

State of the City

2021

Mayor Terry C. Hartwick
City of North Little Rock



Distinguished members of the North Little Rock City Council, City Attorney, City Clerk, and my fellow residents of North Little Rock, thank you for allowing me to serve as your Mayor. Throughout 2021, we faced the continued challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic—I am proud of our City workers who rose to the occasion, continuing to deliver the high quality of services that our residents expect. Even during a time of hardship and uncertainty, the City of North Little Rock has a lot to be proud of, and I hope you will enjoy reflecting on some of our successes from the previous year.

In 2021, the City acquired the former Blue Cross Blue Shield building on Pershing Boulevard, which will soon become the new home to City Services. This spacious building will allow us to consolidate several departments into one central location, just a short drive from our new Justice Center, the Hays Senior Center, and Laman Library. Another notable acquisition of the past year was the Greyhound Lines bus station located on Washington Avenue. The resources we had been using to maintain this city-owned property can now be reallocated to better serve our citizens.

Even as we have confronted major changes, our city and our residents have continued to prove that we are adaptable, flexible, and resilient. We have many accomplishments to celebrate from the past year. I take pride in what we have achieved together, and I look forward to what the future holds for the City of North Little Rock.

Serry C. Hartwick



Animal Shelter:

The North Little Rock Animal Shelter remained open to the public for the entire year and never shut down due to COVID. Animal Control Officers responded to over 6,500 service calls.



Airport:

The North Little Rock Airport broke ground and began construction on a new terminal building, flight planning center, FBO, and corporate hangar project. This project will vastly improve the first impression of the airport, and therefore the City of North Little Rock, for hundreds of passengers a year. The 5,700 square foot building and 18,000 square foot hangar will keep the airport in competition for business with nearby airports such as Conway, Saline County, and surrounding areas.

Beautification:

After many years of being inactive, Unit 50 was reinstated with a continued focus on cleaning up our City. Citizens were encouraged to call 340-5355 to report trash and debris to be picked up. Along Main Street from Pershing to 13th Street, the Mid-City Main Street Project kicked off, which included the addition of planters, flowers, and banners, along with lots of excitement from local businesses. We were eager to begin this project, led by Dr. Arnessa Bennett, and we look forward to continued improvements in the area.



City Clerk:

The City Clerk's office was busy during 2021. They generated \$2,401,222.59 in Business/Privilege License revenue, collected \$218,672.91 for Alcohol License revenue, processed a total of \$111,477,628.44 in various payments, and signed, scanned, and filed over 185 Resolutions and 101 Ordinances. City Hall, our beautiful historic structure, received extra care and maintenance, including the refinishing of floors, fresh paint, and a

deep cleaning of the stained glass ceiling over the main stairwell, helping to restore this beautiful building to its original look.



Code:

Our Code Department was very responsive during 2021 and did more in the past year than ever before, addressing unsafe buildings and public nuisances. In 2021, Code Enforcement improved their stats compared to previous years, including: more “self-initiated” calls (5969), violation notices (7679), less “neighbor complaint” calls, citations issued (355), more “voluntary compliance” from citizens (6046), more vacant lots cleaned/moved, and a total of 89 structures demolished by the City and property owners.

Commerce:

The Commerce Department is committed to reducing government costs through a responsible procurement process. They are diligent about purchasing equipment and vehicles at the best price, while also obtaining the best prices for surplus items. During 2021, the City sold \$135,579 through auction on the sale of surplus items and equipment which went back into the General Fund.

Communications:

The Communications Department expanded the City’s social media presence through Twitter (@nlrgov), Instagram (@cityofnlr), and YouTube (NorthLittleRockArkansas). A targeted distribution group for external communication was developed and distribution lists were expanded to disseminate information across diverse audiences, including neighborhood associations, churches, media/press, schools and more. The Communications Department also worked diligently with all department heads to bring the City’s website content up to date.

Community Development:

Ten lots were purchased in the Baring Cross neighborhood with a plan to develop nine single-family homes for low-income residents. Affordable housing will provide stability for families and have a positive impact on the economic development and stabilization of our city.

The Community Development Association (CDA) received a \$1,200,000 allocation under the American Rescue Act and an additional \$383,436 in CARES Act funding. The City also received \$686,633 of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding and \$331,627 from the Home Investment Partnership Program (HOME) funding.



