

2014 STATE OF THE CITY

As I begin my 2014 State of the City address, I first want to thank my fellow elected officials, Bob Lafferty, Director of Finance, Gordon Eyster, Law Director, Judge Jon Schaefer, Shelby Municipal Court, and Councilmembers, Steve Schag, Pat Carlisle, Harold Shasky, Garland Gates and Nathan Martin.

Looking back on 2013, there are many accomplishments to celebrate in the City of Shelby. Starting in the spring we witnessed the razing of the Moody Thomas, a building that had served the community decades ago but had fallen into disrepair. Another building from days gone by, made a reappearance in the summer bringing back fond memories when the siding was removed from the Shelby Thrift Store to reveal the facade of The Castamba Theatre. The fun we will have over the next few years watching the restoration of this building take place. The changing landscape of the downtown saw ten new or relocated businesses this past year and was the subject of an event titled The Art of Revitalization sponsored by the Community Improvement Corporation. As a follow up event, the CIC hosted Nathan Bevil from the Ohio Historic Preservation Office who spoke about Historic Preservation and Certified Local Governments and the impact they can have on downtowns.

The downtown was also home to the 2013 Shelby Farmers Market which was host to a new innovative program called Farm to Plate intended to educate the public on the importance of the agriculture community. Chefs from around the area were invited to give cooking demonstrations for the public by using produce purchased at the Farmers Market. Farm Bureaus around the state are hoping to replicate the program in other communities. Downtown activities were capped off in late 2013 with *A Night of Christmas Magic*. Ashland Rail brought Santa to town to an estimated crowd of 3,000. The wonder of Christmas was experienced by our business community, adults and especially the children. Thanks to the Shelby Area Business Group for organizing such a delightful event.

As they do every year, the Utility Department saw the completion of many projects, including an upgrade of the SCADA system and a contract with Efficiency Smart to offer programs to businesses and residents to help them save through energy efficiencies. Another large project undertaken by the Service Department last year was the Plymouth Street restoration project. Thanks to a grant from OPWC, we were able to replace water lines and repave this street which is one of the entrances to the new Shelby High School. Although there has been little paving completed over the past couple of years, the voters of Shelby saw fit to pass a much needed street levy in 2013. This will allow us to participate in the ODOT Urban Paving program and repave the three state routes running through our community, as well as, streets in neighborhood sectors.

From an education standpoint, 2013 was a great year for our community. The new Shelby High School was completed ahead of time allowing students to begin this school year in a new building and all school age children for Shelby City Schools to be out of a flood zone. The city and schools partnered for the second year on LeaderRichland, formerly LeaderShelby. With the addition of two more schools we went from 160 students in the first year to over 500 students this past year. This spring nine schools will be participating with close to 1,000 students. Thank you to the Richland Community Development Group for adopting this program and taking it region wide.

Education was a key element of the Shelby City Health Department and the Parks Department for 2013 as well. The Science Camp was a huge hit this summer bringing

many elementary age students to Seltzer Park to learn about things that grow, crawl and fly. Adults and children alike participated in the Look Whose Walking Program for the health department. Diabetic education was also very important this year with lunch meeting and visits to the grocery store. Staying active and educated is vital to the health of our community members.

While the City of Shelby saw many accomplishments in 2013, we've had a few challenges to face. Although the Shelby Justice Center will open in less than a month, the fire department responded to over 1,400 emergency calls from a 142 year old building. Finding a new home for all of our safety forces remains a priority for this administration. A flood in July reminded us of the importance of continuing our search for funding opportunities for a new firehouse, as well as, our work with Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District. The HEC-RAS will be completed in the first quarter of 2014, allowing an engineering firm to offer potential solution to the flooding problems we've experienced for a century. In addition to flooding, we experienced other forms of severe weather and learned new terminology. Straight-line winds plagued the city twice during the last quarter of 2013. While a limited number of homes and businesses were impacted during the first of these storms, the second caused the entire city to go dark the Sunday before Christmas. Thanks to quick work by our line crews and crews from AEP, power was restored within 14 hours. While we have maintained a positive financial outlook through the Great Recession of 2009 & 2010, the constant cuts in revenue from outside sources not in our control is on the verge of turning this challenge into a crisis. The administration will be working closely with council throughout 2014 to find new sources of revenue and make cuts where necessary.

Opening of the Shelby Justice Center will bring some relief to expenditures in the General Fund through savings in prisoner housing and rent and utilities paid at temporary locations. Within a few short weeks, the Shelby Police Department and Municipal Court will find their first permanent home since the Flood of '07. Thanks to the taxpayers of the City of Shelby, we have a home that will well serve these departments for decades to come. Action in other departments for 2014 include construction of Black Fork Commons in the downtown for the Parks Department, the addition of a generator for the Water Plant and replacement of the digester lid at the Wastewater Treatment Facility.

From an economic and community development standpoint, the much anticipated Taco Bell will be opening its doors this spring, as well as, The Vault, a wine bar opening in the original Citizens Bank building, which has stood as an icon in our downtown for decades. Also, the Ralph Phillips Conference Center ribbon cutting will take place later this month with events already being booked through the rest of the year.

Additional projects to be looking for in 2014, a new Welcome to Shelby sign has already been designed and manufactured. It will be installed at the Mansfield Avenue gateway this spring. Thanks to Lantz Star Graphics for the design, Cooper Enterprises and ArcelorMittal for the manufacturing and MTD for the location, all Shelby companies. Lastly, keep your eye out for bikes coming to the downtown in July as the theme for the 2014 Shelby Bicycle Days is "Bringing Back the Bike". There are many great events scheduled over our three day festival so put it on your calendar and join us for a time when Shelby shines.

As we reflect back on 2013 and look ahead to 2014, I am grateful for lessons learned and accomplishments made. But mostly, I am grateful for those men and women who

dedicate their time and talents to bettering the lives of our residents. Thanks to you and your families and God bless the City of Shelby!