

First, let me welcome you to the Rogers City Council Chamber for the 2011 State of the City address. I thank each of you for being here tonight and extend a special thanks 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 and 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, rich in history and heritage. While we have transformed over the years from a bedroom community to the retail Mecca of northwest Arkansas, we still strive to be a well-rounded community. Much of the success of Rogers can be found in the strong leadership of our business community, the commitment to education-both primary and higher learning-, our state of the art health system, and the 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 of the economy in Arkansas. We are proud of where we started, and proud of 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 have to continue to build regional relationships, working with our surrounding communities to solve our common problems.

This year presents many regional challenges including:

Waste Water Treatment and our phosphorous discharge levels. We will continue to work with other area leaders as we attempt to negotiate with the EPA. Complying with the current position of the EPA would have devastating effects to our local economy and the economic growth in the region.

Transportation Funding as always will continue to be a challenge. As a region, we were awarded a Tiger II transportation grant in late 2010, which was to provide 15 million dollars towards the completion of the trail system to connect northern Benton County to southern Washington County. By leveraging this grant, other public funds, and Walton Family Foundation's commitment, we were hopeful to have this trail connectivity completed in the near future. We now face budget cut-backs in the federal government, which could mean the loss of some or all of the Tiger II funding. Along with other area leaders, we will continue to acknowledge the need for a balanced federal budget but at the same time sell our message that this is not the most responsible cut in funding, given the fact we are leveraging public/private dollars almost equal to that of the federal funding. This trail project is vital to our continued effort to provide quality of life opportunities to the people of northwest Arkansas. As important as these

amenities are to our quality of life, they also play a key role in economic development.

In late 2010, the northwest Arkansas Council announced an exciting plan and commitment to the future economic development of Northwest Arkansas. For the first time, a significant investment and commitment will be placed on marketing the region as a united front. In turn, individual communities will have the chance to then vie for new business opportunities.

The plan for a general improvement bond election in early 2011 has been stalled by legal challenges of Issue 2. In the fall of 2010, voters overwhelmingly supported Issue 2, and won the first round of legal challenges at the circuit court level, and the decision is now in the hands of the Arkansas Supreme Court. While I was hopeful they would issue a ruling by the first half of this year, it does not appear we will see a ruling before June or July. Based on that ruling, we will proceed forward with an election asking the voters to approve the issuance of \$130 million dollars of capital improvement bonds. If approved by the voters, this will fund the sports park on Dixieland Road, the water park known as the Dock Wheeler Park, revitalization of Lake Atalanta and some rolling stock in the Fire Department, and roughly \$100 million dollars in transportation infrastructure. This bond issue is the future of Rogers. We have always tried to stay ahead of the growth, which put us in the position to receive the prosperity in the Pinnacle region with over \$1 billion dollars in capital investment.

The city of Rogers has 22 departments or offices, including elected officials, over \$34 million dollar annual budget, 430 employees, 45 buildings containing over 450,000 sq. feet, more 1800 acres of property, an a population of 55,964, we have plenty to keep us busy.

I will spend just a few minutes highlighting some of our individual department accomplishments of 2010 and some goals for 2011.

The Rogers Parks and Recreation departments are functioning in their first full year as separate departments. In 2010, the departments were separated and now function as two departments committed to delivering the highest level of service to the people of Rogers.

In the parks department, 2010 was marked with the opening of the Library Park, which was a joint venture between, the city, Dr. Pepper/Snapple, and Kaboom. This collective effort resulted in a new \$80,000.00 playground with less than \$10,000.00 of city dollars invested. This is another great example of the public/private partnerships in Rogers.

The Horse Barn Trail park opened in 2010, this park includes several amenities including heated restrooms, a pavilion, lighted playground structure, basketball courts, paved parking, exercise stations, and a rain garden. The Horse Barn

Trail Park is a very functional park and trailhead of such quality it ranks among the top in the region.

We continued to see improvements in our trail system in 2010 with the addition of new trails, as well as trail amenities such as benches, signage, trash receptacles, and trailhead markers.

The department also found a new home with the acquisition of the City Hall Annex and is well positioned to manage a great deal of the bond proceeds dedicated to the expansion of our parks system.

The Recreation department had another stellar year with the largest summer adult softball league in the state, the largest adult soccer league in the state, and the fifth largest youth soccer league in the state. The youth basketball league alone saw a 15% increase, while youth football, volleyball, and youth wrestling all had increased participation.

With the new organizational structure, the department it will continue our commitment to provide world-class sports programming and recreational opportunities to those we serve.

