

north
little
rock

PROUD

INSIDE:
COMING STREET
IMPROVEMENTS
STATE OF THE CITY
ACTIVE AMBOY

Spring 2018, Vol. 01, No. 01.

A Publication of the North Little Rock Mayor's Office



NLR PROUD Features

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One of the largest and most active neighborhood groups lets us in on their secrets of success.

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Find out which streets in your ward will be part of this year's overlay program.

6 State of the City
Each year the Mayor gives a report on our city. Read about how he thinks we did in 2017 and what we can expect for 2018.
Spoiler – a lot.

9 Citizens in Action
The leaders of all our neighborhood groups work together to share their best ideas.

On the Cover – The Argenta Branch of the William F. Laman Library serves as an historic anchor for our beautiful downtown North Little Rock. Springtime brings out the picture-worthy tulips that are planted each winter by our dedicated volunteers, committed to making North Little Rock's downtown a welcoming place for every resident and visitor to our community. Photo by Mark Potter.



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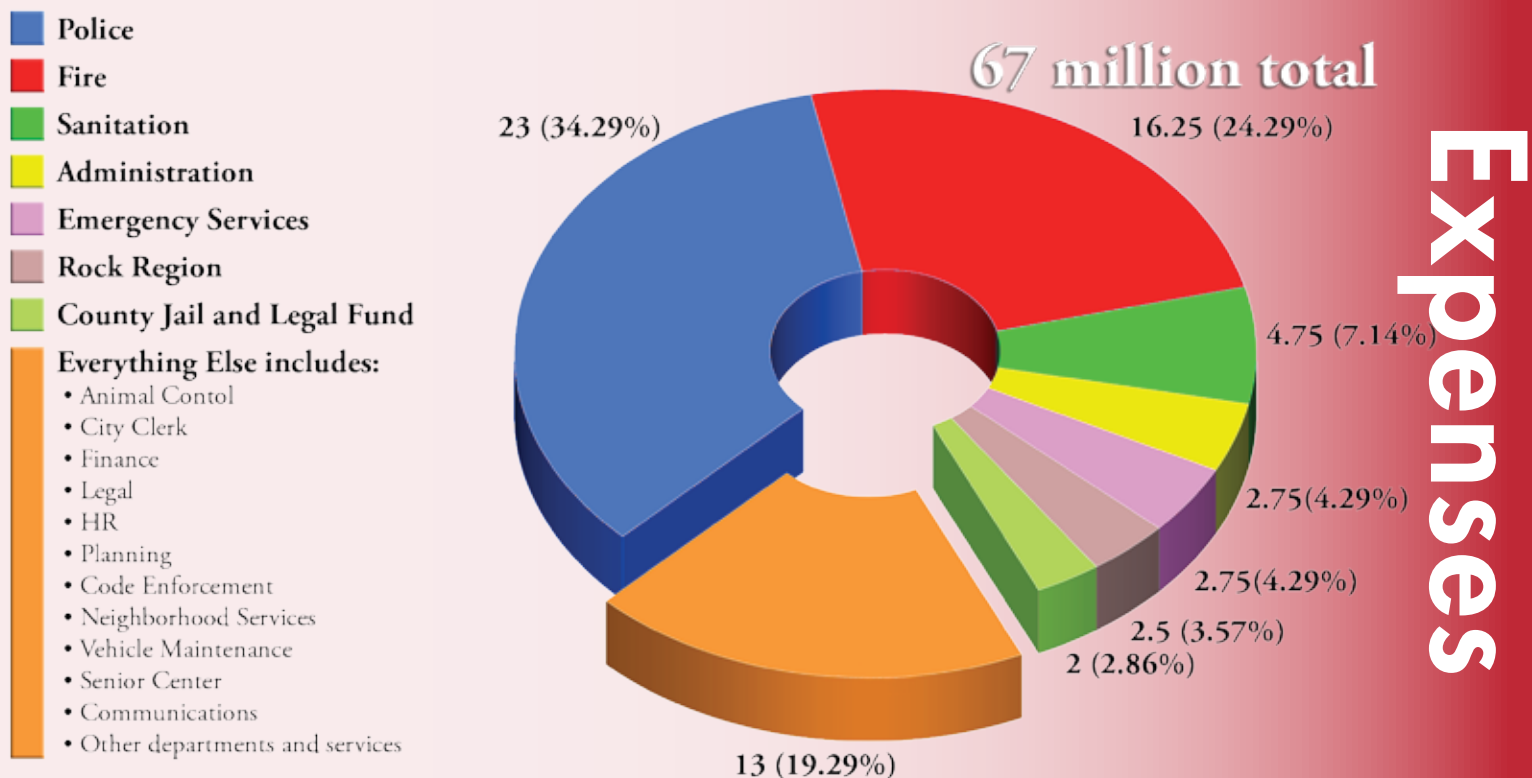
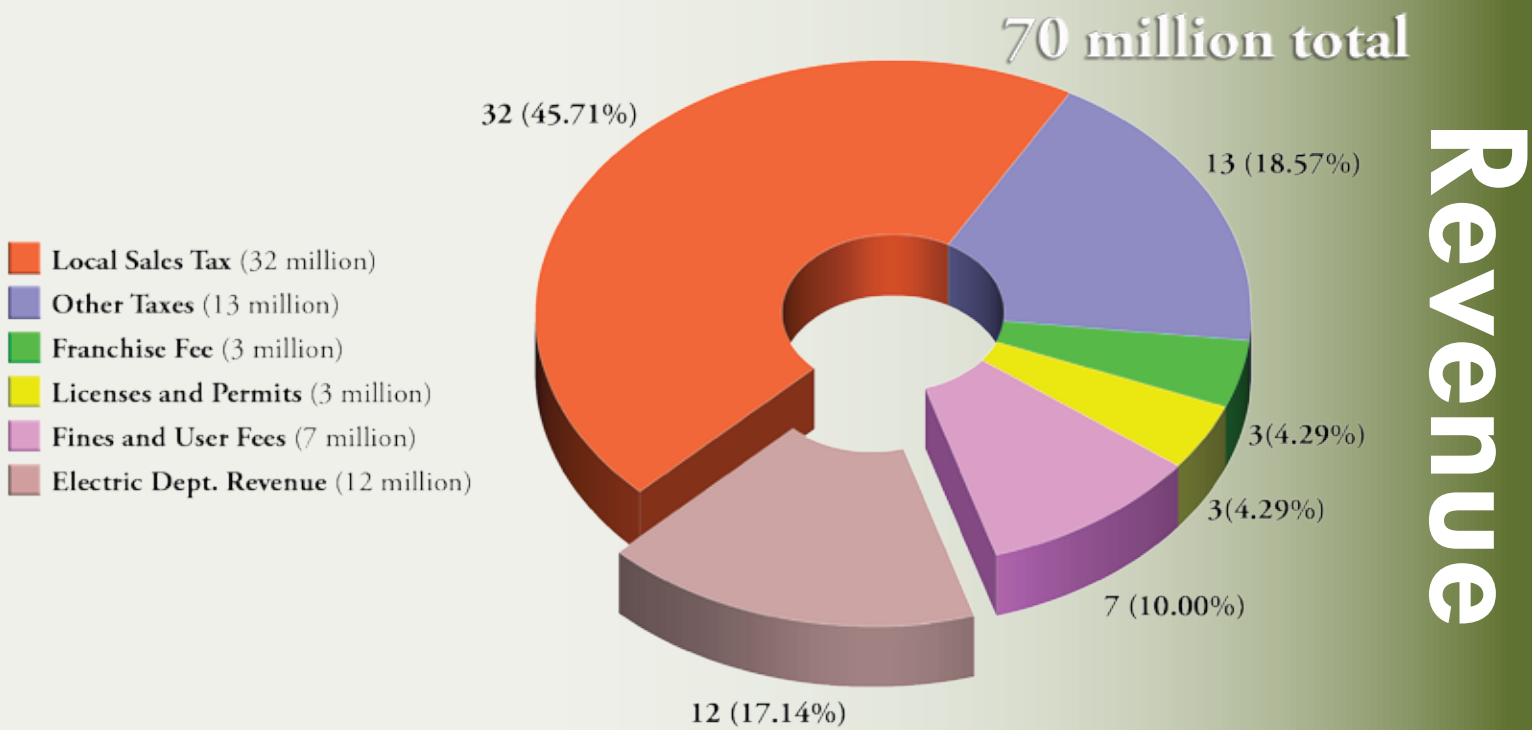
PROUD

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North Little Rock Finances

We have provided a simple breakdown of how the city's receives revenue and what expenses are for each department according to the 2018 budget. The 2018 General Fund budget is available in full on our website (nlr.ar.gov/finance).



DISCLAIMER: This is as broad a look at the budget as you can do. It is overly simplistic by design. It does not incorporate the budgets for Parks and Recreation, Street, Electric, or Capital Improvement Projects. Those are large departments but have separate funds and revenue sources. We know it can even get complicated for staff, so we encourage any questions to be sent to nlrproudmag@nlr.ar.gov and we'll have our accounting gurus answer as best as they are able.



