

# City of Louisa

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Harold E Slone  
Mayor



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City Clerk

## STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

I am honored to stand before you at a time when Louisa is Beginning to ReDiscover itself. A year ago, I made a commitment to the people of this city to listen, to learn, to lead. That's what I do, every day, as I make decisions and take actions that move us forward.

My job as Mayor is not just to govern for the year or the moment, but to mark the way forward, and build for decades to come.

We stand at the beginning of a new chapter and folks Louisa is ON THE MOVE.

I have spent much of my year building and renewing partnerships that will enable a successful future. Partnerships with the tourism commission , the county, the board of education, transportation cabinet, and civic clubs like rotary and others. These partnerships are paving a way for progress unlike we've seen in recent times.

Tonight, I will highlight a number of challenges, reforms, success stories, and next steps as we continue to Rediscover Louisa.

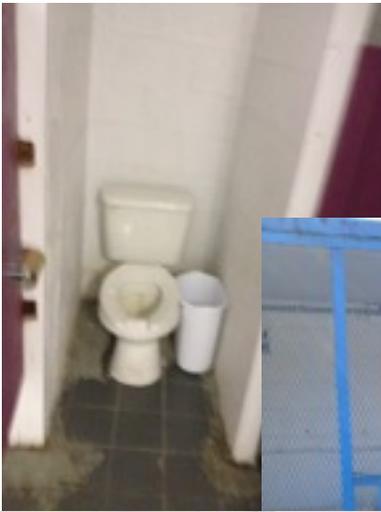
As you remember our town was hit with two major snowstorms in the first 60 days of my term. Accumulation forecast of 15-20" of snow was unlike what we had experienced in decades. Our city was simply not

equipped or prepared for such weather. With one residential type snow plow, on one undersized pickup truck and salt spreader that holds a wheelbarrow load of salt it was very challenging times to say the least. Last week our city was delivered two sets of snow removal equipment, blades and spreaders adequate to do the job you deserve should this happen again. As I learned in emergency management you must prepare for the worst and hope for the best. I can proudly announce we are now prepared for this type event.



As spring arrived I quickly realized the city pool which had provided many years of service and was once a valuable asset to our community had become more of a liability and symbol of neglect.

A decision needed to be made whether we would invest and revitalize this nostalgic location or do as many other small cities and completely close it for good. Considering our youth doesn't have a lot of summer activities and childhood obesity in our region is a serious problem we moved full steam ahead to utilize all resources and "Rediscover Louisa Pool". A complete overhaul to the pool house, including new bathroom fixtures, concession stand and eating area, new ceilings and electric in the shelter, highlighted by a new gazebo on the roof for teens resulted in a huge success. The pool revenue increased over 900 % totaling more than 37,000 dollars this season which enabled us to finish the season with pools first ever safety cover for the winter which will save thousands each spring. This was accomplished without raising the prices to the children using the pool one cent.



The Lock Ave park and locks area was cleared of years of overgrowth and debris returning it to a condition from decades back and setting the stage for many exciting upgrades to come.



We were able to obtain grant funding to get professional conceptual drawings and plans for a future riverwalk project. This plan would tie together the resources we already have beginning at the boat launch area behind the courthouse and ending at the historic locks and dam site behind the park. This plan has prompted collaboration with other cities up the river to market our river as a whole for fishing , kayaking, canoeing and paving the way for potential trail town status by the State of Kentucky.

This project was also kicked off with Louisa's first beautiful mural next to the boat ramp area which was accomplished by a grant and a partnership between city and county officials and was led by Catrina Vargo with the county.

As the warmer weather finally arose the impact of the harsh winter and previous financial struggles from the prior administration had left the cities streets and roads in desperate conditions. The street supervisor stated the streets were the worst he had seen in the 14 years he had been here. By utilizing the bidding commitments and buying power through the county, the city contracted Mountain Enterprises , the largest provider of asphalt in the region to completely repave 6 city streets totaling approximately 110,000 dollars. This was more asphalt than had been laid in the city in the prior 15 years total.



By forming teamwork with all the city departments we were also able to patch over 140 potholes putting down 70 ton of asphalt by hand into these holes. Let me say, I am proud of the job the city workers have done. I asked them to do things they were not used to doing and they stepped up to the plate and delivered.

I have asked these workers to be more

accountable for overtime hours and we have reduced overtime wages across the city by more than 22%.

As mayor I pledge to always maintain and improve public protection and that has been accomplished. Our police department responded to 3790 calls during 2015 and one highlight was 63 drug arrest for an average of more than one a week. The police department has added a K9 unit to help with detection of illegal drugs in an effort to keep drugs off our streets.



By working together with the fire district board the city was able to purchase a much newer and larger ladder truck for the fire department which is completely paid for. We implemented a new plan which allowed a part time fire department employee to locate, test and map over 200 fire hydrants in the departments coverage area. We have repaired

several hydrants here in the city that had been out of order for quite some time. These things along with a group of dedicated and trained volunteers enabled us to lower our ISO rating from 5 to 4 in the city and 7 to 4 5 mi outside the city. There is only 6,200 fire departments nationwide with the number 4 rating. The fire department responded to over 250 calls for help last year.

Our water and sewer department treated over 550 million gallons of water last year providing water to nearly 3000 customers and 1800 sanitary sewer customers and those numbers continue to grow.

Our sanitation department pick up trash from nearly 1400 residents and business's each week hauling more than 3000 tons of garbage to the landfill each year.

Because of growth in the city's tax assessment we were able to lower your tax rate. For a person with a 100,000 home we are providing all these city services for less that 20.00 per month which i believe is a bargain.

However, our work has just begun we continue to face many challenges. Our declining downtown area needs to be kick started with revitalization plans. We simply aren't realizing downtown growth. Thats why I have proposed a plan called "operation bootstrap" which would assist entrepreneur's in starting small specialty business's in our downtown. We have applied for grant funding through the SOAR initiative and anxiously waiting to get started should that funding become a reality.

We must continue to invest in our parks and provide new opportunities for recreational activities in the city. Thats why we have made plans for upgrades to the much used basketball courts and playground equipment to increase physical activity for our youth. Our Main street park stage will receive upgrades that will allow for a regular schedule of performing arts through out the summer be a place people will truly want to visit.

We face major challenges with our wastewater treatment facility. We are currently near capacity at all times and over capacity during any wet weather event. This can only be remedied by doing major upgrades to downtown areas that are allowing rainwater to enter the system due to age and condition of the sanitary sewer and storm drains.

We are currently working on a plan to reduce this infiltration and early estimates are 4 million dollars to accomplish. Our waste water treatment facility is very old and simply needs to be replaced. These

are gonna be major challenges in the years ahead but we simply cannot continue to overlook them if we are to grow and be the city you want and deserve.

One key component of success is communication and this is something I have tried to improve this year by doing things like this tonight. We are also launching a new website for the city which will be a portal of information for visitors and residents alike. The foundation of the site is in place and ready to be built upon in the coming year.

The great work that is happening in Louisa is a testament to our ability to work together for the common good and I've enjoyed your strong partnership during my tenure as mayor.

I still believe in government and believe good decisions bring good results.

The state of our city is SOUND . We are resilient , disciplined and working together to make our city even stronger.

I'm honored and humbled to be your mayor and look forward to the future of our city.