



**State of the City
Bryant, Arkansas
02/25/2020**

Mayor Allen E. Scott

Introduction

Today I am presenting to you the 2020 State of the City Address. Before I begin, I would like to thank several people that have been instrumental in making our city what it is today.

First, I would like to thank our esteemed City Council. Your service to the residents of Bryant is invaluable.

Secondly, I would like to show appreciation to the City Department Heads and the employees of Bryant. Without them, our city would come to a screeching halt and would not be the best place to live in central Arkansas. Our employees are the glue that holds Bryant together, and for that, I am grateful. Over the past year, I have watched them grow into a team that is more cohesive and focused on the tasks at hand. They genuinely want nothing more than to make Bryant an even better place to live.

I would also like to thank the local businesses and their owners for having the foresight and tenacity to be located in Bryant. You are a vital part of our economy, and we appreciate you - and the Greater Bryant Chamber of Commerce for supporting you. Later, I will tell you about the collaboration between the Chamber and the city.

Thank you to the Bryant School District for being one of the top school districts in the state and being the reason many of our residents choose Bryant. Without you, we would not be where we are now. Once again, all schools in the District scored a B or higher on the Arkansas Department of Education Report Card. Also, Bryant won several championships, including a repeat of the state football championship, esports state championship, and girls' soccer state championship, to name a few. There were also several conference and invitational championships in everything from robotics, quizbowl, archery to cross country and track.

I would also like to thank my beautiful wife and family for their support, love, advice, and patience through many long days. They never complain about the hours that I often keep, nor do they seem to mind the various functions that they attend with me. I could not do this without you.

Last but not least, I would like to thank the residents of Bryant for living in the best city in central Arkansas. You are the reason we exist, and we are here to serve you to the best of our ability. Our job is to make Bryant the best place possible for you to live.

The purpose of the state of the city is to let you know what was accomplished in 2019 and provide a blueprint of our hopes for the city in 2020 and later years.

I can say without hesitation that the state of our city is strong and is on track to grow even stronger. We are strong financially. In 2019, our economy grew. Our sales tax revenues increased by approximately 5%, which will allow us to work on improving the earnings of employees. They work extremely hard, making Bryant a better place to live and often go un-thanked for their efforts. I think it is essential that we work over the next three years to improve wages for our city employees. In 2020, we are working to provide an additional increase in compensation for our employees to recognize them for their accomplishments. We are currently

structuring a system to compensate employees for a college degree and their certifications. This compensation revision will make us more competitive in the job market, and this should help minimize our personnel losses to surrounding municipalities and the county. Unfortunately, our employees were neglected for several years, so it will take several years to ensure that we are as competitive as we can be.

City-Wide Happenings

2019 was a big year for Bryant. The Greater Bryant Chamber of Commerce and the city collaborated on several significant events; the newest activity was the Fourth of July, Pops in The Park event. The event was together in a short time as a way to say thank you to you the residents for being so supportive of the Chamber and city. We will continue this tradition in 2020 with an even bigger Pops in the Park. It will be on the Fourth of July again, so be sure to mark your calendars.

Once again, we had the Taste of Bryant and Fall Fest events. Both events had record attendance. This year we hope to break attendance records again.

In 2019, the AIR Race Classic, an all women's cross-country aeronautical race, chose Bryant to be a stopover location. This race started in Tennessee and ended in Ontario, Canada. It was the perfect way to showcase the Saline County Regional Airport. In 2020 The Chamber and the city will once again showcase the airport; this time, it will be with an airshow that will occur on June sixth. It will be a spectacular event with a multitude of planes and aeronautical feats. Be sure to come out and enjoy the show.

Let me take a moment now and talk about our school district. 2019 was a banner year for the school with the completion and opening of the new Junior High School. This construction project was the second-largest commercial construction projects in the central Arkansas area. Also, the school completed the construction of a new fine arts building, state of the art cafeteria, and a new physical education facility on the High School campus. The construction of the physical education facility has allowed the school district to host the state basketball tournament in March of 2020.

The Encore Heart Hospital construction is going well and is on track to open in late 2020. This facility will add many new jobs to our economy as well as spur medical-related growth in the area.