AMBOY-Success Through Action


One of the most active and successful associations in NLR belongs to the proud residents of Amboy. Leaders with a vision, active volunteers and a strong social media presence have been critical to their years of successful community engagement. Whether it is helping/donating to the Amboy food pantry, getting the Amboy bus stop bench and Amboy Wall built, or supporting the Angel Tree for local families, the Neighborhood Association always has items to check off on the agenda at their meetings.

Angelica Bernard, the association's President, says that one of their keys to success is involvement in Amboy Elementary. "We try and help out

the PTA, teachers and administrators by volunteering time and supplies," Bernard said. "These are our kids, our school, and our community."

With Camp Robinson as a neighbor the organization has embraced their role as lead community supporter of the military installation. "Flag Details" (groups of folks waving American flags) are organized to 'Welcome Home' returning Arkansas National Guard members who return from deployment. More than 40 flags are posted on Military Drive for 12 different 'holidays' throughout the year.

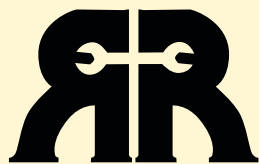
Resident awareness of all the great things happening is a strong foundation of their success but also takes

commitment. A monthly newsletter is posted on their Facebook page. It covers everything going on in the Amboy area, from events to recipes, you can find it there. The Association is also actively recruiting new businesses to the area. "We want to encourage and entice businesses that make our community stronger and provide a great service," says Bernard. This is evident by the new Family Dollar that is set to open in 2018. Neighborhood Services Director Dan Scott said of the association, "They have been very involved in their own economic development. They make sure their voice is heard at City Council when it comes to new businesses moving in." 

Only on the web...



Send in your requests using our Report and Repair system and get email confirmation of when your issue has been addressed. Follow the "report a problem" link on our homepage or download the app.

