



**State of the City
January 19, 2016
Mayor Lioneld Jordan**

Ladies and Gentlemen of the City Council and my fellow citizens of Fayetteville, tonight I am proud to report that the state of our city is sound. 2015 was a great year, and we expect 2016 to be even better. Though 2015 was not without controversy, in Fayetteville our differences don't divide us, they make us stronger and more prosperous as a community. The economy for Fayetteville has been exceptional. Sales tax collections for 2015 are expected to be more than 5% over budget. Due to increased revenue collections and good money management, we believe that we will see a surplus for 2015.

Fayetteville citizens should know that this Administration and this City Council continue to be good stewards of your tax dollars in order to maintain and enhance our infrastructure and quality of life and build a strong foundation for the future of our city as we continue to grow.

Honors and Recognitions

I always enjoy recounting the honors, awards, and accolades garnered by Fayetteville's hardworking public servants and volunteers who shape the soul of this city. This year:

- Sondra Smith received the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Brotherhood Award in 2015, given in recognition to a City employee whose service to our City and the community best exemplifies Dr. King's Dream of Equality, Justice, and Brotherhood. Sondra was also honored in 2015 to receive the Arkansas Municipal League's *Municipal Clerk of the Year Award!*
- City Attorney, Kit Williams provides wise legal counsel and helps navigate the city through negotiation and avoidance of litigation risks. Kit

also brings recognition to the City by serving his 14th year as the State Chair of the International Municipal Lawyer's Association.

- The Fayetteville Police Department was inducted into the Fayetteville Public School Superintendent's Honor Roll for its steadfast commitment to the safety of the students, faculty, and staff of Fayetteville High School.
- Our Media Services Department received a 2015 Bronze Telly Award for excellence in video production for the *Recycle Something* media campaign.
- Friends of Gulley Park won the Arkansas Recreation and Parks Association award for Volunteer Group of the Year and Fayetteville citizen Frank Sharp received the Volunteer Individual of the Year Award.
- Fayetteville was recognized by the International Mountain Bike Association as a bronze level Regional Ride Center and CitiScapes named Wilson Park the Best Public Park and Gulley Park as a runner-up in the Best of Northwest Arkansas Award.
- Fayetteville has been designated a Tree City USA for the 20th year by the Arbor Day Foundation.
- In other categories, Fayetteville was named:
 - No. 3 – Best City to found a company outside of Silicon Valley and New York by DataFox, No. 4 – Best College Town in the Nation and No. 1 in the SEC by Liveability.com.
 - winner of the Green/Energy Conservation Initiatives category and Honorable mention in the Quality of Life category for the Arkansas Business, City of Distinction.
 - in the Top 100 Best Places for Businesses and Careers in Forbes magazine and in the top 100 – Best Place to Live by Livability.com
 - the Arkansas Volunteer Community of the Year award for the 6th consecutive year. An astonishing 681,000 hours of service were given by tens of thousands of volunteers in 2014, creating an economic impact of \$15,720,000
 - 2nd in the small city population category by the Center for Digital Government's Digital Communities
 - The Tour of Fayetteville's Historic Properties website as the "Achievement in Technology Award" from the Arkansas Chapter of the American Planning Association.

- The City with the fastest growing population in Arkansas as named by the U.S. Census Bureau, and the only City in Arkansas to receive and retain a STAR Rating from the STAR Communities Sustainability Tools for Assessing and Rating Communities
- Also in 2015, Fayetteville Public Library was named the Best of Northwest Arkansas by CitiScapes and NWA Best of the Best by Arkansas Democrat Gazette

These accomplishments and many more are a vital part of what makes this city great.

In Fayetteville we believe in a partnership-based government - we are all part owners together. The power of community, volunteerism, education, livability, and infrastructure creates a synergy for Fayetteville that continues to propel its economic engine.

Both as City Council member and as Mayor I have always been a proponent for infrastructure improvements as a foundation for Fayetteville's quality of life and economic development. In this city, we build infrastructure - a physical infrastructure, made up of roads, parks and trails; a technical infrastructure, for government accessibility and delivery of services; and a social infrastructure, where everyone is served and all feel a part of this community.

