment towards improvement in our infrastructure remains an area of emphasis for City Council. The proposed 2017 capital improvement fund budget is \$17.5 million, \$2.2 million of which is covered through outside funding. Major projects include the resurfacing of Shroyer Road in partnership with the City of Oakwood, street improvements in the Oak Creek neighborhood, replacement of the Ghent Avenue bridge, repair of the Stroop Road bridge, Gentile Park construction and Fire Station construction.

A city service that receives much attention because of the way it impacts us all is snow removal. In 2016 our public service team used 19,571 gallons of brine, 18,336 gallons of calcium chloride and more than 3,600 tons of salt in an effort to keep our roadways safe for travel during winter weather events. We know snow removal matters to you so we have adopted an all hands on deck approach. We also changed our standards so that we now plow after 2" of snowfall rather than 3". As a result we saw improvements in our service during 2016 weather events and we assure you that we will continue getting better.

Our Residential Leaf Collection Program resulted in more than 1,300 truckloads of leaves being transported to our leaf farm. More than 22,500 load of yard debris were dropped off at our yard debris center. All of this material will be recycled in to mulch and compost made available free to our residents this spring.

I've talked a lot about the city departments you all see and interact with on a daily basis. There are others diligently working to serve our citizens behind the scenes. Our Administrative Services and IT team played a critical role in all of the technology advancements in public safety. They also completed a project to expand our fiber network so that we share connections with neighboring jurisdictions, a feature that adds significant security to our systems should an emergency occur. Our Law Department completed 475 contracts in 2016 and responded to 173 requests for public information. Our Finance Department worked with city administrators to establish and hold expenses to our annual budget, a process that wins awards and recognition year after year. They also made sure our contractors, vendors and employees were paid. Our Human Resources Department negotiated contracts with our bargaining units and recruited for new additions for our city team. Our Tax Department processed more than 26,000 income tax returns, and worked one-on-one with 3300 residents who needed assistance completing their tax returns to comply with mandatory filing requirements. Our Safety Division ensured that thousands of Kettering school children made it safely to school each day.

I am especially proud of the way many of our city departments come together to serve our residents. Perhaps the most meaningful example of this is our special assistance for senior citizens. In 2016 alone, our full-time Senior Services coordinator worked with the Kettering Police Department to provide resources for 59 residents in crisis, with the Kettering Fire Department to assist 56 residents with complex care needs and the Planning & Development Department to identify options for seniors in need of housing and property maintenance assistance. Because the City is committed to supporting this position to serve our seniors, each of our departments have the opportunity to be proactive in meeting needs of these residents rather than reactive once there is a more serious situation.

The individual attention our Senior Services Coordinator provides to more than 1,500 seniors each year is an innovative service very few cities offer, and one that is invaluable to our seniors and their caregivers. We believe in it because these seniors supported the Kettering community for decades, and it is our turn to give back to them.

Kettering is home to thriving cultural arts.

It's hard to believe that it has been more than twenty five years since a group of

ambitious and dedicated community members, city administrators and generous benefactors set out to make Frazee Pavilion a reality.

Looking back, there is no doubt that their vision and determination to create a permanent home for the “Summer’s Best Music Under the Stars” forever changed Kettering. For the sixth consecutive year, Frazee Pavilion ticket sales exceeded \$3 million in 2016 and we were once again ranked as one of the top 100 outdoor amphitheaters worldwide. Since 1991 the Frazee has served millions of customers and has gained many loyal and dedicated fans. Season after season, concert-goers rave about how seeing internationally known musicians at Frazee feels more like enjoying a private show in their own back yard. We offered an amazing lineup of artists and events to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of Frazee with you. And we topped it all off with the 25th Anniversary Free Concert Series featuring Blood, Sweat and Tears with Bo Diddley in June, Grand Funk Railroad in July, and The Spinners in August, as our way of thanking you for all of your support of Frazee over the past 25 years.