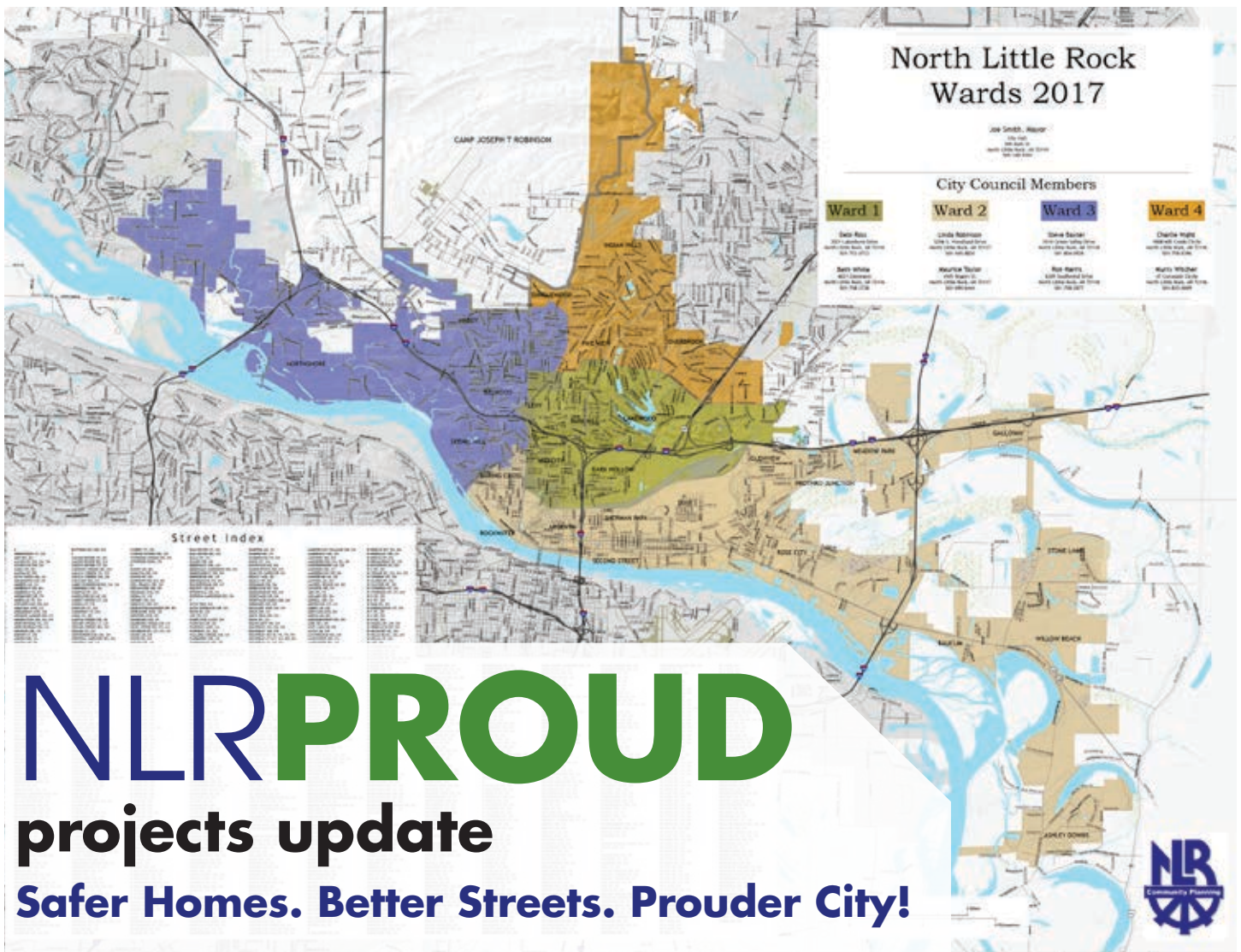


We included a brief snapshot of our 2018 budget (in chart form) on page 3, but we encourage everyone to go to our website for the entire document. It has much more detailed information than could be presented here.



Pay your electric bill online. Follow the link from our homepage to the electric department [my-account](https://nrelectric.com/my-account) and save a trip downtown. While you're there, sign up for auto text billing reminders!
nrelectric.com/my-account





NLRPROUD

projects update

Safer Homes. Better Streets. Prouder City!

This is a list of the streets for this year's street overlay program. Work will begin in about a month, with all projects expected to be completed by December. Money has been allocated equally among the wards but some streets are longer (thus more expensive) than others, resulting in a different total number of projects for each ward.

Ward 1:

- Walnut (15th to 16th)
- Magnolia (19th to 21st)
- 43rd (Pike to Schaer)
- Chandler (46th to 47th)
- Mellene (38th to 44th)
- Intersection of Hillside and Maple
- Pine (E to G)
- Justin Matthews
- Edgemere
- 44th (Camp Robinson right of way to Maple)
- 38th (Orange to Willow)
- West 18th (Main to Percy Machin)
- Percy Machin (18th to 20th)
- West 22nd Street (Main to Percy Machin)
- Avondale (Lakeview to Waterside)
- Schaer Street (33rd to 36th)

Ward 2:

- Colonel Maynard (Hwy 165 Right-of-Way to the levee)
- Stonehedge (Live Oak to Wicker)
- Ben (Ira to E. 19th)
- Glenview Blvd (Edmonds to Young)
- W. 18th (Crutcher to Pike)
- W. 12th (Frank to Vestal)
- East Washington (Main to Verizon Arena Entrance)
- Lynch (Kay to I-440 Right-of-Way)

Ward 3:

- 58th (Alta Vista to Shamrock)
- W. Avalon (Floral to MacArthur)
- Crutcher (36th to MacArthur)
- 55th Terrace (Crescent to Allen)

Ward 4:

- Randolph (JFK to Crestwood)
- Sagamore (Osceola to War Eagle)
- Street Repairs at Fairway & Crestwood intersection
- Street Repairs along Crestwood (Fairway to North Hills)
- Remount Road (Spriggs to Maryland)
- Maryland (Remount to City Limits)





IMAGE COURTESY OF ROB COLEMAN, THRIVE/ERC.

Artist rendering of future NLR downtown developments in 2018. Shown are the following anticipated projects that have begun or will be started this year: 1. Thrive Luxury Living, 2. Argenta Plaza, 3. First Orion corporate HQ, 4. Power and Ice Building, 5. 600 Main Building.

2018 State of the City

Mayor Joe A. Smith, City of North Little Rock, AR

Distinguished members of the North Little Rock City Council, City Attorney, City Clerk, and my fellow residents of North Little Rock, thank you for the honor of serving as your Mayor.

One year ago, I presented this Council and our residents with a State of the City that was uncertain at best. Our dedicated staff had spent years streamlining our budget, finding new ways to stretch every dollar. The Council had reduced our debt to the lowest levels in decades. We continued to offer exceptional services to our community, but the prospects for maintaining a balanced budget were grim. Despite our best efforts, we were headed towards cuts in employees and services simply because our revenue was not keeping pace with even our frugal expenditures.

We presented our situation to our community and this City Council recommended a sales tax increase

in order to provide a strong financial future for our city. In August, by a nearly 2-1 margin, the residents approved the measure. With this added investment and our continued focus on government efficiency, I am confident in saying that we are in the best position we have EVER been in ALL of the critical categories that make a strong North Little Rock.

Our residents voted last summer to invest in our infrastructure, helping provide safer homes, better streets, and a prouder community. We told the voters we would dedicate the additional revenue to three areas: Infrastructure (specifically streets and drainage), public safety facilities, and a commitment to a strong financial future by maintaining a healthy reserve and paying down our remaining debt.



