



**State of the City
January 15, 2013
Mayor Lioneld Jordan**

Ladies and gentlemen of the City Council and my fellow citizens of Fayetteville, I am pleased to report tonight that the State of our City is sound.

Working together through a tough period of economic uncertainty and reduced revenues, we successfully kept our eyes on the stars and our feet on the ground. Attending to the basics while keeping in mind who we are and what we want to become as a community, we worked in the spirit of Alvin Toffler, who reminded us always "to think about big things while you're doing small things, so that all the small things go in the right direction."

Our success has been the result of a strong partnership, built on mutual trust and a shared vision, between my Administration and our City Council.

I want to take this opportunity to express my personal appreciation for the outstanding service of Council Members Brenda Boudreaux, Bobby Ferrell, and Sarah Lewis. Each brought distinct talents to our enterprise. While presenting unique perspectives and varied views, they understood the fundamental difference between policy disagreements and personal animosity, always willing to listen and learn from each other in a spirit of friendship and cooperation. As we welcome our new members Sarah Marsh, Marty Schoppmeyer, and Alan

Long, I commend their legacy to you as you begin your first term of public service on the City Council.

We have and will continue to work together to take care of public business, to wisely manage our resources, to provide essential services, to assure a vibrant community, and to offer the promise of a brighter future for all of the People of Fayetteville.

Sound Management

I am happy to report that the financial condition of the City is sound and that a balanced budget has been presented and approved for 2013.

We met a balanced General Fund budget for 2012 and did not require the use of any reserve funds, marking three years in a row in which the City of Fayetteville operated without having to use our reserve funds for current expenses.

Consequently, the City's General Fund Reserves have been restored above the amount they were when I took office four years ago, and we are now in a strong position to meet any unexpected economic or fiscal crisis in the future.

Our dedication to fiscal responsibility and public accountability achieved these results without any tax increase during the last four years. We initiated a Lean Government program that helps increase efficiency and reduce the future need for additional personnel. This achievement both directly improves customer service to our citizens and allows existing staff to adequately serve an ever-growing customer base. Our dedicated city employees have met this challenge, and I sincerely thank them for their outstanding service to the people.

Our efforts to address the challenges and offer practical solutions have been and will continue to be grounded in a common sense approach, aptly defined by Harriet Beecher Stowe as "seeing things as they are and doing things as they

ought to be done." Now that we have balanced the budget and restored the fiscal integrity of our city government, we can actively pursue our dream for an even more vibrant city in which to live, learn, work, play, and raise our families.

Public Safety

No government function is more important than assuring the public safety of our citizens, and I commend the courage and commitment of our dedicated police officers, fire fighters, and emergency medical technicians.

Although our population has grown by more than 35% since 2000, our crime rate is down 14.7% during the last four years.

While our Fire department responded to more than 8,000 calls for service and emergency incidents this year, there was not a single fire death in our city.

In 2012, our Police Department received national accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies; which strengthens accountability, facilitates continued professional excellence, develops community agency relationships, and creates a forum for law enforcement and citizens to work together to prevent and control challenges.

Through the leadership of the Fayetteville Fire Department in 2012, our City was certified as a Firewise Community USA by the National Fire Protection Association.

We have dramatically improved our emergency communications with a new citywide radio system necessary for safe, efficient, and coordinated responses that are critical to protecting and helping our community in time of need.

We began participating this year in Smart911, a free, confidential service that allows citizens to create a safety profile online that can include photos, parental emergency contact information, and other pertinent data. This safety profile is

automatically displayed to 911 responders during emergency calls and can help save lives. We have increased our Hazardous Materials Response capability, and we will establish our own Hazardous Materials Operations Team in 2013 for such emergencies and other environmental incidents.

Among the proposals we have recommended to our State Legislators are bills to prohibit cell phone use by drivers in school zones during school hours and for state law to allow Workers' Compensation insurance to cover First Responders' work-related mental health injuries.

Transportation

During the last four years, Fayetteville has been a leader in planning arterial roads with medians, bicycle lanes, sidewalks, and green space—such as current projects for widening Crossover Road, Garland Avenue, Huntsville Road and Cato Springs Road. Construction begins this year on the 71B Flyover project to alleviate traffic problems and provide more convenient access to the Uptown business district, and we completed the preliminary design for extending Van Asche Drive from Gregg to Garland.

Other projects scheduled from the existing street bond program include restoration of the historic bridges on Maple and Lafayette Streets and continuation of the College Avenue Improvements with sidewalks, tree planting, and street lighting.

