

2012 State of the City Address

Members of City Council, City staff and citizens of Oakwood:

Why does Oakwood, with a population of 9,202, continue to be “The Premier Residential Community in the Dayton and Miami Valley Region?” It is simple. It is our beautiful neighborhoods, our excellent schools and library, unmatched city services, public safety, public works, recreation and leisure; but most of all because of our citizens.

Neighborhoods

We have three homes on the National Register of Historic Places. Hawthorne Hill was the home of Orville Wright for most of his adult life. Due to an exciting partnership between Dayton History and The Wright Family Foundation, Dayton History now conducts educational tours at Hawthorne Hill while the Foundation continues to own and manage the stately property.

The Long-Romsperst Homestead on Far Hills Avenue was originally built in 1863 and has had several additions. It was occupied by one family until 1985 when it was

bequeathed to the Oakwood Historical Society and now serves as its home.

The familiar Queen Anne style double at 314-316 East Schantz Avenue was originally owned by Adam Schantz, Sr. and built around 1895. Today the new owners are carefully restoring it.

In May, the home at 230 Haver Road was chosen the 2011 Designer's Show House by the Dayton Philharmonic Volunteer Association. This home was built in 1914 in the French Eclectic style with Colonial Revival influences.

Whether it is a majestic Tudor on Ridgeway Road, a Foursquare Victorian on Kramer Road or a New England Colonial on Woods Road, we have outstanding diversity in housing choices.

Schools/Library

Everyone knows Oakwood has great schools, but did you know this about Oakwood schools?

- Oakwood schools, for the 12th consecutive year, received the top rating of “*Excellent with Distinction*” from the State of Ohio.

- The High School Academic Decathlon Team placed first overall in all divisions in Ohio and fourth in the nation in competition in March and April.
- The Speech and Debate team produced two State Champions, Michael Light in Impromptu Speaking and Rob Mitchell in Oratorical Interpretation.

Wright Memorial Public Library continued its mission to provide high levels of efficient, friendly, personal service and foster an atmosphere of intellectual liberty in the American tradition of free ideas.

City Services

The city services offered to Oakwood residents are unsurpassed. We continue to provide weekly backyard trash collection, year-around curb collection of yard waste, fall leaf collection and spring mulch delivery and sidewalk snow removal. We were honored as a Tree City USA for the 29th consecutive year. Our Johnny Appleseed program has planted over 2,500 trees in Oakwood since the inception of this program. We commend the efforts of our 31 member public works department.

Public Safety

Formed in 1927, our 38 member public safety department is the second oldest consolidated department in the United States. It is unique because all our officers are cross-trained and state-certified in law enforcement, fire fighting and emergency medical services. Our police response time is two minutes. Our fire response time is 4.5 minutes; the national standard is 6 minutes. Our medic response time is 3.6 minutes; the national standard is 13 minutes. Oakwood has the lowest crime rate and fire loss in Montgomery County.

In February, Oakwood's first female public safety officer, Leslie Zengel, retired after serving our community for 28 years. As Captain and now Major Baldrige reported, "she will not be easily replaced by anyone because of her love of the job, passion and her caring approach to being a public servant."

Nonetheless, in July we hired Sarah Martin to our Public Safety Department. She completed the Ohio Police Academy program at Sinclair Community College and finished first in her class in academics, physical fitness and firearms proficiency, the first candidate ever to finish first in all three areas. Upon completing her oath of office,

I asked Sarah where she was on September 11, 2001. She replied, “I was in second period at Dayton Christian High School.”

In September, William Davis, a Harman School volunteer, collapsed in the stairwell of the school. He was in cardiac arrest. Oakwood Public Safety officers Damian Baggett, Jack Harrison, Mike Tanner and Bruce Upchurch, along with Major Randy Baldrige, responded to the emergency. They stabilized the patient and removed him to Miami Valley Hospital. The physicians indicated had it not been for the initial actions of the first responding officers Mr. Davis would not have survived. In October, each officer received the Oakwood Public Safety Department’s Life Saving Award. As an aside, Officer Baggett is an Oakwood High School graduate and joined our Public Safety Department in December 2010. We continue to have the finest group of public safety officers in recent memory.

Recreation/Leisure

Where else will you find in a community of 2.2 square miles the parks and green space offered in Oakwood? We offer three neighborhood parks, Shafor Park, Orchardly Park and Fairridge Park.

Our natural areas include Loy Gardens, Elizabeth Gardens, Houk Stream and Centennial Park.

Our recreation facilities include the Oakwood Community Center and Gardner pool, Creager field, Irving field, Old River fields and Mack Hummon Stadium.

In July, Creager field became the place for dogs large and small to bring their owners. We plan to dedicate this community amenity in 2012.