In 2019, there were 134 new residential construction permits issued in Bryant, 16 new commercial licenses, and 25 new business licenses issued. This increase shows that Bryant continues to enjoy steady growth. All indications are that this will continue into 2020 and beyond.

We are continually striving to improve the quality of life for our residents. The Public Works Department has worked tirelessly to make improvements to our infrastructure. These improvements include stormwater, water/wastewater, and streets. Often when these improvements are occurring, residents experience inconveniences such as detours, construction

zones, and interruptions in water and sewer services. Once completed, they often cannot be seen. In 2019, the council allocated \$1,000,000 from the general fund to address stormwater issues that have plagued portions of Bryant for many years. Additionally, residential and commercial properties have a monthly stormwater impact fee that is collected on the water bill that goes directly to stormwater projects.

Our Street department has also been hard at work on numerous projects throughout the city. The largest street project that is currently occurring in Bryant is the Bryant Parkway. In 2019, we were able to open Bryant Parkway and the associated multipurpose trail from the interstate to Shobe Road. The opening of this portion of the Parkway has improved the north-south connectivity in Bryant. The connectivity will be further enhanced once the remainder of the Parkway is completed from Shobe Road to Hill Farm Road. We have received the initial approval from the FAA, and we are waiting on the FAA to grant the land release portion of the approval process. Once given, we can begin the construction of the final part of the Parkway.

We have also been able to add sidewalks in the area of NW 3rd and Elm Street, thus improving the safety of children as they walk between school and their homes. We have numerous other sidewalks that we would like to add and will continue to do so as funding allows.

The following summarizes the projects that the Public Works Department has completed and projects they will continue to work on until completion.

Construction Completed:

- NW 3rd & Elm Sidewalks
- Bridgeport SW Drainage replacement
- Henson Place Drainage Replacement
- Big Stoneybrook SW Drainage
- Dogwood/Bane SW Drainage
- Hwy 183 & Hill Farm Signalization
- Target/Alcoa Exchange
- Timbercreek Drainage Replacement
- Bryant Parkway Project 1
- Jon Street SW Drainage
- Hwy 5 Utility Relocation

Project Engineering Completed:

- Springhill/Hilltop Drainage/Roadway Improvement
- Timbercreek Drainage Replacement
- NW 3rd & Elm Sidewalks
- Bridgeport SW Drainage replacement
- Henson Place Drainage Replacement
- Big Stoneybrook SW Drainage
- Dogwood/Bane SW Drainage
- Hwy 183 & Hill Farm Signalization
- Target/Alcoa Exchange
- Bryant Parkway Project 1

- Jon Street SW Drainage
- WW Plant Centrifugal Pump Upgrade

Engineering Initiated:

- Springhill Rd Left Turn Lane
- Hilldale/Hilltop Intersection Improvements/Roundabout
- Bryant Parkway Project 2
- Chapel Ridge SW
- Oak Meadows SW
- Shobe Road Force Main Relocation
- Boone Road Improvements

Operations, Maintenance & Repair:

- Lexington Park drainage project 140 feet of reinforced concrete pipe
- Complete phase III of sidewalk maintenance program
- Finalization of the driveway permit process
- Justus Loop 42-inch reinforced concrete pipe installation
- Implementation of yard waste pickup program
- Development of a Sign and Signal operation and completed a novice traffic control workshop
- Completed more than 1600 work orders for the Street Department
- Completion of Richland Park Basin and Lavern Drainage Improvements by increasing drainage capacity and redirecting stormwater to reduce the risk of flooding
- Completion of Forest Drive drainage improvements
- Continued to maintain city ditches for drainage and flood prevention
- Completed over 1800 Work Orders for Wastewater/Water with and 74 After Hour Callouts
- WW Solids handling operation processed 4,610,391 gallons of waste sludge producing 959.45 tons of dewatered material for disposal
- WW Treatment process discharge of over 647,725,00 gallons of effluent released into receiving stream
- Highway 5 Widening & Utility Relocation project completion
- Completed 90% of evaluation Water/WW repairs in house saving approximately \$200,000
- Inspected and cleaned over 145,000 feet of the WW Collection System Pipeline
- Completed rehabilitation of over 50 manways throughout the city
- Implemented a root saw program to regulate problematic WW Collection areas
- Water/WW Rate Analysis completed
- Water Tanks Cleaned interior and exterior
- Water System Distribution Emergency Repair Contract Awarded
- SSES for Basin 3 & 5 completed, Construction Contract Awarded
- WW Capacity Analysis for NW part of City Completed
- WW Plant Centrifugal Pump Upgrade Contract awarded
- Lift Station 6 panel and pump upgraded
- Stilman Ditching Project