North Little Rock Mayor Joe A. Smith

City Infrastructure

The voter approved NLR Proud projects will vastly increase our ability to address critical street and drainage issues. In addition to our annual overlay expenditures each ward will have \$500,000 in funding to improve the foundation of our aging city. Our City



Council Members are working with our city engineers now, to prioritize the list of projects in each ward that will receive attention over the next five years.

Public Safety Facilities

Our aging police and courts building and the deteriorating state of many of our fire stations will also be addressed with the additional investment possible from the NLR Proud vote approval. Our fire department staff have identified five stations that will have remodeling work done this year alone. This investment will continue for the next four years as we invest an estimated \$10 million on updating the living conditions for our fire fighters.



We have spent the past few months laying out a plan for our community's new police and courts headquarters. We expect to have a location selected soon and intend to break ground on the \$20 million project early in 2019. The faithful servants who protect and

serve our residents, businesses, and visitors are looking forward to the new facility. We will strive to construct a state-of-the-art facility they deserve.

Secure Financial Future

The other half of the additional revenue approved by the voters will help provide for the long term financial security for our community. By maintaining a healthy reserve account and eliminating the need to acquire additional debt, we are being responsible in thinking of future generations. Even with the additional revenue, we must continue to be vigilant in managing our expenses. My administration is dedicated to a policy of fiscal restraint that faithfully preserves the public's trust in us as responsible stewards of their tax dollars.

Economic Development

The NLR Proud projects and additional revenue provided by the sales tax increase have allowed our city to improve our ability to attract new businesses. We are constantly striving to present North Little Rock as an incredible option for business to locate or expand. Economic development must always remain one of our highest priorities in order to build a community where our best and brightest are able to stay and find careers.


When we break ground this spring on the newly named Argenta Plaza, I am confident residents from every community in North Little Rock will

be proud of this addition to their downtown. The accompanying private development that has already been committed has vindicated the decisions of this Council. 2018 will see millions of dollars of investment thanks to the long-range planning of our city leadership. Our entire community – from Rose City to Amboy and Lakewood to Baring Cross – will share in the increased tax base, additional jobs, and a premier tourist destination they can claim as their own.

Closing

North Little Rock is in the strongest position in decades to provide our residents excellent services, a strong infrastructure, and a healthy financial position. We are here today, thanks to the confidence of our residents in our governing, the hard work of a dedicated, knowledgeable City Council, and the resource of a committed staff of public servants. We owe them our sincere gratitude.

I want to take one moment to acknowledge the many years of selfless service of one public servant in particular. As our longest serving member of this Council anticipates his retirement from his elected position as a representative of Ward 4, Murry Witcher has earned my trust, friendship, and thanks for his priceless guidance during my time as Mayor and as a city staff member. I have relied on Murry's vast knowledge and expertise in municipal governing countless times and I am forever grateful. The city of North Little Rock is a much better place for his having served us.

Thank you, City Council and residents, for the confidence you have placed in our administration. We are constantly striving to achieve great things for our city. Know that maintaining the public's trust in all that we do is always our number one job, and if anyone, council member, resident, business owner, or visitor, has suggestions on how we are able to improve our work, my office door is always open. 

Artist rendering of future plaza and First Orion HQ.



Get to know your NLR Employees

Everyone's friend...Amy Smith

There's no way to truly calculate how much money Amy Smith saves the city as the Assistant Director for Procurement, much like figuring out how much laughter and joy she brings to everyone working or visiting the NLR City Services building.

"She sure knows what she's doing," said Mayor Joe Smith (no relation). "Amy can answer almost any question within minutes about any expense our city's made in the past 20 years and I don't think she's ever frowned in her life."

Every cent the city pays a vendor for everything from asphalt paving equipment to police vehicles to staples in the Mayor's office, goes through Amy's office. On a given day she might work with the Fire Marshal on getting equipment delivered on time, call the City's website vendor to question why an expected discount was left off an invoice, or find a PO from decades past




Assistant Director for Procurement, Amy Smith looks up from her busy day.

for the Parks Department. Her expertise saves the city time and money.

"She's just a likeable gal. What more can you say," Crystal Willis said. Willis has worked beside Amy for 12 years and has a great insight into the reason Amy is so good at her job, beyond the skill and institutional knowledge. "Nobody feels bad asking

for help from Amy. She never insinuates that it's not her job or that it is something you should have figured out already. Even if you should have."