Physical Infrastructure

As mentioned earlier, through prudent financial management combined with revenue growth, this City has had an exceptional year. Our capital projects have moved forward at an unparalleled pace. Projects completed and underway in 2015 bring enormous potential for our City, promoting alternative transportation, healthy lifestyles, and economic growth. I want to thank our citizens for participating in our infrastructure development as well – through public meetings and service on citizen committees.

Our fine Engineering team is to be commended for development of new standards for street construction. These new standards impact pedestrian and bicycle facilities, bike lanes, and neighborhood traffic calming. Street and intersection design standards have been revised to be more pedestrian friendly as well.

The **Van Asche Drive Extension Project**, part of the Transportation Bond Program approved by citizens, now provides a direct connection from Garland Avenue/Hwy 112 to our “Up-town” Restaurant & Retail Center.

This project is a great example of voters, City Council, staff all coming together to build and connect our community.

In 2015, work began on the first segment of the **Rupple Road Improvement Project**, the largest project of the Transportation Bond Program. When completed, Rupple Road will serve as an alternate north/south route, improve traffic flow and complete connectivity with the emerging trail system.

The **Old Wire Improvement Project** includes an overhaul of the intersection at Mission Boulevard and Old Wire and improvements from Mission Blvd. to Ash Street, allowing for protected movements and safer pedestrian and bicycle trails along the roadway and better traffic flow. The City has partnered with the University of Arkansas and Fayetteville Public Schools for **Stadium Drive improvements** and with the University for **Razorback Road** improvements.

These roadways help define significant through-streets and boundaries of our city.

Preservation of Historic Bridges: The City of Fayetteville has now begun repairing and rehabilitating the downtown Maple and Lafayette Street bridges using specifications as close to original design as possible to preserve the integrity of the historic art-deco structures. The bridges, originally built in mid-1930, cross over the Arkansas and Missouri Railroad tracks between West and Arkansas avenues.

The Spring Street Municipal Parking Deck: As your Mayor in 2009, I promised area business owners in the Entertainment District that I would pursue a parking deck project to support the growing number of visitors and employees in the Entertainment District. In partnership with the Walton Arts Center and University of Arkansas, the four level parking facility project now includes 235 parking spaces for automobiles and secure, covered bicycle parking, with convenient access to the entertainment district.

Bikeways and Trails: In 2015 the city completed 3.6 miles of new on-street bikeways and 3.4 miles of new shared-use paved trails, including the southern extension of the Razorback Regional Greenway. Major trail accomplishments include two sections of the Town Branch Trail and one section of the Clabber Creek Trail. The City's urban trail system now includes 28 miles of multi-use trail paths.

A trail usage study recently commissioned by the Walton Family Foundation shows that usage in Northwest Arkansas is on par with cyclists in San Francisco and pedestrians in San Diego County. The study showed that three sections of the Scull Creek Trail in Fayetteville are seeing more than

150,000 cyclists a year, and all three sections were among the five busiest places for cyclists on the 37-mile Razorback Regional Greenway. 2016 will see the construction of an additional 5.8 miles of new shared-use trails.

Sidewalk and Storm Drainage Improvement Projects: Sidewalks are an essential part of the city's infrastructure, providing connections for pedestrians and bicyclists and carefully engineered storm drainage. Over 14,000 feet of sidewalks were constructed in 2015, including both replacement and new construction to complete important connections around town. Fayetteville also tripled sidewalk funding, adding to the City's walkability and connections to the trails system.

In the past five years the City has built over 60,000 feet or 11.4 miles of sidewalks throughout Fayetteville.

The new **College Avenue** sidewalk project planned for 2016 is a necessary part of the city's continued effort to make Fayetteville's neighborhoods walkable. The enhancements will provide much-needed upgrades along College Avenue from Maple Street to North Street, and will include 10 ft. wide concrete sidewalks along both sides of the highway. The project will also include installation of decorative streets lights and trees, modification of traffic signals at Maple and North to accommodate 4-way pedestrian crossings, reduction in driveway curb cuts, removal of overhead electric lines where feasible and evaluation of a pedestrian crossing in the vicinity of Trenton & Rebecca, to be approved by the Ark. Hwy. Dept.

