

First, let me welcome you to the Rogers City Council Chamber for the 2012 State of the City address. I want thank each of you for being here this evening and express my sincere appreciation to the Rogers-Lowell Chamber of Commerce for hosting our reception this evening.

Members of the Rogers City Council, Honorable City Attorney, Madam Clerk, The Honorable Judge Karren, city directors, all city employees, and my fellow citizens, it is an honor and privilege to present to you the State of the City.

Rogers is a vibrant community that is both rich in history and heritage. While over the years it has transformed from a charming small town to the retail Mecca of Northwest Arkansas; and we continue today striving to be a well-rounded community. The success of Rogers is due to the history of strong leadership in our business community, by our schools commitment to education both primary and higher learning, our state of the art health system, our hard working families and our continued heritage of an overall spirit of cooperation.

We have a great history of charting our own course, plowing new ground, and embracing change. This has made us a leader in the state and a model for others to follow. We are the envy of many and a driving force for the economy in Arkansas. We are proud of where we started as well as where we are now; however, we cannot afford to simply relish in our current standing. We must continue the quest to do better, reach higher, dream bigger, and work harder. All the while, we must continue to build regional relationships, working with other communities in Northwest Arkansas to solve common problems and reach common goals.

2011 was a record setting history-making year for Rogers and the region. First, we celebrated the 125th anniversary of Daisy, which was highlighted with the release of a commemorative book, “It all starts here” written by Daisy’s own Joe Murfin. Mercy Health System announced significant investments and expansion over the next several years including a clinic Downtown Rogers. Glad Manufacturing

celebrated 40 years of operation at the Rogers plant and invested over \$34 million dollars modernizing their Rogers facility. And finally in late 2011 we were able to announce that the first Cabela's in Arkansas was coming to Rogers and in 2012 its doors will open. We believe the presence of Cabela's in Rogers is indeed a game changer. Our sister city Bentonville is now host to one of the finest art museums in the country. This regional amenity will have positive effects on Northwest Arkansas for generations to come.

2011 broke all the records with respect to the fiscal well being of the city. Sales tax collections exceeded 2008 numbers, which had previously been the highest in city history. Working with the city council we continue to maintain a healthy financial reserve while still being able to finance many of the smaller capital projects. It didn't stop with sales tax collections, in 2011 the most aggressive and important sales tax extension in the history of Rogers was passed with the highest percentage of support in our history of bond elections. As you know, the approval of the 2011 bond election will have such a positive impact on

our transportation system, public safety, and the overall quality of life in Rogers. For the first time in over 50 years, the city of Rogers will have a new public pool surrounded by a state of the art water park. In addition we were able to acquire the much-needed land for parks on the west side of I-540.

As a region we continue to face challenges with the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) and Oklahoma regarding waste water treatment and our phosphorous discharge levels. These are certainly not new issues to the City but are becoming more imminent. Negotiations have not solved the issues and unfortunately additional litigation is likely. We will continue to join others in Northwest Arkansas to demand that science leads the discussion and ultimate outcome. Last year we were fearful that the Tiger II grant would be lost, further delaying the Razorback trail. Fortunately that funding was secured and the trail will be a reality. The regional approach to economic development by the Northwest Arkansas Council is underway; I remain excited about the opportunities this initiative presents.

We recently completed the process of branding Rogers, lead by the Convention and Visitor's Bureau. Branding is the process of creating a unique name and image for an organization with a consistent theme. Branding is the personality that identifies an organization and how it relates to key constituencies. It was a very engaging and interesting exercise that allowed many levels of participation and revealed the essence of how people view Rogers. The new open door logo and tagline, "Where possible lives" will be fully implemented in 2012 and we will begin to live our new brand.

I will spend just a few minutes highlighting some of our department's accomplishments and goals for 2012:

Fire Department

History was made in the Rogers Fire Department in 2011 when they became one of only 140 accredited fire departments nationwide. The department made several administrative improvements in 2011,

with the addition of a Captain in the Training Division and a Civilian Physical Resources Coordinator to manage and repair the department facilities and fleet. These human resource improvements have had an exponential impact on the department's training and maintenance programs.

Emergency incidents increased approximately 8% over the previous year, with the vast majority of those calls involving transportation and care of sick and injured people. The fire department continues to forge new and innovative ways to provide state-of-the-art care to citizens through the use of mechanical CPR devices and data collection methodologies. Last year nearly 1,000 citizens were trained in CPR. Improving cardiac arrest survival rates in the city continues to be a top tier priority for the department.

In April of last year, the Fire Department reopened its training center after severe structural damage and mold was discovered in 2010. The "new" training center offers a host of improvements to the

department's professional development efforts, including increase classroom and office space and a workout facility. The training center also continues to be a source of regional collaboration, as surrounding departments uses it to host the Northwest Arkansas Regional Fire Academy.

The department received a significant boost through the passage of the 2011 Bond Issue. Because of the support of its citizens, the department will see the arrival of four new apparatus in 2012: three pumpers and one ladder truck. These improvements will be crucial to the eventual lowering of the department's insurance rating. This lower rating signifies one of the few opportunities for local government to "give back" to its citizens by reducing their homeowner's insurance premiums.

