



## Paddock River Preserve Officially Opens

The dedication of one of our newest parks, Paddock River Preserve, occurred on a beautiful fall day in October. The Preserve, formerly part of Aurora Country Club, is named for Harold "Pappy" Paddock, Sr., a prominent figure in the history of the property as an early owner of the club and a well-known golf course architect. Many attended the dedication including Pappy Paddock's grandson, Harold Paddock III, and former Mayors Lynn McGill and Jim Fisher, both of whom helped lay the foundation for the land's preservation.



Harold Paddock III, former Mayor Lynn McGill, and Mayor Womer Benjamin are pictured at the park entrance near the newly built city sign.

Dear Neighbor,

What a busy and fulfilling year this has been for Aurora's 220th birthday! I hope you have enjoyed the beautiful parks, recreational opportunities, restaurants, shops and other amenities Aurora has to offer. Hartman on Town Line Road saw many improvements and its first recreational use in 2019 with the opening of the soccer fields and cross country course. More improvements are forthcoming in 2020 and the ball fields should be open this spring. I also hope you noticed the reopened tennis courts by Harmon, which the schools and city collaborated to restore. Hooray!

We continue to plan for the future to ensure that Aurora remains a vibrant 21st century town. The winter of 2018-19 convinced us we could not afford to

rely on salt deliveries in bad weather, so we built a second salt dome at the Service Department. We finally widened East Pioneer in front of the Library, and I think everyone has noticed the benefit. As you know, road maintenance is a critical responsibility of any municipality, and we continued to invest in road paving, including the paving of a major thoroughfare, Aurora-Hudson.



Ann Womer Benjamin

Infrastructure has been a key focus of mine, and in 2019 we engineered the replacement of the fourth 1920s water line, on East Pioneer, that I will have replaced since becoming Mayor. It will be installed in 2020, and I know it will create consider-

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## HAPPY 220th AURORA!

As we close the year of Aurora's 220th birthday, let's recount some of the fun we have had! We are especially fortunate that clubs and groups in the city helped us celebrate. Our official celebration kicked off on the Fourth of July which not only sported extra special fireworks but a military flyover as well. In addition, parade participants used a birthday or history theme in their float decorations, and at the festival we were lucky to be visited by early Aurora settlers Chauncey and Eunice Eggleston, portrayed by Bob and Charlotte Emrick.

Celebratory birthday banners have been decorating our city since the summer, and with the sponsorship of the Rotary, a special commemorative tree was planted on Town Hall grounds complete with an informational plaque. The Aurora Historical Society worked with the city on activities as well. Special thanks go to Katie Trook and Melissa Coleman for spearheading a display of pictures showcasing Aurora's long history. Heinen's graciously welcomed the project in its café and hosted a reception celebrating the installation. In October the Historical So-

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able neighborhood disruption, but we must get it done. We will also pave the road from Route 43 almost to the Beljon development. The incredible news is that through 2020 we will have **successfully avoided borrowing** for our four major water line replacements, notwithstanding that when I first became Mayor I was told that we would have to begin borrowing for these projects as early as 2015.

Sidewalks continue to be installed, 3200 feet of new sidewalks in 2019 alone! We plan on more connectivity, focusing on the Historic District along 306, with the expectation of also installing period-appropriate lighting along that stretch. In addition, since East Pioneer will be under construction anyway, we are hoping to install a sidewalk from the Library to New Hudson, on the north side of the street.

Finally, despite the unavoidable fact that FirstEnergy is not going to go away, the city has made some promising progress in discussions with company representatives over the last several months. Our goal is to mitigate the visual impact of the proposed transmission lines, for our community and property owners adjacent to the route along the railroad right-of-way, through a variety of measures which the company might be willing to employ, including landscaping and shorter poles. The city has **not** agreed to anything at this point and is reserving all of its legal rights and remedies as discussion continues.

Have a healthy and prosperous New Year!

Ann Womer Benjamin, Mayor

## Aurora Economic Development Director, Jack Burge, Will Be Missed

The City of Aurora lost a good friend and perpetual promoter with the passing of Jack Burge on November 15. Jack's vast networks, entrepreneurial spirit, and genuine enthusiasm for this city led him to bring incredible economic growth to us in the last decade. As Economic Development Director, Jack was Aurora's "advocate-in-chief," and his engaging personality and deep knowledge of business and industry needs provided the kind of advice and encouragement which benefitted the city and business alike.



Rest in peace, Jack.

Economic Development Director Jack Burge

## Aurora Police and Fire Make Us Proud

The Aurora Police Department received re-certification from the Department of Public Safety's Ohio Criminal Justice Services Agency for its continued compliance relating to various standards on policies and procedures. To remain compliant, police departments must implement and test their members on various policies relating to law enforcement topics and other areas of importance. In addition, police community outreach continues, and the National Night Out/Truck Night attracted nearly 600 attendees despite inclement weather.

This year the Aurora Fire Department and University Hospitals Portage Medical Center set a record for a six minute "door-to-balloon time." A Mantua resident

experiencing chest pains pulled over in Aurora and called 911. The call came in as a possible stroke, but when Aurora Fire Department paramedics arrived and did an EKG they realized the individual was experiencing a heart attack. The paramedics alerted UH Portage Medical Center and transferred the EKG information directly to the Emergency Department, resulting in the patient receiving relief within six minutes after arriving at the hospital. The total time was only 31 minutes from the time the firefighters arrived on the scene to the time the patient's blockage was opened. This record time included 20 minutes of driving! Congratulations to all who assisted.

city held a children's event at Sunny Lake called "What were kids in Aurora doing 220 years ago?"

The Aurora Chamber of Commerce also helped us celebrate, incorporating the 220th birthday theme in its summer "Drive-It-Yourself" tour.

