



STATE OF THE CITY 2013

Mayor Jill Dabbs

Good Evening and Welcome! Citizens of Bryant, Department directors and their staff, and Members of City Council to the 2013 State of the City address.

Arkansas is poised for great economic development despite the past few challenging years our country has seen and that is important to Bryant because we are positioned to benefit from any economic development that takes place in our region. Our state just made a major economic development announcement for North East Arkansas. Multiple companies have their sights set on Central Arkansas due to the economic stability we have compared to other regions throughout the country. As new companies evaluate communities in their site selection process, a key consideration is the quality of education available to their children. We not only have excellent schools, but also a great quality of life to offer.

We started out as a little quiet bedroom community that provided an improved quality of life to those who chose to live here. As we look at opportunities to grow, we must remember where we came from. We need to retain the sense of community that was key to our growth. In order to do that, we must continue to set an exceptionally high standard of community safety, advance our educational system and build our community on the foundation of a high quality of life for our citizens.

2012 was the year Bryant AR stepped into the 21st century and we began to see massive improvements across all departments. One of our key goals has been providing better communication and accessibility to the residents we serve. These improvements are brought to you by wide sweeping changes across the city utilizing modern technology and tools made specifically for the purpose of helping local governments operate more efficiently and effectively in order to better meet the needs of the people. Just to mention a few we have developed an interactive website with lots of functionality that gives residents, business owners, and anyone considering in making Bryant their home or future business location access to a virtual Bryant online that is truly reflective of our City.

We have also, at a cost savings to the taxpayers, implemented a new telephone communication

network across all city departments that unites all city offices under one communication umbrella. We modernized the water billing department with easier more convenient ways to pay your water bill. Agendas, minutes and recordings of City Council meetings are all available in one convenient location on the website at www.cityofbryant.com This accessibility to your local government is very important as it gives you as residents a real opportunity to be an active part of the process and not just a spectator. The transparency it provides is important for reasons of accountability and also for building trusting working relationships within our great community that will lead to collaboration and the implementation of the ideas that become our future as we look towards 2030 and beyond.

The State of the City is strong. Financially we are sound, we are doing well with the resources provided to us and maximizing our return by continuing to improve efficiencies, eliminate waste, and operate within our means. During 2012, we continued to improve our cash on reserve, our capital improvement funds and improve city services; all without increasing local taxes. During 2012, we received the Arkansas Cities of Distinction award in the Quality of Life category and the Built Environment Leadership award from the Governor's Council for Health and Fitness.

Bryant is going to continue to grow and with growth comes challenges which are better thought of as opportunities. My commitment remains to see this growth continue in a planned, controlled method, that results in a Bryant that holds onto the values and assets that built us and a Bryant that offers the same quality of life we are SO well known for.

Bryant's Future

Bryant is destined to continue growing and as we grow we must act our size and act responsibly. Local government must be accountable to those we serve in order to meet the needs of this growing City without being a burden to the Citizens we serve. My Focus and Commitment to you is the same as it was this time last year, to continue moving Bryant forward with intelligent planning and sound principles.

This past year the council passed a sign regulating ordinance, to keep our city looking clean and fresh and an ordinance requiring metal buildings to have a facade on the street adjacent sides for aesthetic beautification. Regulations for apartment development are at the forefront of a lot of community discussions at this time. Case law allows for regulation of apartments in many different manners but just saying "NO apartments" will land the city in court. We must move forward with an ordinance soon that gives us the tools to insure our safety, schools and infrastructure are all considered with any request for multi-family development. A good sound ordinance will allow for limited apartments, but with the strictest of regulations to ensure Bryant continues to enjoy the quality of life standards it has come to expect.

During 2012 we moved forward on improving our drainage infrastructure to eliminate some of our potential flooding problems and will continue with more of this work in the upcoming year. Improved development practices based on the standards set in the 2011 storm water ordinance

continue to insure we do not create additional storm water problems. We will continue to grow, we want to grow, but we must grow in a responsible manner that does not create infrastructure issues that will be laid on the backs of the taxpayers.

I will continue to put my whole mind and heart to work on the issues that are important to this city and the issues that are important to you. We must be solution oriented, thinking outside the box to discover ways we can work smarter, spend less and get more done. A dynamic staff is instrumental in helping us achieve the city's goals. I cannot tell you how proud I am of our City Employees and how hard they work to serve you. They are excited about the vision laid forth in my administration and they are the ones who deserve credit for making that vision a reality.

