

## 2019 State of the City Address

Good evening City of Davison. It is once again with great pride and privilege that I get to address you this evening. One of my favorite things to do is not only serve this city, but talk about it when given the opportunity. Also, to defend it when given the opportunity, as on social media. I truly do love Davison, and can't imagine living here and not being involved as are each one of you here tonight. My first praise and thanks goes to you council. Its your job to lead and help the residents in coordination with the staff. It is your job to present ideas and debate them down here for implementation. It is your job to convey the happenings to the residents and let them know we are an extension of them. And it is your job to help make good conscience and financial decisions for current and future residents. Although most of the interaction we have with the public may be seem like its negative and complaint based, we know that the real work we do is positive and important to this community. That is why your neighbors, friends, and relatives voted you into this position. Don't ever lose sight of the fact that you were put here by your peers to work with and for them. One of the biggest misconceptions is that we as a council are making decisions to benefit the city, as in the big picture, and not so much the residents who foot the bills. People think small town government is way bigger than it is. We are simply one of the residents who pull their pants on just like the other 5,500 people in town. We are very accessible people, often having that city business discussion at the grocery store, the back of church, or favorite watering hole like Maddens. This current council is a good mix of the residents and seems like they all have the best interests of Davison in mind. We need people who have open minds for decisions about the city and its future. With the diversity on council, we are well prepared to do just that. The next few years will be pretty important to keep this city moving forward.

The city as a whole is in great shape. As with every municipality across the state, we continue to scratch and claw for every penny in shared revenue. We also try to be fiscally sound on our decisions with items that include everything from common equipment maintenance to bigger items like road repairs. For the first time in years, new development has hit the city. It may only be a few new build houses at this time, but that signals good things for the future. We have also seen a few key pieces of commercial property sell this year. Initial discussions with the new owners/developers have been pretty exciting and it won't be long before we see new development there. As part of the yearly council/staff goals and objectives meeting, we revisit the cities capitol improvement plan and have discussions about changes to it. This plan was developed with the help of not only this group, but a wide range of others in the community as well. It has been pretty encouraging over the past few years that we observe this document change in a good way, watching projects come to life and be completed. In a smaller version, the Downtown Development Authority has done the same, and also feel the excitement of actually crossing things off the list.

Inside city hall things continue to flourish as well. The staff has been busy as ever making sure the city runs like a well oil machine. This applies to each and every member in each and every department. City manager, office staff, department heads, guys on the water main breaks, public safety .....they all go above and beyond what they are expected on a daily basis. I know every one of the people on the city payroll and I can say this.....I've observed most of them for years and years...some of them for only a few years.... but I can honestly say that they are not simply in this for the check. They really care about their work and the city they do it for. Many of them put in extra time during the week and after hours to just make sure all is taken care of. Many of them have families in town, so their invested interest shows. Sometimes this commitment is lost as the size of the city grows, but I sure enjoy the small-town service, as do many of the residents. With the numerous small complaints I get...someone's lawn is not cut, someone's not shoveling, the water bill was high (ya got for kids..lol) ....I also get many positive compliments. Usually they come after a snow event, but hey, I'll take em!!! I also get them about the park's beauty, the helpfulness of a police officer, or someone at city hall being in a good mood on the phone. I get all kinds....

Department heads should be very proud of what they have done. Leadership and teamwork go hand in hand as individual commitment to a group effort is what equals success. By fostering the relationships you have with each of your employees, you have created a work environment that runs exceptionally well. The city has won several awards for things we do every day. That shows the efficiency and care that is taken with our daily lives by the people who work here. Staff continues to look at ways to improve the wastewater and storm sewer facilities, as well as to continue to maintain an award-winning water supply. This asset to the residents goes mostly unnoticed, as we turn the water on and off and pay the bill.... done. Just be sure that this commodity is closely monitored and evaluated for the safety of its residents. Staff development is a big part of why they are so good at what they do. Continuing to train at conferences or doing in house items keeps them up to date. Davison most certainly wouldn't be where we are today without you.

In years past, my state of the city has mostly been a positive reflection of what has been going on or what will be going on in the near future. This year however, I feel the need to touch on the ugly...our roads. Several local streets are nearing the status of desperation according to a recent PASER study. This public piece of data shows which streets need what kind of level of repair or replacement. We have a few that are quickly approaching emergency status. Although our Department of Public Works does its best to maximize repairs when needed, we as a city need to start replacing certain roads along with the infrastructure under them. The funding of such projects is always the hot topic. With less shared revenue from the State every year, it is up to local municipalities to find their own ways to fix roads. The new Governor has recently proposed a large gas tax increase. With a proposed forty percent of her increase going into the states general fund alone, and nothing proposed to local roads, be well aware that nothing she is asking for will trickle down to Davison. All that proposal will cover is state highways and roads, and some county roads...again, not the ones driven here in town. There will be time in the near future that council works with staff to propose funding ideas to you the residents. Understand that we will work together to create the best

solutions for our roads, and there will not be an easy answer. Nobody wants to see an increase in their share, but at some point, we need to take responsibility for maintaining our living space. It will be up to these officials to put forth what we think is the best solution, however, that decision will be placed solely in the hands of voters....it will be your choice what route to take. Please make a wise consciences decision based on the facts and needs that are presented to you as residents.

I look forward to the future of this town as your elected officials have been and will continue to work for you. I also look forward to the staff's performance and their ideas for keeping Davison as the best small city in Michigan. I'm glad each and everyone of you has chosen this as your home and as somewhere to write your life story. Be proud of your hometown, it's a big part of what makes you the person you are...be proud of Davison.