Our vision for convenient and sustainable transportation; however, is much more than traditional highways and includes alternative transportation as a keystone of our future. During 2012, we added 100 Shared Lane markings for bicycle routes and constructed more than 12,000 feet of sidewalks, including the enhancements to College, Mountain, and Center for the walkable environment envisioned by the Downtown Master Plan. The proposed 2013 Sidewalk Construction Plan identifies 24,757 feet of citywide sidewalk projects. We completed the Meadow Valley Trail in 2012, and the Fayetteville Multiuse Trail

Network was voted the best municipal trail system by readers of *Citiscapes Magazine*.

In 2013, we will see the most extensive trail construction in the City's history. Expanded mass transit must and will be a part of our future transportation system. We have continued our partnership with Razorback Transit providing free transportation for city residents, and ridership has increased on the Ozark Regional Transit routes. I have been the advocate for a regional light rail study by the Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission, and I will continue to encourage an expanded and convenient regional mass transit system.

As part of our larger vision, we will continue our leadership and participation in the Fort Smith-Fayetteville Alliance to pursue enhancements to the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System by deepening and widening the channel and managing the flow to accommodate larger barge loads and increase utilization of river transportation and rail connections. Success in this project will mean long-term economic and environmental benefits to the two cities, the region, and state; reducing both transportation costs and carbon emissions.

With regard to planning our integrated transportation system, as well as other aspects of our vision for a sustainable future, we will continue to be the most innovative City in Arkansas.

Environment

The People of Fayetteville have a continued commitment to a clean environment. We will carry on our work to be good environmental stewards and further partnerships that leverage environmental progress.

In 2012, Fayetteville became a National Wildlife Federation Certified Community Wildlife Habitat, the first in the State of Arkansas. We became the first, and still the only city, in

Arkansas to pass the 2009 International Energy Conservation Code for residential structures. We also replaced and restored 300 yards of the White River stream bank in 2012 alone, reducing over 450 cubic yards of sediment with over 330 pounds of phosphorus that would otherwise continue to enter the White River annually.

We completed the pilot dredging project on Lake Sequoyah, for what could be the largest phosphorus removal project ever performed in the White River. We completed construction of our biosolids facility, and we began selling dried Class A biosolids and turning landfill waste into a reusable product. Our biosolids initiative and facility won the *Arkansas Business* 2012 City of Distinction Award in the category of Green/Energy Conservation Initiatives. We are not only diverting loads of product from entering a landfill, this program saves the City from paying landfill fees for the disposal. We are migrating and implementing alternative fuels such as propane and biodiesel in our fleet and equipment.

The Fayetteville Police Department is testing two hybrid-type vehicles for non-emergency purposes, and we will increase the use of these energy-efficient vehicles for non-emergency Police work if the test results prove positive, and I expect they will.

Fayetteville is now an affiliate of Keep America Beautiful, and in 2012, Fayetteville received 5 blooms from America in Bloom, the highest number that a city can receive. Fayetteville was honored with the Tree Growth award from the National Arbor Day Foundation, making that five years in a row; and we celebrated 17 consecutive years of being honored as a Tree City USA. We will continue our successes restoring native grasses in Fayetteville, such as the restoration of the native grass prairie at Lake Fayetteville along the historic Butterfield Trail.

In 2013, we will continue with the building of our urban forests and work to fulfill the goals of the tree canopy coverage assessment. In 2012, we distributed more than 600 free trees and shrubs to residents to plant on their property to help re-

establish our City's urban forest and the planting of 162 trees in street rights-of-way as part of the Tree Preservation and Protection Ordinance, which will also reduce storm water peak flows and air pollution, increase oxygen supply and property values, provide wildlife habitat, and beautify neighborhoods.

We replaced the inefficient light fixtures in the City Municipal Parking Deck on Meadow Street with 67-watt LED fixtures and light sensors on the first and second levels. This year, we will re-design center medians in the municipal parking lot west of the Bank of Fayetteville to catch runoff waters and help self-sustain the new trees that we will plant.

We again encouraged our State Legislators to file and support Property Assessed Clean Energy Bonds legislation and Renewable Energy Feed in Tarriff legislation—or what we refer to as PACE and ReFIT.

Community

We who live in Fayetteville love Fayetteville, visitors come back or stay forever, and Fayetteville is known nationally as a city in which our People are our prize.

Over 30,000 Fayetteville residents donated over 557,000 volunteer hours last year, making Fayetteville a Volunteer Community of the Year in the State of Arkansas for the 4th consecutive year. Community volunteerism has benefitted Fayetteville's economy—its creative economy, its historic preservation economy, its green economy, its tourism economy, its local foods economy, its transportation economy, its health economy, and helped assure that Fayetteville is a beautiful and thriving city. Many did so by not taking time away from their families, but integrating the family in volunteer activities. Fayetteville Forward volunteers continue to contribute to our community, and they dedicate their actions to building Fayetteville's economic opportunities and future in an inclusive and innovative way.