We will continue to make myself and my staff available to you through town hall meetings, social media outlets, neighborhood focus groups, and continued improvement on building a team approach to city government so we can better meet your needs. Encourage and provide more ways for our citizens to get involved in the process of improving the community through organizations such as BONA-fide, Keeping Bryant Beautiful, MYAC, Master Gardeners, Chamber, Rotary, Lions Club, Bryant Historical Society, Faith based groups, youth groups, Bryant Senior Adult Center and Boys & Girls Club, BEE Coalition, volunteer programs, workshops, organizations and special events.

I am committed to keeping my focus and energy working on what is good and worthy of attention: accomplishments, goals, and building healthy, working relationships with elected officials and community leaders. Continue to streamline processes, eliminate waste and reduce operating costs as much as possible, continuing to prove that local government can do more with less. With the cost saving measures and cuts the city made last year we were able to fund the two stormwater improvement projects, widen and overlay Woodland Park Dr. fund the required upgrade of our 911 center that will be completed in 2013, fund two new pumper trucks and at least one maybe two new fire stations, budget for a complete overhaul to Mills park pool, and a remodel to the finance department to improve the workflow in order to work more efficiently. I commend the city staff for remaining committed to doing more with less and over the course of twelve months we realized enough savings to fund some very needed projects for the betterment of Bryant in 2013. I see today in Bryant a great opportunity for our future

Connecting better as a community by taking great strides towards being a more engaged and accessible local government to the citizens, businesses, organizations, and schools that we serve. Continuing to build a "Bryant" that is beautiful, accessible and inviting that sustains and improves the quality of life and supports economic development.

The ideas of the residents of Bryant have always brought the best results, your local government wants to be your partner in making your great ideas a reality. Just to mention a few, would include strategic community driven economic development, continuing to strengthen our public safety departments, curbside recycling, a beautiful dog park, enhanced playgrounds throughout the community, flourishing neighborhood organizations, improved early education opportunities

for every child in Bryant. There is much to be done and many opportunities to pursue together. Looking at what we have accomplished and the plans for the immediate future, I am excited about the possibilities.

With a Great Team comes Great Accomplishments. I believe strongly that every once in awhile it is important to shift our focus away from all that needs to be done and celebrate what we have done in order to stay motivated, focused and encouraged. Now comes the time to recognize the outstanding accomplishments of our departments under the direction of our dedicated directors. There were many projects completed in 2012 and many new ones got underway.

Fire Department:

Accomplishments 2012

- The fire department along with the City of Bryant welcomed Chief JP Jordan as our new Fire Chief following the retirement of Randy Cox.
- Performed welfare checks on our elderly citizens of Bryant during the record high temperatures we experienced this past Summer.
- Proposed a Step & Grade salary schedule for our firefighters to City Council to consider for 2013.
- Record call volume for 2012 with 2,049 calls compared to 2011 we ran 1678 calls and a look further back to 1996 a mere 360 calls.
- Hosted public events such as Fire Fest and Breakfast with Santa
- Received a lowered Insurance Services Organization (ISO) rating of a Class 2. This put our Fire department among the top .013% (that's less than 1%) in the United States. This should directly impact the insurance rates for every homeowner and business owner in Bryant.

Goals for 2013

- Complete construction of fire stations 2 & 3 which will replace current stations that will better meet the future needs of our City and our firefighters and allow our firefighters to have better living quarters.
- Purchase 2 new fire Engines. These 2 new apparatus will replace older, aging apparatus and allow us to have an apparatus in place when we are fortunate enough to open a much needed station 4 on the North side of I-30

Bryant Police

Accomplishments 2012

- The new fleet of cars are all in service and the feedback from the public has been overwhelming regarding how sharp they look. They make a strong statement for a

community that is committed to remaining one of the safest in the nation. The technology in the cars is state of the art and equips our officers with the tools they need to better protect Bryant.