There is more to come! Early 2020 will see the construction and installation of a new cupola at Town Hall, replicating the one in 19th century pictures that was apparently lost decades ago. Thank you to all of you who helped to make this milestone memorable.



## On the Move with Mayor Womer Benjamin



Congressman Dave Joyce conducted a Main Street Tour in Aurora, here pictured at the Police Department stop with the Mayor and Police Chief Brian Byard.



Members of the Big Bad Brick Builders Robotics Team met with the Mayor during their recent visit to City Hall.



The Mayor visited with veterans at Sunny Lake during a Wounded Warrior outing.



Eagle Scout Keaton Thieding was presented with a proclamation from the Mayor for his achievement.



Thorncreek Winery celebrated its renovation with festivities including a ribbon cutting. Pictured are owner David Thorn and the Mayor.



A group of English teachers from Eastern Europe and Central Asia visited City Hall and met with the Mayor to discuss local and international issues. The group was hosted by Kent State University for a six week program entitled Fulbright Teaching Excellence and Achievement, Media Literacy.



The Mayor, Economic Development Director Jack Burge, and Portage Development President Brad Ehrhart, visited local business Cabmat and spoke to owner Matt Razinger.

## City Welcomes New Chief of Staff/Director of Personnel

After almost five years we had to say goodbye to Karen Aldredge, the city's Chief of Staff and Director of Personnel, who is relocating with her family to their home state of Georgia. Karen's contributions to the city during her time in Aurora have been immeasurable, from reconfiguring personnel positions and bolstering

accountability to saving taxpayer dollars through better oversight of employee benefits.

Aurora resident Karen Pope has been hired to fill the vacancy, bringing 15 years of experience at an international company as Manager and Human Resources Business Partner. Welcome Karen!

## Message from Council

*George Horvat, President  
Aurora City Council*

Happy holidays, everyone!

As we approach the end of 2019, and reflecting back on the past year, we as Council have continued to work hand-in-hand with the Administration to keep Aurora the special place that it is.

As Council, we are here for you, so please feel free to reach out at any time with any questions, comments or concerns. Council contact information can be found on the city website, [www.auroraoh.com](http://www.auroraoh.com), under the City Council tab. Our meetings are generally held the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month, but please check the website for exact dates as there are occasional schedule changes.

We are thankful to all of you, our constituents, for your input and support throughout the year and wish you all a happy and prosperous 2020.

## City of Aurora to Partner with U.S. Census Bureau in 2020

The year 2020 is the constitutionally required census data collection year. Through this every 10-year process, each individual in the United States is counted once and only once.

The data remains confidential for 72 years and is used to generate statistics which are vital in determining the city's level of public safety and emergency preparedness. They are also used to determine the district boundaries used in local, state, and federal elections as populations shift over time.

Your first invitation to participate in the Census will be in your mailbox early this spring.



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Mayor Ann Womer Benjamin  
130 S. Chillicothe Road  
Aurora, Ohio 44202



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## Keep in Touch!

Please call me at 330-995-9123, or email me at [mayor@auroraoh.com](mailto:mayor@auroraoh.com). Thank you for working with us!

- Police/Fire Emergency** – 911
- City Hall** – 330-562-6131
- City Council** – 330-995-9125
- Mayor's Office** – 330-995-9126
- Parks & Recreation** – 330-562-4333
- Planning, Zoning & Building** – 330-562-9564
- Service** – 330-995-9116
- Water & Utilities** – 330-995-9109

- Ward 1** – Jim Vaca, [wardone@auroraoh.com](mailto:wardone@auroraoh.com)
- Ward 2** – Dennis Kovach, [wardtwo@auroraoh.com](mailto:wardtwo@auroraoh.com)
- Ward 3** – Reva Barner, [wardthree@auroraoh.com](mailto:wardthree@auroraoh.com)
- Ward 4** – George Horvat, [wardfour@auroraoh.com](mailto:wardfour@auroraoh.com)
- Ward 5** – Kathi Grandillo, [wardfive@auroraoh.com](mailto:wardfive@auroraoh.com)
- Ward 6** – Harold Hatridge, [wardsix@auroraoh.com](mailto:wardsix@auroraoh.com)
- At Large 1** – John Kudley, [atlarge1@auroraoh.com](mailto:atlarge1@auroraoh.com)
- At Large 2** – Amy McDougald Eckard,  
[atlarge2@auroraoh.com](mailto:atlarge2@auroraoh.com)
- At Large 3** – Scott Wolf, [atlarge3@auroraoh.com](mailto:atlarge3@auroraoh.com)

## Thank You for Supporting Charter Changes!

Many thanks go to the Charter Review Commission which met multiple times this year to review the city's Charter for appropriate changes and updates. Six of their recommendations were approved by Council and placed on the November ballot. Thank you to all Aurorans who exercised their right to vote in November and approved five of the six proposed amendments. Thank you again to Ron Cohen, Morgen Cost, Len Gantler, Carolyn Greenberger, Joe Keckan, Jim Maulis (chairman), Cheryl ShROUT, Nikki Thieding, and Greg Tomasko for volunteering their time and talent to help move Aurora forward in this every five year undertaking.

## We Are Keeping Aurora Streets Clear This Winter

The City of Aurora makes great effort to ensure streets are safe during all snow and ice events. Our crews are "on call" 24/7 and work hard to keep more than 220 lane miles of roadway clear during each event. The city prioritizes the order in which streets are cleared based on traffic volume and safety concerns. This generally results in the main arterial routes being cleared first, with secondary streets coming next, followed by the subdivisions and residential streets. As of this year, due to the construction of a second salt dome at our Service Department, we are able to house 3,500 tons of salt. As a team, we strive to keep our community safe and would like to remind everyone to drive safely and be cautious around snowplows and emergency vehicles.