

## State of the City Address—2024

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 14 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 14 years. The 2023 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 24,543 which is up from 23,100 in 2023 which is a 6.65 percent increase from last year according to worldpopulationreview.com and we have grown 35.08 percent since the 2020 censuses of 17,792. Centerton has also grown to 13.6 square miles and ranked the 20th 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 Centerton Animal Hospital, and a new Muse Burger restaurant, and a new Chipotle just 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 and have acquired the last right of way for this project and this should go out for bid soon. We are also working on Phase 2 of the McKissic Trail which will eventually connect to the Bentonville Trail System and finishing up comments from ARDOT and this should also go out for bid soon. We also plan on applying for the next round of TAP and Carbon Reduction Grants for a sidewalk project to connect several existing sidewalks together and also received a grant to add a 10-foot sidewalk on Highway 102 which is currently to go out for bid this year.

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. I have also been in touch with Northwest Arkansas Planning Commission about getting some of these projects programed into the next round of improvements.

The Public Works Department has been very busy in 2023, and a lot of road improvements have been made to include, patching, overlays and striping in different areas of the city. Many drainage boxes have also been repaired last year which will help with drainage in the community. The city has received a grant for \$300,000 to pave Tycoon, Motley and Dorsey Lee Roads and public works has been preparing the road by fixing issues prior to the paving. This will help save the taxpayers additional funding by doing the work in house. A trail was completed near Grimsley Junior High and flashing lights were also added to slow traffic down during peak times at the school.

Parks and Recreation has also been busy in 2023, by installing a Pump Track, and getting final designs to install a BMX Park, also a new playground and dog park was added to Riverwood Park, and the department has also been utilizing a recently purchased woodchipper taking care of removing dead trees in the community. Public Works staff has also been working hard together with the Fire and Police Departments to clean up and open dams at the Centerton Lake. The department has also budgeted for new equipment to continue to make improvements at the lake.

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 department has also been working on updating our codes and is in the middle of reviewing the Land Use and Master Street Plan, which should be reviewed every 5 years, but due to our growth this is being reviewed earlier. The city also had a Community Rating System (CRS) is a voluntary incentive program that recognizes and encourages community floodplain management practices that exceed the minimum requirements of the [National Flood Insurance Program \(NFIP\)](#). Over 1,500 communities participate nationwide, and I am proud to announce due to the hard work of our staff we received a CRS rating of 7 which will help homeowners on flood insurance rates. SmartGov has also come online and is assisting in the review process of planning projects, where developers can see the progress of their submittal, also business licenses has been added to help automate the process.

Centerton has seen a huge impact on building in our city with a total of 11,979 inspections in 2023, with a total of almost \$1 million dollars in building permit fees for the year, we have seen a steady increase in 2023 of many commercial projects coming to the city with many more services and restaurants coming to our community. For 2023 we had 1305 new 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 and other complaints in 2023, since implemented, the officer has been very proactive in identifying violators, which has kept the number of complaints down for the year.

The city gave 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 22,171 total calls for service which is an increase from 2023. The residents recently passed a bond issue to increase the size of the police building, which should start construction this year.

The Centerton Fire Department responded to 1760 calls for service in 2023 and attended 11,000 hours of training and is currently staffed with full time firefighters, part time fire fighters. Training continues on a continuous basis and our department hosts training on a regular basis. The ambulance service is going well. And we were able to send an ambulance and crew to Florida to help FEMA in 2023 in a disaster response. Station 2 remodel is complete and houses a full-time ambulance crew and the department is in the process of hiring 6 new firefighters to staff and provide full time coverage on the north side of our city and fire area.

The Centerton Water and Sewer Department is 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 has completed the first phase of the remodel project and has hired a Animal Services Manager in addition to a Adoption Specialist and has 2 Animal Control officers and 2 Kennel Techs. 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. The shelter is featured once a month on KNWA pet of the month and on KFSM Channel 5.

The voters recently approved a bond to build a community center in the community and the process will start to design the building, we are excited for this project and are shooting for a opening time of Spring 2026.

Lastly, I appreciate the opportunity to work with each of you and for the citizens of our community over the past 14 years, and no administration is complete without the support of the Centeron City Council and a loyal staff of great employees. 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!!!