- The Criminal Investigations Division that is lead by Sgt. Hawkins and Cpl. Green has solved numerous burglaries which has lead to several arrests.
- CID has been able to solve cases that were several years old off of tips that they received in the last few months
- .The Strategic accident traffic unit referred to as the SAT team has done an outstanding job by increasing number of violator contacts in residential areas. The SAT also is working on decreasing accidents in the frequent accident zones and doing speed and traffic studies throughout the city.
- Due to training the police dept received this year they are more capable of identifying different tactics for fighting to keep the drugs out of our city. Numerous drug arrests have been made including almost 3 kilos of heroin and a vehicle seizure. This specialized unit has served over 1400 subpoenas, worked over 600 accidents and issued over 1700 citations within the city.
- The School Resource program we have in partnership with Bryant Schools is something for this community to be very proud of. They have been working closely with the school and the new campuses to make sure security is A-plus throughout the district. The amount of criminal activity the school has seen this school year has drastically reduced from past years.
- We have also focused on detecting and deterring crimes in neighborhoods and businesses.
- Bryant Police have also aggressively targeted DWI Arrests with 111 DWI's charged in 2012

2013 Projects and Goals include

- A new program will be rolled out this year to assist businesses in preventing crimes
- Dispatch will be renovated with new consoles and up to date technology
- Expansions to the police force this year will include an additional officer for the School Resource program, an additional K-9 and a new K-9 Officer assigned to the SAT Team. And a Public Information Officer to assist with more neighborhood watch programs, junior officer programs, citizen academies, and to oversee and involve the city through the very powerful tool of social media. These expansions are dependent upon council's approval of the 2013 budget later tonight. All Policies will be updated as needed to a State Approved Policy Manual backed by Municipal League.
- Search for Funding to equip every Patrol Car with Defibrillators and for placing a Satellite Station on the North side for anticipated future growth.

CODE ENFORCEMENT

Accomplishments 2012

- Due to the growth of the city this department needed to be reorganized a bit, after moving from city hall to public safety they are much more accessible to the public and Greg Huggs was named Code Enforcement Director/Chief Building Official. He now supervises the Police Records Department, Permits, Inspections, Code Enforcement. Also oversees Stormwater/MS4 and serves as Floodplain Manager. This has proved to provide much better accountability for the city as a whole.
- Admin expenses were reduced in this department while at the same time providing better service with the combination of the Record Clerk Position and Permits Council approved Huggs request to update the permit fees in order to bring them more in line with surrounding communities.
- Strengthened our Unsightly and Unsanitary Ordinance, to allow us to clean up properties and place liens against those that do not comply with our ordinances and citations, and shortened the time allowed to comply, so that the city can take action in a more timely manner when the situation warrants. These amendments were approved by Council.

GOALS FOR 2013

- The Code department will have new i-worq software which will allow remote access to all forms, applications, and pertinent Ordinances accessible to the public through our city web site.
- Business License Renewals will be completed and submitted online as well as permit applications, complaint forms etc... All payments to the city will be made from the website through i-worq by credit or debit card.
- Continue to provide a proactive and common sense approach to Code Enforcement and Stormwater issues. As a part of this effort we will provide 2013 Seminar Series for developers to assist them in their effort to be compliant with codes without burdening their economic development efforts.
- We will be in compliance with all ADEQ stormwater regulations within the next year.
- We are required by the state to adopt the 2011 Energy Code by January 2014 over the next year we will spend time educating the home builders through the same seminar series what is required of them to meet this code and getting certified ourselves to enforce this code.
- Now that Bryant has a good solid sign ordinance public awareness efforts will be made over the first quarter of 2013 in order to help improve compliance.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Accomplishments 2012

- Shari Knight, our new Human Resources director, is a breath of fresh air to the city of Bryant. She and her team in HR have been successful in creating a happier, healthier, and safer work environment for the city employees. Just to mention a few highlights over 2012
- We had a successful Employee Appreciation Day in which businesses across the city offered specials and discounts to the city employees,
- We also had the very first City of Bryant Employee Health Fair organized to showcase all benefits available to the employees, including but not limited to, health care, family services, life insurance, cafeteria plans, financial counseling services, etc. The close partnership between HR and the other department heads has led to new policies which resulted in fewer workers comp claims.
- The improved safety in the workplace resulted in our Worker's Comp premiums being reduced by \$22,000.00. Policy updates recommended to Council and approved included;
- Random drug testing for city employees, social media, vacation policies, part time/seasonal hiring practices for the purpose of streamlining this annual process and various other policies updated for the City of Bryant.
- Streamlined the Evaluation Process to save time for all supervisors
- Initiated a City of Bryant Volunteer Program with plans of expanding this throughout 2013

