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December 2019

## 2019 Review/2020 Outlook



### INSIDE:

Sweeping Corp of America

Cities address gun violence

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### ON THE COVER

For municipalities, outsourcing street sweeping and jet-vac services can be an economical solution, resulting in a range of cost savings. Sweeping Corporation of America offers a variety of street sweeping and jet-vac services to fit the needs of cities, whether for single events — such as during a heavy leaf season or after a parade — or on a more regular basis. Learn more on page 10.





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# Happy Holidays

from all of us at  
**The Municipal**

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### Meet The Feature Writer

**Andrew Mentock** is a writer and journalist based in South Bend, Ind. He writes about sports, culture and government.





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# Cities continue to cope with gun violence



Sarah Wright | Editor

**A**FTER THE VIRGINIA TECH shooting occurred in 2007, I vividly recall assessing each of my college classrooms with new eyes, highlighting points of escape, nooks for hiding and objects that could be hurled in a worst-case scenario. It's a habit I still partake in today as mass shootings continue to occur in a variety of settings. Anytime there is a crowd, I can't help but think: What if the wrong person is nearby? It only takes one act to shatter lives.

While no community wants to be tied to such tragedies, most know there are no guarantees in life. So, cities of all sizes are investing in protection not only for their first responders but also for their citizens—should the worst happen. Denise Fedorow writes extensively about this topic in this month's issue, speaking with representatives with the city

of Dayton, Ohio, which was the site of a mass shooting in August, just a day after a shooting in El Paso, Texas. She relays how the city has recovered since the event and how it and the other incidents it experienced have shaped its response.

She will also be sharing efforts made by a smaller police department to be prepared in a worst-case scenario in addition to how technology is moving forward to address the epidemic of gun violence.

These efforts will go a long way to ensuring safer communities, but gun violence will remain a topic we as a country will have to grapple with. It's a shame discussion has become so polarized, with many people being so thoroughly entrenched that a productive conversation cannot occur.

This December issue, which reflects on 2019 and looks toward 2020, will also cover other trends cities across the country are experiencing.

Julie Young is sharing how cities and states are trying to attract young professionals into their communities, examining what has worked and programs that are being re-examined. Related to this, Kathleen Moran writes on Portsmouth, Va.'s, fiber network, which

is intended to attract businesses and additional economic development to the city. It is just one of many cities investing in a fiber network.

Climate also remains a much discussed topic, with cities embracing a variety of sustainability goals. Lauren Caggiano checks in with Grand Rapids, Mich., to see how its efforts to meet its goals are going.

Finally, drivers are more distracted than ever before, and it is proving disastrous for first responders, construction workers and others whose professions require they work alongside roadways. Barb Sieminski is profiling Ohio's and ResponderSafety.com's efforts to raise awareness for this matter.

It'll be interesting to see what 2020 brings—besides an engulfing storm of political ads, which we all know are coming. It's not bound to be a quiet year simply for that reason.

But before that happens, enjoy the holidays. Try to get some rest and start the new year fresh.

Happy holidays and a happy New Year's, from everyone at The Municipal!







- \* Some of the **largest agencies in North America use BH** (BEET HEET). 7 state DOTs/Tollways will have BH on their roads and highways this season.
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# Outsourcing municipal street sweeping

Article submitted by Sweeping Corporation of America

**Outsourcing any public works function can be an economical solution for a municipal government. Utilizing a third-party contractor such as Sweeping Corporation of America for street sweeping and jet-vac service can provide a range of cost saving options for a city.**

SCA can provide single event services such as cleaning up a heavy leaf season or after a parade on an hourly or on-call basis. Having a qualified sweeping contractor on-call allows for a city to have pre-negotiated rates and service levels in the event there is a need for roadway cleanup or emergency jet-vac service. Cities may have regulatory inspections, drag out on paved surfaces from construction or a variety of other situations where it is advantageous to have a third party ready to perform the service.

Cities with existing municipally performed street sweeping programs may choose to hire SCA to augment and support their existing sweeping operations. Often times cities are growing at a pace where their current equipment cannot keep up with the required daily sweeping miles needed to remain compliant with their stormwater permits. In this instance, SCA can be regularly scheduled each month to sweep a predetermined area for the municipality. SCA can preschedule the cycles of sweeping annually or collaborate with a public works department each month to determine the specific services required.

A municipality may also choose to completely privatize and outsource an existing municipally performed services. SCA can not only provide the complete outsourcing of both street sweeping and jet-vac service, but also provide detailed reporting for their municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) permit in support of any national pollutant discharge

**ABOVE:** Sweeping Corporation of America's jet-vac services provide detailed reporting, which enables cities to track data necessary for permitting. (Photo provided)

elimination system (NPDES) permitting. SCA works closely with city officials to deliver a turnkey solution that includes planning, resident notification, parking-ban signage, execution of sweeping as well as storm drain and/or sanitary sewer jet-vac service.