Water and Sewer Utility Work: Water and Sewer projects are critical to our city's infrastructure. The City has begun construction on the Upper Scull Creek Drainage Improvement Project to alleviate flooding in the area. The Utility department replaced or installed over 17,000 square feet of water pipe and over 6,000 square feet of sewer in 2015. Six new generators were installed at water pumping stations, enabling 100% of our system to maintain water pressure and service in the event of a total power outage.

Parks Projects Underway: The City of Fayetteville manages over 4,200 acres which includes 35 parks, 16 natural areas, and 17 trails. We are constantly adding new programs and building new parks to keep up with the needs of our residents. This year the City participated in the Northwest Arkansas Regional Open Space Plan to identify natural landscapes and open spaces that make this region an attractive place to live and to identify a strategy for conservation of these natural assets.

In 2016, public meetings will be held to begin the design of the master plan for the additional ten acres in **Gulley Park**.

New Regional Park: Construction of the Regional Park Phase One is well underway. This park will provide a consolidated venue for league and tournament sports as well as many other active and passive recreational opportunities. This is the largest project the Parks Department has worked on in over a decade. Located off Cato Springs Road in southwest Fayetteville, the property is comprised of over 232 acres. Due to strong HMR tax revenues in 2015, the City was able to add a fourth baseball field to the original plan, and lights for the six soccer fields. Also in the plans are two concession/restroom buildings and associated parking. Soccer will be played on the new fields in the fall of 2016! This park will offer tremendous economic development opportunities as we bid on state and regional tournament events.

The Regional Park is immediately adjacent to **Kessler Mountain**, an approximately 376 acre forest which will be preserved in its natural condition and open for public use.

This nature preserve coupled with the developed recreation area of the Regional Park will provide the people of Fayetteville and surrounding areas unparalleled outdoor recreation, education, observation and appreciation. The final draft of the Kessler Mountain project will be taken to the Parks Board and then to City Council for approval in early Spring. Citizens are already enjoying the almost seven miles of nature trail accessible from a new trailhead located at the site of the Regional Park.

City Facilities: Projects in 2015 also included maintenance and upgrades in over a dozen city facilities.

Expansion and improvement of our Recycling and Trash facility on Happy Hollow Road is currently underway. The project will add over 5,000 square feet to the facility and renovate the existing space. The new facility will relieve space needs for staff and parking shortfalls for the public.

The Recycling and Trash Division, the Yvonne Richardson Community Center, and the Airport Tarmac all had lighting retrofits, utilizing incentive funds from SWEPCO, and ultimately saving over \$13,000 per year in electricity and maintenance costs.

The Fayetteville Airport received a \$500,000 state grant to conduct a much needed Terminal Apron Repair, and a \$200,000 state grant to repaint and repair runway and taxiway surfaces.

In 2016, our work continues. I am focused on making sure that we continue to meet our goals to keep projects on time and on budget as we work to complete the renovation of the City Council Chamber, provide upgrades to the Senior Center kitchen, and begin the development of the Woolsey Farm Master Plan.

Technology as Critical Infrastructure

Your tax dollars at work this past year also included a considerable investment in the city's digital backbone. Our citizens demand more electronic interaction with their City government and in 2016, we will be meeting that demand with a \$4.5 million upgrade in 2016.

Fayetteville has been recognized as a small city that rivals big cities in its digital practices.

We know that transparency and accountability build trust. Our plan is to meet the peoples' expectations and send a citizen-first message. All city departments now have the capability to manage and provide updates on their own web pages on a daily basis. Over the next two years, our twenty-year-old financial software system will be replaced and integrated with other software updates including our core financials, annual budget, payroll, and human resource systems. The new software will provide self-service options to more efficiently serve the community.

Online services citizens can now access range from video-on-demand of city meetings, utility payments, job application, recreation program registration and much, much more.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) apps developed in 2015 include a Fayetteville Historic sites map, Razorback Greenway markers, public art installations map and trash and recycling truck routes.

Also in the area of GIS, our Transportation Division is installing new GPS location systems in snow removal vehicles, allowing us to locate vehicles and personnel during inclement weather, track streets where snow removal has occurred and allowing us to respond more quickly in an emergency situation.