GOALS FOR 2013

- Include training all city employees on the city's new internal Intranet site to insure it is used to its full benefit.
- Implementation of new Security Badging System for improved security around city offices that will be a cost savings to the city.
- New programs for 2013 include an Employee Recognition Program and City Internships in partnership with Bryant Schools and Possibly some of our local colleges.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

Accomplishments 2012

Change does not come easy does not even begin to describe what the finance department went through in 2012. But I am proud to say they landed firmly on their feet, while under an extreme

amount of pressure to get it together and get it together fast. Under the direction of new Finance Director, Cindy West, she has assembled a finance team that has quickly got a handle on the daily operations of the finance department while at the same time making vast recommendations for improvements of efficiency and improved technology that will take transparency and accountability in city government to a whole new level over the course of 2013.

- 2012 ended with Revenues over Expenses by:
 - General 8%
 - Street 5%
 - Water 10%
- 2012 ended with Actual Revenues over Budgeted Revenues by:
 - General 9%
 - Street 19%
 - Water 8%
- 2012 ended with Actual Expenses under Budgeted Expenses by:
 - General 3%
 - Street 30%
 - Water 13%
- 165 Operating Days Cash in Reserves in General Fund with \$600,000 allocated to Flooding Projects to be completed in 2013.
- 20% of Water Customers utilizing Direct Debit payment, up from 12% at the beginning of the year.
- Call volume reduced by 40%; thereby online payment processing increased by 20%. Decreases customer time on telephone and increases customer security of financial information.

GOALS FOR 2013

- Springbrook Software will be fully implemented it will save time, money, will allow for greater transparency and accountability and will make us more efficient as a city government. It provides greater efficiencies and cost-savings and environmental-friendly processes. Green processes include Water customers opting out of paper billing, Water customer late notices sent on postcards instead of 8 ½ x 11 paper and envelope, Citywide electronic purchase orders and time sheets..
- Laserfiche Implementation in the Finance dept to improve document management and save time.
- Continue to reduce our debt and manage the city's finances in a business like fashion by keeping the bottom line always in mind.

ANIMAL CONTROL

Accomplishments 2012

Tricia and her team do a phenomenal job, I challenged them last year to get out in the community more and provide some fun activities with the purpose of raising additional funding for this department. And they did just that with a new program every quarter including a car show that is destined to be a very successful annual event in Bryant, as is the Annual Doggie Dunk at Mills park that grew over 300% from the first year.

- They expanded their social media presence outpacing even the parks department.
- Successfully decreased the number of animals entering the shelter using the spay/neuter vouchers.
- Reduced the number of animals euthanized in the shelter.

GOALS for 2013

- Create and implement a disaster preparedness program for all of Saline County's animals, working in cooperation with other animal control agencies, humane societies, breed placement organizations and volunteers.
- Procure a method of accepting credit/debit cards/checks on site and in the field, and online for improved customer service.
- Continue the discussion/planning for a large community dog park.
- Propose to Council to eliminate the licensing fee for all Bryant pets, still requiring a license but at a zero cost to residents.
- Develop and implement standard operating procedures for accidents involving livestock and large numbers of animals, this is important since we are an interstate city.

Bryant Parks and Recreation

Accomplishments 2012

Derek Phillips and his team are doing phenomenal job operating our rapidly growing parks department. Listing all that our thriving parks department is doing throughout the year would take an exorbitant amount of time. From a financial standpoint our parks department will soon be an enterprise fund for the city and by that I mean they are not just self sustaining but very close to becoming profitable. When I mention government can be and should be run like a business Bishop Park is a perfect prototype to prove this can and is being done. The taxpayers made a decision to make an investment in 2005 and the return on that investment is quickly being

realized.

