

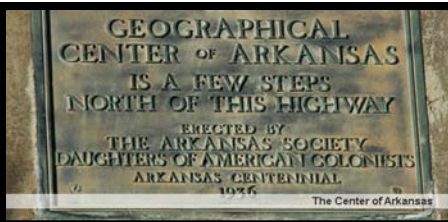


State of the City



Mayor Jill Dabbs

February, 2011



**City of Bryant
210 SW 3rd Street
Bryant, AR 72022**

Jill Dabbs
Mayor

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I would like to thank the:

- Citizens of Bryant for electing me to serve as their Mayor.
- Most importantly I would like to thank my family, who has allowed me to pursue the opportunity to serve the people of Bryant.
- I also want to thank all of the employees of the city who have helped provide me with the information that I have needed to make decisions, provide assistance to individual residents, and carry out my duties.

When a person is asked to take over a job, usually they are provided with training and time to learn the position. This is not really the case when it comes to serving as Mayor.

A lot has happened in these last two months:

- I hit the ground running the day after election and I haven't stopped, and will not stop.
- I am assembling perhaps the most skilled senior staff yet in Bryant city government, and one which will, I hope, prove to be one of the most effective.
- I have shaken up the leadership in some key city departments in order to encourage productivity and I have a tight grip on the financial plan.

When I look back at what we have accomplished in such a short period of time, I am amazed. But, there is much more left to do, we have just begun. I am proud to report that the state of our city is strong.

My focus is moving Bryant forward and preparing for changes yet to come.

It is my desire to enlist the help of:

- elected officials
- community leaders
- Bryant citizens to work together in order to make our city what we want it to be.

Relevant change is a constant in Bryant. To maintain our relevancy as a city for generations to come Bryant must become a city with its eyes on tomorrow.

Who would have thought a small city such as Bryant could grow into one of the Best Affordable Suburbs in America:

- ranked #86 in the top 100 "America's Best Places to Live" by CNN's Money Magazine; specifically spotlighted in CNN's Money Magazine
- while naming Saline County as #10 of the "Top 10 America's Best Places for Jobs";
- or ranked #2 by the Gadberry Group's "Top 9 Fastest Growing Communities in Arkansas".

Good government requires us to face hard facts:

- Unemployment is high and housing sales have yet to recover to previous levels.
- Businesses are hurting and our City government faces challenges, as well.

I see today to be an era of transformation in our city government:

- Asking ourselves what can we do better – can we be more creative?
- Just because we've done things one way for a long time, doesn't mean it is the best way.
- We will simplify, update and reorganize the core functions of Bryant municipal government.
- We are resolved to stop waste, upgrade services, and welcome new concepts.

There is much to be done, tough decisions to be made, and opportunities to pursue. Those of us who are fortunate enough to live here know that Bryant's quality of life is second to none. We are setting standards, not following them.

Our most notable and significant accomplishment to date:

- Has been the opening of Bishop Park. 2010 was an exciting year for the Bryant Parks and Recreation Department.
- The Center of Bryant officially opened its doors to the public on August 17th.

In addition to that huge accomplishment:

- We held the Mayor's Second Annual Easter Egg Hunt
- and the first festival - Family Fest, at Bishop Park.
- The ARPA Mini-Maintenance Conference was held inside The Center, as well

The Center hosted the first-annual

- Senior Salt Bowl Banquet which had approximately 1000 guests.
- Fitness classes have begun in the Center as well as recreational sport leagues on the newly constructed fields.
- In addition to these items, we assisted in community festivals, and sports programming.

In December of 2010, we received notification that Bishop Park won the Arkansas Recreation and Park Association Facility of the Year. This prestigious award was accepted at the annual conference in February 3rd, 2011.

We have just completed the construction of the Aquatic Facility at Bishop Park and held the official Grand Opening and Dedication of The Center of Bryant on January 27th. Hundreds of Bryant and Saline County Residents joined us for the ribbon cutting, the luncheon, and organized events.

Bryant Animal Control & Adoption Center had a great year in 2010!

- They reduced the number of incoming animals over-all and increased the number of animals placed into new homes.
- They released more animals that were sterilized prior to adoption than ever before

and helped many of our citizens make arrangements for:

- Training and low-cost veterinary care in order to keep their pets, which also reduced incoming animals.

By adding a separate adoption area an information hallway in the Animal Shelter: we have opened up the possibility that more pets will find new homes.