Additional Technology Projects Underway:

The City will replace the audio/visual systems in the meeting rooms in the City administration Building and make the operations consistent from room to room. We will upgrade the Television Center to a fully digital high-definition system to meet industry standards and improve the audio and video quality of the signal for citizen engagement.

Not only do we believe in transparent government and freedom of expression for our citizens, but we also believe in the power of images and video to capture the independent spirit and culture of our community. Sharing our city services and natural beauty, celebrating our accomplishments via the web site and social media channels, and continuing to offer more

interactive services will keep our citizens engaged in Fayetteville's democratic process and the future of our community.

The City of Fayetteville believes our digital backbone is just as important as our roads, bridges, trails, parks, and utilities. Our digital city will continue to be an engine for Fayetteville's economic health, targeting industries and workforce development for today's economy.

Because of our emphasis on on-line accessibility to citizens, we will continue to work in 2016 to enhance access for all citizens to affordable broadband services. Fayetteville is the 1st city in the state to join with Next Century Cities, a coalition of community leaders across the country who recognize the importance of leveraging digital assets to attract new businesses, create jobs and connect residents to new opportunities.

Digital inclusion for all of our citizens for online learning and access to job banks is a new goal we will define as we create Fayetteville's Broadband Strategic Plan in 2016.

Our Social Infrastructure – A Healthy and Welcoming Community

In addition to the building blocks of physical that are the foundation of our city, it takes an equally solid social infrastructure to nurture every family, individual, and business so that our entire community can prosper.

We ARE and we will continue to BE a SAFE Community:

The Fayetteville Police Department has sustained accreditation year after year, demonstrating their level of professionalism and expertise that I, as your Mayor, and Fayetteville citizens expect. They also recognize the value of our city's unique cultural diversity and strive to treat all citizens with kindness, tolerance, and dignity, protecting the rights, liberties, and freedoms guaranteed by law.

Both FPD and the **Fayetteville Fire Department** are focused on positive recruitment and selection of high caliber personnel, with an emphasis on recruitment of a diverse workforce to better represent the census of the population we serve.

The Fayetteville Fire Department also retains its high standards year after year and has implemented a national testing network and fitness certification for entry level firefighter testing. The Fire Department also works to increase public fire safety education and conducts a Fayetteville Family Fire Safety Day each year.

All of these notable continuous improvements in our police and fire programs have allowed us to continue to respond in the face of our rapid growth but we also recognized the need to plan for the inevitable future growth to maintain our standards.

Last year, I asked our Police Chief and Fire Chief to provide a detailed plan for how we could keep up with this growth and maintain a safe and secure city. They analyzed call volume and response times in order to identify improvements to be made.

And here is what they found: Fayetteville Police Department responded to a nearly 23% increase and the Fayetteville Fire Department saw a 36% increase in calls for service from 2008 to 2015.

As we confirmed this trend in increased service calls, I asked our Chief Financial Officer to determine the most appropriate funding mechanism to increase staff to support our high standards for response times in both police and fire.

As a result of the City Council passing the \$1.3 new discretionary mill, we are now able to establish a new police beat, expanded dispatch, motor officer, and a new company of firefighters to provide more coverage and quicker response times, for a total of 19 new public safety officers in 2016. The cost for this increase in service is no more than \$20 per \$100,000 of home property value and we believe this is a small investment to pay for the safety of our city. As I said when I opened remarks in this section, we ARE a safe City and we WILL keep this city safe.

A Thriving Workplace Community: As a city, we strive to be a model for workplace productivity and one that rewards and motivates its employees. The city's increased revenue for the year, combined with strong stewardship and money management will fully fund the salary package for employees this year without having to dip into reserves. As Mayor of this city, I am blessed with an incredibly talented staff who manage our city resources with care.

A Caring Community: In 2015 Fayetteville was awarded \$574,209 in community development block funding. The City works with a number of service organizations to assist low-to-moderate-income residents. We distribute Energy Efficiency & Weatherization Kits to qualifying residents, providing tools to weatherize homes and reduce water usage.