Amy has been improving NLR government's reputation for nearly 25 years. In addition to her mastery of the purchasing procedures for the city she works on preparing, opening, and accepting bids from the city's many vendors. It's an important job that requires transparency and a good relationship with plenty of businesses that compete with each other. Maintaining a neutral and pleasant environment is critical and the success can be seen in how few disputes arise.

If you haven't had the pleasure of making her acquaintance, drop by her office on the first floor of the NLR City Services Building and meet one of the smartest, nicest, funniest, employees in the city and one our residents can be proud of. 

Charlotte Thomas: City Hall's Ambassador

Can you name the last seven Mayors of North Little Rock? No googling. There are very few people who can get to seven, and to be honest only a few of them do not work at the NLR Heritage Center.

Charlotte Thomas is one of them. But she has an advantage no one else can claim. Mrs. Thomas, as an executive assistant for the Mayor of North Little Rock for nearly 45 years, has worked for every single one of them. Mrs. Thomas graduated from Scipio A. Jones High School in NLR then completed college at Philander Smith before returning to NLR to work for Mayor Bob Rosamond in 1973.

"It's not that everybody knows Charlotte, they do, but everybody loves Charlotte," said former NLR Mayor Terry Hartwick. "She's the first person many people talk to when they call or visit the Mayor and she is very,

very good at her job." And sometimes, it's not an easy task to fulfill.


"People can be upset about a lot of things when they march up to speak with the Mayor," said Danny Bradley, who has worked with Mrs. Thomas for a couple decades, some years as Chief of Police and now as Chief of Staff to the Mayor. "We deal with potholes, electricity, traffic lights, barking dogs, and a hundred other things that can make people upset.

Charlotte really has a calming effect on everyone who visits or calls."

Mrs. Thomas is an exceptional asset for our city. She is extremely helpful to the Mayor of North Little Rock by going above and beyond her duties to help



Mayor Joe Smith depends on Charlotte Thomas just like 7 mayors before him.

him run his office and welcomes everyone...Senators, Governors, working men and women alike. All are invited to stop by the Mayor's office, and meet Mrs. Thomas. 

Citizens in Action

North Little Rock's Neighborhood Associations and Neighborhood Council

There is strength in numbers and that's certainly true when talking about our neighborhood associations. With more than 30 recognized organizations, our city has some great ones that regularly come together to advocate and give back to their little corner of North Little Rock, while others struggle to maintain participation which makes it hard to accomplish



goals.

In 2013, as a way to help foster more neighborhood engagement, Mayor Joe Smith and the Neighborhood Services Department founded the Neighborhood Council. The Council is designed to bring together all the leaders of the neighborhood associations to share ideas, discuss city wide plans, and learn about new legislation being purposed that will affect them. The idea is to share with everyone the best practices and policies used by the more successful of the neighborhood organizations.

The Neighborhood Council also serves as a sounding board for the Mayor. "We needed to do something but I just didn't have a feel for what the residents wanted us to do," said Mayor Smith about the financial issues the City faced in early 2017. "So I went before the [Neighborhood] Council and presented the entire situation and asked them point blank 'What do you want to do'. The specific idea of a sales tax increase with a half cent used

for infrastructure projects that would sunset in five years came directly from them at that meeting."

The city's Neighborhood Services Department provides associations guidelines for meetings, how to step up leadership roles and ideas for bettering their neighborhoods, but it's the interaction with other leaders that have "been there and done that" which

really makes a difference. Building a strong, stable community group will not only bring together the diverse people of an association, but it gives the residents credibility with the local government. Alderman Debi Ross is a firm believer in the associations and the council. "I try to go to as many neighborhood meetings

as I can," she states. "These meetings are the chance for citizens to let the elected officials know how they want their city to run." Ross went on to say, "The more voices, the stronger the participation, the more likely action will take place. The Neighborhood Council is the where all the ideas can come together."

"Collaboration and communication," states Terri Imus with the Argenta Downtown boosters. "Working together with other groups creates awareness for important projects." Currently the Argenta Downtown boosters are working with the Sherman Park Neighborhood association to attract a grocery store between the two areas. Imus says, "There is strong need to get healthy food for both areas." Working together they are bringing awareness of this issue before their local city



officials. Sherman Park's Artis Boykin echoed Imus' statements, "A store such as this would bring great visibility, needed jobs and economic growth to the area. It's hard for the senior citizens of the area to get to the Kroger on North Hills and McCain, they feel like they live in a food desert!"

Head of Neighborhood Services, Dan Scott feels there is more that can be done. "We have some great groups that take pride in their community and the whole city and it shows, but we always want more participation."

Contact Dan Scott or Shirley Abel with Neighborhood Services @ 501-791-8500 Mon-Friday or stop by and see them @ 3427 North Magnolia St.

Email: NLRNeighborhoodserv@nlr.ar.gov.