The CDA worked closely with Central Arkansas Team Care for the Homeless (CATCH) and the Continuum of Care, which is designed to promote communitywide commitment with the goal of ending homelessness. In 2021, they coordinated their efforts with North Little Rock Police Officer Jhailan Rathey, the Liaison to the Unsheltered Community. In addition, the CDA worked to bridge the gap between English speakers and non-English speakers. The CDA now publishes announcements in both English and Spanish newspapers and on social media, along with providing assistance to hearing- and sight-impaired individuals.

Diversity Equity and Inclusion Alliance (DEI):



The City's first-ever Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) effort was organized and an alliance was formed. The DEI Alliance focuses on meeting the needs of the entire community, including residents, city staff, and visitors to North Little Rock. Dr. Arnessa Bennett heads up the DEI Alliance, and began working with businesses, neighborhood residents and City staff to educate them on diversity, equity and inclusion.

Electric:

Hats off to North Little Rock Electric for their hard work! Our City didn't lose power during the 2021 snowstorm while neighboring communities experienced rolling blackouts. North Little Rock Electric was responsive, forward-thinking (buying power ahead of time to ensure the lowest available rates), and provided excellent customer service.

The North Little Rock Electric Department launched a Prepaid Payment Option, allowing customers the flexibility to pay in advance and as often as convenient. There are no due dates, penalties for paying late, reconnect charges or security deposits.

The monitoring system at the Murray Hydro Dam was upgraded to help it run more efficiently. Additionally, the intake was dredged to increase efficiency and reduce vibration. This dredging project will save on maintenance and downtime costs while increasing our revenue, due to longer periods without an outage. More than 65,000 yards of sand and debris is expected to be removed and deposited in the forebay and 75% of the project costs will be covered by federal grant reimbursement.



Economic Development:

Over 1,900 new jobs were added in our city during 2021! Amazon opened in September 2021, creating 500 full-time positions and a \$120,000,000 investment in our community. North Little Rock also welcomed a Dollar General Distribution Center, Applied Technology Group, and Winrock International. Several existing North Little Rock companies added jobs, including Tyson (100 full and part-time positions) and Caterpillar (100 full and part-time positions).



The City of North Little Rock began negotiations with Baptist Health to create a new health facility in Rose City. The East Broadway/Census Tract 28 kicked off in March in partnership with the Arkansas Economic Development Institute (AEDI) when a community meeting was held to reveal the findings of a study that began in 2019. The

Arkansas Economic Development Institute (AEDI) performed an in-depth, comprehensive evaluation from the Interstate 30 overpass to Highway 165 and covered the following items: Population Patterns, Educational Profile, Land Use, Housing Trends, Sustainable Growth, Retail Demand and Leakage Analysis, Workforce Availability, and Commercial and Industry Usage. After the study was complete, a series of meetings were held in 2021, split between three pillars: Economic Development/Education, Communication/City Infrastructure, and Beautification and Housing. Once AEDI and the City have finished compiling the information, a final presentation will be held.

The first-ever meeting was held with North Little Rock School District Superintendent Greg Pilewski, Shorter College President Dr. Jerome Green, and University of Arkansas - Pulaski Technical President Dr. Margaret Ellibee to set a plan for career and educational advancement. All three educational institutions in North Little Rock worked together to lay out a pathway for continuing education and workforce development. The Shorter College Program for Entrepreneurship (currently offered online) will be housed in the Rock Island Train Station. Additionally, we look forward to new University of Arkansas - Pulaski Technical Career Center offerings and setting up the Academies of Central Arkansas.

Engineering:

The Engineering Department worked hard to enhance and improve city infrastructure. In 2021, they completed several federally funded community development projects, such as improvements to State Highways 70 and 391 for Amazon, and drainage projects in Wards 1, 2, and



3. They also completed several city-funded projects, including the restoration of the cascading waterfall at The Old Mill, Laman Plaza All-Inclusive Playground, and North Little Rock Middle School Sidewalk and Traffic Crossing. Our Engineering Department stayed busy with projects across all wards of our city during 2021, making improvements to streets, drainage, sidewalks, walking trails, and more.

Finance:

The Finance Department received the City's first-ever Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for their 2020 Comprehensive Financial Report, awarded by the Government Finance Officers Association. Finance oversaw the allocation of American Rescue Act funds, ensuring that all areas of the city were covered. City departments were asked to submit their recommendations on how funds were assigned. The Finance Department set the standard with researching and allocating these funds and other cities called North Little Rock for our advice on how funds were dispersed.