The Taxi Program assists elderly and disabled residents and the Transit Program assists low-and-moderate income citizens with fixed-route and assisted transit passes.

One goal of the Community Development Program for 2016 is to assist homeless persons to obtain affordable housing and assist persons at risk of becoming homeless to secure affordable permanent housing, particularly for disadvantaged citizens and persons with special needs.

We've held the fifth annual FEST of ALL in conjunction with First Thursday. FEST of ALL is a celebration of the many cultures of the Ozarks and provides exposure to many organizations, groups, performers and artists in our region.

Animal Services: In December the City Council approved renaming Fayetteville's Animal Shelter to "The Lib Horn Animal Shelter of Fayetteville", in honor of Lib Horn's long-standing service to the City both as Animal Services Director and as champion to its animal inhabitants. Following Lib's ideals, Fayetteville takes great pride in caring for our animals and will continue to set an example of what a quality animal shelter represents.

When I came into office, the euthanasia rate at the shelter was over 50% in 2009. In 2015, it continues to be low at 9.4% despite taking in 257 more pets this year and adopting, reuniting or sending to rescue 235 more pets. We also saw a 27% increase in returning pets to owners and increased our number of low cost spay/neuter surgeries by more than 100 over same time period in 2014.

Ranger's Pantry continues to help citizens experiencing financial hardship to get food for their pets so they don't have to surrender them because they can't feed them.

A Sustainable Community: One major accomplishment for Fayetteville in 2015 was the establishment of the city's PACE Improvement Project, the first in the state of Arkansas. PACE - or Property Assessed Clean Energy - is a creative financing mechanism allowing commercial property owners to borrow money at very low interest rates for weatherization, energy efficiency, renewable energy or water conservation improvements.

Work continues on the Solid Waste Reduction, Diversion and Recycling Master Plan and pilot projects are underway to determine effectiveness of types of recycling collection services and solid waste composting.

The City of Fayetteville's efforts to boost recycling received this year's Arkansas Environmental Stewardship Award, known as the ENVY Award, the highest environmental award given by the State from the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality.

The Keep Fayetteville Beautiful Committee conducted 2 cleanups at both Lake Fayetteville and the Razorback Greenway trail network and 1 at Lake

Sequoyah to remove trash, litter, and recyclable materials. Keep Fayetteville Beautiful also conducted the annual litter index survey.

In 2016, we plan to set some bold goals in sustainability. One will be to prioritize STAR Outcomes and Actions to be implemented over the next 2 years with a focus on becoming a 4-STAR Community. We will begin to track and report community greenhouse gas emissions with a goal of achieving an 80% reduction in community-wide greenhouse gas emissions in our future. We owe it to our children and our children's children and this we will do!

A Natural Community: Fayetteville's natural beauty, its gardens, open spaces and natural habitat preservation continue to grow. This year's celebration of trees gave away over 800 trees to citizens. The City carefully selects tree types for installation along sidewalks and trails to provide shade to enhance walkability.

The Parks Urban Forestry and Sustainability departments have begun to focus on invasive species removal and habitat restoration. We are increasing efforts to remove invasive plants in response to concerns about their rapid spread which harms our ecosystem by choking out native plants and reducing the natural insect and animal habitat. This past summer, goats were brought in to munch on poison ivy, honeysuckle, privet and other invasive plants at Wilson Park. The City received national recognition for the Greedy Goats program in the *National Parks and Wildlife* magazine.

The invasive plant ordinance amendment and education publication are significant steps in a community approach to dealing with invasive plants, and are in response to years of research and effort from active residents and citizen advisory boards.

In other efforts to increase the native habitat, I recently signed the Save the Monarch Butterfly Pledge with the National Wildlife Federation. The North American monarch population has declined by more than 90 percent in the past two decades. In response to a call from the Wildlife Federation, several of our departments are working together to plant more habitat and engage our citizens in the spring and fall of 2016.