Tips from the Neighborhood Council on running an effective Neighborhood Association

1. Know what the key needs are.
2. Set goals that are achievable. Start with smaller ones then continue to grow.
3. Treat everyone with dignity and respect. If you want people involved, treating them respectfully will go a long way in boosting participation.
4. Have fun events! One main reason for people getting involved is to get to know the people around them. Fun events such as night outs, fund raisers and community cleanup projects can be fun activities that can get people excited!



If you were Mayor...?

Mayor Smith got a letter from a friend of his shortly after he was elected. It started with congratulations and then offered some good advice by saying "If I was Mayor..."

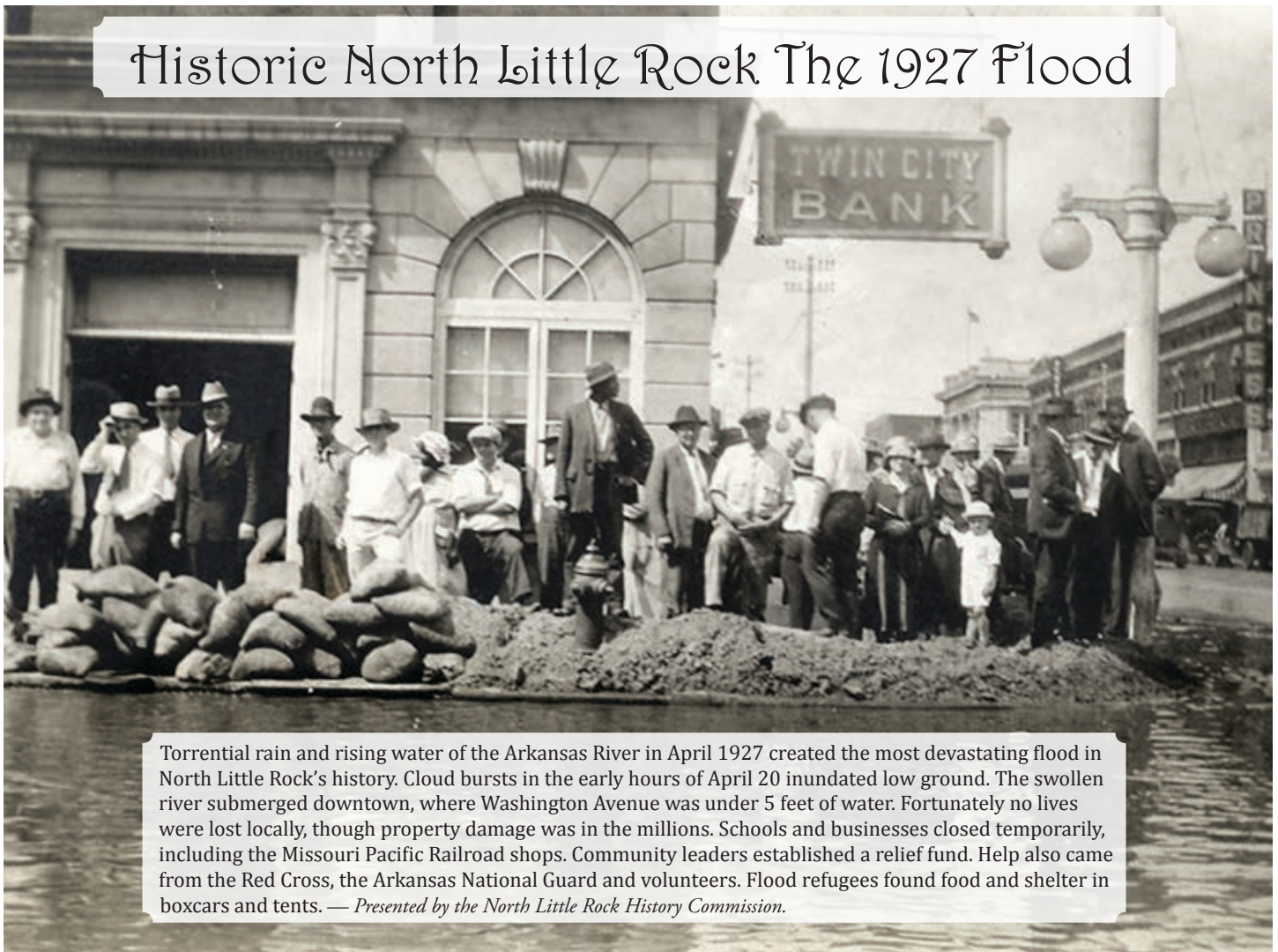
It, along with all perspectives from all our residents, was welcomed by the Mayor and he often refers to it when speaking to others. He will ask them "If

you were Mayor, what changes would you make? What would you do differently?"

