

2021 State of the County

Tom Klein, County Administrator



On behalf of County Commissioners John Frey, Jim Fulwider and Dan Guard, the County Council, our 12 other elected officials and our 242 employees, we present the 2021 State of the County.

As we enter in to the County's 200th year, we are honored to work for the people of Montgomery County – who continue to make this a great place to live and raise a family.

2021 was both a challenging year and an exciting year. Our Health Department continued its response to the COVID-19 pandemic as it coordinated the distribution of vaccines, performed testing, and advised citizens of the best ways to work through the pandemic's challenges. The Health Department coordinated over 21,000 vaccinations and performed over 16,000 tests. Community volunteers logged over 5,000 hours to help make this happen.

But 2021 was also an exciting year of economic development as Tempur Sealy announced that it would locate its newest and largest manufacturing facility in Montgomery County, bringing 300 new jobs and over \$180 Million in capital investment here. As part of our commitment to Tempur Sealy, the County agreed to improve our roads and extend water and sanitary sewer lines along Nucor Road, and these infrastructure improvements will strengthen our efforts to bring additional economic development to the County.

This success would not have occurred without the efforts of the County Council, Commissioners, Redevelopment Commission, Economic Development Commission, Indiana American Water Company, CEL&P, the Regional Sewer District, Metronet, the City of Crawfordsville and the State of Indiana.

The teamwork exhibited was a great example of what we can accomplish when we work together to achieve a common goal,

These efforts have also helped with attracting residents as homebuilding continued apace in the County with 67 new housing starts,

To continue attracting residents, broadband services need to be improved and our residents are well aware of the challenges of broadband.

The Commissioners took the steps necessary to become a State certified Broadband Ready County and we continue to support our internet providers' efforts to secure state funding to expand broadband to rural areas of our County,

One of the most important services that we provide is ensuring the safety of our residents and businesses.

Our Sheriff's Deputies responded to over 15,000 calls for service.

Our centralized emergency dispatch service, in partnership with Mayor Barton, answered over 71,000 calls and completed an operational study of its services.

Our emergency management agency assessed and repaired inoperable tornado sirens, initiated an emergency mass notification system and secured a grant to purchase a new SWAT vehicle for the County,

Our court system is also an important part of ensuring the safety of our residents and businesses,

Our Judges, Prosecutors, Probation Officers, Public Defenders and the County Clerk worked together to ensure that our residents received a fair and just administration of the law,

Our Probation officers secured over \$441,000 in grants to provide services,

And Our Clerk processed over \$4,000,000 of court related payments,

Our departments have collaborated to provide services to our residents and businesses,

Our Auditor, Assessor and Recorder worked together to offer new on line services,

Our new Mapping Department worked with our Central Communications Center to establish a program to alert

departments to road closures and to ensure that our database for emergency responses was continually updated,

And Our Treasurer and Auditor worked together to collect property taxes and distributed \$45,000,000 in revenue to fund the operations of our schools, towns, townships, libraries and the City of Crawfordsville.

The maintenance of our infrastructure is a responsibility that we take seriously,

Our Highway Department paved 16 miles of roads, chip and sealed 24 miles of roads and replaced 53 drainage culverts. They also increased their efficiency by constructing a new salt barn that will store more material for snow fights and replaced the 30 year old paving machine,

Our Surveyor's Office repaired or reconstructed 69 drains,

Our Engineering Department repaired two significant bridges over Sugar Creek, built a new bridge that eliminated a safety hazard and secured a grant to pave 7 miles of road in 2022,

Also, our Weights and Measures Department continued to ensure that our citizens receive fair value at stores and gas pumps by conducting over 1000 inspections,

Our Veteran Services Officer welcomed 188 veterans to the office for assistance, and worked hard to see that the men and women who fought for our freedom were cared for properly.

The County also provided financial support to other organizations to meet the needs of our community. This includes the Soil and Water Conservation Service, Purdue Extension Office, Abilities Services, Animal Welfare League and Ivy Tech. These institutions provide key assistance to our farmers, 4-H participants, students, animals and those with disabilities who are looking for jobs.

All of these services would not have been possible without our employees and we want to recognize a few of them for their accomplishments,

First, we want to recognize Sheriff Deputies Monica Downing and Shelby Curtis. Monica was recognized as the Correctional Officer of the Year and Shelby received a Life Saving Award for saving a life. Their service is greatly appreciated.

Second, we want to recognize our Emergency Management Agency Director Shari Harrington and our Central Communications Center Director Sherri Henry. Both have continued their professional training and have received certification as managers in their respective fields. Their dedication to continual learning helps them provide vital emergency services when things matter the most.

Finally, we want to recognize our employees that have served the County for over 25 years. Earlene Garrard, Laren Myers, Ron Blanton, Missy Goforth, Matt Olin, Mark Bickel, Jennifer Bentley, John Conkright, Angela Swazay and Jeremy Hughes. As with any endeavor, longevity of service gives the citizens of Montgomery County the benefits of experience and expertise. We appreciate the dedication and commitment of these members of our team who serve you.

We also want to acknowledge all of the members that serve on our 34 Boards, Commissions and Committees. Their participation is important

in order to serve our residents and businesses, and they are citizens, just like all of us who give of their time to keep our County government representative of all of the citizens of our County.

We are blessed that we live in a caring community. Our Community Foundation has one of the largest per capita asset valuations of any Community Foundation in the state and that tells us how generous the people of Montgomery County are but also how generous our citizens have been for generations. Our residents pay for the meals of those in need, they make donations to the United Way to help our children's programs and programs for those in need, our churches are a vital part of neighbors helping neighbors and the people of Montgomery County volunteer their time, talent and treasure in many community events and organizations giving freely of themselves for others. A little more than a year ago, my family moved here and we are amazed by the generosity, friendliness and strength of this community. We are glad to call Montgomery County our home.

So, the state of the County is good. 200 years ago, our first citizens braved harsh and difficult conditions as they settled in a land that was undeveloped and lacking in the amenities we now take for granted. They embodied the pioneer spirit, they were members of a young

democracy who knew that they lived in the land of freedom and opportunity. They banded together to protect and serve one another. This is our heritage. And we think that heritage is the foundation for what makes us good and strong today. We are strong and even stronger together. We will rise to meet challenges, and we will overcome them.

Thank you and may god bless our county, state and nation.