2012 should continue to be a dynamic year for the RFD. Working to be the first Fire Department in the state to complete ambulance service accreditation, along with continued growth and development of

resources will ensure that the citizens of Rogers receive excellent public safety service.

Police Department

2011 was marked by a change in leadership at the Rogers Police Department. Chief Allen a regionally well-respected lawman joined the department in April. All officers in the department were given the opportunity to visit with the chief, to discuss issues, concerns, and the direction of the department. At their convenience, officers spent as little as 15 minutes and up to two hours having a one on one interaction with the chief.

The department began a comprehensive review of its Policy and Procedure manual and hopes to present a revised version to be adopted by the Rogers City Council in the first half of 2012.

Several facility and equipment upgrades began in 2011 many of which will be fully realized in 2012. For the first time the Criminal

Justice Complex will be have a new generator which will allow the department to remain fully functional in the event of power outages. Thanks to the 2011 bond election a much needed perimeter fence will be constructed around the secure areas of the facility with the goal of protecting the public as well as the facility. Again thanks to the voters, the Police department will be able to acquire a reasonable fleet of four-wheel drive vehicles allowing for continued operations in all weather conditions. A new “patrol rifle program” will equip all of our officers with the necessary tools to handle a violent situation efficiently, effectively, and quickly.

A renewed warrant service effort resulted in a 10% reduction of outstanding warrants and continued efforts to reduce traffic accidents at the top ten accident locations resulted in a 10% drop in accidents. While we enjoy a low crime rate in Rogers, it’s in no small part due to the dedication of our men and women in blue who continue to deliver the highest quality of service and dedication to solving crime. Because of their devotion to duty we continue to have a high rate of solved and

cleared cases in all areas considered major crimes. The total number of reported offenses dropped 11% in 2011 and the department's clearance rate of major crimes was 63.9% compared to the national average of 47.2%. Of the 22 crime or offense categories tracked, we saw a reduction in the crime rate in almost half of those categories.

Code Enforcement

The Code Enforcement Department issued approximately 2200 notices or letters for violations of city ordinances in 2011. The majority of the violations involved high grass and weeds, unsightly property conditions, and inoperative vehicles parked on the grass. Graffiti removal was down this year compared to the last two years.

Approximately 175 locations of graffiti were removed in 2011 compared with around 300 locations in 2010. Illegal signs posted on city right-of-ways were collected throughout the year in a continued effort to keep the city clean.

Building Inspections

The commercial permits were increased in 2011 with a total of 22 compared to the 17 in 2010. There were 118 commercial remodel permits and 15 commercial addition permits issued in 2011 that was also an increase from 2010. The value of the commercial permits issued was just over \$40 million.

However, 176 building permits were issued for residential single-family homes, which is lower when compared to the 224 issued in 2010. The good news is that single-family home remodeling permits were up in by 28 in 2011.

Animal Services

The Rogers Animal Services had a busy year as a total of 2117 animals came through the shelter in 2011 compared to 2089 for 2010. Included in the 2011 total are 508 dogs from Bentonville.

Animal control received 3,705 calls regarding injured animals, animals at large, and bites reports 2011; which is down from the 4310 calls they received in 2010. Euthanasia was down this year at the shelter by approximately half with only 496 animals in 2011 compared to 852 in 2010.

In 2011 the Animal Shelter adoptions were up to approximately 1400 animals finding new “forever homes” which is compared to 1107 adoptions in 2010. This increase can be attributed to efforts of the staff as well as the many volunteers who helped raise awareness and participation in adoption events throughout Northwest Arkansas.

Parks and Recreation Departments

The Rogers parks department stays busy managing and maintaining the city parks and trails. While currently responsible for 5 large sports parks, 14 neighborhood parks, and 23 miles of trails, the department will be expanding with the acquisition of the Mt. Hebron land as well as the sports park development on Dixieland and the

Aquatics complex at the Doc Wheeler site. From a management standpoint the department spent much of 2011 working with the design and engineering teams on the aquatic complex, Sports Park, the modernization of facilities at Northwest Park, and the Razorback trail.

The Parks Department is also responsible for the maintenance side of all the parks and continues to do more with less and delivers a high level of service to the community they serve.

In 2012 the department will be tasked with the start of nearly \$20 million in new projects while leading the ongoing discussion of the redevelopment of Lake Atalanta. Trail construction and development of the future Mercy Health trailhead park will be ongoing in 2012.

Both youth and adult recreation in Rogers continue to grow which necessitates the expansion of our parks system. With record numbers of participants in both adult and youth soccer and softball programming and scheduling is always a challenge. We are so fortunate in Rogers to

have a strong relationship with the Rogers School Community Recreation Association and the Rogers Youth Center board which allows us to provide a variety of high quality recreational services to all ages of participants at affordable prices. Once the sports park is completed in 2013, there is no doubt the facility will be fully used by residents and visitors.

Rogers Historical Museum

The City of Rogers museum continues to offer a wonderful opportunity to residents and visitors alike to take a step back in time and learn about the rich and interesting history of our city. With world class accreditations and scores of community advocates the museum is a real gem and truly enhances the quality of life in Rogers. This year was highlighted by the opening of the “Benton County Crime Stories” exhibit and continued planning for the future expansion and capital campaign which will be launched this year.

