

Welcome to the 2011 State of the City address highlighting the Year 2010.

There are many decisions and factors involved in making the City of Kettering, the Community of Choice to live, work and play. As your elected officials, City Council and I respectfully, bear the honor, of balancing fiscal responsibility with the necessity of approving projects that will sustain this beautiful community & its infrastructure for today, tomorrow and well into the future.

2010 was a year marked with infrastructure improvement projects, including roadway improvements, neighborhood improvements and parks and recreation improvements. It is, in fact, impossible to travel this community without encountering an improvement project.

While it is true, that the City has been the beneficiary of a great number of federal and state stimulus dollars, the fact is, that many of the projects underway are a result of a proactive long term planning process. The addition of stimulus dollars to our efforts, has enabled us to enhance our already aggressive efforts, to update, upgrade and improve the many facets of this City that demand our attention.

I will spend a good portion of my address detailing the many projects in their varying stages of completion; and I will highlight some of the City's outstanding achievements throughout the year. Finally, I will give you a glimpse into the year 2011 and some of the things you can expect, to see and experience in the coming year.

As a result of your overwhelming support of our 2008 Parks Recreation and Cultural Arts Bond Levy, we are actively involved in pervasive improvements, in parks and recreation facilities across the City. This has been an exhaustive and comprehensive process, that has included numerous meetings with citizens, countless hours of planning and yes, a great many "Excuse our Construction" signs.

And you have been actively involved in helping us to make good decisions, for the future of our parks, our programming and our design process. This has truly been a community effort and we are beginning to see the fruits of our labor.

Kennedy Park is a good example, of how your support, has resulted in the completion of a new and improved neighborhood park. Kennedy has new walking paths, new playground equipment and the City's first Sprayground – sure to be a hit this spring and summer.

Oak Park and Van Buren received new walking paths and new playground equipment. Wenzler Park received new playgrounds, pathways and will be more easily accessible from all angles as clearing along Ackerman creates a new entryway.

While public input has been instrumental in every phase of our work, there is one area of public involvement that I'm particularly proud of, and that is the public art component. Residents, especially residents who utilize the parks in their neighborhoods, were encouraged to participate in public art projects, that are, or will be prominently displayed in the park. The "Orb" at Kennedy Park is one example, as Yellow Springs artists Beth Holyoke and Kati Seidl worked with over 550 individuals to create tiles that reflect what the park means, to them.

Fairborn artist, Tess Little, worked with more than 285 residents, and the result of that will be an archway at Wenzler Park, that will display metal casts of hands, that include a symbol or design that means something to the person, who created it.

Kids who participated in these public art programs will have a new sense of ownership, in their neighborhood park.

We celebrated the Grand Opening of Pondview Park this year - Ohio's first self-guided, fully accessible environmental park. The park was renovated with grant funds and

cooperation from the WG Kellogg Foundation, The Dayton Foundation, The City of Kettering, and the Midwest Community Foundation Ventures.

The Kettering Recreation Complex is certainly undergoing its share of growing pains. Members of the Rec Center, are patiently utilizing the facility during construction, which includes a new entryway, checkpoint and lobby area, as well as improvements to the indoor track, multi purpose room and a fitness expansion.

Construction has already begun at the Water Park. When that facility reopens in Summer of 2011, visitors will see taller, faster slides & updated water play features. The new Adventure Reef water park will be more appealing, to youth of all ages, when the dust clears.

The main pool area will also see improvements, as the sauna area is updated and the indoor pool gets a new retractable roof. The addition of the new roof provides a number of positive factors, including energy efficiency and more consistent programming, as the pool will not have to close during inclement weather conditions.

But as you know, parks and recreation isn't the only area experiencing construction at this time. Orange barrels all over the community, are a reminder, that Capital Improvement Dollars, are at work, in tandem with stimulus funds. The City has always placed a priority on infrastructure improvements, and stimulus funds, have certainly worked to enhance our efforts.

