

Message from Mayor Ann Womer Benjamin



Happy 2016!

Last year was a year of getting things done in Aurora, from sprucing up the Town Center to completing Sunny Lake improvements to addressing stormwater issues to installing a new sidewalk on SR 82. We also repaved roads, leveraging Aurora tax money with state grants on key roads like E. Mennonite. We will leverage our own

monies with state and federal funding this year as well. Critical to our road program is our .9 mill **Road and Bridge levy** which is up for renewal on March 15. This is NOT a tax increase, because it is a renewal instead of a replacement. The real estate values from the levy passage in 2006 will still be used.

The Road and Bridge levy generates ongoing road funding, typically providing about half of what we need to maintain our roads. A homeowner with an assessed home value of \$100,000 will pay about \$90 per year. This year we will spend about \$352,000 for a \$1.7M ODOT project on 43 and 82. We will also do a project on California Street for which Reminderville and the state will contribute the majority of the cost. Great returns on our investment!

We have key water line replacements, sidewalk installation, Hartman Farm recreation development, stormwater improvements and Town Center projects slated for 2016. Keep in touch so we can benefit from your input!

911 Services in Aurora

As Portage County officials and local community leaders considered consolidation of public service answering points (PSAPs) for 911 wireless calls, Aurora faced a county determination last November that Streetsboro would answer our 911 calls henceforth. We did not want to negatively impact response time which would occur if Streetsboro were to be the PSAP for Aurora's 911 calls, which would then be relayed to Aurora. Any delay in response time is dangerous for residents and not acceptable for city services. Instead, Aurora opted to maintain its own 911 system and moved to purchase new equipment in December through a contract with AT&T. The new 911 system is being paid for from the police wireless fund.

Geauga Lake, Meijer and Mixed-Use

The city, with Council's support, has vigorously pursued the steps necessary to create a walkable, livable and enjoyable space on Aurora's Geauga Lake property once Cedar Fair identifies a buyer. The site for the proposed Meijer store is in the Bainbridge Township section of the Geauga Lake property, NOT the Aurora section, so Aurora has no direct voice in that development. Aurora's carefully crafted design standards preclude a "big box" store on the Aurora portion of the Geauga Lake property.

Storm Response and Improvements

This administration continues to address stormwater issues following the serious storm in July. Stormwater engineering work is ongoing and will provide recommendations for improvements across the city. With the support of Council, engineering reports have been completed for East Homestead, Stone Hill Oval in Hawthorn and Sherwood, and implementation of improvements has begun on Stone Hill. Additional engineering work was approved for Geauga Lake and Hawthorn and completion of the reports is expected soon. Council and the administration will consider the possible implementation of recommendations and their funding in the coming months.

Connectivity

The city completed the first sidewalk installation along SR 82 and is completing engineering for East Pioneer Trail (Library to Willard) and South Chillicothe Road (Pioneer to Aurora Hudson) sidewalks. Residents in those areas are being contacted for easements and work agreements. Engineering for sidewalks on South Chillicothe south of Aurora Hudson to Aurora Farms will begin soon.



Sidewalk ribbon cutting at SR 82

Meet the Finance Director

Timothy Clymer began in January 2016 as the city's new Finance Director. He started on a part-time basis in December and was sworn in on January 15, 2016. Mr. Clymer, a licensed CPA, is president of the Northeast Ohio Finance Officers Association, serves on the Ohio Auditor of State's Regional Advisory Board, and is also the Clerk Treasurer of the Village of Brooklyn Heights. He will supervise and manage all financial activities and staff, replacing retired Finance Director Robert Paul.



Mayor, Finance Director Tim Clymer & Law Director Dean DePiero

City Finances: General Fund Review

	Expenses	Revenue
2014 Actual	\$13,685,729	\$15,976,907
2015 Actual	\$14,190,500*	\$16,264,619

* Increase attributable to stormwater work, sidewalks, parks and wages.

Economic Development News

It's exciting to see the many things happening in Aurora. Most noteworthy are the renovation and expansion of the Aurora School of Music, the opening of Avenue of Aurora which offers rehabilitation and skilled nursing care, construction of the new Pyrotek facility in the industrial park, and renovation of the 1815 Tavern owned by John and Terri Updyke of Mad Jacks.

2015 Building Stats

Residential Construction	\$21,855,791
Commercial Construction	\$ 6,143,270
Industrial Construction	\$14,946,000
TOTAL CONSTRUCTION	\$42,945,000
	(26% increase over 2014)

Fire and EMS Stats

- Answered 1995 total calls, 1561 EMS and 434 fire.
- Taught CPR and First Aid to 510 people and provided fire extinguisher training to 600 employees of local businesses.
- Hired an additional Firefighter/Paramedic allowing someone to be assigned to Fire Prevention and Public Education duties.
- Purchased a new pickup truck with snow plow replacing a ten-year-old vehicle. This vehicle is used to back up the squad on calls and plow both fire stations.
- Upgraded ambulance cots and breathing air packs.

Park Improvements

Significant improvements were completed at Sunny Lake Park, including expanded parking, renovated restrooms and a field-side concession and restroom. Path paving, lighting and ball field construction were finished at Kiwanis Moore Park, and Chagrin River and wetlands restoration work, path maintenance and parking were finalized at the former golf course. And yes, the trees on the sledding hill were relocated!

Police Department Stats

- Equipped all officers with body cameras.
- Established a Parking Violations Bureau.
- Utilized a \$12,000 grant for overtime security detail at the Aurora Premium Outlets to combat theft.
- Conducted three women's self-defense classes at no cost to participants.
- Restored K9 and bicycle programs.

Public Services to Residents

- Collected 7,886 cubic yards of brush and tree limbs.
- Installed street lights on Robinhood and Sherwood.
- Initiated painting of fire hydrants throughout the community.
- Mapped sanitary sewer lines and manholes to digitize the data into a GIS System.
- Collected 5,900 tons of solid waste under trash program, 1,320 pounds of electronics and used ink cartridges, and more than 1,300 tons of recycling.



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2015 Year in Review

- **Rating the Suburbs:** Aurora moved up in the ranks of top places to live in northeast Ohio from 9th to 6th place, as rated by Cleveland Magazine.
- **Director of Personnel/Chief of Staff:** The Mayor appointed Aurora resident Karen Aldredge to this newly created position which provides personnel support to mayoral staff, plans and directs the human resources management for the city, and oversees key projects.
- **K9 Officer:** Nero, a two-year-old male German shepherd and his handler, Officer Dale Riley, recently became state certified and are now patrolling in Aurora. The K9 program was fully funded with donations, primarily from the Rotary Club of Aurora and the Ben Roethlisberger Foundation.
- **Bike Patrol Program:** The Police Department relaunched its bike patrol program over the summer with 14 certified officers and six bikes.
- **Gas Savings:** The city secured a rate of \$3.46 per Mcf for its natural gas program which runs through October 2016.
- **Deed House:** Following the successful move to its new East Pioneer triangle location in late July, the city began restoring the exterior and is also working on plans for a park that will surround the historic Deed House. Meanwhile, the Aurora Historical Society continues to plan interior renovations.



Looking ahead to 2016

- **Road and Bridge levy RENEWAL - March 15 – NOT A TAX INCREASE.**
- **Shawnee and Harmon waterline replacement projects** – Thus the flags in those neighborhoods.
- Development of a **Hartman Farm recreation complex** with ball and soccer fields, trails and arboretum.
- **\$1.3 million in road paving** and improvements.
- Implementation of a new **Sidewalk Transitional Assistance Repair Program ("STAR")** and an **Aurora Transportation Program** – Call City Hall for more information.