

STATE OF THE CITY REPORT FOR 2019

This marks my eighth State of the City address and it is a marked difference from when I reported the condition of our city back in 2012. We have so much to be thankful for. We have to continue to make improvements and invest in our citizens, employees, equipment, and critical assets such as local roads and streets, parks, buildings and equipment.

It takes a large group to make this government work, so I would like to thank the Clerk Treasurer, City Council members, members of the Board of Public Works and Safety, Department Heads, volunteers who serve on all of our local boards and commissions, and all of our dedicated employees who work tirelessly everyday to make our city better.

Our most important priority is the delivery of public safety in our city. As in previous years, our public safety departments make up a large portion of our total budget. In 2018, we raised our staffing levels for both the Police and Fire Departments to their highest level ever. In 2018, we hired (1) IDACS employee and hired replacement Public Assistance Officers (PAO's). Critical investments continue to be made as we purchased more police cars, refurbished an ambulance, purchased a self loading power cot, purchased and ordered new Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) and an Air Filling Station, purchased new computers for some of our vehicles, and purchased new mobile and portable radios for both public safety departments. The investments listed above cost the city well over \$800,000.00 and more will be coming in 2019. In 2018, our Violent Part 1 Crimes decreased by 11.5%. Part 1 Non Violent Crimes decreased by

3.2% , while our Part 2 crimes which include Drugs increased by 5.6%. Our total crime reporting through the FBI shows a DECREASE in crime from 2017 by 4.8%. This is significant based on what is happening on the outskirts of our city. Listed below is the reported run down concerning crime reporting and responses for both public safety departments:

Beech Grove Police Department:

Responses: 21,060

Vehicles Stopped: 3,325

Arrests: 1,238

Traffic Accidents: 295

Motel Responses: 504

Apartment Runs: 1,541

Medicine Disposal: 708 Lbs.

PART 1 Crimes: Robbery 13, Assaults 4, Homicide 0, Rape 6 (Down 11.5%)

PART 1 Crimes: Arson 2, Burglary 4,3 Larceny 225, Stolen Vehicles 65, (Down 3.2%)

PART 2 Crimes: Drugs 118, Vandalism 49, Misc. 245 (Up 5.6%)

Beech Grove Fire Department:

Fire Responses:	4,546
Ambulance Responses:	5,233
Ambulance Revenue:	\$ 1,383,655.31
Fire Loss:	\$416,290.00
Fatalities:	0
Injuries:	5
Overdoses:	164
Inspections:	143

*In 2018, we became re-accredited with CAAS (Commission on Accredited Ambulance Service).

In 2018, our Department of Public Works once again performed at a very high level. The Department was presented with more new equipment and continued upgrades to the buildings and grounds. The city purchased a new trash truck that improved our fleet and we finally replaced our old trash truck that was purchased back in the early 1990's. Our Department of Public Works employees continue to provide excellent trash pick up, heavy trash pickup, brush removal, leaf pick up, pot hole filling, delivery of recycling and trash totes, and many more very valuable programs that benefits the citizens of our city. We contract out mattress and box spring pick to prevent exposures to our city employees and we also contract out street sweeping services. The street sweeping service runs from April to the end of September each year as part of our storm water utility program.

In 2018, we once again filed all of the necessary paperwork for our MS-4 certification, and we also applied for re-certification as a “CLEAN” Community through the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM). Listed below are some outstanding statistics provided for the year 2018:

Department of Public Works

Trash Picked Up and Delivered to Either the Landfill or Covanta 4,549 tons

Dumpster Yards of Heavy Trash 460

Recycling totals 455 tons

Paper Shredding 13 tons

Mattresses and Box Springs Picked Up 288

New Totes Delivered 147

Work Orders Produced 566

Pot Holes Filled 94

Alleys Grated 35

Gallons of Waste Water Treated by Citizens Energy Group 643,000,000

Amount of Debris Picked Up from Street Sweeping 386 tons

The Department of Compliance has remained very busy. We welcomed Cathy Chappell into the Department and she has adapted very well. As you can imagine, the Department of Compliance at times, is not well received because of what they do, but it is very necessary.

Department of Compliance

Inspections Conducted 434

Letters to Property Owners 243

Tickets Issued 36

Vehicles Tagged or Towed 65

Public Nuisance Notices 5

In 2019, it is our intent to re-purpose one of the Fire Department Administrative Vehicles and place it in service with the Department of Compliance. The current vehicle that the Department of Compliance uses is the old Battalion Chief vehicle used by the Fire Department. As of this writing, the Department of Compliance has been issued one new computer and a new computer program to track inspections has been installed, and is in use.