The Dorothy/Wilmington Intersection, was already slated for reconstruction within our Capital Improvement Program, when we realized that we could leverage state and federal dollars to make the project more cost effective for the City. Many of us are feeling the results of this project, more than any other, due to the fact that this is the County's second busiest intersection. The project consists of new curbs, sidewalks, pavement, storm sewer, street lighting, traffic signals and a water main replacement, as well as the widening of Wilmington Pike north and south of the intersection. And though it may not

feel like it now, this project does have an end date, and we will be moving smoothly through the intersection, once again, in the late Summer of 2011.

State and federal dollars were also at work on two separate Wilmington Pike resurfacing projects; Smithville to the North Corporation Line and Stroop to the South Corporation line. Both of these projects are complete.

A bridge on Dorothy Lane, that was constructed in the late 1960's, had reached its effective lifespan, and we have constructed in its place, a wider bridge to accommodate any future improvements to Dorothy Lane, as well as a concrete deck to extend the life of the bridge. The new bridge, now complete and in use, is expected to last for the next 50 – 60 years.

Perhaps the area where state and federal dollars are making the most impact, is in our neighborhoods. For more than 20 years the City's Community Development Division has been working in neighborhoods, to make a difference. We have purchased homes, and rehabbed them for sale. We have purchased homes, and demolished them for green space. We have offered a variety of programs to homeowners, who need to make necessary improvements, to their home. But we, like many communities across the country, have experienced our share, of the foreclosure crisis. The money offered to us, through the Neighborhood Stabilization Program, is geared toward helping us combat the devastating effects of foreclosure, in some of our hardest hit neighborhoods. As a result, we have been able to substantially increase our efforts, to strengthen neighborhoods in our community, and the impact is undeniable.

The City is putting more than \$1.5 million dollars to work, by rehabilitating nearly 20 foreclosed homes; and demolishing and rebuilding two foreclosed homes. Neighbors have expressed extreme gratitude for the City's ability to step in, and make a difference, by removing a blighting influence on their neighborhood. These improved and more modern homes are then resold to qualifying families. The purchase of these homes will

allow us to reinvest back into our Community Development efforts, furthering our goals even more.

And finally, the City was able to utilize some of the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Grant dollars, to aid in the improvement of the City's Government Building on Shroyer Road. As that project nears completion, we are poised to provide residents and businesses, with a more user friendly government center and certainly more handicap accessibility. It has been amazing to watch, as a completely outdated system, of wires and cables, has transformed into a communication network for today's capabilities. The energy payback on the more efficient HVAC system, is only 8 years. This project has been quite an undertaking, as we endeavored to update the functionality of the building, without compromising its architectural integrity.

I mentioned the foreclosure crisis, that has hit so many of our families and our neighborhoods. We have had many conversations, about how to help those, who are suffering in this community that we love. Utilizing the stimulus dollars, to make a difference in our neighborhoods, and ultimately for the families who will make these updated homes, *their* home, is one way. But there is another way that we feel we can make a difference, and that's through an aggressive economic development program.

Looking back over the last 20 years, our Economic Development efforts have ranged from redeveloping vacant shopping centers; to recovering from the devastation, of having DESC closed, through the Base Realignment and Closure; to working closely with business partners, to ensure that our future is secure. It's difficult to shake the effects, of watching the very industry, upon which this community was built, simply dismantle. But just as we couldn't give up, when we lost DESC, we knew that we just had to work harder to recover from the loss of GM & Delphi.

When the Community Blood & Tissue Center, made their decision to locate their expansion in Kettering, it was just the good news we needed. As we have watched the construction of their 90,000 square foot facility take place, we did so with a great deal of

pride, as this important organization has chosen to locate their community tissue services here. The \$40 million dollar project, is located at the Miami Valley Research Park and is scheduled to open in February of 2011. Community Tissue Services, serves donor families, physicians, hospitals and its community partners by providing education, recovery, processing and distribution of bone, skin and tissue grafts. The facility will house 175 new employees to Kettering.

The City's largest employer, Kettering Health Network, completed the construction of the Benjamin and Marian Schuster Heart Hospital in 2010, representing a \$77 million dollar investment, into this community. The Heart Hospital is six stories with five floors dedicated to patient service. The addition adds 90 new beds, with 50 of the beds dedicated, to heart patient care. Not only is this project an important one for the community, but at a time when loyalty and commitment are rare in today's business climate, it is heartening to see a partner like Kettering Health Network deepening their roots in their community.

