

Mayor Mark A. Tyler
April 2010 – Kirtland Gazette Article

I was honored to represent the City of Kirtland at the annual Willoughby Chamber of Commerce State of the Cities Address. Every year Kirtland and surrounding communities are invited to provide this special presentation. Nikki Matala, Executive Director of the Willoughby Chamber of Commerce, and her staff should be commended for their ongoing efforts and for providing a forum where we can share our accomplishments, provide an update on current projects and present our plans for the future, collectively --- as a community.

I would like to share with you some of my comments from this presentation:

The City of Kirtland had a productive year in 2009. We began the year by implementing a citywide Solid Waste and Recycling Program. This program offered a savings to residents and enhanced convenience in two ways: by offering the first curbside recycling program in Lake County utilizing carts and by offering a bulk waste pick-up service at no additional charge. We successfully eliminated the unsightly and hazardous drop off recycling bins and cut down on traffic and damage to our roads with waste and recycling services now provided exclusively by one company. The feedback from residents has been overwhelmingly positive. In addition, we have observed an important trend developing – more residents are recycling. We are excited about the prospect of reducing solid waste and making a contribution toward a healthier environment.

The City of Kirtland also hosted its first shred day in 2009. Residents were invited to bring up to four bankers size boxes of documents to be shredded for FREE! Over 75 households took advantage of this special opportunity to safely discard documents. Based on the positive feedback from the community, we are considering making this an annual event.

In September of 2009, we launched a new website for the City of Kirtland. We value maintaining an open line of communication with residents, particularly when the information is time sensitive. It is our hope that the website will serve as a forum for keeping our residents up-to-date. The website features a community calendar to highlight upcoming events, frequently requested forms in pdf format, information on events and classes at our Community and Senior Center and other important information for the city. The website serves as a way to provide updates on city projects, provide important announcements and highlight reasons to celebrate the City of Faith and Beauty!

The City of Kirtland has also enjoyed some proud moments over the last year. We were honored to be ranked 7th out of 76 communities for safety by Cleveland Magazine. We were also honored by the American Automobile Association for demonstrating a commitment to improving traffic safety and presented with two awards: for the 30th year, the City of Kirtland was recognized for no pedestrian fatalities and for the 5th year, the City of Kirtland was awarded the Platinum AAA Traffic Safety Leadership Award. The prestigious Platinum Award is the highest level of recognition that a city can achieve. It is reserved for those cities that have five years of improvement in at least two statistical areas and for providing educational, environmental, engineering and other programs that promote safety in the community. Only 7 of the 80 communities represented at the awards program were eligible for the Platinum Award. Congratulations to our safety forces, service department and engineer's office for their contributions in achieving these awards!

Early in 2009, the decision was made to delay spending, manage overtime and callbacks and make additional budget cuts. Collectively, these decisions had an important financial impact -- they prevented cash flow issues later in 2009 and allowed for a carryover into 2010. With revenues expected to remain flat in 2010, we will continue a conservative fiscal approach while working to maintain the high caliber of city services residents have come to expect. Capital Improvements in 2010 will be limited; the focus is on the Five Year Plan. In 2010, we have purchased a new squad (approved in 2009) and will purchase a grass fire truck with money awarded through the Assistance to Firefighters Grant. Over the next five years, we will focus on making necessary capital improvements to aging city buildings, purchasing equipment necessary to maintain roads and replacing safety vehicles to keep the fleet up-to-date and in good working order.

Despite our conservative fiscal approach and deliberate delays in spending, we have managed to keep several vital projects moving forward. Improvements to the State Route 306 and Rt. 6 intersection were completed in 2009. The road was widened and the traffic signals were upgraded in anticipation of future development. This project is part of the City's Comprehensive Plan. This intersection accommodates over 21,000 vehicles every day. It is our hope that the intersection improvements, combined with eventual sewers, will provide an opportunity for economic development in the years to come.

In 2010, at the intersection of Rt. 6 & Sperry Roads, engineering changes to the topography of the intersection will improve visibility and safety. Rt. 6 will also undergo a complete resurfacing, in Kirtland, from Willoughby Hills to Chardon. ODOT is contributing \$1.2 million dollars toward this resurfacing project.

The intersection improvement projects at SR 306 and Lakeland Community College are underway. The signalization upgrade project, which was completed in October, was a collaborative project between Willoughby, Mentor and Kirtland. Additional turn lanes will be next be added to make the intersection much safer.

Finally, the much anticipated SR 306 sewer project is underway and steadily making progress. This project, under the direction of the Lake County Commissioners and Lake County Department of Utilities, is being accomplished via three main contracts:

1. Contract 1, SR 306 Gravity Sewer
2. Contract 2A-D, Markell Rd. Pump Station
3. Contract 3A, I-90 Crossing and Contract 3B, Force Main

A separate sewer project provides for the construction of the Temple View Pump Station. In 1990, the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency found bacteria in the East Branch of the Chagrin River and the Lake County Health Department traced it to the Temple View subdivision. More than half of the septic systems in this subdivision are failing. The new pump station will provide service for 52 homes. Construction bids were awarded in September of 2009. The City was awarded \$492,897 in federal stimulus (ARRA) money for the project via the Ohio EPA Water Pollution Control Loan Fund. Construction is scheduled to begin soon.

We still have much to accomplish and 2010 is certain to be another productive year. Our Charter Review Committee will have completed their review of our City Charter by Memorial Day. The Charter serves as the framework by which the city operates. The nine-member Committee, appointed by Council, convenes every ten years. The Committee is responsible for reviewing the Charter and adopting any alterations, revisions or amendments which the Committee deems

advisable. Recommendations from the Committee will be submitted to Council for review. All proposed changes to the Charter will appear on the ballot in the General Election this Fall.

The City of Kirtland has a lot to look forward to in 2010.