Just to highlight a few accomplishments from this past year, and I do mean a few, there are many more I won't take the time to list them all

- Bishop Park Enhancements
- Splash Pad Completed
- Implemented the room sponsorship program
- The Silver Sneakers program
- Constructed and opened the new Outdoor Exercise area which includes sand volleyball courts, and Bishop Park Fitness Trail
- Planted hundreds of trees and shrubs for beautification
- 8,000 memberships sold since opening in 2010
- Several FREE clinics for youth basketball featuring the Bryant HS team and former Razorback Sammy Munsey
- Hosting dozens of basketball, volleyball, softball, baseball, and soccer tournaments, including AAU State Championship
- Hosted AAA State Softball Championships (and WON)!

Due to the strong ball programs in our community and the commitment of the volunteers who run those our community can celebrate with these committed youth that bring home trophies such as the Cal Ripken Little League World Series Championship, HS state champions for both our softball and our baseball teams and numerous other state and district first place trophies. Without the support of the volunteers and the partnership between the schools and the parks department and all the sponsoring businesses none of this would be possible. Our sports programs show how connected we are as a community and this asset will be capitalized on for the future. Great things are ahead, we have a legacy in the making. Enhancements planned for Bishop Park for 2013 include:

- Fishing Pier
- Acquire funding for shade structures for the ball fields
- Continue expanding our trail system
- Acquire funding for the preservation of the Hurricane Bridge that was recently donated to the City by Mr. Curtis Ferguson through the assistance of the Bryant Historical Society.
- There are already plans taking place to strengthen our partnership with Bryant School District for expanding youth programming such as basketball and volleyball by sharing courts.Plans to renovate Mills Park Tennis Courts
- Introduction of Community Gardens and the possibility of a Farmer's Market

Aquatic Center

Accomplishments for 2012

Onat Tungac has taken the business of swimming to a level no Aquatics program in the State of

Arkansas has ever seen. There are literally families moving to this community in order for their children to be a part of the Bryant Swim Programs, Teams, and Training.

We are the First Local Partner with the Make a Splash Foundation in the State of Arkansas!

This is a year round swim school designed to provide the proper swimming foundation for swimmers up to the age of 17. Over 700 participants and \$70K in revenue The Barracudas our Rec league program that is a member of the Central Arkansas Swim League is the 2nd largest Summer League Team with 230 swimmers, anticipating to pass 300 this next year. We were the smallest team in 2004. The Barracudas host 3 big swim meets each summer at Bishop Park and provide a beginner level competition experience for many children throughout this community. By design they are the catalyst to all the other advanced swim programs that are rapidly growing. These teams include the AAU team BASS that is a year round city owned league for the moderate competitor and the USA Team, RACERS, which has state and nationally ranked swimmers and is the second largest USA team in the state. And last but not least the Bryant and Benton High School teams are growing rapidly as a result of the expansion of the sport of swimming in Saline County.

- 16 swim meets will be held at Bishop during the current season.
- Projected swim meet revenue - \$18K-\$20K
- Bryant Aquatics programs is predicted to bring over 5000 out of town visitors!
- Over 1000 hotel reservations
- Countless restaurant visits! Other activities that are generating a significant amount of income that supports our parks programming are
- Year round Swim Lessons for home school students, Private Swim Lessons
- 400+ Private Swim Lessons, Pool Parties, Movie Nights at the pool

Plans for 2013 include

- Renovating Mills Park Pool
- Resurface Tennis Courts at Mills
- Launch the Adopt a Bench program in February
- Finish the pavilion at Midland Park and start on the playground
- Increase programming with more community wide events
- Maintain Alcoa and Ashley Parks in a manner that is becoming to the community and as Parks that will never be neglected or overlooked because they like Bishop and other parks are an important part of our parks network.

Public Works Department

Accomplishments 2012

I love the Public Works department, these guys are so committed to serving this City and making sure our streets are maintained, our water is plentiful, and our toilets flush. Many Public

works departments need only maintain the city infrastructure, but not ours we are still building our infrastructure and doing it quite well.

- The new Booster Station constructed was completed and the station was activated. Due to our increased storage capacity, we are now able to purchase our water from Central Arkansas Water during off-peak hours. This allows us to save approximately \$10,000 per month. Several transmission lines were installed throughout the City to increase system pressure and system volume.
- The wastewater treatment plant aeration system was installed and has reduced the plants power consumption by 15%.
- The wastewater collection system rehabilitation project is underway.
- The Woodland Park Rd widening project was completed.
- An inspection by the State identified defects in Cox canal and the defects have been repaired.
- Culvert replacements throughout the City have helped alleviate minor flooding issues.
- The pothole patch truck has allowed the department to repair multiple defects throughout the City.
- The Street Department responded to several storm damage calls throughout the year and has made preparations for winter by accumulating salt and sand and ensuring that all winter weather equipment is on standby.

