

2014 State of the City Address

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

Change amidst continuity and a continued commitment to excellence hallmark our city.

Neighborhoods

Eleven new homes are under construction in the residential section of Sugar Camp at Pointe Oakwood. This follows the initial eight homes, seven of which have been sold, in this new Oakwood neighborhood. These homes blend the new with the recognized old charm of Oakwood architecture. We have outstanding diversity in housing choices.

The 88 unit upscale assisted care facility plans to begin construction this year and new medical office tenants plan to locate at the remaining office building in the commercial section.

Hawthorn Hill, a National Historic Landmark, is now owned by Dayton History and will be preserved and maintained with a \$1 million gift made by multiple donors to a fund administered by the Dayton Foundation.

Schools/Library

Everyone knows Oakwood has great schools, in fact, the finest public schools in the region. This has been the case for decades and the tradition continues. Our Oakwood schools had the highest 2013 “Performance Index Score” in the Miami Valley and the sixth highest in the state of Ohio.

In 2013, *US News and World Report* published their “Best High Schools Rankings.” Oakwood earned the Report’s highest honor, a gold medal, ranking 9th in Ohio and 241st nationally... this out of 21,000 high schools. *Forbes* featured Oakwood schools as one of the best schools in the nation with affordable housing. They ranked Oakwood schools third in the Midwest and 13th in the country.

For the second year in a row, the Oakwood High School Academic Decathlon team is national champions. This scholastic competition is unique because the nine member team is tested in art, economics, language and literature, mathematics, music and science and participates in judged events in speech, interview and essay.

Jack Bachman, Heather Brooks, Nathan Gibbs, Cliff Goertemiller, Caleb Kell, Grant Pitarys, Wilson Mullen, Herbert Sizek and Wending Zhu, along with Coach Lori Morris, are congratulated for this significant achievement.

Dr. Mary Jo Scalzo retired after 41 years as an educator and 10 years as Oakwood City School Superintendent. Her enthusiasm in every room she entered will be missed. Oakwood resident, Dr. Kyle Ramey, with 24 years of education experience, will continue the commitment to excellence as the new superintendent of schools.

In 2014, Wright Memorial Public Library celebrates its 75th anniversary in its current location at 1776 Far Hills Avenue. It continues its mission to provide high levels of efficient, friendly and personal service and to foster an atmosphere of intellectual liberty in the American tradition of free ideas. Ann Snively retired with 36 years of public library experience including 10 years as Wright Library Director. Debra Schenk has done a fine job as interim director and Travis Bautz was recently selected from 31 applicants to serve as the new director.

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 31st consecutive year. Our Johnny Appleseed program has planted nearly 3,000 trees in Oakwood since the inception of this program. We commend the efforts of our public works department and our horticulture staff in the leisure services department.

Public Safety

Formed in 1927, our 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 first officer on scene response time for any emergency is under two minutes, by far the fastest in the region. Our fire engine response time is 4.2 minutes; the national standard is 6 minutes. Our medic response time is 3.8 minutes; the national standard is 13 minutes. Oakwood has the lowest crime rate and fire loss in Montgomery County.

Recreation/Leisure

Where else will you find in a community of 2.2 square miles the parks, gardens and green space found 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, the Dog Park at Creager Field, Irving Field, Old River Sports Complex and Mack Hummon Stadium.

Oakwood also features beautiful public gardens including Smith Gardens and Francine's Garden.

People

We salute Oakwood Municipal Court judge Robert Deddens for his 24 years of service to the citizens of Oakwood. Eight highly qualified Oakwood residents were on the ballot to continue Judge Deddens' record of excellence and newly elected Judge Margaret Quinn took office last month.

Chris Epley and Elizabeth Reger completed their exemplary service as members of the Oakwood Board of Education. Cassie Darr and Linda Woods, along with re-elected member Michael Miller will continue to provide sound leadership to our school district.

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 2013.

- In May, about 1,000 walkers participated in the 12th Annual Breast Cancer 5K CARE Walk. Since its inception, the event has raised over \$150,000 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;
- Our first farmer's market opened on Saturday morning's from June to September and featured home-produced and gourmet food items and works of local artisans. The MOMs Group of Oakwood donated a bike rack to the community to encourage people to bike to the farmer's market and the Shops of Oakwood.
- The 14th annual Giving Strings concert has donated over \$40,000 for local charities. Oak Tree Corner, a charity which helps children deal with grief, was this year's recipient.

Financial Concerns

The past four years have been financially difficult for our city and local governments across Ohio. In 2012 the Ohio legislature significantly reduced the local government fund, phased-out the business tangible property tax reimbursement and eliminated of the Ohio estate tax. Currently, H.B. 5 sits in the Ohio Senate. Its fate is unclear but, by any analysis, it means additional revenue losses to Ohio cities.

In addition, 15 surrounding communities have increased their income tax rates over the last several years. 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. Accordingly, our city receives about \$330,000 less in income taxes each year.

Community Outreach

In 2012, City Council and city staff met with over 500 citizens in 28 neighborhood meetings, three town hall meetings and three open houses to discuss how the repeal of Ohio's estate tax and other state funding cuts affect our community. We heard several common themes, notably:

- 1) We live in this community for a good reason and truly value our comprehensive and high quality city services.

2) While new taxes and fees must be part of the solution, the city should continue reducing expenses and be as cost efficient as possible; and

3) To the extent that services can be paid for through specific fees, that is preferred over general taxes.

Accordingly, we made our refuse program self-supporting by reducing expenses and increasing the monthly refuse charge. We established a storm water utility to account for the costs of this program. We increased fees and reduced expenses at the Oakwood Community Center.

Our union and nonunion employees have agreed to salary freezes, two-thirds of the employees for two years and one-third for this year. We plan to ask them for an additional year with no increase in compensation.

In May our citizens approved a 3.75 mill property tax levy for city services with a 55% affirmative vote. The cost to the owner of a \$200,000 home is 62 cents a day and was the first increase in city property taxes since 1991.

The combination of these actions solved about three fourths of our financial problem.

The Value Proposition

We have not raised city income taxes since 1984. We have spent less for city services in each of the last five years and plan to spend less in 2014 than we did in 2013.

Our citizens pay less for water and sewer than most people in the Miami Valley. We have reduced our city staff by 12% since 2004 with no reductions in city services.

Tonight we will introduce an ordinance to limit the credit for taxes paid to other jurisdictions to 1.75% effective for the 2015 tax year.

With Oakwood's tax rate at 2.5%, the 1.75% limit assures that all residents with earned income pay at least 0.75% to Oakwood in support of Oakwood's unmatched public services, including public safety, public works, recreation and leisure.

The 1.75% credit limit will only affect Oakwood residents with income earned in another taxing municipality where the tax rate is above 1.75%. For example, an Oakwood resident who works in Dayton or Kettering will pay 0.5% more on their earned income. In 2015 they will continue to pay Dayton or Kettering 2.25% and will pay Oakwood 0.75%.

The credit limit will also protect our city from future revenue losses when other cities increase their tax rates.

Because it is a well-established fact that local government is the most accountable and responsive government, 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 seventh year on City Council and was recently re-elected to lead the First Suburbs Consortium of Dayton. I am also proud to serve with Stanley Castleman who begins his 11th year on City Council and Rob Stephens and Anne Hilton each of whom begin their fifth 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 including assistant city manager Jay Weiskircher.

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.

So 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.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you.