

State of the City Address—2023

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Centerton City Council, and fellow citizens as your Mayor I am honored to report to you the state of the city and its future needs. I am grateful for the opportunity that the citizens have given me to serve the citizens of the City of Centerton over the past 13 years as your mayor. First of all, I am happy to announce that the City of Centerton is financially sound, and thru fiscal conservation, your staff and City Council who are good stewards of the taxpayer's money has balanced its budget over the past 13 years. The 2022 financial statement has been presented, and as you seen we are in a good financial condition.

Centerton continues to grow, and we are continuing to see new citizens every year, our current estimated population is 20,276 according to worldpopulationreview.com and we have grown almost 14 percent since the 2020 censuses. Centerton has also grown to 13.6 square miles and ranked the 23rd largest city in the state.

As the community grows, we are seeing more commercial projects coming to the community, currently under construction is a new Harps store which will be approximately 40,000 square feet other projects are a new Walgreens, Domino's Pizza, Centerton Retail center which will have 11 available commercial spaces, Centerton Animal Hospital, and a new Muse Burger restaurant to name a few.

I would also like to report on a couple grant project we are working on, currently we are working to construct sidewalks along Gamble Road to Bliss Street from Seba Road and then Bliss Street to D Street. We are also working on Phase 2 of the McKissic Trail which will eventually connect to the Bentonville Trail System. We also plan on applying for the next round of TAP Grants for a sidewalk project to connect several existing sidewalks together.

The city is also working with ARDOT on the expansion of Highway 102, West Centerton Blvd from Main Street to Highway 279 south. The project was set to go out for bid in September 2023, however the plan showed a roundabout near Sun Meadow Drive, which would cause 5 local businesses to be displaced, that round about was removed from the project. The project will include 5 lanes and sidewalk on both sides of the roadway, the sidewalk on the south side of the road will be a 10-foot side path which the city received a \$625,000 grant to fund this project. This will offer additional sidewalk in our community.

The city is also working with ARDOT to widen Main Street, which is State Highway 102B to see if they will widen the road, repair it and add sidewalks on both sides the city would possibly take

over the road. We are also working with ARDOT on Highway 279 south, which is Vaughn Road to get this project added to the next round of road improvements listing.

The Public Works Department have placed new asphalt in overlays and newly constructed roadway sections. Also new gravel base was installed maintaining our existing roads and in constructing new roadway sections. The city has worked to add amenities to our Sports Complex, which includes batting cages and lighting for the multipurpose field. The department is in the process of adding a dog park with new playground equipment and parking area. Also in the works is a new Pump Track to be located on Seba Road. The city will also be applying for a grant to add more amenities to the Cornerwoods Park at Seba and Keller Roads to include restrooms. The department also updated some equipment to include a crack seal trailer and new roller.

Our Planning department has been very busy with several projects active at one time, at any given time there are 12-15 different subdivisions, and several commercial projects are in some phase of development. The city has also adopted several updated codes as the city continues to grow this will give a direction for the future. The city has also hired a staff engineer in 2022 and this helps move projects along and assists the different departments and help move project forward and work with staff and developers.

Centerton has seen a huge impact on building in our city with a total of 13,719 inspections in 2022, with a total of almost \$1.4 million dollars in building permit fees for the year, we have seen a huge increase in 2022 of many commercial projects coming to the city with many more services and restaurants coming to our community. For 2022 we had 895 new residential permits and 13 commercial permits, also most permits now are done online, along with scheduling which streamlines the process.

The Code Enforcement division has been extremely busy with a large number of grass complaints in 2022, since implemented the officer has been very proactive in identifying violators, which has kept the number of complaints down for the year.

The city has given away over 500 trees in October and received over 500 trees thanks to a grant from the Wal Mart Family Foundation, which has really enhanced the appearance of the community with another group of trees planning to be given away during Arbor Day.

The Centerton Police Department recorded 20,751 total calls for service and the department has recently changed radio systems to the Arkansas Wireless Information Network (AWIN) and all radios have been installed and issued to the officers. The department is in the process of hiring 4 additional officers that were budgeted this year, replacement vehicles have been a

challenge to find but the department has worked hard and found them and installs their own equipment which saves the taxpayers money.

The Centerton Fire Department responded to 1588 calls for service in 2022 and attended 8100 hours of training and is currently staffed with 23 full time firefighters, and 5 part time fire fighters and 5 volunteers. Training continues on a continuous basis and attends 8100 hours of training, and our department hosts training on a regular basis. The city has added their own Ambulance service staffed with 12 paramedics and EMT personnel and provides service to the residents of Centerton. The city is currently working to add living quarters to Station 2 on Highway 72 to house an ambulance and crew at this location. The department has been working hard with ISO and the fire rating is now ISO 2, with a goal of going to ISO 1 with the addition of future training facility for both the police and fire departments.

The Centerton Water and Sewer Department I currently increasing the size of the commission to 5 members and is also working on adding a new water tower at Fire Station 3 which is on the west side of the city.

Centerton Animal Control, is in the process of remodeling the facility and our contract with Bentonville has ended in 2023 as they opened a new pet resource center, The shelter uses Facebook to post dogs picked up and there is a great response from the community not only reuniting pets but also adopting them from the shelter, also the shelter is featured once a month on KNWA pet of the month and also on KFSM Channel 5.

We have occupied the new city hall and court facility for a year now and things are going well, we plan on adding in the 2024 budget to add onto the city hall building to add more offices and the staff and community grow.

Lastly, I appreciate the opportunity to work with each of you and for the citizens of our community over the past 13 years, and no administration is complete without the support of the Centerton City Council and a loyal staff of great employees, and our city has many hard-working employees from the Department heads to the troops that carry out the daily activities and duties to help keep our city running smooth and efficiently. Thanks for a Job Well Done.!!!