

State of the City



April 9, 2026



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Mayor's Message

Serving as your Mayor for the past 12 years has been a great honor. As I prepare to leave office, I do so with deep gratitude, immense pride, and great confidence in the future of our community.

Together, we have faced challenges, celebrated milestones, and made meaningful progress that will benefit Waukesha for generations to come. Among the accomplishments I am most proud of are our transition to Lake Michigan water to ensure safe, reliable drinking water for the future, the continued revitalization of our Downtown, and the strength and unity our community showed in the wake of the parade tragedy.

Over the past decade, we have invested in infrastructure, strengthened public safety, supported local businesses, expanded recreational opportunities, and remained committed to being fiscally responsible and forward-thinking. None of these achievements belong to one person alone. They are the result of collaboration among dedicated City staff, elected officials, community partners, volunteers, and engaged residents who care deeply about where they live.

While my time as Mayor is coming to an end, my love for this community is not. I look forward to watching Waukesha continue to grow and succeed under new leadership, confident that the foundation we have built together will support a bright and promising future.



Shawn N. Reilly

Mayor



Mission, Vision, & Values



Mission Statement



WHERE WE'RE HEADED

We are dedicated to fostering a high quality of life in Waukesha through efficient, effective, and engaging government.

Vision Statement



OUR SHARED IDEA OF THE FUTURE

Waukesha is an accessible, vibrant, and desirable community where diversity is celebrated, and sustainably sound and innovative practices are prioritized.

Core Values



EXPECTATIONS FOR CITY DECISION MAKING AND SERVICE DELIVERY

BE OF SERVICE

to each other by enhancing, innovating, and providing high levels of customer service to the community.

BE OPEN

by connecting, listening, responding, and engaging.

BE ACCEPTING

by supporting change, showing consideration, and being inclusive.

BE RESPONSIBLE

by forward-thinking, owning the work, and showing accountability and integrity.

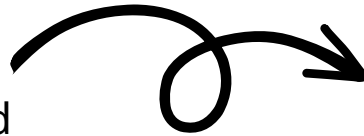
ABOVE ALL

be focused on ensuring the community is safe and secure.

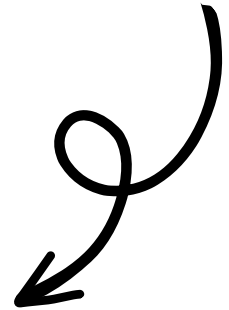
By the Numbers



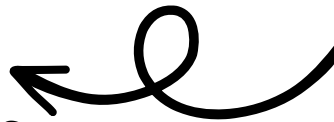
Incorporated
FEBRUARY 4, 1896



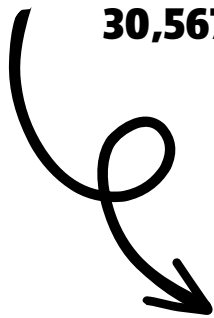
City Area
25 SQUARE MILES



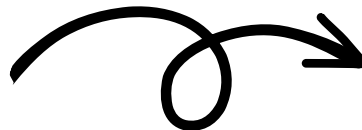
Population
71,158



Number of Households
30,567



Median Household Income
\$83,837



Median Value of Owner-Occupied Housing Units
\$315,500

Top Achievements



Completion of Flood Mitigation Projects

What Happened

Over the past decade, the City of Waukesha has invested approximately \$19.1 million to reduce flooding and strengthen stormwater infrastructure across the community.

In 2014, the City completed a comprehensive Storm Water Management Plan that identified 10 areas with known flooding concerns. Since then, the City has been systematically advancing the flood mitigation projects outlined in that plan, focusing on improvements that provide long-term protection for neighborhoods, roadways, and public spaces.

Key Flood Mitigation Projects

- Greenmeadow Drive & North High School Area
- Rolling Ridge Drive Corridor (Devonshire Court to east of N. University Drive)
- E. Moreland Boulevard (Les Paul Parkway/Wolf Road to the Fox River)

Why it Matters

While no stormwater system can completely prevent flooding during extreme events of certain magnitudes, Waukesha's recent experience in the August 2025 flood as compared to a similar storm in June 2008, suggests that the City's investments are making a meaningful difference. During the August 2025 storm, some areas did experience flooding, but the number of affected locations and the severity of impacts were reduced compared to past major storms.

Flood mitigation is an ongoing effort. As weather patterns continue to produce intense rainfall events, the City remains committed to improving infrastructure, maintaining waterways, and implementing projects that reduce risk and increase resilience for the entire community.



Implementation of Badger Books

What Happened

In 2025, the City Clerk's Office purchased Badger Books, electronic poll books (e-poll books) that replace traditional paper poll books used across polling locations. On Election Day, workers can scan a voter's photo ID to quickly locate their record, assign a voter number, capture a signature, assist with registration, and redirect voters if needed. This technology improves processing time, accuracy, and the overall voter experience.