Fit2Live:

Last year, the Fit2Live Program began various fitness challenges for City employees. They also participated in a 5k run/walk for the National Alliance of Mental Illness and hosted a flu clinic where 234 employees received a flu shot. Fit2Live collaborated with Parks and

Recreation to install QR Fitness equipment on our new QR FIT Trail System. The trail has six stations to intensify a run/walk along the White Oak trail in Burns Park.



The Fit2Live Program also partnered with the Arkansas Prostate Cancer Foundation to provide free PSA (Prostate Specific Antigen) tests to male employees.

Hays Senior Center:

In spite of COVID, the Hays Senior Center remained fully open. They reinstated 90% of all classes and increased connection with volunteer leadership. Multiple

construction projects were completed, including the renovation of the Ball Room and Aquatic Pool, new carpet and flooring, landscaping to prepare for spring planting, new fitness and cardio equipment, and the purchase of a handicap-accessible van.



Health Department:

The Health Department administered adult and pediatric vaccines to local schools, organizations, and partner pharmacies, as well as 1,000 COVID tests at the North Little Rock Health Unit. They also provided 17,000 COVID, PCR test kits to nursing home facilities, businesses and other entities in North Little Rock.

History Commission:

The North Little Rock History Commission continued their efforts to develop their digital archives. They participated in “Sandwiching in History”, a tour with the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, which provided historical information about Argenta. Throughout the year, the History Commission welcomed and toured visitors through their location at 506 Main Street. Pictured to the right is the Rialto Theatre, built in 1930, previously located at 205 Main Street.



Human Resources:

A job fair and vaccine clinic was held on September 22 in the North Little Rock Chamber of Commerce Boardroom. The event was well attended, with participation from local food trucks and an incentive for those receiving the COVID vaccine. During 2021, the City of North Little Rock hired 108 full-time employees and 104 part-time employees.



IT (Information Technology):

The Information Technology (IT) Department provided safe and secure computer networks across all city departments, and we could not operate without them! The City’s IT Department relocated to the new North Little Rock Justice Center allowing them to have a more centralized presence in our

community which will help ensure a continued focus on network security against cyber threats. Among numerous other responsibilities, they were also tasked with facilitating virtual meetings for City Council during the pandemic.

Library:

Patrons of W.F. Laman Library enjoyed more than 234,000 books through the Tails and Tales Summer Reading Challenge! The Community Engagement Librarian took library programs out into the community, visiting many daycares across the city. Their Facebook LIVE Story Times reached a vast audience of virtual viewers. During 2021, the library recorded 108,278 participants in programs and actual visits.

The Main Branch hosted the 4PM Project for children, along with movies, gaming, and special events in the Teen Center. They also resumed the Equal Heart Meals program, which provides free, healthy suppers for 1-18 year olds from 3:45 pm to 4:15 pm every weekday afternoon.



Neighborhoods:

Mayor Hartwick met with all active Neighborhood Association Presidents, who were asked to create and share a “wish list” for their communities. Mayor Hartwick and his staff addressed a number of issues and concerns, following them to completion. Also during 2021, improvements were made to the historic Thomas Cemetery, one of the oldest cemeteries in the city and the only one actually owned by the City of North Little Rock.

The Community Garden program’s Garden Administrator focused on the growth of the garden program and the importance of providing access to fresh foods for neighborhoods located in food deserts. New collaborations with nonprofits helped distribute extra produce across our city. Those partnerships included Potluck Food Rescue,

Heifer International, and several local food banks. Seasonal videos were produced and shared with the community and the City Council, beginning with the Summer 2021 Community Garden video.

Pandemic Office:

A Pandemic Office was created from existing staff in City Hall. A COVID webpage was developed with numerous resources, including vaccination clinics in partnership with UAMS, Baptist Health, and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arkansas. Partnerships were promoted with local pharmacies, neighborhood vaccine clinics, Simmons Bank arena, churches, and others in the community.

