

**Mayor Kris Turnbow
State of the City
May 2018**

As a City we mark our growth in measurable milestones - like how many people live in our community or how many homes are built in a year or how many parks we invest in.

This past year, our City took a big leap forward as we crossed the 20,000 mark in population. Our growth shows few signs of slowing down, but as a City we must continue to work diligently to ensure that the same community charm and neighborly feeling that drew us here continues into the future — no matter how many people decide to make Raymore home.

There are a number of projects and programs I want to highlight tonight that I think will help us keep Raymore on the right track and invite even more to our hometown.

Finding our downtown identity

Although we do not have a traditional downtown it is not the buildings that make a downtown, the heart of a city — it is the people who live and work there.

It is going to take more than just a new development to bring that downtown feel to Raymore, it's going to take creative ideas from our elected body, hard work by our staff and the leadership of our business community to get it done.

When we built Centerview, we knew it was going to be a popular amenity drawing people from all over the region to events here in the heart of Raymore. But Centerview was just the first step.

When Dave's Bike Shop, a new business on the circle, invited the community to a fun, family-friendly event to introduce Dave and Tabatha's business to Raymore, attendees could see this was more than just a grand opening ceremony, it was a glimpse into what could exist here on the Circle. We saw families enjoying music and food trucks, and a bicycle rodeo all while connecting with one another and forging the kind of community relationships that make Raymore amazing.

In addition to that event and in honor of Law Enforcement week, Jane Redmond with Edward Jones, another great business on Municipal Circle, hosted a recognition breakfast at Centerview on May 8th for First Responders throughout the area.

So, as our Economic Development Team continues to work, I know we, as elected leaders, can continue to encourage our local businesses to help us mold our downtown identity and encourage the kinds of efforts and programs we saw with Dave's Bike Shop and Edward Jones.

Economic Development Beyond Downtown

But our businesses can only take the ball and run so far on their own. It is up to every one of us in this room to lay the proper foundation and welcome the kinds of businesses that will bring additional jobs, retail and entertainment opportunities to Raymore.

We continue to see incredible things on the horizon when it comes to development at North Cass Parkway and along Interstate 49. Just about every department at City Hall has been tapped to help attract not just any development, but THE RIGHT development for this important area.

We also continue to examine how we can improve those developments that already exist in our community and how we could better serve those businesses that choose to call Raymore home.

Parks & Rec is bringing people from all over the metro to Raymore

However, even with all this exciting news about development, I can share that several of our next major developments will bring people to Raymore from all over the region and will actually be located in our parks.

Starting later this summer the Parks & Recreation Department and the non-profit group "Unlimited Play" will begin a major campaign seeking community support for one of the first ever All-Inclusive playgrounds located at Hawk Ridge Park. This playground will be a one-of-a-kind play space that offers interactive play for all children. There is only a handful of these all-inclusive playgrounds in the state of Missouri and ours will be the first in the south Kansas City Metro area.

Also expected to draw large crowds from around the region, will be our future amphitheater at Hawk Ridge. If the popularity of Summer Scene and other Arts Commission sponsored performance events is any indication, this will become a premier performance venue for our community to share in.

As I said before, Centerview was an important piece in helping create a new gathering place for our community at Municipal Circle. Its success only continues to grow as it is host to numerous meetings, training seminars and events. Just last month, the facility was booked nearly solid with weddings, graduation parties and baby showers for folks from all over the region.

Construction at the Recreation Activity Center in Recreation Park is well underway and it, too, like Centerview, is expected to be a big hit the second it is open for business this summer.

Growth

All of these services are not done in a vacuum. They are done to meet the growing needs of our growing population. In 2017 alone the Community Development Department issued more than 280 new single-family and multi-family home permits. In 2018, we have already issued more than 75.

The tremendous growth and future economic development projects means we could possibly pay off the bonds for our 2016 voter approved projects and once again ask our residents what needs they envision for our growing community.

Our residents put a lot of trust in us to manage these projects in a fiscally responsible way. They showed that trust when they overwhelmingly voted to approve the streets and parks projects. It is an incredible credit to staff and Mr. Feuerborn that we can say that trust is well placed and that we are ready to begin another round of projects for our residents.

But outside of the exciting new projects on the horizon, we must also give a tremendous amount of credit to our Public Works department. I am constantly amazed at the level of professionalism and skill I witness on a daily basis from this group. They maintain hundreds of miles of roads, sidewalks, curbs and utilities.

They are the first on the roads when a winter storm hits our community and the last to leave when a water line breaks.

Whether you realize it or not, their work serves as the foundation from which every other project can succeed.

Public Safety

Another reason we see so many new residents calling Raymore home is because we continue to foster that small-town feel. In my opinion that feeling is due in large part to the incredible men and women in our Police Department. They truly are second to none in the region and our residents agree as they continue to tell us in community surveys that they feel safe no matter where they are in our City.

While most departments may rest on those results, our Chief and command staff continue to push the envelope with new education, and crisis intervention initiatives that ensure our officers are

well-prepared and well-equipped and well-trained to meet all the needs of our residents - and not only when there is an emergency.

They embody the true spirit of community policing and continue to be great ambassadors for our City.

The task of keeping our community safe extends beyond our borders to the involvement of our Emergency Management Director in the development of regional emergency and disaster response protocols.

Annexation

But it is not just our residents in the City Limits that should recognize the value of our community. As part of our long-term planning, we have started to turn our eyes to the east recognizing that 58 Highway is in need of repairs and our partners in the Raymore-Peculiar School District are looking to be part of the City soon.

That is why we have been reaching out to our neighbors who live along 58 Highway to begin the conversation and hear their thoughts on future voluntary annexation and to be more aware of what the value is in becoming a Raymore resident.

The City of Raymore strives to provide only the highest quality services to all of our residents. To do this, we must also plan for our community's future by developing a responsible and reasonable approach to the growth of our City.

We know the 58 and 291 Highway intersection is going to be an area of major change in the coming years. We do not want to repeat the mistakes of the past where our community gave up its ability to help shape the growth around 58 Highway and Interstate 49.

By annexing to the east, we can ensure our neighbors and partners within the Ray-Pec School District have a say in how that area grows.

Our efforts in this region have been positive and the response from many homeowners has been encouraging as we continue to communicate and move forward while avoiding the mistakes of the past.

Community Conversations

With the guidance of our City Manager and his leadership team, I have the utmost confidence that the day-to-day operations of our City are being done by some of the finest professionals that have our community's interests clearly in their sights.

Internally, staff just completed a year-long analysis and update to the City human resources manual. This may seem like a minor project that only concerns staff here at City Hall, but our staff remains one of the most valuable resources and this much-needed update keeps our City competitive when it comes to recruiting new talent and holding on to those who have a huge impact on the lives of our residents each and every day.

Even with innovative and exciting ideas coming from City Hall, at the top of our organizational chart sits our residents.

That is why we will revisit the Reimagine Raymore community conversations we started in 2016 and invite the public back in October 2018 for a new round of discussions.

Many of the projects I highlighted earlier will be completed or near completion by then and this will give us an opportunity to follow up directly with our residents on the ideas they generated in the first series of community conversations.

It certainly will help us develop even more for the next year and beyond. Our Citizens are the ones I report to as your Mayor and it is your voice I want to continue to hear as we begin to chart the direction of Raymore for the new generation.