- Shoal Creek Clean Out
- Midtown SW Collection System Cleaned
- Little Stoneybrook SW Basin Cleaned, Removed over 50 truckloads of sediment
- Ashley Park Demolition Completed
- Pavement Analysis Completed
- Lift Station Transducers Installed for monitoring

One of my goals when taking office was to update and improve the city park system. In 2019, the council allowed me to use \$300,000 to start this program. This \$300,000 was used to update the ball fields at Ashley with new lighting, fencing, and field rehabilitation. This update is the first phase of improvements at Ashley Park and will make the ball fields useable again. A portion of the funds was used in conjunction with donated money to convert one of the unused ball fields in Alcoa 40 Park into a much needed and long overdue city Bark Park. The Bark Park has quickly become a major attraction for the dog lovers in Bryant as it allows dog owners a place where they can safely play with their dogs off-leash.

We will continue to work to improve our city park system throughout my tenure as your Mayor. To give you an idea of the needs, I have summarized the repairs and upgrades below by each park.

Alcoa 40 Park:

- New Park Sign
- New Bathrooms
- Trail System Upgrades
- Expansion of Multipurpose Fields
- New Concession Stand
- New Fencing and Lighting on Softball Fields
- New Mountain Bike Trail

Ashley Park:

- New Park Sign
- Refurbish the Pavilion
 - Refurbish the Concrete Pad
 - New Lighting
 - New Picnic Tables
- New Bathrooms
- New Playground

Bishop Park:

- Aquatic Center
 - New Interior Pool Lights
 - Install Pool Pack Dehumidifier
 - Redo Non-Slip Flooring
 - Electrical Repairs
 - Repair Corrosion Problems
 - Repair Roof System

- Fire Sprinkler Rehabilitation
- Exterior Pool Chemical Storage
- Lap and Therapy Pool Repair and Recoat
- Bishop Grounds
 - Construct Stage/Pavilion
 - Install Festival Power
 - Expansion of Parking Lot
 - Installation of Parking Lot Lighting
 - Lake Charles Property Acquisition
 - Reynolds Property Acquisition
 - Construct entrance from Sleepy Village Road

Midland Park:

- New Park Sign
- Miscellaneous Field Improvements
- Additional Parking
- Construction of Concession Stand
- Field Lighting
- Add additional Fields

Mills Park:

- New Park Signs
- Complete Phase 2 of All-Inclusive Playground
- Resurface Basketball Court
- Resurface Tennis Courts
- New Fencing on Tennis Courts
- Expand Parking Lot
- Resurface Walking Trails
- Continue to Improve Mountain Bike Trails
- Refurbish Pavilion including Electrical

Springhill Park:

- New Park Sign
- Remove and Replace Playground Equipment
- Repair Plumbing
- Install Bathroom

As you can see, this is an extensive parks improvement list, and without planning for these repairs in the future, it will result in further deterioration of our park system. These repairs will take several years to complete, but it is essential to continue working toward our goal so we can be proud of our parks.

For the first time, Animal Control was able to upload a full calendar year of data to the National Animal Shelter database. There are thousands of animal shelters across the US that upload their data to the national database and share their intake and outcome data with the database. Using

the database helps us to understand if our intake/outcome statistics are similar to the rest of the country and allows a comparison of numbers with similar-sized cities helping us improve.

Animal Control took in a total of 929 animals in 2019: 360 Cats, 509 dogs, and 60 other animals, which is slightly up from 2018's total of 856. Of those, 668 were reunited with their owners, adopted, fostered, or transferred to another organization. The Spring Mutt Mixer brought out lots of dogs to the Pop-up dog park. The Bryant Bark Park officially opened in October 2019. Since that date, we have seen steady usage, especially on warm sunny days.