Goals for 2011at the Animal shelter include:

- Improving customer service
- Improving follow-up procedures for complaints
- Devoting more time to actively patrol problem areas
- And purchase an animal control specific software program

We are embarking on an operational overhaul of public safety services:

- The first step was the appointment of Mark Kizer as our interim Police Chief
- Enough cannot be said about the excellent work our city provides with respect to basic quality services.
- The Police department provides outstanding services to our community by maintaining a low crime rate and taking a proactive approach to crime prevention.

Our Fire Department continues:

- To improve services provided to citizens by upgrading our communications dispatch system
- And establishing a fully functioning 911 Center in Bryant.

We are grateful for the selfless dedication of our Police Officers and Fire Fighters, who put their lives on the line every single day to protect and serve our citizens. Even

though these public safety departments excelled in 2010, I envision our public safety services to produce results a cut above the norm in the coming year.

The Public Works department has continued to meet the goals of improved infrastructure:

- In order to assemble crucial data needed to make informed financial and development decisions the Bryant Geographical Information System (GIS) is being utilized to accomplish sales tax determinations, street project design support, 911 mapping review and address database, and grant development assistance.
- The Engineering Department applied for and received a grant for Forest Drive Street and Channel Improvements in 2010 that funds the removal of the low-water bridge on Forest Drive at Hwy. 5. This important work will be completed by mid 2011.
- In 2010 the Street Department oversaw 14 street projects, which included overlay improvements, replacement of storm drains, culverts, repair of damaged roadbeds and the re-striping of streets. These projects were in addition to normal street maintenance of mowing, ditching, and various spring cleanup efforts.
- The Water/Wastewater Department continued in its efforts to supply the community with safe water along with the safe disposal of its wastewater. The 2011 year holds many promises with the ground-breaking for the City's new water tank and many other essential projects coming under way in continuance of meeting the goals of our 20 year Master Plan.

At the same time, we are working to step it up a notch with our community development efforts.

This past year our Planning efforts yielded 12 new major commercial developments that included construction of:

- Your Home Outlet
- Strawhat Pizza
- Hamilton Dental Clinic
- Bryant Family Clinic
- Sally's Body Shop
- Summerwood Corporate Offices
- and Logan's Roadhouse.

New housing and single family residential saw tremendous growth in 2010, with the issuing of 273 building permits with a total value of 87.7 million dollars.

We will intensify our efforts to design and encourage responsible Commercial & Residential Economic Growth

- And move our city in a direction that will facilitate this in a positive manner.

- Even though we have obstacles to overcome before some necessary improvements are achieved
- We are well on our way to conquer them.

In the months to come the Council will work with the Planning Commission to:

- Facilitate a directed focus on commercial and residential growth
- With an overall emphasis on expanding opportunities for our current and prospective commercial and industrial businesses.
- We will look at ways of developing a Unified Code to give developers a more directed focus on building in Bryant.
- With an emphasis on commercial and industrial growth
- We will take all steps necessary in order to preserve the historic values and properties of Bryant.

Small changes can create huge impacts:

- My goal from the onset of my administration and into the future is to transform our city government to be more accessible and more transparent.

In keeping with my pledge:

- We are modernizing and upgrading the city website to make it more user friendly for citizens who want to check up on what city government is doing.

Through analyzing our budget:

- The Council & city's staff are doing an excellent job of conserving and expending the citizens' tax dollars.
- The Finance Department has proved to be extremely diligent in their watchful attention to detail by initiating a systematic follow up tracking of general sales tax revenue.

My focus for this year is:

- To save tax payer dollars by utilizing volunteers
- I plan to launch a major effort --- the Bryant Volunteer Program --- that will increase those savings and provide opportunities for volunteer services
- This will lessen the financial burden the city will endure from having to hire additional part time or temporary help
- I can envision hundreds of hours volunteering in various facets and departments
- In order to deal with the continuous flooding issues various parts of our city has to endure. I want to see a comprehensive plan brought to the table that implements the proper procedures to begin to bring resolution to our flooding issues
- Continue to exam the 2011 budget and explore cost saving measures to bring a more fiscally responsible 2012 budget to you the citizens

- These are not only the right things to do, and the reasonable things to do, our current economic circumstances necessitates it and our residents deserve it

My administration has an opportunity:

- An opportunity to change the way we do business at city hall.
- I care deeply about our local government.

City government's basic function is to provide the basic services needed to keep society functioning. We have a duty to respond. Should it always be the same response? No. In fact, if we are to progress, improve and go forward, we must be willing to improve – to find more efficient, more cost effective, and productive ways to get the job done.

Bryant is a city built upon vision. We are at the beginning of a new era. We are a city of opportunity and confidence and we will strive every day to fulfill our vision for Bryant to take its place as a great American City!

Thank you.

Mayor Dabbs