The Rogers Museum opened three locally produced exhibits and hosted two traveling exhibitions while continuing to place rotating community exhibits at the Rogers Public Library, City Hall, the Adult Wellness Center, and the Center for Nonprofits, and a new venue at the Pinnacle Hills Promenade. The museum continues to offer a full range of curriculum based programs and materials to area schools, and last year, served almost 13,000 schoolchildren through in-house and outreach programs.

Adult and family programming included a Civil War Family Day and the grand opening of the Building Rogers exhibit. During 2010 the museum received 72 donations totaling 887 objects for the Permanent Collection, which now numbers about 40,000 items. The museum also developed a new 2011-2015 strategic plan, launched an improved version of its website, and the museum was awarded a \$500,000 National Endowment for the Humanities challenge grant for the planned expansion. This year the museum plans to open four museum-produced exhibits and host one traveling loan exhibition, as well as continue to expand its outreach programming and community exhibits.

The museum continues to plan strategically for a capital campaign, which will eventually allow for the expansion of the facilities to further enhance and enrich our cultural amenities in Rogers.

The Rogers Public Library had 250,000 visits and circulated over 517,000 items, and added over 4,500 new cardholders in 2010. Using foundation, general fund, and federal energy grant money the HVAC and lighting were upgraded in the

entire building. We are currently testing three different eReaders with patrons hoping to identify the best technology to purchase in the future. The Library is currently working on upgrades and revisions to the website as well as upgrading the public computers with a local grant. Rogers Public Library continues to be one of the most visited public libraries in the state.

2010 marked another busy year for The Adult Wellness Center. Membership totals rose to 14,527 with 2,468 new members joining in 2010. On average between 800-1300 people a day, use the facility with 1988 active silver sneakers members. The first of the year brought a new director to the center. Lesli Ossenfort started with the center as the assistant director and more than proved herself as an intelligent and capable leader. I look forward to watching her accomplishments in the years to come. In 2011, we will have the Adult Wellness Center Foundation and its board completed, create new membership committees for additional input, create a sustainable maintenance plan for the facility and equipment, Update the website, improve staff communication with monthly meetings, and staff development opportunities. The AWC will continue to develop partnerships with community businesses to enhance programs and increase program revenue.

The Rogers Code Enforcement Division had another busy year trying to keep our city looking good. Once again, the top complaints were high grass, inoperative vehicles, parking on the grass, and debris or bulky waste in the yards of residential areas. Code Enforcement issued more than 2200 notices or letters in 2010. We continue to operate under the philosophy that we are here to help and educate people as opposed to simply issuing citations. Unfortunately, over 300 instances of graffiti required the response of code officers who either cleaned or painted over the graffiti. Our continued rapid response to graffiti in our city is a top priority. On the heels of the election season, no one is more pleased to see the campaign signs come down than code officers are. We continue to be proactive in the removal of illegal signs that pop up at city intersections on a frequent basis.

The Rogers Building Inspection Department issued more building permits in 2010 than 2009 and is well positioned to manage what we hope is a bright future for construction in the coming months and years ahead. 2010 saw a total of \$18.2 million in new commercial construction and 230 new residential permits totaling \$43.7 million dollars.

The Rogers Animal Services Division received over 4300 calls for service in 2010, which is down from the 2009 numbers. 500 less animals were brought in last year than in the previous one. Animal services continue to work aggressively on the adoption program and appreciate the help and cooperation of many private citizens, other city employees, local businesses, and other area shelters.

The Rogers Police Department conducted another citizen survey in 2010, the third such survey in as many years. Results of the survey indicated a continued rise in citizen satisfaction from the preceding three years reaching a satisfaction rating of 84%. The department added a new drug incinerator allowing the property and evidence personnel to destroy drugs on site in an attempt to save money and time. In November 2010, the department was awarded accreditation from CALEA (Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies). The agency held its first ever-basic academy with eleven new recruits that received 715 hours of training exceeding the CLEST requirements of 420 hours. A \$295,000.00 renovation of the Communications Center was a major accomplishment, replacing equipment that was outdated and obsolete. The department will focus on crime analysis and intelligence lead policing, hold another basic academy, work on CALEA accreditation for the Communications Center, and remain focused on the reduction of accidents at the top ten traffic accident intersections.