Public Works Department

Goals for 2013

- Installation of the new AMI metering system. The new system will give customers more control over their water usage by allowing them to set budgets and notifying them within 24 hours of leaks via text message or email. The notification will prevent leaks from going unnoticed.
- The Street Department will be installing new culverts on Whistling Pine and Henson Pl. This is the last phase of work to be done in-house for the Forest Cove Drainage improvements.
- The Street Department will be overlaying approximately \$300K worth of roads in the city in 2013.
- New Roads will be opening from Ramar overpass to Highway 5 and from Springhill overpass to Woodland.

The city will have the opportunity to Bond additional street improvement monies thanks to the new Amendment #1 approved by voters in November

Planning and Community Development

Accomplishments for 2012

Under the leadership of Planning Director – Dave Green this department is advancing rapidly to meet the demands of a growing city. He, along with his staff has re-vamped staff reports for Development Review Committee, Planning Commission and Council to include more pertinent background information, mapping and planning direction;

- Revised the establishment of new procedures for acquiring and maintaining street improvements bonds;
- Participated in several Town Hall meetings, walkability studies, and Bryant visioning sessions
- Planning for the expansion of Stagecoach Rd and Alcoa Rd are well underway.

Goals for 2013

- Complete Draft ordinance for City Council in order to set standards and restrictions for multi-family development in the city of Bryant;
- Complete analysis of and revisions to the Master Street Plan, including a Complete Streets Policy
- Re-evaluate the current Landscape Ordinance and develop revisions to make more effective;
- Develop and implement Access Management Plans for all major streets and proposed streets;
- Work with the Parks Department and Keep Bryant Beautiful in re-establishing Bryant as a Tree City USA participant;

And last but not least the **Legal department** is now lead by Chris Madison, he is a real asset and partner to the city in regards to assisting each department in reaching their goals while keeping us between the lines, and going the speed limit, and stopping at red lights, as he often refers to his responsibilities to the city.

Mr. Madison has been aggressive at resolving some legal issues the city was facing when he came into his position, as well as, addressing new ones as they arise. Litigation is a common place in city government, what is important is that you have an attorney like Mr. Madison that can prevent us from needing to be the defendant as much as possible and aggressively prosecute when necessary.

*On a personal note the first two years of this term have flown by, and I must thank some people that have been instrumental in assisting me. It goes without saying that the first person I need to thank is my husband, Allan and next my two wonderful daughters, Emily and Reagan. Without their love and support I could not do this job. They have sacrificed a lot and I will forever be indebted to them for supporting me as they have done.

What I call, the Tri-Pod, Cindy West, Finance Director; Chris Madison, Staff Attorney and Shari

Knight, HR Director. The effort these three put forth to keep the city running in a psycinct manner is incredible. I have the utmost respect for each of you. You are a true asset to the other departments in achieving their goals and meeting the needs of the city.

My assistant, Vicky Morris, thank you for all that you do! You learned on the fly how to keep up with me at the pace I like to keep. You are a master at managing my calendar and keeping me where I need to be and when I need to be there.

I cannot say enough to all our city department heads and employees for the jobs they do on a daily basis. To you, I am very grateful and the City of Bryant is grateful.

I would like to give recognition to the former mayors, elected officials and citizens that call and offer advice and most importantly encouragement, on a daily basis.

City Clerk Heather Kizer, the cities keeper of the records is instrumental to ensuring our city government is transparent and accessible. I cannot thank you enough for your soft spoken wisdom and attention to detail. You are key to the success of this administration.

I thank the City Council for their feedback and willingness to work together as a team. A true partnership is developing already amongst this council and myself and I look for that to grow in the upcoming year.

My friends, we are all part of a great city we call Bryant! Historically and still today we are passionate about how our city will grow. And because of that passion and that commitment to community we are poised for even greater things than we have already seen, while at the same time preserving our quality of life for generations to come. The whole state and beyond has their eyes on us, let's work together and give them only great things to talk about.

I thank everyone for listening tonight and my door is always open. **Thank you and God Bless!**