A Healthy Community: With its Active Transportation Plan, Fayetteville is committed to developing an inclusive multi-modal transportation system to create a "livable transportation network" of bicycle and sidewalk infrastructure. We believe that combining pedestrian and bicycle planning into active transportation planning will yield the maximum return on the public's investment and lead to a more healthy and vibrant community. Fayetteville's miles of trails lend themselves to a bicycle friendly city. Fayetteville is a League of American Bicyclists-designated Bicycle Friendly Community, boasting six locally owned bike shops and an ever-growing

network of bike trails and bike lanes. Fayetteville's bike-friendliness attracts visitors and new residents, reduces traffic congestion, keeps us healthy, and boosts the economy. With some of the best mountain biking trails in the country, Northwest Arkansas has also become a destination for mountain bikers.

The Razorback Regional Greenway is a 36-mile, primarily shared-use trail that extends from south Fayetteville to Bella Vista Trail, linking dozens of popular destinations across 6 downtown areas, the University of Arkansas campus, historic sites, arts and entertainment venues, parks, shopping areas and residential communities. The Greenway in Fayetteville was funded from a federal transportation grant, a gift from the Walton Family Foundation, and matching city funds.

An important transportation link in Northwest Arkansas, the Greenway is a central spine, connecting all of the trail systems of the surrounding cities. Destination events, group rides and adventure races are increasing traffic on the Greenway, becoming a ribbon of commerce.

Tourism in Fayetteville has become a year-round adventure with new destinations opening up every day, all accessible by the most successful and complete multi-modal transportation network available.

In 2016 we will continue our partnership with the University of Arkansas to develop a community bike-share program for Fayetteville and will develop an on-line public bicycle rack request program to facilitate the installation of more bike racks on public streets.

The first year of the Fayetteville Race Series, launched by the Parks and Recreation Department, drew a total of 1,274 participants. This race has been a grassroots effort with the ambition to become a premier race series in Arkansas.

A Fun Community: Every season in Fayetteville is beautiful and each has its own unique event schedule. There is something for everyone here, from Razorback sports and the City's many great festivals to the Farmer's Market and Gulley Park Concerts to the free Dive-In Movies at Wilson Park sponsored by the Fayetteville Firefighters Association. Fayetteville continues to be a great place to live, work and play.

A Performing and Visual Arts Community: Fayetteville "is also gaining a reputation for its vibrant arts and cultural scene..." according to Liveability.com

As Fayetteville's population grows so too does the interest in more and more arts and entertainment. The City continues its long established

partnership with the Walton Arts Center with new administrative offices and the addition of backstage spaces located in a new building on the north side of the Spring Street Parking Deck.

We are also excited about the new expanded entry that promises to transform the relationship between Walton Arts Center, Dickson Street and the entertainment district.

The city has also collaborated with Theatre Squared to achieve a significant, multi-million dollar grant for design services, and has committed the use of city property for their new 51,000 square foot theatre, another major capital and cultural investment in our downtown.

Public Art continues to grow in Fayetteville with the newly painted mural on the square, the gift from a local artist of a sculpture on the Frisco Trail, and continuation of the University of Arkansas "Upstream Art" project, painting storm drains to bring educational awareness of storm water pollution. Keep Fayetteville Beautiful is continuing its Utility Box Art program to combat graffiti and City Parks is working with Art students in Fayetteville Public Schools to display student art on the trails.

In 2016, we are looking forward to an expanding partnership with the University of Arkansas Art Department for the new Art and Design District to be established between the Tsa La Gee trail and Martin Luther King Blvd. off of Government Avenue.

An Educated Community

Our Schools: In 2015, Fayetteville dedicated our new 96 million dollar high school - a state of the art facility in a school system second to none in the state of Arkansas. The University of Arkansas saw student enrollment increase to a new record of 27,754 students. Our Research and Technology Park at the U of A continues to grow and is home to dozens of technology start-ups.

Library Resources: Our world class Fayetteville Public Library continues to provide services to all of our citizens, including the students in our public and private schools.

Over 1 million items were circulated in 2015; library visits increased by 18%; program attendance has increased by 10%; reference services answered over 78,000 questions; volunteer hours are up 5% over last year.

The Library hosted the 3rd annual True Lit, Fayetteville's Literary Festival, and attendance increased 44% from 2014 with almost 900 people attending the Lois Lowry keynote lecture at FPL.