The Department of Senior Services continues to do well. In 2018, our Senior Center continues to add programs to assist our older population. Transportation continues for local residents to the grocery store, doctor's offices, local hospitals, and other local shops. Our local Lowes donated book shelves, a microwave, installed carpet around the stage, installed new kitchen faucets and sprayers, handicapped rails in the restrooms, (2) new toilets, and installed a new dishwasher in the kitchen as part of their community volunteer program. The City purchased a new stand alone freezer for the kitchen and had security cameras installed throughout the building.

Elton H. Geshwiler Senior Citizens Center

Memberships 218

Gallons of Gasoline Used 1,225

Transports 1,800

The Department of Parks and Recreation is such a wonderful asset to our city. We are so fortunate to have the type of park system that we have. Clean, safe, presentable and family friendly parks are what we offer to our citizens. In 2018, the Indiana Historical Society held a ceremony in Sarah T. Bolton Park and installed a historical marker to recognize this historic area. Once again in 2018, the Sarah T. Bolton Park hosted the Annual Memorial Service in May and hosted the City's largest one day event, the annual Promoters Club fireworks display in July. In 2018, park employees planted 5 new trees and removed 24 trees. Re-mulching was conducted in the playground areas at Challis Park and Sarah T. Bolton Park, and all three park entrance signs were replaced. Our parks employees replaced 12 picnic tables and collected over 32 tons of trash (at all three parks, and outside of the park system).

In 2018, one Dixie Chopper lawn machine was purchased which increases our fleet of grass cutting machines to five, with the oldest being less than six years old. Having reported all of this, we can also add that more than 10,000 man hours were worked without any reported injuries.

In 2018, our park system received a \$13,000.00 Patronicity Grant from the Indiana Housing and Community Development Association (IHCDA) to help offset the cost of playground equipment for Sarah T. Bolton Park and Challis Park. This money was

matched by the proceeds from the Mayors Dinner for the Parks held in October. In early 2019, our Redevelopment Commission voted to fund the remaining balance so the Parks Department can purchase new playground equipment at both Sarah T. Bolton Park (near the Creek Side Shelter) and at Challis Park (approximately \$79,000.00). This will replace the current playground equipment which is 20 years old.

The Hornet Park Community Center is a center that we should all be proud of. So many wonderful things are happening in the center and now more than ever more and more citizens especially children are coming to the center. In 2018, the center offered 27 different programs, some of these programs included “Buzz Club” “Cooking Matters”, “Self Defense”, “CPR Classes”, “Yoga”, “Kick Boxing”, “Immunization Clinics”, “Free Dental Clinics”, “Wednesday Night Family Dinners”, “Going Green in the Grove”, “Mini Monday”, “Free Summer Lunch Program” and hosted the second annual “Mayors Dinner”, to raise funds for park programs and equipment, just to name a few. In 2018, the Hornet Park Community Center collected over \$84,000.00 in registration, shelter, and program participation fees, and the Mayors Dinner for the parks has raised \$34,000.00 over the last two years for our parks system.

In 2019, we look forward to doing the final paving work around Sarah T. Bolton Park so we can begin work on the 2.2 mile “Franciscan Trail” Greenway. The Greenway is set to be bid out anytime after July 1, 2020. Thus, in 2019, 15th Avenue will be redone from Main Street to the top of the hill at the park entrance, Byland Drive will be redone from 9th to 12th Avenue, and a walkway will be constructed from the edge of the woods to the Hill Top Shelter to accommodate walkers from the Southeast neighborhoods of our city.

This \$3.3 Million Dollar project will completely change our city and next to the reconstruction of Main Street, will be in my estimate the most important project that we have done to date.

INFRASTRUCTURE

In 2018, we had another great year for rebuilding our infrastructure. Our paving program continued to make improvements and when we completed our paving in 2018, we had paved 55 roads and parking lots since 2012, and the majority of the road work was total reconstruction. In 2018, we paved the following roads:

Adelaide (Full Depth Reclamation)

Ash Street (4th Avenue to 9th Avenue)

6th Avenue (Churchman to Ash)

Groveswood Drive (Strip Patching)

8th Avenue (Churchman to Byland)

12th Avenue (Alton to Churchman)

21st Avenue (Southern to Cleveland)

South Grove School (North Entrance Drives)

As part of our paving program, we conducted another inventory of all of our local roads through the “PASER” program. This inventory rates all of our roads and gives us better direction on when our local roads should be repaved.

