



## CITY OF FORT SMITH

### 2012 KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- In March, voters overwhelmingly approved the use of sales tax bonds and sales tax revenue for 5 projects and purposes critical to Fort Smith's future prosperity. The ballot questions passed by margins as high as 3 to 1.
- Roadway construction work for the widening of Highway 45 between Phoenix Ave. and Zero St. was completed. The \$13.4 million project was a partnership between the Arkansas Highway & Transportation Dept. and the City of Fort Smith.
- Construction of water and sewer infrastructure along Riverfront Dr. began in summer 2012 and will be completed in spring 2013. The \$2.1 million project will stimulate development along Fort Smith's river front.
- City Clerk Sherri Gard was selected as the 2012 Arkansas municipal clerk of the year for her professionalism, her commitment to training for herself and other municipal clerks, and for her diligence in fulfilling her responsibilities.
- The city completed an efficiency study of its water and sewer operations to identify opportunities for improvement. The task force overseeing the study will review results with the mayor and board in February 2013.
- Funding for the construction of I-49 through Chaffee Crossing and southward to U.S. Highway 71 continued. The city completed relocation of a water main in the Howard Hill Rd. area to accommodate the roadway project. The segment between Highways 22 and 71 is expected to be open to traffic by 2015.
- The design of fire station 11 at Chaffee Crossing is nearly completed with construction expected to begin in January 2013. Modernizations to 10 older fire stations are underway.
- Using federal stimulus funds, the city undertook building improvements at fire and police stations. All of this will reduce the city's energy consumption and lower operating costs.



- Packets for board of directors meetings are now paperless, saving \$14,500 annually in direct printing and delivery costs and furthering the city's "green" initiatives.
- The transit dept. has gone paperless in collecting passenger manifest information. Ipads are used to track boardings on all buses.
- Approximately 365 residential lots are under various stages of development.
- The 12<sup>th</sup> annual Creekmore Holiday Express saw an estimated 20,000 citizens attend the attractions at Creekmore Park during November and December.
- Fort Smith was named the # 1 western town in America by True West magazine. The distinction will bolster the region's tourism business.
- Fort Smith received a \$987,309 grant from FEMA to increase staffing levels on the city's aerial fire companies. The new staffing has improved public and employee safety.
- Transit ridership increased 4% during 2012. The transit dept. completed \$1.2 million in renovations and upgrades to its operations facility using federal stimulus funds.
- Fort Smith's City of Good Neighbors program was recognized by the International City/County Management Assn. (ICMA) with a community health and safety program excellence award for innovation, excellence and success.
- Design of the new city/county aquatic center at Ben Geren Regional Park is nearing completion. Public review meetings will be held in January. Construction is expected to begin by May 2013 and be completed by April 2014.
- The Fort Smith police dept. attained its 3<sup>rd</sup> consecutive national re-accreditation. Accreditation was first granted in 2003. The accreditation signifies the department's adherence to nationally-recognized standards for law enforcement services.
- Construction of a \$35 million upgrade to the Lake Fort Smith water treatment plant was completed. The upgrade modernized the plant, which was first constructed in the mid 1930's, and increases treatment capacity by 10 million gallons per day.



- The city was granted a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Assn. for the 27<sup>th</sup> consecutive time. This is the highest award given for governmental financial reporting.
- The final phase of streetscape along Garrison Ave. was completed. The streetscape improvements make the thoroughfare a more inviting environment for pedestrians and have stimulated private investment in the downtown. Over the last 12 years, \$5.8 million has been spent on Garrison Ave. streetscape projects.



- City Administrator Ray Gosack was elected president of the Arkansas City Management Assn. for 2012-13.
- Continued operation of The Park at West End to attract residents and visitors to downtown Fort Smith. The Ferris wheel had its highest-ever day of ridership on July 4<sup>th</sup> with more than 1,100 riders.
- Design and construction of various water transmission system improvements has continued. Construction of a new line at Chaffee Crossing is underway, and construction of the first 6 miles of a new line from Lake Fort Smith will begin in mid 2013.
- Conducted 5 sessions of the citizens academies program through fire, police and administration – graduating approximately 100 citizens. These academies develop better relationships between city government and residents.
- Completed a citizen survey which provided valuable feedback about city services and strategic issues. Plans to address critical areas of concern are in progress.
- Continued construction of \$180 million in improvements to the sanitary sewer system to reduce the occurrence of sewer backups, overflows and untreated discharges during periods of heavier rainfalls. Work this year has focused in the Cavanaugh/Zero St./Mill Creek areas. The last of 21 overflow relief pipes were eliminated. Upgrades to the P St. wastewater treatment plant were completed.
- The purchase of 6 replacement pieces of fire apparatus was approved. The \$4.1 million purchase includes 3 pumpers, 2 aerial ladder trucks, and 1 combination pumper/aerial truck. The new equipment should be in service by March 2013.

