

**2022 STATE OF THE CITY**



**Tim Theaker, Mayor**

Eleven years ago, when I was first elected Mayor of Mansfield, I inherited a city that had been placed in fiscal emergency by the State of Ohio in 2010. Our city was overwhelmed by dilapidated structures and we struggled to maintain manning levels in our safety forces. Today I am pleased to present the 2022 State of the City highlighting significant changes and growth our city has seen over the last year. Some were welcome transitions, and while others were hard-fought battles, we continued to take productive steps toward building a better future for Mansfield. I am thankful for the cooperation and collaboration of dedicated community leaders, city council members, and city employees who have worked tirelessly for the furtherance of our city. Eleven years ago I pledged to make Mansfield the best city in which to live, work, worship, and raise a family, and as I enter my 12<sup>th</sup> and final year as mayor, I hope the results of those efforts have left Mansfield succeeding and in a much better place now and for the future.

As Mansfield, like many other cities, continues to rebound after the pandemic, funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) provided \$750,000 of much needed assistance to our small businesses; \$160,000 to Catholic Charities in order to assist residents with housing/rent and utility needs; \$1,500,000 for the North End Community Center; \$200,000 for the design of the West End Target Area; \$200,000 for rebranding efforts with Richland County and the Chamber; \$500,000 for the Westinghouse demolition; \$40,000 for retention of the historic Westinghouse Arch; \$20,000 for a North End Career Fair; and \$750,000. for Bike Path work on Trimble Road.

Additionally, ARPA funding directly assisted or will assist with needed work at Clearfork Dam, City Building renovation and front foundation work, fire station COVID upgrades, police and fire department facility and equipment upgrades and replacements, rescue squad and police vehicle replacement, Mansfield Lahm Airport taxiway/taxi lane drawings and cost estimates, and new servers, backup storage and website redesign in IT.

Other collaborative efforts over the last year with various Richland County agencies included the hiring of a Richland County Environmental Enforcement Officer to combat illegal dumping and littering throughout Mansfield and Richland County, completion of Phase 1 of the West End Target Area, the Westinghouse demolition, the Richland County rebranding efforts, the Homeless Response Team, collaboration with Richland Source, the Richland County Foundation, and the Richland Chamber and Economic Development for ARPA funding allocations, and the Ritter's Run senior housing complex with the Area Agency on Aging.

Economic development activity included Airport West 1 LLC acquiring 15 acres at Airport West Industrial Park and constructing a 160,000-sf spec building. Owners are negotiating with a prospective tenant and hope to secure a lease soon. Total project investment \$10,000,000.

M & D Real Estate Investments, LLC completed construction of two additions to their Newman Street facility. The investment enables Edge Plastics room to expanding their manufacturing capacity. 35 full time jobs within 12 months is anticipated. Total project investment \$12,382,000.

Ohio Valley Stamping & Assemblies acquired the former Rable Machine property at 137 Touby Court to accommodate the expansion of their business. In addition to the property acquisition, the company invested in new machinery and equipment necessary to produce fabricated parts for Newman Technologies. The company projects the creation of 20 full time jobs over the next 24 months. Total project investment \$1,000,000.

1027 Trimble, LLC began construction of a 12,200-sf office building that is expected to house medical providers. Fifty percent of the space will be leased to Akron Children's Hospital Medical providers and the balance will be available for lease. The project is expected to create five full-time jobs in the first year. Total project investment \$4,900,000.

Union Benefits Group acquired the building located at 214 Lexington Avenue to expand their insurance related business. The new location will enable the company to add three new employees as well as bringing their current employees into Mansfield from their previous locations. The company will hire three full time employees immediately and has room to accommodate future expansion plans. Total project investment \$120,000.

Deja Foods acquired the former Fork & Fingers building and equipment to open a dine in restaurant specializing in Filipino American foods. The company hired 2 full-time and 4 part-time employees. Total project investment \$165,000.

All C-130's left the 179<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing in 2022 in preparation of their new Cyber Warfare Mission. Niss Aviation FBO has drastically improved operations and activity at Mansfield Lahm Airport since taking over that operation.