The Rogers Fire Department continues to work towards several important and strategic goals including accreditation and an overhaul of the training program. In 2010, the department received three federal grants totaling almost half a million dollars. These grants allowed the department to overhaul its smoke detector installation campaign, install vehicle exhaust removal systems in all fire stations, and hire three additional firefighters to improve staffing. Extensive assessment and review of the operating procedures for the organization were conducted as part of the accreditation process with the Center for Public Safety Excellence. The department expects to receive accreditation in 2011. RFD rolled out one new fire engine, one heavy rescue truck, two command vehicles, and one paramedic ambulance in 2010. The training center began a half million-dollar remodel necessitated by the need for mold remediation. This project additionally allowed for a new facility layout thus improving operational efficiency. The training division proved to be a change agent in the attempt to improve professional development within the department through a formalized officer development program and the first ever leadership symposium. Rogers Fire Department will serve as the host agency for the 2011 recruit academy. The most significant upgrade within the department served to address emergency medical needs, which account for over 75% of the response volume for the department. All cardiac monitors were replaced; new defibrillators placed on basic life support fire apparatus, and power cots were purchased to eliminate back injuries. Already, 2011 is shaping up to be a pivotal year for the Rogers Fire Department. The reopening of the Training Center along with completing accreditation will ensure the department continues to set the standard for professional fire departments in the state and region.

The Information Technology Department continued to accomplished many strategic goals in 2010. Some of which included; the update of the Rogers Communications Center, Rogers Fire Department, and upgrades in the Rogers Police Department. The department answered over 1500 trouble tickets from the

various departments within the city and strives to provide IT solutions for the entire city. Among other things, the department serves as the clearinghouse for all computers and telephone upgrades and keeps the city on the cutting edge of technology with staying ever mindful of fiscal prudence.

The Rogers District Court had 22,485 new criminal/traffic citations filed and 2,131 Civil/Small Claims court filed. The Court disposed of 22,285 cases and was able to collect \$638,046.12 in fines for the City. In order to be more effective in the collection of delinquent fines, the court will implement the use of a collection agency this year. Last year District Court instituted Teen Court for students who wish to keep their citations off their record. These students may participate in Teen Court that uses students as Prosecuting and Defense attorneys, along with all jury members being students who were sentenced previously by Teen Court. All students are cross-trained on both the criminal and civil of the office.

The Rogers Municipal Airport completed the \$2.1 million of large scale, heavy construction on the Airport; it also completed the \$538,000 runway and apron maintenance project, while securing a grant for \$484,231 from the Arkansas Department of Aeronautics to finance the project. The construction of the final phase of the east-side parallel taxiway is almost complete which will conclude the multi-year effort to reconstruct the Airport's taxiway system and runway safety efforts. All construction projects were completed without accidents or incidents.

The Airport was able to complete the airfield signage plan, secured FAA funding for it, and began the project. Air traffic control tower expenses were reduced by \$30,000 along with coming in 25% under budget in Operations and Maintenance under budget. In addition, the Mayor, Director of Transportation and Planning, Airport Commissions, and others created a memorial concept to honor Commission Alan King's service to the Airport and the City.

Rogers Water and Sewer department continues to provide a high level of service at very competitive rates. While the economic times have certainly had an effect on the departments' rate structure and forced layoffs, management and the commission remain confident in the strategic plan for the future.

The Finance Department attained the GFOA Distinguished Budget Presentation Award.

The City Maintained \$14,352,971 General Fund Reserve or 45.2% of General Fund Revenue Budget for 2010 along with having \$4,991,559 Street Fund Reserve or 108% of Street Fund Revenue Budget for 2010. The City also added \$140,866 to Police Fleet Fund and \$6,604 to the Cemetery Maintenance Budget.

The City purchased the City Hall Annex at \$458,000, spent \$505,500 on ETC rebuild, spent \$760,500 on Architect work for Aquatics and Sports Parks, and purchased additional property for Aquatics Park at \$150,000.

The Street Fund spent \$938,000 in Street Projects completed; \$235,000 in drainage improvements; \$215,000 in traffic light improvements; \$169,000 in sidewalk construction, and the completion of the joint project with Bentonville on the Olive Street Bridge that was a total cost to Rogers of over \$3 million.

The Rogers Planning and Street departments are ever challenged to keep up with the growth trends of the city. We saw a very productive 2010 with many overlay projects, sidewalks and trails, Rainbow Road improvements, the downtown intersection and additional exposure and repair of two blocks of historic brick streets, drainage improvements, and the widening of New Hope Road from 1st Street to 8th Street.

Several major projects were completed or designed in 2010 including; 26th Street from New Hope to Pleasant Grove, and Pleasant Grove from I-540 to Bellview. Designs are complete for Perry Road, 21st Street, and Bellview Road South of Pleasant Grove Road.

2011 will be a busy year as well; we hope to have completed Price Lane, Persimmon from 13th to Dixieland, and Garrett Improvements. We are additionally preparing for the future bond projects and trail expansions.

This year started out with the challenge of two back-to-back winter weather storms with one being one of the worst on record in the past 30 years with record-breaking inches of snow. I thank the citizens and business owners for their steadfast support during those storms. I could not be prouder of the response of the entire city staff. Our road crews, public safety, airport staff, parks department, city hall staff, and water department worked round the clock to insure that we provided the best service possible.

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....

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Greg Hines, Mayor