Parks & Recreation:

Improvements were made to the cascading waterfall at the historic Old Mill, making it a perfect photo opportunity for residents and visitors alike. We are very proud of our new

all-inclusive playground at Laman Plaza, an accessible play space that opened between the W.F. Laman Library and the North Little Rock Community Center. We constructed, opened and dedicated a new Pump Track at Big Rock Quarry Bike Park, the beginning of an exciting attraction expected to draw cyclists of all ages and skill levels from across the state. A grand opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony was held for the Disc Golf Course at Stone Links. Last but not least, numerous projects were completed at Burns Park Golf Course, including new rock gardens, updates to the driving range, and improvements to the parking lot of the Heritage Room. We welcomed three new Park Rangers who assisted the public and provided safety by patrolling city parks, trails, and more in our city.



Fire:

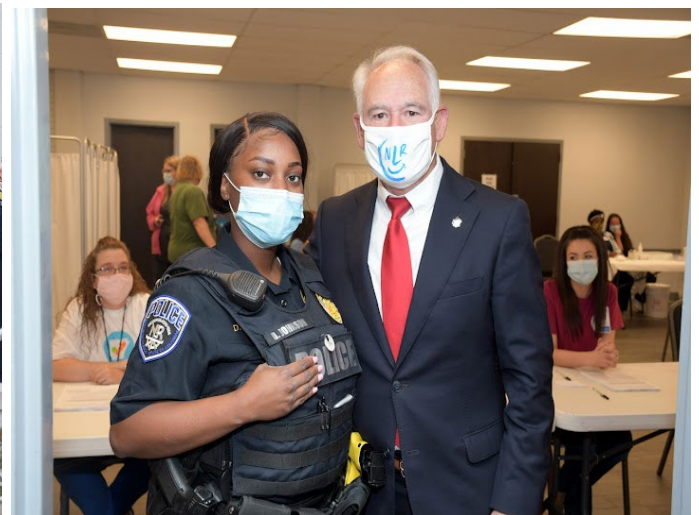
Residents should be proud of our new Station 6 in Levy, which was opened and dedicated in 2021. Other fire stations across the city were remodeled, including Station 3 at 15th/Schaer, Station 5 in Park Hill and Station 9 at John F. Kennedy Boulevard/Osage.



Our fire department received additional training to continue to provide safe and efficient services to all of our citizens, including Helicopter Search and Rescue training, Hazardous Materials training, Pediatric Advanced Life Support training, and more. The North Little Rock Fire Department is one of only 336 departments in the United States that maintains a prestigious “Number 1 rating”.

Police:

The Grand Opening of the new North Little Rock Justice Center was held in December and over 600 people attended the historic event. A media tour was held prior to the event and tours were conducted for the community following the dedication ceremony. Officer Rodney Thomas was recognized as Officer of the Year by Reverend Benny Johnson and the Stop the Violence organization. The North Little Rock Police Department officially installed the Cold Case Squad. Our police department continues to recruit, hire and promote the best and brightest in the state.



Public Works:

We can't say enough about the City of North Little Rock's Public Works! During February of 2021, we received 20 inches of snow, and our public works crews made sure our roads and bridges were prepped, salted, cleared, and barricaded where needed. Countless hours were spent working, sometimes overnight, while everyone else was huddled at home.

Public Works made numerous upgrades in 2021, including a coordinated effort between North Little Rock, Maumelle, and Pulaski County to improve traffic along State Highway 100 from Northshore Drive to Interstate 40. They also upgraded traffic controllers and installed new pedestrian flashers and fiber detection systems in various locations across the city.

Unsheltered Community:

We are proud of the work that Officer Jhailan Rathey has done with the unsheltered community. Officer Rathey's service is much-needed and his efforts to assist the unsheltered community continues to improve our City. Officer Rathey coordinated several events in 2021, including: "Moments of Joy" Christmas event, Winter Gear Collection, VSP "Eyes of Hope" partnership with Fit2Live to provide free eye care, and partnering with the City of Little Rock on the "Point in Time" count of unsheltered individuals.

NR
NORTH LITTLE ROCK

FERIA DE SERVICIOS A PERSONAS SIN HOGAR

15 DE OCTUBRE 2021
10AM - 3PM

120 RIVERFRONT PARK DRIVE
NORTH LITTLE ROCK, AR 72114

\$50 TARJETA DE REGALO (PARA COMIDA)
PARA VACUNACIÓN CONTRA COVID-19

CITY OF NORTH LITTLE ROCK
1914
POLICE

McDonald's **Popeyes**

Oficial Jhailan Rathey, Enlace de Personas Sin Hogar, Departamento de Policia de North Little Rock