An international law firm, not only new to the region, but to the State, began their search for a place to locate their Professional Services in early 2010. WilmerHale is an internationally recognized law firm with more than 2000 employees in the United States, Europe and Asia. With offices domestically in Boston, New York City and Washington D.C., the firm certainly had their choice of communities in which to locate. Following a six month site selection process, WilmerHale chose Kettering over 31 other eastern U.S. cities. Their office, located in the Miami Valley Research Park, will create 200 new jobs in Kettering, approximately 90% of those will be filled, from our own local workforce.

I'd like to extend a congratulations to the Miami Valley Research Park for celebrating 25 years of business in 2010. We work extensively with the Research Park, on a variety of projects, and certainly 2010 was no exception. Thanks to Bruce Pearson, and to the Board of the Research Park, for your commitment to bringing quality companies and organizations, into the Park, and into the community.

Expansions from some of our existing businesses certainly provided good news in 2010. We were honored, to attend ribbon cuttings, for the expansion of Hanson Audio & Video on Far Hills, the New Balance Store, located right next to Roderer Shoes in Town and Country, and McGowan Brabender's Senior Resource Center, on South Dixie, to name a few.

To the businesses who made Kettering their new home in 2010, a heartfelt thanks to you, from City Council and City Administration, as I know that you could have located anywhere. We're pleased that you chose Kettering, as the community, in which to do business.

Public Safety continues to be one of our crowning glories in Kettering, as we enjoy the benefits of having Ohio's Finest, policing our neighborhoods, as well as the outstanding Kettering Fire Department, responding to residents in crisis.

Aside from making more than 7,000 medical and fire runs in 2010, the Kettering Fire Department was busy with ongoing training, utilizing a home on Haig Avenue, that was being demolished for roadway improvements, as a training facility. Kettering Fire also developed a new pay structure for volunteer firefighters, and the first phase of that process has been implemented. The new staffing structure will assist us in the recruitment and retention of firefighters, and has already bolstered recruitment.

The Kettering Fire Department is also conducting a long term study of current fire stations. The study is to analyze the function and location of the stations, since our station locations, date back to the 1940s, and the community has certainly changed since then. Ultimately, the study will let us see, how we can more efficiently operate and staff stations to meet today's needs.

And congratulations to the department for raising \$8700 dollars for MDA over the Labor Day weekend.

The Kettering Police Department was recognized among the top 20 departments, in the state, for outstanding enforcement efforts, in OVI and seatbelt violations.

The department retired several high ranking officers in 2010, and we certainly thank those officers for their service to the City. As a result, current officers are being promoted, and we have hired new officers to fill their positions. We currently have four officers in the academy and two new officers in the field-training unit.

Our police canines had another outstanding year. Patrolman Price, and his canine partner, Bandit, took top honors at the United States Police Canine Association Regional Trials, taking home the “Top Dog” title. Patrolman Lambert, and his canine partner, Brix, took second place in the same event. Both canine teams competed in several, in-state competitions, bringing back multiple first and second place awards. And while the awards are proof that even our, *canine* officers, are among Ohio’s Finest, even more impressive is the work these two dogs are doing, for this community.

The department continues to promote community oriented policing programs, by sponsoring the Cops n Kids camp, CSI camp and cops and bowling. Our school resource officers continue to be a positive presence in our schools. The department considers these programs, to be invaluable, in their efforts to make direct contact with students throughout the year.

Aside from their very full plate of Neighborhood Stabilization projects, the Community Development division of the City, also conducted a number of valuable programs. The Domestic Partnership Panel discussion was held in March. The Tenant Rights and Responsibilities Forum was held in September and the Landlord Rights and Responsibilities Forum was held in November. All of these initiatives, are sponsored by Community Development and the Community Board of Relations, and are valuable assets to the City.

Community Development also assisted 18 homeowners with rehab loans, extremely important for reinvestment, into our aging housing stock and three homes were rehabbed to make them accessible to, the resident.

Eleven households were served through a Fire Safety Grant, where hard-wired smoke detectors were installed.