In October, we re-established the Oakwood Bikeway. It is a 5.4 mile route that includes a wonderful mix of flatland and hills and gives cyclists a beautiful tour of Oakwood.

In November, Carol Collins, our Director of Leisure Services, received the prestigious Ohio Landscape Architecture Award. This award honors Carol for 37 years of outstanding horticultural efforts and service to Oakwood.

People

Oakwood's strength is its people. Our citizens are leaders in industry, education, medicine and the arts. Just consider some of the events in which our citizens participated in 2011.

- In January, several hundred people attended the 8th annual Kettering-Oakwood Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast.
- In May, over 700 walkers participated in the 10th Annual Breast Cancer 5K CARE Walk. The event raised over \$16,500 to support a cure for breast cancer.
- That Day in May, sponsored by the City and the Oakwood Rotary Club continued the tradition of the pancake breakfast, 5K and 10K runs, community parade, games, rides, refreshments and displays.
- The Oakwood Historical Society created a self-guided walking tour highlighting the original town of Oakwood established in 1872. The area starts at the Five Points intersection and extends south to Park Avenue and west to Oakwood Avenue.
- In July, The Oakwood Sister City Association hosted the 35th anniversary of our twinning with Outremont. The Association also visited Outremont in October as part of the twinning. The mission of Sister Cities is promoting peace through mutual respect, understanding and cooperation—one individual, one community at a time. We have two sister cities: Le

Vesinet, a suburb of Paris and Outremont, a suburb of Montreal.

The Value Proposition

We have not raised city income taxes since 1984 or city property taxes since 1991. In fact, we reduced property taxes in 2008 by letting an existing levy expire. We have spent less for city services in each of the last four years and we expect to spend less in 2012 than we did last year.

Our citizens pay less for water and sewer than most people in Montgomery County. The services we receive in Oakwood are unsurpassed. We have reduced our city staff by seven percent since 2002 with no reductions in city services. The reductions were possible by finding efficiencies and by asking our employees to do more.

Unfortunately, we have a serious budget problem facing our city. The Ohio estate tax expires on January 1, 2013. This tax has provided, on average, \$2.6 million annually or about 20% of the revenue used to provide city services.

Our largest source of revenue is the city income tax. We project collections of \$6 million in 2012. Because we give a 100% credit for taxes paid to other jurisdictions, for an Oakwood resident working in Dayton or Kettering, where

the income tax rates are 2.25%, Oakwood only receives 0.25% of the 2.5% total taxes paid.

Over a dozen surrounding communities have increased their income tax rates over the last few years. Accordingly, our city receives about \$235,000 less in income taxes each year.

We also face the fact that there are people in the Ohio General Assembly and the current administration who do not agree with the right of Oakwood and other charter cities throughout Ohio to provide services under the “home rule” provisions of the Ohio constitution, provisions which were established 100 years ago. They believe there are too many local governments and school districts in Ohio and plan to force local government and school district consolidation by reducing our revenue streams.

As I speak, legislation is being drafted in Columbus that would outlaw all municipal income tax ordinances. Under the guise of tax uniformity, the legislation will reduce our municipal income tax base. We believe this legislation could reduce our city income taxes by an additional \$500,000 a year.

Because it is a well-established fact that local government is the most accountable and responsive government, Oakwood City Council will oppose the efforts of the State of Ohio to impose their centralized government agenda. We represent you and will see that our city provides the services you believe are important and necessary. And in doing so, we will prudently manage the resources our community provides.

Well Governed, Well Managed and Financially Strong

When I joined City Council in 2003, it was my belief that Oakwood was well governed, well managed and financially strong. I still hold that belief and will continue this tradition.

I am proud to serve with Vice Mayor Steve Byington who begins his fifth year on City Council and Stanley Castleman who begins his ninth year on City Council. I am also proud to serve with Rob Stephens and Anne Hilton who each begin their third year on City Council.

This Council, like those that preceded it, operates in a collegial style and everyone believes in doing the right thing for the citizens of Oakwood. We listen to one

another, no one has hidden agendas, and we believe in community service.

The excellent services provided by our public safety, leisure services and public works departments would not occur if not for the leadership of City Manager Norbert Klopsch. He is recognized throughout the region as an outstanding city manager. He is also blessed with a fine group of department directors and deputy city manager Jay Weiskircher.

We have citizens who are willing to pay the extra costs to have this special Oakwood community. As former city manager J. David Foell once said, "It's not a question of how much you pay in taxes; the question is whether you receive good value for each dollar spent."

Accordingly, it was not surprising our citizens passed our November 2011 city property tax renewal levy by a 74% margin.

With the help of City Council, city staff and the citizens of Oakwood, we will continue to be well governed, well managed and financially strong. Thank you for the opportunity to serve you.