Why it Matters

Badger Books connect polling locations directly to the voter database, eliminating the need to print and duplicate 54 paper poll books each election. They reduce staffing needs, cut paper and overtime costs, provide real-time absentee updates, and help prevent errors by guiding poll workers through required steps. Voters can check in at any e-poll book within their polling place, easing lines and improving efficiency. Post-election reconciliation that once took weeks can now be completed within a week, with greater accuracy and accountability.



Installation & Dedication of Final Parade Memorial Sculpture

What Happened

On November 21, 2025, the fourth anniversary of the Waukesha Christmas Parade Tragedy, the community gathered to dedicate the sculpture "Holding Love" at the Waukesha Parade Memorial site. The sculpture, created by artist Carmen De La Paz, features open hands holding a heart. The open hands represent welcoming, supporting, and lifting others up.

Why it Matters

This sculpture was one of the final pieces of the Waukesha Parade Memorial project which is dedicated to honoring all those impacted by the Waukesha Christmas Parade tragedy on November 21, 2021. The memorial serves as a lasting public space for reflection and remembrance.



Refresh of City of Waukesha Website

What Happened

In September 2025, the City of Waukesha launched a newly redesigned website, delivering a more modern, user-friendly experience for residents, businesses, and visitors alike.

The refreshed site was built with one goal in mind: making it easier than ever to find the information and services you need.

Fresh, Modern Design

The new layout offers a cleaner look, simplified navigation, and an improved structure to help users quickly locate important information.

Featured Section on the Homepage

Top topics are now front and center, highlighting frequently requested services, important updates, and time-sensitive information right when you land on the homepage.

AI Chat Assistant – Available 24/7

Every page now includes an AI-powered chat assistant, providing instant answers and guidance any time of day. Whether you're looking for meeting information, paying a bill, or finding a department contact, help is just a click away.

Expanded Accessibility Tools

The new site includes built-in accessibility features such as text resizing, color contrast adjustments, dyslexia-friendly fonts, and other tools designed to ensure all users can comfortably access information.

Instant Translation in 80+ Languages

With one click, visitors can translate the website into more than 80 languages, making City information more accessible to our diverse community.

Why it Matters

The City's website serves as the central hub for news, services, programs, and community updates. From checking garbage collection dates and reviewing agendas to registering for programs and reporting concerns, it's often the first place residents turn.

This refresh ensures that every visitor can easily access, understand, and interact with important City information. By improving navigation, enhancing accessibility, and expanding language options, the City of Waukesha continues its commitment to transparency, inclusion, and excellent service for the entire community.

Restoration of Fountain at Prairie Home Cemetery

What Happened

The water fountain at Prairie Home Cemetery is once again flowing, restoring a cherished feature of the Autumn Garden Mausoleum area.

More than 20 years ago, as part of the development of the Autumn Garden Mausoleum, a water fountain was installed as a central design element. The feature quickly became a defining characteristic of the space, with many families selecting crypt and niche spaces specifically because of the peaceful setting created by the flowing water.

Several years ago, however, staff noticed the fountain was losing water. Multiple efforts were made to identify the source of the issue, and several repairs were attempted. Despite those efforts, the problem worsened over time. In June 2023, the fountain was turned off to prevent further water loss.

In 2025, construction began to fully rebuild and restore the waterfall area.

The newly reconstructed fountain officially reopened on July 1, 2025.

Why it Matters

The restored water feature enhances the beauty and serenity of the cemetery grounds. For the approximately 1,900 crypt and niche spaces located in this area, the fountain is more than a decorative element, it is an expected and valued part of the setting families chose for their loved ones.

With the fountain flowing once again, Prairie Home Cemetery continues its commitment to maintaining a peaceful, respectful, and well-cared-for environment for visitors and families.



Consolidation into a New Waukesha Magazine

What Happened

In December 2025, the City introduced a new publication mailed directly to residents. The redesigned piece keeps the traditional Activity Guide on one side, as the community has come to expect. When flipped over, the reverse side reveals the Waukesha Current, featuring important City updates such as public safety news, construction projects, community programs, and more.

This new format combines previous City newsletters, including The Works Space newsletter, into one streamlined publication.

Why it Matters

The new publication makes it easier for residents to find relevant City information in one convenient resource. By consolidating multiple mailings into a single piece, the City is also reducing printing and postage costs which saves approximately \$30,000 annually.



Sharing of Resources to Better Serve Our Community

What Happened

In 2025, the City of Waukesha entered into an agreement with the City of Brookfield to provide backup inspection services when needed.

Waukesha currently has one inspector assigned to each trade area—electrical, plumbing, residential construction, and commercial construction. If an inspector leaves their position or is unavailable for an extended period, there is not additional staff available to step in.