Adult Wellness Center

It has been another busy year at the AWC. With memberships growing and unbelievable use of the facility, 2011 was a year for future planning. In an attempt to insure the facilities and its amenities continue to be top notch, a long-term maintenance plan for the facility and equipment was developed. The first phase of this plan was adopted by the city council in the 2012 budget process and will be implemented throughout the year. A new and revamped reporting system was developed for the Silver Sneakers program which has resulted in additional revenues and increased participation by the members.

As reported in 2011, the formation of the AWC Foundation remains a high priority for the future sustainability of the Center. 2012 will bring a continued effort to develop programming that maximizes and serves the needs of the members. Through regular membership meetings, management at the center strive to improve services and classes geared to enhance member experience.

Recycle Center

The Rogers recycling center continues to be a success for the community. While the continued attempt to be self supporting is a challenge with volatile commodity prices, many have heard me say, “It’s not cheap to be green, but it’s my favorite color and more importantly, it’s the right thing to do.” The department continues to be innovative and was responsive to downtown merchants interested in recycling by providing receptacles and regular pick up in the alleys behind downtown businesses.

Rogers Public Library

The Rogers Public Library continues to be one of the busiest in the state with an estimated 230,000 annual visits, over 500,000 circulations of materials, and 32,000 participants attended our children’s programs in 2011. In 2011 all public computers in the facility were replaced thanks to grant funding from Cox Communications, online reference materials were added making them both available at the Library and 24/7 from home. The Library significantly increased the size and number of the

downloadable EBook collection and added Transparent Online Language Database that includes courses for 80 languages. 2012 will be a busy year at the Library, with goals of a complete upgrade of the Library website, improving mobile access, and enhancement of the library catalog with an integrated search of library physical materials and key databases.

Airport

With the continued success of our global business community the Airport continues to be a key component of the amenities Rogers has to offer. The Airport began 2011 by overcoming numerous winter weather challenges, including a record-setting March snow in excess of 24 inches. Airport staff worked diligently throughout the winter to minimize airport closures, lost revenue, and inconvenience to valued customers.

The east parallel taxiway was completed, improving safety and capacity while bringing the taxiway system and runway safety areas in

compliance with FAA standards. Construction of a \$1.1M apron reconstruction project began in September and will be completed in 2012. There were two large projects completed in 2011; one being the upgrading of numerous airfield signages and the other a significant pavement maintenance project.

One of the Airport's primary sources of revenue, fuel flowage fees, increased by 8.5%, while operations and maintenance expenses were 12% under budget for the year. Design work will continue in 2012 for Phase II of the apron reconstruction project. The Airport is planning another extensive pavement maintenance project that includes seal coating, restriping several taxiways, and aircraft parking aprons.

IT Department

The department continues to work on many strategic plans to keep city departments on the cutting edge of technology while ever mindful of fiscal prudence. In 2011, the department was able to reduce mobile phone and data plans by \$20,000.00 a year, and saved another \$15,000

annually by streamlining printing solutions. With upgrades in the police and fire departments along with over 2500 work requests the department stayed busy in 2011. With numerous goals in 2012 from the implementation of “e-ticket” for mobile police units to installing mobile solutions for the Animal Shelter, the department strives for excellence.

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Finance & Human Resources

For the fourth consecutive year the Finance Department received the Government Finance Officers, Distinguished Budget Award. Revenues for 2011 were up over 2010 mainly due to the continued upward trend in sales tax collections. City sales tax collections ended up 5.2% (over \$600,000.00) above initial projections, and 2011 collections were up by \$7,295.00 over 2008 collections, making 2011 the largest city sales tax collection in history. Business Licenses were up 5% and franchise taxes were up by 4.9% in 2011, both good indications of a recovering economy. The finance department will have a busy 2012 as many of the bond projects begin. The human resource department increased their presence in the unemployment hearings which resulted in a lower unemployment charge to the city and maintained Worker's Compensation compliance resulting in a lower billing for Worker's

Compensation insurance premiums. During 2012 the department will continue to focus on the updating of the city personnel manual.

Street Department

2011 was a challenging year for the street department with record snowfall, record rainfall, and record heat. Despite the many challenges from Mother Nature the department accomplished many in-house projects including Pine Street and Dogwood. They additionally completed several drainage and overlay projects throughout the city. Ongoing in-house projects for 2012 include Price Lane, drainage improvements on 13th Street and Cambridge, street overlays, and several signalization installations. From an administrative level, the department will be very active with the design and utility relocations of the first phase of bond projects. A number of large drainage projects are slated for design and construction in 2012 as well.

As you can see, there is a lot going on in the city of Rogers. On behalf of all the city staff, elected officials, members of the various

boards and commissions, and my office, we look forward to continuing to provide unparalleled service to the people of Rogers.

While the challenges are many, the opportunities are endless....where possible lives.

God bless the United States of America and God bless the City of Rogers.

Respectfully Submitted,

Greg Hines, Mayor