There were several notable and very successful pet adoption events, which included: Whiskers in Wonderland, Home for the Holidays & Caldwell Banker's Homes for Dogs event.

In 2019, Carl Minden became the Chief of Police. He came to us from the Pulaski County Sheriff's Office. During the time he has been here, the department has had several accomplishments. Through an anonymous donation, Chief Minden was able to implement a drone program and purchase body cameras for all of the police officers who did not already have one. Also, he was able to replace the 8- to 10-year-old service weapons with new weapons. All officers have completed Narcan training and were issued Narcan kits that were provided a grant from CJI. The availability of Narcan has resulted in several saved lives. An additional officer was added to the SRO Division as well.

In 2020 The implementation of the body camera program will continue. Also, using the step and grade policy, the starting pay will be adjusted so that we continue to be more competitive. There are also plans to add two additional officers to the Patrol Division.

Notable accomplishments of the Fire department in 2019 included maintaining the ISO 1 fire rating for the city. The construction of the new fire training facility was completed and is located at Fire Station 2 on Reynolds Road. This training facility completed the fire bond fund expenditures for the department.

The department implemented a rank restructure, creating the Driver/Engineer rank to recognize and compensate personnel who are responsible for driving and operating fire department apparatus and equipment. Included in this restructure was the standardization of all company officers to the industry standard rank of Captain.

The goals for the fire department in 2020 are to test for the Battalion Chief position to serve as Fire Marshal. To seek additional grant opportunities to increase and add to the services provided by the department. Additionally, there is a plan to implement Advanced Life Support (ALS) functions to EMS operations within the department as staffing allows. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the training opportunities for department personnel will increase through the new training facility.

Administratively, we were able to establish an Engineering Department utilizing existing staff, which will allow better control over projects in the city and assist in planning for the additional infrastructure needs of the city. Before 2019 all information technology (IT) services were

performed by subcontractors. We have established an IT Dept so that IT issues can be addressed promptly and as a way to improve city connectivity and increase cybersecurity for the city.

Coffee with the Mayor was started and has been a success. We typically have 20-30 interested citizens that attend and receive updates on various projects throughout the city. Often it allows residents to communicate directly with me as well as the department heads, which enables issues and concerns of the residents to be addressed. We have redesigned the newsletter that is included in the water bill to make it more informative and useful for residents.

Plans for 2020 and Beyond.

The city will continue to work on stormwater mitigation and other infrastructure issues. As a part of this, over the next two years, we plan on looking at alternative funding methods for our stormwater mitigation. We need to find alternative funding sources so that we can fix the problems that exist in a timelier manner.

We will continue to work on improving connectivity in our city by completing the Parkway in the next two years as well as work on other street improvements throughout the city. This improved connectivity will include road improvements and multipurpose trails. Finally, we will continue to work on our wastewater system improvements and strive for release from the current ADEQ Consent Action Order.

We will continue improving our Park system so we can provide our residents with the quality recreational opportunities that they want. We will be pursuing funding for Phase 2 of the all-inclusive playground and trail resurfacing at Mills Park, improvements to Bishop, Ashley, Alcoa 40, Midland, and Springhill Parks.

The city and the Greater Bryant Chamber of Commerce will continue to work together for the economic development of the city. We will also be working together to work on a new strategic vision for Bryant. The plan will extend 10-20 years and will be called Bryant 2040. By clarifying our vision, we will be better able to serve the resident's needs and wants. The strategic vision will not be successful without the input of everyone, city personnel, business owners, and residents. So be on the lookout for further information soon.

We will continue to improve the compensation of our employees, so we remain competitive in the current job market. We will also be working to further enhance public safety through the addition of more police and fire personnel.

We are also continually striving to increase communication between the city administration, council, and residents through regular meetings to keep people better informed. One way we have made strides in this area is through Coffee with the Mayor, and we will continue to work toward better communication. As I have stated before, I have an open-door policy and am here to serve you.

We redesigned the city seal in 2019 and are looking into the development of a new logo that is a modern representation of Bryant.

In closing, I am proud of what we have accomplished in 2019 and are striving for in 2020, and I hope you are as well. The state of our city is strong thanks to the hard work put in by city employees, the city council, and the residents of Bryant.

Thank you for your patience and support,

Mayor Allen E. Scott