An Aviation Museum became a reality at the Mansfield Memorial Museum in 2022 highlighting the history of Mansfield Lahm Airport. Buckeye Imagination Museum moved into their new location adding space and private classrooms, along with an elevator and parking lot. Other businesses achieving milestones were: United Way of Richland County who celebrated their 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary; Mansfield Motor Group who celebrated their 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary; Leaning Tower of Pizza who celebrated their 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary; Metronome Music who celebrated their 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary; Richland Pregnancy who celebrated their 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary and Richland Academy of the Arts who celebrated their 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We are thankful and appreciative of these businesses who are long-standing fixtures of our community. Also noteworthy during 2022 were the 61 ribbon cutting ceremonies for new or existing businesses.

We were pleased to welcome back the following events throughout 2022 which provided our residents with a variety of family-friendly activities to enjoy throughout the year close to home: 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Resurrection Breakfast; 179<sup>th</sup> Flying Legacy Tribute; Miss Ohio Parade/Pageant; Juneteenth; Soap Box Derby; Incarceration; Shawshank Hustle; Mansfield Pride Parade/Festival; the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Heart of Ohio Cruise-In Car Show; Airpower History Tour; Mansfield Arts Festival; Kingwood's Pumpkin Glow and the New Year's Eve Celebration. These events require hours of planning and preparation and we appreciate all those involved who keep these events going in our community.

With regard to city operations, 62 structures were demolished throughout the year in our continuing efforts to rid the city of blight. Our Codes & Permits and Community Development departments were combined under the name of the Permitting and Development Division. Clearfork docks and campsites were at full capacity and currently have waiting lists. Community Development completed 21 emergency home rehabs and expended \$1,961,318.84 in block grant funds and \$90,164.75 in HOME funds. They also collaborated with the Richland County Foundation for a Downtown Incentive grant to provide funding for housing rehabilitation in the downtown area.

Engineering oversaw the resurfacing of 142 streets and alleys (25.89 miles) totaling \$4.5 million. Infrastructure improvements included Storm Sewer Improvement projects on N. Linden, Taylor Road, and an emergency storm sewer installation project to replace a sewer that failed near the intersection of Bowman Street and W. Dickson Ave. The East Third Street Major Culvert Replacement Project was bid and awarded with construction to begin in February 2023 with an anticipated completion date of June 2024. Thanks to a grant from the Municipal Bridge Program, the bridge along 6<sup>th</sup> Street was reconstructed.

The Engineering Department, in partnership with the Chamber, received grants from RAISE (Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity) and over \$7 million dollars in safety funding from the Federal Highway Administration and the Ohio Department of Transportation to design and construct the Main Street

Upgrade project from First Street to Fifth Street. The design effort has begun and is expected to be completed near the end of 2023.

Our Water Treatment Plant rehabilitation project which started in November of 2021 continues and is expected to be completed in 2024.

Final design was completed for the seepage remediation project at the Clearfork Dam. Design efforts also were made toward the Touby Run Flood Mitigation project with EMH&T with final design expected to be completed in mid-2023.

The Fire Department responded to 12,204 emergency calls: 2,074 fire responses and 10,130 medical responses. Two rescue squads were delivered this year. Renovations to Station 1 provided separate bedrooms for firefighters as a result of COVID. An assistant chief was added to oversee EMS functions as was an administrative assistant for the Fire Prevention Bureau. Six firefighters were hired in 2022 bringing the department to full staffing, and 2 paramedics completed their training.

Our Police Department handled 30,111 calls for service during 2022. Part 1 crime decreased by 7.4% compared to 2021 and robbery and burglary offenses were drastically decreased by 33.3% and 6.8%. Their training facility saw finished construction in 2022 and is now operational. The "Shoot House" is still in the development stage with NCSC. Body-worn cameras (BWC) were implemented for patrol officers with the assistance of grant funding along with a grant funded BWC technician in the Crime Lab. Grant funding expanded the coverage area of ShotSpotter from 1 sq. mile of coverage to 3 sq. miles. The Division implemented 25 Flock LPR cameras within the city to aid officers/investigators in reducing violent crimes and enhance safety. 8 new patrol cars were purchased and put into service in 2022.