Rosewood Arts Centre celebrated the 28th year of Art on the Commons, one of the Dayton area’s most popular fine arts festivals. Art on the Commons features fine arts and crafts by nearly 100 talented artists from throughout the United States and live entertainment throughout the event.

Kettering is home to beautiful parks

We dedicated a long-awaited and very special tribute to our veterans in 2016. The Kettering Veterans Memorial & Charles F. Kettering History Walk at Delco Park celebrates veterans of all military branches and honors the men and women who dedicate their lives to preserving our freedom. It also highlights the important contributions of Charles F. Kettering to the war efforts during WWI and WWII and the many innovative and philanthropic contributions of our city’s namesake. We owe a special thanks to Kettering resident and decorated veteran Jim Schneider and to the Kettering Parks Foundation for their vision and determination to establish this memorial.

Pickleball made its way to Kettering in 2016. Kettering constructed four new outdoor pickleball courts at J.F. Kennedy Park on Bigger Road. The facility is immensely popular and attracting all new park users to the sport.

With 21 parks in Kettering, each of our residents can find a city park within about a mile of their home. We will add a new park in 2017 with the construction of Gentile Park near the Kettering Business Park and Acorn Walk development.

Kettering is home to world class recreation amenities and year-round family fun

The City of Kettering Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts Department joined the ranks of elite park and recreation agencies across the country by earning accreditation for the fifth time through the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies and the National Recreation and Park Association. This achievement signifies that our department is operating according to the very highest standards of agency administration.

We have put a focus on community wellness with our state of the art fitness facilities and community-wide initiatives like “Healthy Heart, Healthy You”. Kettering was awarded the 2016 Silver Level Healthy Community Award from the Ohio Department of Health in recognition of these efforts.

Kettering is home to volunteer spirit

The Kettering Mayor’s Ball for Charity is a volunteer driven annual black tie, fundraising event that benefits a Kettering non-profit. The event was created by the Kettering Rotary Club and has raised more than 175 thousand dollars since its inception. In 2016 the Mayor’s Ball raised more than 40 thousand dollars for the Multiple System Atrophy Coalition, a cause that is so very near and dear to my heart. We thank Reynolds and Reynolds for providing an elegant backdrop for the Ball each year and the very dedicated group of volunteers who plan the evening. In 2017 the Ball will benefit an outreach that unfortunately is desperately needed in our region. Brigid’s Path, soon to open in Kettering, will provide life-saving care to babies born drug dependent and supportive resources for their families. We hope you will join us on April 29th.

We could not provide the level of services we do without our city volunteers. In its 37-year history, the award winning City of Kettering Volunteer Program has been an integral part of the city’s operations. The program has grown tremendously over the years. Volunteers have donated over two and a half million hours of dedicated service with a value of over 20 million dollars. Each year more than 1,000 city volunteers of all ages give of their time, talent and heart to make Kettering the best it can be. Volunteers help increase productivity and extend services in many ways. Volunteers help provide resident services in our administrative offices, assist with family events that create memories for generations, drive senior adults to critical medical and life essential appointments, and so much more. Volunteers work in every department and every location within the city. They are truly an essential part of the city’s day-to-day activities.

We know that we have residents out there with talents and professional expertise that could benefit the city, community service clubs, our schools and area non-profit agencies. In the coming year I ask that each of you find a way to volunteer here in Kettering. It takes all of us giving of ourselves to preserve the strength of our neighborhoods, our businesses and our treasured community traditions.

Kettering is a community unlike any other. We offer an exceptional level of city services and a quality of life enhanced by our senior services, beautiful parks, public art, recreation facilities and great outdoor music. People locate here, stay here, and return here because of the range of world class amenities and services that make Kettering a place our residents love to call home.

Be assured that we will work tirelessly every day in 2017 and the years to come to maintain this quality of life.

May you and your families be healthy and prosperous in the New Year and on behalf of City Council and staff, thank you for making Kettering home and allowing us to serve you. God bless!