The Division assisted 3 first time homebuyers, with down payment assistance; and completed 12 Weatherization Grant projects, assisting homeowners, with saving an aggregate of \$6000 dollars annually, in energy costs.

The Community Development division, also continued their partnership with the Homeownership Center, to provide foreclosure counseling, serving 346 clients in 2010.

Several years ago, we began to enhance our efforts, to improve property maintenance throughout the City. I'm pleased to say, that those efforts are paying off. Our property maintenance division is working hard, to get compliance from property maintenance offenders, while offering workable solutions, in the process.

Inspectors were able to obtain a 76 percent compliance rate for commercial property maintenance complaints, and an 80 percent compliance rate for residential property maintenance complaints. Inspectors found fewer severe violations, in target improvement areas, and their orders were instrumental in the demolition of three blighted structures, in the City.

We will continue, to make property maintenance a priority in 2011.

This is certainly a busy time of the year for our Public Service department. A couple snow events, required our crews to delay leaf pickup efforts. At the end of 2010 snow related incidents cost the City more than \$375,000 dollars in salt and over \$200,000 dollars in overtime labor. While the size and scope of the City, prohibit us from salting

every road, we continue to make it our priority to ensure safe transit around, and through the City.

Leaf Pickup yielded 1816 truck loads, totaling over 32,000 cubic yards. Leaves were taken to the City's composting sight, where they will be processed into leaf mulch, for residents in the spring. In 2010 6400 cubic yards of compost and 6300 cubic yards of mulch were processed and distributed, the majority of that, was distributed, as part of our free mulch program to residents.

The City's Senior Services Coordinator continues to be a resource, not only for Seniors in Kettering, but also for our Fire Department, Police Department and Property Maintenance division. Vickie Carraher, provided services for almost 2,000 individuals in 2010. She has assisted almost 200 Seniors in navigating the Medicare maze; she has helped 78 citizens get healthcare benefits, through the Benefits Bank, and she has helped 35 Seniors, find and get, Veteran's Benefits by connecting them to the Montgomery County Veteran's Service Center.

The Check Up Call service, that we instituted in 2010, calls frail elderly or disabled residents daily, to check on their welfare. One of our residents on the program, only sees her son on Sunday. She fell on Tuesday and because of this service, police were able to find her and get her assistance. Had she not been on the program, she quite possibly could have been laying there, until her son came into town on Sunday. This is EXACTLY why this program is important.

The success of the Frazee Pavilion, continues to surpass our expectations, especially during a difficult economic climate. In its 19th year, the Frazee was able to make money to the tune of about \$60,000 dollars, even with all of the free events, festivals and low priced shows like \$5 Fridays. The Frazee hosted artists like Vince Gill and Billy Idol, and Sheryl Crow returned to the Frazee stage for the third time, bringing up and coming artist Collbie Callait with her. Sheryl joked, that she feels like the Frazee "House Band", because she's been here so many times, and we'll take her back everytime, that's for sure.

We also had an unexpected addition to our 2010 lineup, when Maroon 5 switched their venue, from fifth third field to the Frazee. With a year like 2010, I can't wait to see the 2011 season, as we prepare to celebrate the 20th Anniversary, of the Summer's Best Music. Already we've announced country superstar Trace Adkins, country rock legends Lynyrd Skynyrd, Chicago and the Steve Miller Band. Stay tuned for more exciting announcements!

Another important program, is our Volunteer Program. In 2010 1,000 volunteers contributed more than 41,000 hours of service, valued at more than \$780,000. As awe-inspiring as this number is, what's equally valuable, is the contribution each and every volunteer makes, in their respective way. Whether volunteering to file in the tax division, pick up parts for the fire department or calling bingo at the lathrem center, these folks, are as much a part of this organization, as I am standing here today. The level of commitment and loyalty, that our volunteers have is just staggering. It's no wonder, our program is modeled across the country.

The Volunteer Office, also administers programs that make a difference in the community, such as the Make a Difference Day efforts they organize each year. This past October, 110 volunteers participated, and as a result, 20 yards were raked for senior citizens, 240 trauma dolls were assembled for area hospitals, and 500 backpacks were filled for the Kettering Backpack program.