Through this new mutual agreement, Waukesha and Brookfield can now assist one another with contract inspections during times of short staffing.

Why it Matters

The State requires the City to complete some trades inspections within 48 hours and plumbing inspections within 24 hours. This partnership helps ensure both communities can continue to meet those timelines without interruption.

By working collaboratively, Waukesha and Brookfield are strengthening service delivery and maintaining a high level of responsiveness residents and businesses rely on.



Utilization of Mobile Integrated Health Program

What Happened

In 2024, the City of Waukesha Fire Department hired a new grant-funded case manager as part of a new Mobile Integrated Health Program. Since that time, the program has become fully integrated into the Waukesha Fire Department operations.

This position is critical in helping community members such as those facing drug or alcohol abuse, those needing mental health care, and those facing mobility challenges and safe living decisions.

The case manager is able to facilitate outreach and education to help prevent emergency or crisis situations.

Why it Matters

This program helps provide service and resources to vulnerable populations, beyond what can normally be provided by a firefighter on a 911 call.

By providing proactive outreach and support, the program can help prevent crises and ensures vulnerable community members receive the care they need.



Construction of a new Sludge Drier at the Clean Water Plant

What Happened

Construction is officially underway on a new sludge dryer at the City's Clean Water Plant/ This is a major step forward in modernizing our wastewater treatment operations.

The new system will remove additional moisture from treated solids (biosolids), transforming them into Class A biosolids, the highest safety and quality standard established for treated wastewater solids. Through this advanced drying process, the material is converted into a stable, nutrient-rich product that can be beneficially reused as fertilizer.

This project represents a strategic investment in infrastructure that supports both environmental stewardship and long-term cost efficiency.

Why it Matters

The new sludge dryer provides several important benefits:

- **Reduced Hauling & Disposal Costs**
 - Removing more moisture significantly decreases the volume and weight of material that must be transported.
- **Environmental Protection**
 - Class A biosolids meet strict standards, reducing environmental risks.
- **Sustainability**
 - Converting biosolids into fertilizer supports beneficial reuse of a wastewater treatment byproduct.
- **Operational Efficiency**
 - Modern equipment improves reliability and positions the Clean Water Plant for long-term service to the community.

By investing in this technology today, the City is ensuring a more sustainable, cost-effective wastewater treatment process for years to come.



Other Noteworthy Achievements



Minaka Playground

A new Minaka (Woodfield Park) playground was installed. The previous playground had some of the oldest equipment in the park system and showed significant wear due to the use and age of the equipment. The playground was installed using the help of over 20 volunteers through our Community Playground Build program.

City's 130th Birthday

In 2026 we are celebrating the City's 130th birthday since incorporation. We're also recognizing other major anniversaries across our City departments this year. 130 years of the Waukesha Public Library and Waukesha Police Department, 100 years of a fully paid Waukesha Fire Department and of having a Park, Recreation & Forestry Board, and 45 years of Waukesha Metro Transit.



Completed Citywide Revaluation

In 2025, the City Assessor's office completed a full citywide revaluation. The purpose of this process is to make sure that all properties in Waukesha are assessed at fair-market value.

Reconstruction of Silvernail Road

The City completed reconstruction of Silvernail Road from STH 318 to just east of University Drive. This project included new concrete roadway, installation of sanitary sewer, storm sewer improvements and new pavement markings.



Other Noteworthy Achievements



Began Construction on New Water Utility Operations Center

The current Waukesha Water facility dates back to 1886 and is in need of repairs and safety modifications. The new building will house administration offices, vehicles & equipment for the Water Utility and is centrally located in the City for quicker and easier dispatching of crews during emergencies. The new building is expected to be open at the end of 2026.

New Permitting Software

The Community Development Department has selected a new permitting software to improve user experience and efficiency for both the public and staff. The new software should be in place by the end of 2026.



Increased Usage of Fire Training Center

In 2025, the Waukesha Fire Department increased usage of the training tower by 49% over 2024, including expanded opportunities to train with mutual aid partners through new training agreements.



New ADA improvements at Rotary Building in Frame Park

Extensive renovations were completed at the Rotary Building in Frame Park including new flooring, windows, blinds, doors and updates to further meet ADA compliance.



Other Noteworthy Achievements



New Before/After School Sites

The Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department will be offering before/after school at Meadowbrook and Summit View starting next school year. After these programs are open, they will be offering Before/After school programs in all of the School District of Waukesha Elementary schools.

New Grant Funding for Projects

The City Public Works Department has received grants for work on intersection improvements at Sunset Dr. and Guthrie Dr. as well as grants for the planning and preliminary design of 2 pedestrian bridges over the bypass.