Our City is sound because we have active and successful partnerships with the outstanding institutions that are an essential part of the fabric of our community and help define who we are and provide additional opportunities for success.

Fayetteville Public Schools are the best in the state, again named to the list of Higher Performing Schools in Arkansas by the National Center for Educational Achievement and for the fourth consecutive year were named to the Top Ten Digital School Districts in the nation.

Academically, Fayetteville led the state with the most Advanced Placement students, National Merit Semi-Finalists, and National Merit Finalists, while 33 students were selected for the Arkansas Governor's School.

Whether winning Odyssey of the Mind tournaments; literary awards; Quiz Bowl; State math awards; All-State honors in band and choir; winning state championships in football, volleyball, cheerleading, and track; or a student-produced film being named the Best Youth Film at the 2012 Little Rock Film Festival; or other successes; students in our public schools excel. And, the City values our relationships with the School Board and Public School Administrations, as well our partnering on projects that benefit Fayetteville and her people.

We also value our productive relationship with the University of Arkansas, an essential part of our community that will soon achieve its goal of becoming a Top 50 Public Research University. Our relationship has been enhanced by the formal creation of the Town and Gown Advisory Committee composed of City and University officials and citizens from each Ward. The exciting work at the UA's Arkansas Research and Technology Park resulted in Fayetteville winning the 2012 City of Distinction Award in technology advancements. The award exemplifies the vision we share with the University to make the Arkansas Research and Technology Park a dynamic environment where innovation can flourish.

The nationally-recognized Fayetteville Public Library was again named the Best Library in Northwest Arkansas by reader polls in both *Citiscapes Metro Monthly* magazine and the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*. The American Library Association's Library Design Showcase presented three awards to the new Otwell Teen Library.

There are now more than 67,000 registered users, 2012 circulation surpassed 1.165 million items, 63,000 people participated in Library programs in 2012, and Summer Reading Club was the largest ever with 4,073 participants. The Library's Project Fayetteville added over 1000 Fayetteville items to the digital photograph archive, the Fayetteville Stories film festival resulted in new works about our history, and our Public Library encouraged, sponsored, and premiered the Fayetteville documentary "Up Among the Hills" that is narrated by President Bill Clinton.

We are fortunate to have this outstanding facility in our community to inspire imagination and foster learning, an information resource open to every resident without charge. I am looking forward to participating with the board, staff, and community in developing plans for future expansion of the Fayetteville Public Library.

The Walker Park Senior Citizens and Wellness Center received the Therapeutic award from Arkansas Recreation and Parks Association.

The Wedington Corridor Neighborhood Plan was approved by the City Council earlier this year, the first stage of the plan process has been completed with a successful week-long public design charette, and we are finalizing the report from the public input sessions.

Our community is coming together in support of local foods and urban agriculture policies and ordinances to encourage sustainable and compatible urban agriculture, food

production, and distribution within the city; and this year I will propose that this Council support such legislation.

Moreover, our community garden program is a proven success. The Walker Park Community Garden expanded the number of plots and gardeners in 2012 in conjunction with the construction of a deer fence and designated water supply. These additions enabled gardeners to utilize 38 garden plots for personal use or to grow food to be donated. The Jefferson School Community Garden had another successful year with all nine plots utilized.

There is always something fun to do in Fayetteville. Fayetteville is where memories are made. This is certainly the case again with our City's recreation programs. The youth spring soccer season had an increase of 22 participants from the fall season. The total number of participants for 2012 year was 2,718 players, and Fayetteville has the largest youth recreation soccer program in the state. Youth softball continues to have impressive growth with 446 participants last year.

The adult softball teams had over 250 teams in the spring, summer, and fall leagues, with over 3,150 participants. The Fayetteville adult softball program has more teams than any other program in the state. In 2012, all available field space was filled with 48 Adult Coed Kickball teams playing in our summer and fall kickball seasons.

Wilson Park was awarded the best public park by *Citiscapes* Magazine. Gulley Park was a runner-up. Wilson Pool had 20,578 visitors this past summer, and 489 people participated in swimming lessons at the pool. The Dive-In Movie Series sponsored by the Fayetteville Firefighters Association was a great success with 1,203 people attending the four movies. 505 youths participated in our BeActive Camps, and an estimated 7,000 people attended the six free Gulley Park Summer Concerts.

The Yvonne Richardson Community Center continues its growth and improvements, boasting well over 25,000 visits in 2012.

