

Corsicana Daily Sun

corsicanadailysun.com

Thursday, January 12, 2017

75 Cents



Daily Sun FILE photo

The Corsicana and Navarro County Chamber of Commerce State of the City Address was held Tuesday at the City Government Center.

Mayor shares city's progress, goals

Inaugural State of the City address held Tuesday

By Michael Kormos
Daily Sun

The Corsicana and Navarro County Chamber of Commerce's inaugural State of the City address



Corsicana Mayor Chuck McClanahan

ment Center council cham-

drew a large crowd Tuesday evening as business and community leaders filled the Government Center council cham-

■ Highlights from Mayor McClanahan's Speech 3

bers almost to capacity.

Corsicana Mayor Chuck McClanahan updated residents on what's going on in and around Corsicana as far as business and road projects. He also talked about new businesses in 2016 and explained the city's budgeting process.

The State of the City Address is the second of three addresses in this series, with a State of the County address to follow in March.

The event was Presented by AT&T and also sponsored by Republic Services.

Highlights from the Mayor's speech:

The Interstate Highway 45 addition of two lanes
The cost of the project is approximately \$72 million. The project boundaries are from the north side of Corsicana to the south to the Freestone County Line. The addition will help the city prepare as traffic grows on the highway mostly from the south as the Houston port begins to receive more cargo from the ships that can now get through the Panama canal with its expansion. The extra two lanes will also entice industries that are looking at Corsicana.

The Highway 31 Relief Route

Cost of the project is \$105 million. The project starting point is Hwy. I-45 at the crossing point of Hwy. 31 relief route. Even though it is four years away the city is having inquiries about the intersection the route will create. There will be lots of opportunity for business to locate along the route. With a total of 177 million for both roads that means lots of workers renting hotels, eating out, purchasing gas and diesel, parts, and many other items.

City marketing two business parks

The Hwy. 31 Business Park (located behind Pactiv, 292 acres) and Hwy 45 Business Park (located south of town, 169 acres), both will have access to the Hwy 31 Relief Route. We have identified the Hwy 31 business park as our Rail Serve Port due to the easy accessibility to the railroad. The park has been engineered for pad sites, roads, rail spurs. When a developer inquires about locating in Corsicana, the city can show him the layout and discuss the best spot to fit his needs. The I45 Business Park will be ideal for industries that need visibility.

Old Home Depot warehouse

Corsicana's largest commercial building of 1.5 million sq. feet. Pactiv has approx. 650,000 square feet. And Guardian has 240,000 square feet. McClanahan said it's interesting the owner of the former Anchor Glass building now owns the Home Depot building. The investor bought the Anchor Glass building and within two weeks, had three companies inquiring to buy. Sold it to Polyguard. The investor was so excited, he asked "what else do you have?" and bought the Home Depot building. Better to work with. The Mayor said the city has a shortage of buildings between 10,000 to 100,000 sq. ft. to meet the demand that Economic Development Director Scott Jones is getting from companies.

Incentives for new business

McClanahan said while the city doesn't have a war chest of money, they can entice companies and has done a good job of getting funds from the state. The state incentives Corsicana taps into for businesses are: Texas Capital Fund, Governor's Fund, Gift property for the right business, 380 agreement and New Markets Tax Credit. The Mayor also said there is Navarro College to teach employees skills or certifications needed and paying for the programs with state grants.

Streets

The Mayor said the council's goal has been to spend as much on streets as they can. They divide the street funds between five areas of the city, the four precincts and downtown. Residents may only see 25 percent of the work, but the city had had approximately 10.5 million dollars worth of work going on in 2016. He said they spend around \$2 million on general maintenance a year and their goal is to spend an additional \$800,000.00 in capital improvements. This does not

include bond street work such as 24th Street.

The Mayor said the city is making more headway today on road work than ever before. "The cost to rebuild a street can cost between \$350 to \$650 a foot," he said. "It all depends on the soil type, width, and traffic count. With the 161 miles of streets we have and the number of years they were neglected and our soil, they are always going to be a battle. If we rebuilt every street at \$500 per foot, we would spend approximately \$425 million. We are not alone. It's a problem for Ennis, Dallas, and Ft. Worth."