Public Safety Grant Funding

The Police Department has received grant funding for the Crisis Response Unit, Commercial Motor Vehicle Unit, CAD/RMS project and statewide data sharing initiatives. The Fire Department has also received grant funding to conduct a comprehensive community risk assessment and a standard of cover. This grant-funded work helps identify potential risks across the city and ensures that resources are properly aligned to meet the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors.



Heavy Utilization of Library Studio 321 Makerspace

The Library's Makerspace continues to grow in popularity. The Library sees over 400 users each month in that space.



Other Noteworthy Achievements

2,484

Tons of Leaves Collected
(Final pickup completed on
3/13/26 due to early snow)

21

Snow Operations

1,736

Parks, Recreation & Forestry
Programs Offered

34,285

Parks, Recreation &
Forestry
Programs Enrollments

72,146

Pool Attendance

6,514

Parks, Recreation &
Forestry
Facility Rentals

Other Noteworthy Achievements

43

Community Special Events

Est. Attendance: 102,000
(4th of July Parade
was cancelled)

9,365

Total Calls for Fire

691

Building Permits Issued

2,641

**Property Maintenance
Inspections**

20,967

Police Calls for Service

28,041

Police Self-Initiated Calls

Other Noteworthy Achievements

882
Library Programs

37,721
Library Event
Attendance

310,296
Library Visitors

1,009,879
in Total Library Circulation
(Physical & Electronic)

87
New City
Employees Hired

189
Burials at Prairie Home
Cemetery

2025 Honors & Awards

- **Concrete Design Award: Waukesha Parade Memorial:** Wisconsin Ready Mixed Concrete Association
- **Silver Medal for Best Park - West: Frame Park:** Milwaukee Magazine 2025 Best of the Burbs
- **Bronze Medal for Best Downtown/Main Street:** Milwaukee Magazine 2025 Best of the Burbs
- **Award of Distinction: Chief Daniel Thompson:** The 31st Street Safety Committee
- **Award of Distinction: Detective Kenny Stucker:** Waukesha County DA's Office Victim Witness Assistance Program
- **Building Community Award: Waukesha Parade Memorial:** Milwaukee Business Journal Real Estate Awards
- **Top Projects of 2024: Waukesha Parade Memorial:** The Daily Reporter
- **3rd Place Gun Fire Around Man, 3rd Place Open Area Search for Man, & 3rd Place Malinois:** Officer Smidt & K9 Arko: Jessiffany Canine Services Competition
- **Hans Marrero Award of Distinction:** Lieutenant Kyle Bergner: Axon/Taser
- **Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Officer of the Year: Officer Jason Fink:** Wisconsin CIT Advisory Committee
- **2025 National Physical Fitness Qualification 1st Place: Waukesha Police Department Tactical Team:** National Tactical Association (NTOA)
- **2025 National #1 Operator: Specialist Kyle Becker:** National Tactical Association (NTOA)
- **2025 National Top 10 Scorers: Captain Brad Becker & Sergeant Bryan Spakowicz:** National Tactical Association (NTOA)
- **Operator Meritorious Award: Dave Berg, Waukesha Water Utility:** Wisconsin Chapter of the American Water Works Association (AWWA)
- **Meritorious Canine Apprehension of the Year Award: Officer Nate Smidt & K-9 Arko:** Wisconsin Law Enforcement Canine Handler Association
- **Top Performer in 2025 Best in Governance Awards: Utilities:** Polco
- **Top Performer in 2025 Best in Governance Awards: Safety:** Polco
- **2025 First Responder of the Year: Officer Jose Arellano:** 82nd Assembly District in Wisconsin
- **Community Champion Award: Waukesha Public Library:** Community Action Coalition for South Central Wisconsin
- **Special Recognition in Adaptive Re-Use: Hillcrest Park "Open Air" Shelter Design:** American Institute of Architects Wisconsin
- **Gold Level Learn to Swim Provider: Waukesha Parks, Recreation, & Forestry:** American Red Cross
- **Officer of the Year: Officer Ken Stucker:** Waukesha Elk's Lodge
- **Firefighter of the Year: Chandler Voigt:** Waukesha Elk's Lodge
- **Gold Award for Web: Towns & Municipalities:** Horizon Interactive Awards

Financial Sustainability



Volunteers

The City of Waukesha had 1,994 volunteers during 2025 working a total of 34,773 hours or nearly 4 years of volunteerism from our community! We are grateful for all the time and dedication the residents of Waukesha commit to making our community thrive!

Sponsorships

The City of Waukesha hosts many events and programs and tries to offset their costs through sponsorships. In 2025, the City collected over \$280,000 through sponsorships. Thank you to all our community partners that sponsored events and programs!



Grants

The City of Waukesha actively seeks out grants to help improve infrastructure, livability, and bring visitors into the City. In 2025, the City applied for multiple grants for construction projects, art installations, and more and received over \$1,588,000 in grants. These grants are used in lieu of tax dollars to complete the City's goals and initiatives.