City staffing levels have remained fairly consistent over the past few years with the City employing approximately 460 employees during 2022. Human Resources (HR) added a new Risk Manager/Procurement Officer who is responsible for managing the City's general liability insurance, procurement of large assets and annuals bids, and managing the sale of unneeded City property on GovDeals. HR assisted with promotional exams for all ranks of officers in the Fire Department, entrance exams for the police and fire departments, and lateral transfer opportunities for the police department. Significant time was also spent negotiating new union contracts for the City's police and fire unions.

Security and infrastructure upgrades have been a strong focus for IT and will continue in 2023 as they continue to develop ways to streamline workflow, cut costs and maintain a tight security posture while providing essential services and technology to city departments. The IT team closed out 1,827 service tickets throughout the year. Other projects included upgraded and installed new physical hosts in the datacenter, replacement of aging switches in the environment, replaced aging firewalls in multiple offsite locations, completion of Phase 1 of the downtown Wi-Fi project, and began overhaul of disaster recovery site. Five new servers were built out for GIS projects, assisted with multiple cameras being added to the security system, updated internet use policy for city employees and began redesign/update of city's website to incorporate community branding.

The Maintenance Department worked with local contractors on concrete being poured at the Park Avenue East Courts entrance, the 1<sup>st</sup> floor police entrance, the police compound area, and the sidewalks at the corner of Third and Adams Street. New underground conduit and wire were installed in the parking lots before new asphalt was laid to make lighting brighter and improve safety. Maintenance assisted with a total rebuild of the police department's restrooms, shower rooms and locker rooms. The walls in the north and south stairwells were tuckered, pointed and painted. Lighting and painting projects also occurred throughout the year.

Splash pads were installed at North Lake and Johns Park thanks to a generous donation from the Richland County Foundation. New playground equipment was installed at Dickson Park. Thousands of daffodils were planted in our parks and a sunflower field was planted at Burton Park. A Summer Program at Burton and North Lake Park served 25 kids a day. Various arts and crafts activities took place throughout the year along with a drive thru Easter basket giveaway and the annual food truck festival and Christmas light display in Central Park.

In our Service Complex, the Street Department's new street sweeper cleaned 592 miles of roadway and disposed of 173 tons of road waste. A new wood chipper was purchased and 6 new snow plows trucks are anticipated to be arriving and added to their fleet in 2023. 716 potholes were filled throughout the year.

Water Repair responded to 108 main leaks, 720 main line valves were exercised, and they repaired or replaced 130 water service lines. The department made 152 water taps and repaired or replaced 120 main line valves. Along with the Mansfield Fire Department, they either flushed, repaired or replaced 479 fire hydrants

Sewer Repair responded to 534 backup calls. This along with normal maintenance flushing, resulted in 52,812 feet of sanitary sewer main jetted. 71,431 feet of sanitary sewer mains were cameraed. Their large vacuum trucks disposed of 467 tons of waste throughout the year.

The Repair Garage completed 470 work orders during 2022 keeping city equipment and vehicles in tip top shape.

Utility Collections continued with the water meter replacement program with approximately 932 meters still requiring changeout. Meter personnel completed 8,952 work orders and cashiers processed over 122,048 payments. Debt Recovery Solutions of Ohio collected \$7,444. on delinquent water bills.

Our Wastewater Treatment Plant treated a monthly average of 9.73 million gallons per day with a total of 3.5 billion gallons of sewerage for the year. The leachate acceptance program brought in \$156,919.85.

The Water Treatment Plant treated and pumped out 3,360,138,000 gallons of safe potable drinking water. The 2021 annual consumer confidence report was completed and added to the City's website with post cards being mailed out to customers advising them of the website links. The Plant's rehabilitation project continues with a completion date in 2024.

In closing, I am proud of the work we have accomplished together as a community over the years to improve Mansfield and make it a place we are all proud to call home. It has been an honor to serve you as Mayor.