

Mayor Mills' State of the City, 2022 - 02/13/2023

2022, NEW to YOU! The year included introductions to new people, being exposed to new places, the formation of new partnerships, and it was the year of being open to new ideas!

Greetings President Hilgenberg and council members. Welcome elected officials, coworkers, and my fellow citizens. Tonight, may we share and celebrate the many things that made the City of Coshocton a great place to live, work and play in the year 2022.

In addition to showing all of you my appreciation for what you do for our city, I would like to thank all the hard-working men and women that are beside me daily and share my vision of making Coshocton, Ohio the best place to call home. Sherry Kirkpatrick and the Auditor's Office, Jackie Cushman and the Tax Office, Bob Skelton and the Law Director's Office, and I cannot fail to thank all of the department heads and employees that make things happen! Thank you for making my office look good. On behalf of the Mayor's Office, including myself, Safety-Service Director Max Crown and Executive Assistant Bob Beaumont, please accept these gracious

thanks and know that we acknowledge and always appreciate everything that you do for the greater good of Coshocton!

I cannot fail to mention the people who help me, personally, behind the scenes. Mom, Dad, and Ginger, once again I could not have asked for a better support team, thank you! Dom and Trip, we made it through another year! I hope you are as proud of me as I am to call you both, my sons.

New people, there has been a leadership change within the City of Coshocton Fire Department this year. Most notably, a new Fire Chief, Russell Dreher. Welcome Chief! Andrew Akers became a new Captain. And the ranks received a couple new fire fighters. Sadly, these men's promotions were not the headlines that got the most attention. A catastrophic fire at Grace United Methodist church will always be remembered. However, Chief Dreher and his team fought that fire in such a well-organized and professional manner that they managed to save this structure so that it can, and currently is, being rebuilt. Hopefully, we will never see a fire like this again in our lifetime. May we all be thankful for the service that

this department, and all other first responders and local volunteers, provide to our community.

New places, 2022 welcomed a variety of new businesses to our community. Restaurants, bars, medical offices, specialty stores, and national chain stores are just a few of the types of businesses that felt Coshocton would be a great place to plant roots. Several well-established businesses grew to the point of re-locating and/or expanding within our city limits. A few notable local business investments are McWane Ductile's \$45 million expansion and job creation investment, MFM Building Products' \$8 million investment in job creation and expansion and Standard Power's multimillion dollar investment at the former paper mill property.

The medical industry is thriving in Coshocton as we continue to celebrate Coshocton Regional Medical Center for being recognized as one of the top 100 hospitals in the country. Genesis Coshocton Medical Center invested tens of millions of dollars in a brand-new facility in 2022 and will soon open its doors for business this spring. The Coshocton County Commissioners, EMS and Sheriff Offices should be recognized for the hard work of making

their visions of a new EMS building and a Justice Center a reality. The city is proud to be a part of these projects and grateful to the taxpayers for their support!

Roscoe and downtown, not new, but both are experiencing a renewed atmosphere. Our beloved Whitewoman Street has finally been paved, looks new, and couldn't have happened at a better time. There is not one empty store front in the village. Entrepreneurship is alive and well in Historic Roscoe Village, a couple examples, Roscoe Barbeque and the expansion of Good Boy Bakery! Main Street and the downtown area are busier and busier each day. New life has been given to the Selby building thanks to the work of Lanny Spaulding and Our Town Coshocton. The Frew building has never looked better in decades thanks to the vision, blood, sweat and tears (and money) of Paul Gilbert and Matt Parsons. Main Street is experiencing a much-needed resurgence of housing, short term rentals and an influx of new businesses from both "in town" and "out of town" investors. The city thanks each businessperson investing in our downtown and Roscoe Village businesses, as well as their patrons and tenants.

Bridging the topics of new places to new partnerships is the merger of the City and County Health Departments.

To peek ahead a bit in this speech, it may even be considered a new idea. The successfully negotiated merger will save the city an estimated \$2 million over the next ten years. And it is exciting to watch from the City Hall windows the new Coshocton Public Health District location taking shape at the old Hopewell Industries building.

The Governor and Lieutenant Governor each made visits to our city in 2022. After the creation of Ohio's new re-districting map, we have met with all of our new state representation and many of their staff members. My administration is working to grow these partnerships on many levels. The citizens of Coshocton should feel a renewed confidence that our interests are being heard at the state level and these visits are proof of that.

New federal partnerships have developed in 2022 thanks to the in-depth co-operation of already established local partnerships. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the US Forest Service, the Northern Border Regional Commission, and the Appalachian Regional Commission selected Coshocton as a community to receive planning assistance

through the Recreation Economy for Rural Communities program. The City of Coshocton, The Coshocton County Chamber of Commerce, The Coshocton Port Authority, Our Town Coshocton, Coshocton Visitor's Bureau, and many other organizations, local government officials, business leaders and residents worked together in a community workshop with these federal agencies to learn how to enhance outdoor recreation opportunities and strengthen our downtown. Not only did we learn how to utilize and promote our outdoor resources, but local organizations also unified as a team to benefit Coshocton for generations to come.

A new partnership was established with Strategic Public Partners, SPP. The city administration opened itself to the new idea of a municipality our size partnering with a firm that will represent our interest in government affairs, especially at the state level. SPP earned their keep in 2022 by aiding the city to receive over \$100,000 from the Ohio capital budget, specifically sidewalk/street work done in Roscoe Village and repairs to the Selby building.

The DORA is a success and will continue to be. Many doubters and critics came out of the woodwork during its

creation, but once it was in place and working some of them became fans, especially during the summer concert series. This scenario has played out many times while serving as your mayor. Many of my strongest opponents are now the very people who believe in me, work with me and encourage me to be forward thinking as their mayor. I welcome everyone to reach out to me and share concerns, visions, and thoughts about things my administration is doing right or wrong or could and should be doing. I am your mayor, and this is your city and I want to make sure the things that have already started become reality during my next term.

Before I conclude, allow me to share a few things that are on the horizon. Late last year I joined the Governor at his residence for the announcement of a once in lifetime funding opportunity for the 32 Ohio Appalachian counties. We are slated to receive a portion of the allocated \$500 million which will potentially fund downtown revitalization, including a couple buildings, and development of a riverfront connection to our downtown. Other funding is actively being sought for demolition of the two former glove factory buildings, Custom Glove and Ansell-Edmont. The Warsaw water project is an ongoing venture and drawing closer to

becoming a reality. And in continuing this similar type of growth, developing infrastructure to Conesville is being explored. My big wish involves the Carnegie Library. As I've been known to say, "Stay Tuned!"

In closing, I know I have probably forgotten to give thanks to several organizations and individuals. It was not intentional, and I hope that I have always shown my sincere appreciation to everyone daily as we work for the betterment of the City of Coshocton. And if I haven't, I am adding "showing gratitude" to my list of future goals. In the sense that many people may not have been mentioned in this State of the City Address, nor have numerous projects, accomplishments, ideas or even failures. Well, failures were intentionally left out, unapologetically... May I leave you with this, as they say on the locally famous WTNS Trading Post, the successes were "Too numerous to mention!" And again, as I have personally said, "Stayed Tuned!" I look forward to sharing all the great things that are happening and will happen in 2023, as well as asking for the opportunity of being your mayor again in 2024.

Good night fellow citizens, be proud of what Coshocton was, is and will be!