Several notable and award-winning authors were hosted this year, the summer reading program offered a 10-week series for all age groups, and the Library provided free, lifelong learning classes on a wide variety of subjects. In 2016, the Fayetteville Public Library will host a centennial celebration, will grow and expand True Lit and will pursue plans to introduce a new app to increase access to online library services.

A Growing Community

Fayetteville's rapidly growing population, from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2010 report of 73,581 to the current estimate of 80,621 and projections that maintain a strong growth, is a strong indicator of a thriving community. Many people locate to Fayetteville because of the quality of life, its educational opportunities, and the welcoming business climate.

Through the city's business license program, City Planning processed 767 new business applications and 2,971 renewal applications for 2015. Both new businesses and renewals of existing business licenses are at an all-time high.

Two hundred and fifty (250) items were reviewed through the Planning Commission, Board of Adjustment, and Historic District Commission and there were 433 new dwelling units and over 86,000 square feet of nonresidential space approved this year.

All of this physical and digital infrastructure provides the foundation for our city's growth - growth that can be measured by the over 700 building permits approved this year, amounting to approximately \$1,200,000 in permit revenue, including several major projects such as Whole Foods and Walmart Neighborhood Market opening this Spring, and a number of single and multi-family homes, projects, and student housing across town. In addition, our Development Services Department also served as liaison for economic development, assisting new start-up/expansion businesses in Fayetteville such as Metova and Overdrive Brands to locate and/or expand their facilities. Work will continue in 2016 on the Transportation Master Plan, which could drive future transportation projects for a decade or more. We will begin the CityPlan2035 process and hold regular developer focus groups to gain input/perspective on potential code and process reform.

Fayetteville is experiencing a vibrant and healthy economic climate. It is a great time and place to nurture your families and build your dreams, your ideas, and your businesses. We have been blessed with steady growth over the past few years in all of the measurable indicators - from record increases in sales tax, building permits, and population growth to the infrastructure development that provides building blocks for the future and sustains and enhances our quality of life. Fayetteville is a progressive, business-friendly

community. We believe it takes the partnership of the entire community to move its economic engine forward.

A Progressive City for Economic Development – Fayetteville First!

Boyette Strategic Advisors has been engaged to develop the City's new Economic Development Strategic Plan update *Fayetteville First!*, which will include identification of targeted business sectors/opportunities, along with the development of strategic recommendations to position Fayetteville for continued economic development success.

We are asking citizens and business leaders through stakeholder group meetings and surveys to rank business sectors and opportunities for investment and job creation as to the best fit for Fayetteville in order to target our economic development efforts.

We will be looking at best practices and benchmarking against progressive and successful cities across the nation. Once this plan is completed, we will make recommendations for City Council consideration and action to take this city to the next competitive level for continued prosperity.

Moving forward, I am thinking of how much our City has grown, how it has changed, and how it continues to excel in rankings and awards. I reflect on its diversity and marvel at its strengths and what great things we have ahead. We want to take this opportunity to harness our City's positive momentum and update our focus, target industries, and future opportunities for continued economic success to make Fayetteville First succeed on a globally competitive scale.

You may have heard people say they are tired of everything moving up North but I want to ask you, when you hear these comments, I want you to remember the successes and accomplishments of your city as supported by all of the statistics and progress in this State of the City report. I want you to reflect on these facts, be able to tell your neighbors about them, and know that you live in a progressive city and one that continues to set the bar high and lead the way for others to follow.

Fayetteville has proven time and again that it is a welcoming, fair and tolerant city. People live and stay here not because of what we market, but because of what we believe.

As I Close:

When I count the number of ways I love this city, I always think of its natural, breathtaking beauty, its unique spot in the universe, “up among the hills,” its carefully planned urban architecture, and these days, its economic vitality. But when I count the ways I love this city and the people that make it so unique, I am awestruck that we can all be so lucky. We live in a safe community, a community that fosters a thriving workplace environment, a caring community, a sustainable community, a natural and healthy community, a fun community, with unique tourism and performing and visual arts, an educated community, and a progressive city. Fayetteville is all of these things because it is a diverse and welcoming community and a community with a vigorous tradition of freedom of expression and tolerance.