In 2018, we continued to focus on repairing sidewalks, adding sidewalks and adding new ADA Ramps to make our city more walk able. In 2018, sidewalk work was completed in the following areas:

Churchman Avenue Sidewalk Project (Closed Out and Completed)

South 6th Avenue (New Sidewalks Added, Repairs made, and ADA Ramps)

South 4th Avenue (New Sidewalks Added and ADA Ramps)

Redfern Drive (Sidewalk Repairs)

Killian Drive (Sidewalk Repairs)

Britton Drive (Sidewalk Repairs)

18th Avenue (Sidewalk Repairs)

Buffalo Street (Sidewalk Repairs)

Groveswood Drive (Sidewalk and Approach Repairs)

South 12th Avenue (ADA Ramps)

Churchman Avenue (Sidewalk Repairs)

In 2018, we continued to focus on making drainage improvements in local neighborhoods. Much has been done since we established a “Storm Water Utility District” and began charging storm water fees to make improvements. At years end, our consulting engineers (Wessler Engineering) developed a new list of areas that they have inspected. In 2018, drainage work was done in the following areas:

Churchman Sidewalk Project (Closed Out and Completed) * Drainage Improvements

Killian Drive

North Bend Road (Closed Out and Completed)

21st and Southern

Smoke Tree Drive (Clean Out)

Mann Drive (Ditch Improvements)

Churchman Avenue at Churchman Bypass

INDOT, MPO and COMMUNITY CROSSINGS GRANT PROGRAM

In 2018, we continued to receive funding commitments from the Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization and INDOT through the Community Crossings Grant program.

Thompson Road Sidewalk Project:

In 2018, we received notification that the City will receive \$410,000.00 in funding to install sidewalks on the north side of Thompson Road from Emerson Avenue to 9th Avenue. This project is slated for bid in 2021, and I suspect this project will be moved up for pedestrian safety in that area.

Arlington Avenue and Big 4 Round-A-Bout:

In 2018, work continued on the design and purchase of (6) parcels affected by this project. This project is set to be bid out on July 10, 2019 for construction in the fall of 2019.

Franciscan Trail Greenway Project:

In 2018, work continued on the engineering design, environmental inspections, and parcel identification for areas affected by the 2.2 mile trail. This project is set to be bid out after July 1, 2020.

Franciscan Trail Head:

At the end of 2018, work began on the design of a “Trail Head” that will be constructed in the summer of 2019. The Trail Head will be built at the intersection of 16th and Albany on the north side of Albany.

25th and Churchman Avenue Round-A-Bout:

In 2018, we applied for funding to construct a round-a-bout in the area of 25th and Churchman. We received a very favorable grade on this application and look forward to hearing whether funding is approved by the end of May 2019.

INDOT Community Crossings Grant:

In 2018, the City received \$425,000.00 in funding to assist us with paving local roads and streets and sidewalk installation. We received \$336,000.00 in the spring letting and re-applied in November and received an additional \$89,000.00 to continue to make improvements to our local roads. We have applied for more funding (\$333,000.00) in 2019 and we should hear an announcement sometime this spring.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In 2018, we had another good year with local business. We continue to have interest in people re-locating their businesses and starting up new businesses in our city. Since we began in 2012, we have become home to over 100 new businesses. Now we have lost businesses and some business have ceased operations, but we still have a substantial net gain.

In 2018, home values and our assessed valuation as a city continued to grow. The real estate market in our city appears to be very good. These are all good indicators of the favorable direction that our city is headed in.

With my report I want to separate our priority objectives to give you better insight on the drive that we are taking to continue to improve our city.

Main Street:

In 2018, the city applied for a non competing planning grant (\$40,000.00) to hire a consultant and come up with a plan for our business district. In 2019, I anticipate that we will apply for funding from OCRA to do façade replacements on Main Street building store fronts. The business community is excited about this as twelve (12) businesses have signed up to participate. We hope to have our application for this funding turned in by June.

We continue to have more businesses rent space on Main Street and we are slowly but surely filling up empty store fronts. In early 2019, we had a couple ribbon cuttings and I anticipate more this spring and summer.

St. Francis Property:

Brandenburg LLC. completed the dismantling of the old St. Francis Hospital building in 2018 and restored the property to its original state. This was a major undertaking and the project ended up being extremely successful. Brandenburg LLC also removed all of the utilities serving the old hospital building including sewer piping which we hope as helped reduce sewer back ups and drainage problems in the neighborhoods around the hospital.

The old hospital property is now ready for redevelopment should Franciscan Alliance choose to do so. It's important to note that the City of Beech Grove does not own the property, so any development would have to be approved by their executive board.

Much work has also been done to the Alverno Services building (13th and Albany) as the St. Francis Visiting Nurse Service has moved back to Beech Grove and into this building.