So, we're taking that idea to the masses. This edition of the magazine we're asking you to send in your best ideas, the things you would change, do different. What hasn't been addressed that you think needs to be? Why? We're open to new

ideas and criticism. Of course, a note about where we are getting things done also helps us know when we're on the right track.

We'll take some of the best ideas and highlight them in the next edition. Send all your emails to nlrproudmag@nlr.ar.gov. Multiple entries are encouraged!



Historic North Little Rock The 1927 Flood

Torrential rain and rising water of the Arkansas River in April 1927 created the most devastating flood in North Little Rock's history. Cloud bursts in the early hours of April 20 inundated low ground. The swollen river submerged downtown, where Washington Avenue was under 5 feet of water. Fortunately no lives were lost locally, though property damage was in the millions. Schools and businesses closed temporarily, including the Missouri Pacific Railroad shops. Community leaders established a relief fund. Help also came from the Red Cross, the Arkansas National Guard and volunteers. Flood refugees found food and shelter in boxcars and tents. — *Presented by the North Little Rock History Commission.*

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Mayor	Joe A. Smith	975-8601	mayor@nlr.ar.gov
City Clerk and Treasurer	Diane Whitbey	975-8617	Dwhitbey@nlr.ar.gov
City Attorney	Amy Fields	975-3755	nlrlegal@nlr.ar.gov
Judge (Traffic)	Judge Randy Morley	791-8562	judy.west@nlrpolice.org
Judge (Criminal/Civil)	Judge Paula Juels Jones	791-8559	vicki.weed@nlrpolice.org
CITY COUNCIL			
Ward 1 Council Member	Debi Ross	753-0733	dross@nlr.ar.gov
Ward 1 Council Member	Beth White	758-2738	bwhite@nlr.ar.gov
Ward 2 Council Member	Maurice Taylor	690-6444	mtaylor@nlr.ar.gov
Ward 2 Council Member	Linda Robinson	945-8820	lrobinson@nlr.ar.gov
Ward 3 Council Member	Steve Baxter	804-0928	sbaxter@nlr.ar.gov
Ward 3 Council Member	Ron Harris	758-2877	ronharris@nlr.ar.gov
Ward 4 Council Member	Charlie Hight	944-0670	chight@nlr.ar.gov
Ward 4 Council Member	Murry Witcher	835-0009	mwitcher@nlr.ar.gov

DEPARTMENTS

Animal Control	David Miles	791-8577	dmiles@nlr.ar.gov
Code Enforcement	Tom Wadley	791-8581	nlrcodeenforcement@nlr.ar.gov
Commerce	Mary Beth Bowman	975-8881	MBowman@nlr.ar.gov
Communications	Nathan Hamilton	975-8833	nhamilton@nlr.ar.gov
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Neighborhood Services	Dan Scott	791-8500	nlrneighborhoodserv@nlr.ar.gov
Parks and Recreation	Terry Hartwick	791-8538	parksandrec@nlr.ar.gov
Planning	Shawn Spencer	975-8835	sspencer@nlr.ar.gov
Police	Chief Mike Davis	771-7101	nlrpd@nlrpolice.org
Safety	Kenny Stephens	371-8330	kastephens@nlr.ar.gov
Sanitation	Harold Ford	371-8345	hford@nlr.ar.gov
Senior Citizens Center	Bernadette Gunn Rhodes	975-4297	brhodes@nlr.ar.gov
Street	Patrick Lane	340-5356	plane@nlr.ar.gov
Traffic Services	Chris Wilbourn	340-5352	cwilbourn@nlr.ar.gov
Vehicle Maintenance	Kenny Brock	340-5371	kbrock@nlr.ar.gov

Emergency dial - 911



2017

by the Numbers

POPULATION



65,004



VISITORS TO BURNS PARK



1,086,624

POLICE CALLS

26,660

911

FIRE CALLS

12,560



5,952

TONS OF ASPHALT
USED IN REPAIRING
POTHOLES AND
STREET OVERLAY



16,768

TONS OF HOUSEHOLD
GARBAGE COLLECTED

4,221

USED TIRES RECYCLED

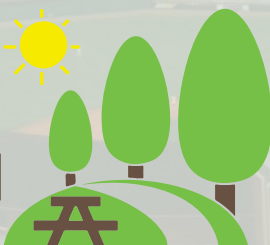


116,675

CUBIC YARDS OF GREEN
YARD WASTE COLLECTED



34



NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS



1 ONE HEART
PLAYGROUND

INCLUSIVE PLAYGROUNDS
BUILT FOR KIDS WITH
SPECIAL NEEDS