Quality of life

McClanahan mentioned the parks are the one thing the city receives compliments on constantly, but it comes with a price tag. "We spend approximately \$1.3 million a year on parks," he said. "There are so many summer activities in the park (in 35 days they had 37 events) Slip-in-slide, Tennis camp, Bowling, air and space, hay ride, airport tour." The Mayor went on to list baseball, soccer, tennis, playgrounds for kids, and walking track. The new Lake Halbert Sand beach, two spray parks, two swimming pools (in the 44 days they were open they had 12,560 swimmers). The last pool event is the pooch paddle, Hooked on Fishing normally has 700 kids and adults. The AirSho, Pioneer Village had 1407 visitors from 19 countries and 28 states, and The Senior Citizens Activity Center. "This last summer we had the opening of the new Baseball complex on 45th street," he said. Downtown comes alive every Halloween, Easter, at Christmas there is the 50-foot tree, ice-less skating, snow hill, Derrick Days, Second Saturday Events. There are now two parks downtown: Pocket park and the Beaton Street Market Park. The library has a va-

riety of programs in addition to checking out books, like Legos, painting, story time, adult reading, and movies. Palace Theater continues to bring in great shows. Warehouse Living Arts Center has had many wonderful plays. We have had several artists move into Corsicana, buildings at the north end of Beaton have been converted into studios. Thanks to our Police Chief we have had several movies shot here in Corsicana.

Housing

According to the mayor, in 2016: 130 homes were built in the county, 19 homes were built in the city, 178 homes sold in the county, 184 homes sold in the city. A 2013 survey performed by an independent Company showed 71.2 percent of people that work in Corsicana live outside the city. That's a lot of folks that could be spending their money here. Studies show that 70 percent of items that are purchased after 6 p.m. are purchased where you live. Scott Jones just got a study back that tells us we need to build 154 houses per year and have the need for 184 multi-family units. He is talking to several builders that could come in here and help us with our shortage. The study indicates that Corsicana is projected to grow at a rate of 3.5 percent to a population of 52,203.

Downtown

Continues to grow, we have approximately 55 people living downtown and several more lofts are being constructed. The council continues to offer incentives to businesses downtown. That's the heartbeat of Corsicana.

Tax Rate

Keeping taxes low is very important to attracting business. They look at the total tax burden. According to McClanahan, the city has not raised taxes in 13 years. That's why the city is always in favor of

broadening its tax base, he said. Because keeping the tax rate the same keeps our revenues somewhat flat and that limits the amount of money we have to spend on roads and other infrastructure. The city manager, Connie Standridge, keeps a very close eye on the financial health of the city and ensures we keep an adequate fund balance. The fund balance is like a savings account. If a tornado tore through our town, we would need to continue to operate until we could rebuild.

General Fund Expenditures

Approximately \$17 million
Here's where the money comes from: 37 percent from Sales tax 32 percent from Property tax 15 percent from Franchise tax (Oncor, Atmos, Northland Cable, and solid waste with Republic)

Where the city spends your tax dollars

51.5 percent goes for Police and Fire 15.2 percent goes for Public works We spend \$150,000 on Animal shelter We spend \$445,000 on the library.

If you live in the city and have a \$100,000 home you pay to the city \$627 per year. The Mayor said he believes public safety should be top priority and as stated 51.5 percent goes to public safety. Therefore, of the \$627 the city receives \$323 goes to public safety and that only leaves \$304 to provide all of the other services. That's why we are so interested in getting new business in so to broaden that tax base.

Employment rate

The Mayor said the estimated rate in Corsicana is 4.1 percent while the national average is 4.7 percent — that's good and bad. "What it means to the city is when a company is looking to locate here, where can they get the workers?"

Jones has a study that indicates that workers making \$12 to \$14 an hour will normally only commute 30 miles. Workers making \$25 to \$50 per hour will commute 50 miles. The advantage to a company locating in Waxahachie is they have so many skilled workers to draw from to the north," he said.

New Businesses

Some of the new business that announced their opening or will open or had a major expansion in 2016 are: Polyguard, Freedom Shooting Sports, Plasson, Moontower Restaurant at the Oaks, former Adams Hat factory building (Corsicana Bedding), Burger King, New CUSD Middle school, Baseball complex, First State Bank of Athens, AT&T mobile phone center, Citizens National Bank, Just Wright Dental Clinic, Dr. Edds Dental Clinic expansion, McDonald's, Brinson Power sports.

The Mayor closes with a call to action

"We have been working on the SWOT analysis for Corsicana," he said. "Strength, weakness, opportunities, and threats. We have been discussing it in our first Tuesday meetings of each month at 8 a.m. Michael Stewart has been leading the meeting since we began, and Scott has been leading the SWAT analysis. We have developed a list and will be working on solutions to the top ones. We need your input to make this successful, so please plan to attend. You can view the past meetings on the City of Corsicana's website." "In closing I would like to thank you for being interested enough in your community to be here tonight," McClanahan said. "I along with the City Manager, Economic Development Director and Council Persons will be down front to answer questions. "Because together we can make Corsicana greater!"

Deanna Kirk contributed to this report.