Fayetteville acquired new park land in 2012, we renovated the Wilson Park Pool, we constructed St. Joseph Park, we are engaged in the Lake Sequoyah Boat Ramp and Courtesy Dock Project, and we are moving forward on Regional Park development. In 2013, we will renovate the Wilson Park Swimming Pool building, Walker Park Concession Stand, develop the Mount Sequoyah Gardens, move forward on the Regional Park development, and make improvements at the Wilson Park Tennis Courts.

This year, we will begin construction on the Dickson Street area parking deck. This Administration has proposed to our State Legislators the filing of permissive Legislation for regulating boating, the same enabling rights the state gave the City of Fayetteville to regulate towing. And in the Historic Downtown Square area, we will move forward on an Arkansas Entertainers Walk of Fame.

We have also seen great strides in our City Animal Shelter. In the past year, we broke our animal adoption record from the year before and placed over 2,450 pets in new homes. The City Council passed a micro-chip ordinance that has helped us limit the number of animals that end up at the Shelter by getting many dogs and cats directly to their homes. Ranger's Pantry distributed eight tons of dog food and two tons of cat food, enabling 363 dogs and 303 cats to remain in their homes.

We continue to decrease the animal euthanasia rate, which is at 23.8%--compared to 35.8% in 2011. People donated 7,000 volunteer hours and \$50,000 to benefit the Animal Shelter in 2012, and we constructed 8 new play yards.

The City of Fayetteville also was the recipient of the 2012 Governor's Work-Life Balance Award in the Large Nonprofit Category—the first city governmental entity in Arkansas to win

this award.

Farmland Trust awarded the Fayetteville Farmers Market the designation of top Farmers Market in the nation.

Kiplinger listed Fayetteville as number 5 in Best Cities for Mid-Career Professionals. The National League of Cities selected Fayetteville as one of 12 cities in the nation highlighted in the NLC 2013 Calendar, with Fayetteville landing the October feature month. And, as *Parade Magazine* recently announced, America in Bloom awarded Fayetteville with the prestigious designation as the most beautiful city in the nation among cities in the population category of 50,001 to 100,000.

Fayetteville also recently received the America in Bloom Heritage Preservation Award, and this award beautifully states, "Heritage encompasses a broad field, but in the case of Fayetteville, the most powerful expression of heritage awareness is in their trail system. The trail system in Fayetteville easily threads the needle of history. The stage route of the Butterfield Trail, the sadness embodied in the Trail of Tears and the Civil War routes through this community all make the trail system a poignant reminder of the history of this region."

We are a historic city, a vibrant city, a beautiful city, an artistic city, an environmentally-aware city, an academic city, and we all feel a special connection—a bond—to our city and to each other.

We will continue these successes, and we will make expansions--such as with the Woolsey Wet Prairie Sanctuary. We will build more community gardens in city parks, the public schools will continue their community garden successes, and we will have new City tennis courts and soccer fields by 2014.

We will enhance our public education program on recycling with the Marion Orton Environmental Education & Recycling Center, which honors Marion Orton for her service as Mayor and as a private citizen who started Fayetteville's first

recycling center.

From 2010 to 2012, Fayetteville added 1,775 new jobs and 570 new businesses. This year we plan to continue that job and business growth with the addition of 200 new jobs per year.

The Walton Arts Center will expand by 2015, and the Downtown Dickson Street Entertainment District municipal parking deck will be completed by 2015. We have started improvements on the City's industrial park and will be installing new city wayfinding signage. We will continue our expansion of open government and active citizen involvement in public policy and continue to be the most innovative municipal government in the State.

We will continue our strong partnerships and working relationships with the Fayetteville Public Schools, University of Arkansas, Chamber of Commerce, Northwest Arkansas Labor Council, Northwest Arkansas cities, Washington County, State and Congressional Legislators, and community organizations.

We will continue to help assure Fayetteville maintains its national standing as a top least-expensive place to live in the United States and a top place in high quality of life categories.

We will continue to attain the best for our community and the best in ourselves. As William Jennings Bryan stated, "Destiny is not a matter of chance, but of choice. Not something to wish for, but to attain."

We are not here merely to hold an office. We are here in order to empower the people of our community to live a better life, with greater vision, with a sense of hope, and with the chance to achieve their dreams for themselves and their families.

We are here to enrich our community, and we impoverish ourselves if we forget our errand. So, let us raise our sights and

see the possibilities – always see them, for they are always there.

Let us be daring and assert our integrity of purpose and imaginative vision against the commonplace and the ordinary. Then, let us work together – the Mayor, the City Council, and the People -- to translate our shared vision into reality and to assure that Fayetteville will continue to be the most interesting, innovative, and vibrant city in Arkansas.

In closing, let me share the wisdom of Henry David Thoreau, who said, "If one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with success unexpected in common hours."

Let us join in seeking our dreams for Fayetteville, making these uncommon hours, and sharing that success with every resident of our community.