- Greg Riley was selected as Fort Smith's new director of streets and traffic control following a nationwide search.
- Implementation of automated refuse collection entered its sixth and final year with 4,083 more households added to the program. The program streamlines the collection of garbage, improves the appearance of neighborhoods, provides same-day service for all collections, and reduces the potential for litter. The 2012 program completed the conversion of all 33,483 single-family residences to automated collection.
- The city was granted a distinguished budget presentation award from the Government Finance Officers Assn. for the 24<sup>th</sup> consecutive time. This is the highest award given for governmental budgeting.
- Fort Smith was named an Arkansas Volunteer Community of the Year for 2012. This was the 14<sup>th</sup> time and the 8<sup>th</sup> consecutive year for Fort Smith to receive this honor.
- Improved neighborhood infrastructure by resurfacing 18 lane miles of neighborhood streets; replacing 1.5 miles of 2" galvanized water line with 6" water lines; and reconstructing and repairing 1.5 miles of public sidewalks using city forces for the first time.
- The city is strongly supporting efforts to preserve a future mission for the 188<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing of the Arkansas Air National Guard. The staff is facilitating close coordination with the community council and the congressional delegation.
- Mayor Sandy Sanders and Fayetteville mayor Lioneld Jordan have created a strategic partnership between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> largest cities in Arkansas. The partnership, which involves dozens of community members, is working to promote deepening of the Arkansas River channel to 12'.
- A 1-1/4 life size monument of famed U.S. Deputy Marshal Bass Reeves was erected in Pendergraft Park. The monument was the result of a community fund-raising effort to honor the iconic lawman from Fort Smith's days of bringing law and order to Indian Territory.



- Partnered with the Fort Chaffee Redevelopment Authority to entice Old Dominion Freight Line to construct a new \$6 million freight terminal at Chaffee Crossing. Old Dominion will initially employ 25 people at the new location.
- The city supported two litter pick up days organized by the Beautify Fort Smith committee. Nearly 4 tons of trash was removed from public roadways.
- The development services department partnered with World Changers, a network of Southern Baptist and other evangelical churches, to make roofing and exterior repairs to 16 homes in Fort Smith. World Changers received private funding to perform repair on another 9 homes.
- Downtown Fort Smith saw private investment of over \$3 million and 16 new businesses. The CBID, Chamber of Commerce and City are working jointly to market the downtown riverfront.
- The city launched new citizen communications initiatives including quarterly neighborhood board meetings, a monthly e-newsletter (*Fast Focus*), a Facebook page, and small group listening meetings with a diversity of citizens. Facebook likes increased from 146 likes in November 2011 to 1083 likes as of November 12, 2012. The Fast Focus newsletter subscriber number has increased from 244 subscribers in January 2012 to 392 in November 2012. The goal is to strengthen trust and to build communications tools and resources for city representatives and citizens.
- Carol Ann Cross Park expanded by 50% with the addition of 10 acres to the eastside community park. The acreage was donated by the Hanna family.
- Fort Smith established a friendship city relationship with Jining, China. Several representatives of Jining were in Fort Smith in October. The connections are hoped to develop business opportunities between the two cities.
- Fire Marshal Ronnie Rogers was appointed to the Arkansas Fire Prevention Commission.
- The city began using vehicles powered by compressed natural gas (CNG) in its fleet. Four vehicles in the police, fire, transit, and customer service departments are now in service. CNG is a greener fuel and costs significantly less than traditional motor fuels.



- Fort Smith was ranked #10 in the United States for municipal e-governance by Rutgers University. Municipal web sites were evaluated in the areas of privacy, usability, content, service, and citizen participation. Other cities on the top 10 list include Seattle, Minneapolis, Washington, D.C., Boston, and St. Louis.
- Operation of the Fort Smith Convention Center was successfully transferred from the city to the Advertising and Promotion Commission. Tim Seeburg was hired as the new chief operating officer for the center. Revenues are up more than 30% this year compared to the previous year.