Work has also been done to the old Medical Arts Building and the parking garage (1500 Albany). Floors seven through eleven have been remodeled and the parking garage is

being remodeled. Insurance Services now occupy the building and many jobs have been brought back to Beech Grove through the Nurse Services and the Insurance Services division.

110 and 112 N. 17th Avenue Medical Center:

The two medical buildings across the street from the old hospital have recently been purchased. I met with the new owner and he is working on a couple potential tenants for both buildings. There are a couple options that he is working on but it is too early to report anything other than the fact that the buildings have been purchased.

CSX Property:

The city has been working with CSX for years on either redeveloping the property or selling the property. The CSX property is 115 acres located north of the Amtrak facility and is zoned for heavy industrial. CSX is working with IDEM and has hired a company to clean up the property from an environmental perspective. At the end of March 2019, clean up work should almost be complete and we are working towards a private company purchasing the property to relocate their business. This is very good news for our city and we need to show extreme patience in this very long process. This initiative could be one of the largest investments made in our city in years.

Industrial Park @ Arlington Avenue and Big 4 Road:

INDOT will be putting out bids for the construction of a round-a-bout this summer. This has attracted questions from a few businesses (who may be interested in locating here) based on accessibility. We have purchased (6) parcels of land for the round-a-bout construction and are working to attract more industrial business into our city. The round-

a-bout is needed in this area because it is estimated that by 2023, there will be a 30% increase in traffic coming through this area.

A LOOK AT 2019

We had a good year in 2018. Where are we going in 2019 and what should we expect?

In 2019, we must continue to provide the quality services afforded all residents of the city. We have to continue to focus on responding to problems associated with drug abuse and usage, and underlying problems this causes. Hopefully, in 2019 we receive good news for Main Street and the OCRA Grant process. We hope that residential property values will continue to increase and the net worth of our city will continue to rise as well.

We must continue to invest in the personal safety of each resident and all of our dedicated employees. Investments must continue to be made in all of our departments, especially our Police and Fire Departments. Our involvement with the school district continues to be important and the interaction between our Police Officers and students has to remain in place.

In 2019, we hope to continue to purchase new vehicles and equipment to better serve all of you. We should be replacing Fire Department administrative vehicles soon and purchase more police cars as well. I have asked our Fire Chief to form a committee to develop specifications for a new fire engine. Our Department of Senior Services should receive another vehicle for further transportation and our Compliance Division should receive a replacement vehicle. These are vehicles from the Fire Department that will be re-purposed for continued use. In 2019, our Police Department will hopefully have an “out building” constructed so equipment can be stored away from the main building.

In 2019, we should also receive a new trash truck bringing our fleet up to four vehicles and DPW should be receiving two new mid size dump trucks as well. Our DPW has already taken delivery of a new “wood chipper” machine to complement their fleet. Our Police Department has recently received a new finger print machine and should be employing another Public Assistance Officer (PAO) to better serve people who visit the police station. One of the new programs under development concerning both the Police and Fire Department is drone technology. We look to introduce that program sometime this year.

In 2019, we look forward to continuing to rebuild our infrastructure and continue to fix drainage problems that have been around for many years. We continue to look forward to paving and rebuilding more roads and we hope to hear good news concerning INDOT’s Community Crossings Grant program. With this round of paving, we would have reconstructed approximately 60 roads and parking lots since 2012. We look forward to the round-a-bout construction on Arlington Avenue at Big 4 road and the construction of a Trail Head on the hospital property. We want work to continue on the Thompson Road Sidewalk Project and the Franciscan Trail Greenway, and we hope that we receive funding for the construction of a round-a-bout at 25th and Churchman Avenue.

In 2019, we look forward to continued improvements in our parks system. Sometime this spring, we hope to see the installation of new playground equipment at Sarah T. Bolton Park and at Challis Park. The Hilltop Shelter will also have a walkway installed that begins at the edge of the woods and travels over to the playground area. This marks the final paving for the parks systems prior to the construction of the Franciscan Trail Greenway.

In 2019, we hope to finalize the transaction of ownership of the CSX property and hopefully see a future for the old hospital property. I believe the round-a-bout at Arlington Avenue and Big 4 Road could give us a huge boost for more business to come to our industrial park.

In 2019, we will have to do more mediation work on the landfill as we have been visited by IDEM and more recommendations have been made to mitigate issues with the property.

We have done such a good job of paying off our debt and within the next 3-4 years, our Civil City and Redevelopment Commission will not have any long term debt. In closing, I again want to thank everyone associated with the city and all of our dedicated employees for all of the work that was done in 2018.

We look forward to what 2019 will bring.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dennis B. Buckley

Mayor

City of Beech Grove