Also making a difference, are the graduates of the Kettering Leadership Academy, with its 7th class now underway. Graduates from the Academy, have plugged themselves into, a variety of leadership roles, such as serving on Kettering City Council, the Partners for Healthy Youth board, serving on the board for St. Vincent's Homeless Shelter, and serving on Ohio Task Force One, just to name a few. This program continues, to be an overwhelming success. A special thanks to Councilman Bruce Duke who initiated, and continues to work very closely with this program.

Speaking of making a difference, our Parks Recreation and Cultural Arts department, has identified ways to make programs and services available, to residents, struggling financially.

For example, as part of our attempt to increase recreational opportunities for adaptive populations, three events were held in 2010, including bowling, a Dayton Dragons clinic & game, and a UD Women's basketball Spirit Night. These events were offered for socialization opportunities, as well as to give families living with disabilities, the opportunity to experience things they might not otherwise.

Camp Discovery, was also created to give people living with disabilities, an opportunity to experience summer camp.

Financial contributions from local organizations helped 24 youth, from families struggling with economic issues, to experience the fulfillment of Summer Camp. These campers received transportation to and from camp each day, as well as a nutritious breakfast and lunch.

Our staff worked with the schools again in 2010, to organize a holiday gift drive, that provided gifts to 679 Kettering students. Support from residents and businesses in Kettering have made this program the success that it is, and school counselors work closely with us each year, to ensure, that our efforts are benefiting Kettering families. This is just one of the many joint endeavors that we administer with the schools. Our cooperative relationship with the school board and administration, is one that we strive to cultivate. We are proud of the Kettering City Schools and all that they represent for the families of this community. An Excellent with Distinction rating in 2010 only confirms what we know to be true, and that is that we have a superior public school system. Kettering is blessed, in fact, to have a number of outstanding education opportunities, not only through the public school system, but through private opportunities as well.

The Kettering Mayor's Ball for Charity, is an event that continues to grow in success each year. In 2010, we were able to raise close to \$19,000 dollars for SICSA and we are grateful to the people and the businesses who support our event year after year. Certainly we could not offer a better venue than Reynolds and Reynolds, and their generosity has been overwhelming. In 2011, we will raise funds for the Kettering Backpack Program, an extremely important organization that helps youth in poverty, to have healthy food throughout the weekend, by sending backpacks of food home each Friday. The event is scheduled for Saturday, April 30 and I encourage you to save the date, and help us raise funds for this meaningful cause.

I'd say looking back over 2010 we have had a very, very busy and productive year. The last thing I'd like to highlight for the year 2010 is an award that our Finance Department receives year after year, recognizing them for Excellence in Financial Reporting. This award gets very little fanfare, yet it represents our commitment to taking your public dollars seriously. Whether identifying what Capital Improvement projects to fund or adopting the annual budget, our responsibility to balance fiscal responsibility with appropriate expenditures, is one that we bear with great reverence. The adoption of the 2011 budget was certainly no exception. We are committed to living within our means, the same way that all of you do. Our Operating budget limits our day-to-day spending, so that we do not outspend our current year operating revenue. This is what you are doing in your homes and it is what we must do as a fiscally responsible City. We are using our reserves to fund long-term improvements, not day-to-day expenditures.

If 2010 was about growing pains, 2011 will be about enjoying the benefits of that labor. The Government Center building will open in the Spring. The Dorothy/Wilmington intersection reconstruction, will be completed in the Summer. The Rec Center and Water Park, will open in the summer and many of the park improvements, will be complete as well. Our neighborhood improvement programs, will yield updated and modernized homes for sale to qualified families. And we will, of course, be celebrating the monumental 20th year of the Frazee Pavilion.

We will continue to make the difficult decisions about how best to allocate, your tax dollars. We will continue to provide our core services to you, in the best and most efficient manner, and we will certainly continue to provide those quality of life services, that have become a mainstay in the Kettering way of life. We'll continue to look to you, our residents, for your input, in how to keep Kettering the community of choice to live, work and play.

A happy and prosperous 2011 to you and your family.

Thank you and God Bless.