SCA has the ability to utilize several sweepers on designated days allowing for easier on-street parking notification for residents. While it may not be feasible for a city to own multiple sweepers, SCA can mobilize its fleet of over 600 units to meet a city's needs. For example, utilizing five SCA sweeping crews over a single week could allow a city to complete upward of 750 curb miles while causing fewer days of traffic, and parking impact within the community.

Regardless of the range of service, SCA can provide several efficiencies and benefits. Budgets and capital expenditures are frequently a topic of discussion for cities. Similar to the outsourcing of waste management services, shedding the burden of capital expenditures for street sweeping and jet-vac equipment along with their corresponding maintenance cost can free up funding for other areas of a municipality. Street sweepers and jet-vac trucks require constant maintenance and have expensive wear parts such as brooms that require periodic changing.

As most public works departments have experienced, attracting and retaining qualified CDL drivers is a challenge. Contracting with SCA to



perform sweeping and jet-vac services provides significant capital savings through reduced equipment purchases, eliminates the expense associated with maintenance and removes the challenge of hiring qualified CDL drivers.

SCA currently works with over 250 municipal entities. From this experience, there are several key things a city official should consider when working with a sweeping contractor:

**Bonding Requirements**—Every municipal sweeping job should require their contractors to post a surety bond to guarantee the performance of their work. Not only does this ensure municipalities will be working with a financially viable contractor, but it also gives peace of mind that cities have financial protection against nonperformance.

**Safety**—Require the vendor to provide a copy of its safety plan that identifies the training, dedicated safety resources and job-specific safety protocol. At SCA, safety is a core value. Other companies say this, but SCA has invested heavily in providing specific resources that mitigate risk while working in a community, and its track record proves it. More specifically, the company drives its safety culture through dedicated, full-time safety professionals. This provides professional training to its operators and allows for field observations to ensure compliance with policy. Utilizing in-cab camera systems to record events allows the SCA safety team to effectively coach its operators on correcting any unsafe behavior. This also allows operators who are consistently operating safely to be rewarded.

**Fleet Technology**—Demanding that a vendor use technology to verify its service ensures the city is getting what it paid for and lowers the cost of inspection. Every SCA truck is tablet enabled, and SCA is the only company to offer Verified Sweeping Service (VSS). SCA can geofence all areas to be swept and storm drains to be inspected and cleaned. Once its operators are in the geofenced area, SCA can set several predetermined metrics such as speed of operation, broom engagement, number of loads dumped (for MS4 compliance) in addition to simply verifying the truck was in the area. More importantly, its VSS portal allows for a city official—both in a desktop or mobile application—to view real-time and historical inspection of SCA's work.

**Experience**—Require references of a contractor proving their experience in a similar size and scope contract. Providing a quality result requires that the vendor has the knowledge of how to perform the work. SCA sweeps millions of miles annually and has the experience of starting and performing new contracts every month. While every city is different and every city official may have different requirements, SCA's experience in providing cost-effective, consistent and field-driven results is unmatched. Many contractors are still learning the things SCA has mastered on public roadways. During the launch of a new contract, SCA deploys a team of its most experienced operators who specialize in contract startups. It refines and perfects operating plans using real-time information such as areas with tight turns, low tree canopy cover, route efficiency and other areas where SCA can improve service to the city.

**Fleet Age and Quantity**—Specifying that a vendor use a new or newer specific equipment type in addition to it owning more equipment than is required in the contract reduces the city's risk that a mechanical breakdown will impair the sweeping program. SCA has the largest privately owned street sweeper fleet in the U.S. In each SCA location, there is typically a spare ratio of at least 10%. This not only allows for maximizing the uptime of equipment, but also ensures that SCA has the proper capacity to perform routine preventive maintenance by its DOT certified mechanics.

**Scope of Service**—Bundling sewer/catch basin inspection and jet-vac service with street sweeping can provide a cost-effective and complete



*Whether contracting for single event services or on a more regular basis, SCA can mobilize its fleet of over 600 units to meet a city's needs. (Photo provided)*



*Safety is a core value for Sweeping Corporation of America. It provides professional training to its operators and allows for field observations to ensure compliance with policy. (Photo provided)*

solution to any stormwater management plan. Most cities sweep for aesthetics but also to ensure compliance with their MS4 permit. SCA is equipped to work with a city's engineer to assist in this compliance by self-performing both the jet-vac service and the sweeping service as well as providing the required documentation to support the municipal permitting requirements. Its Verified Sweeping Service provides an additional level of documented proof that decreases risk of any challenges around these permits. **M**

Headquartered in Cleveland, Ohio, Sweeping Corporation of America is the largest power sweeping company in the United States. Through 39 locations, SCA self-performs highway, street, industrial, parking lot and construction power sweeping as well as jet-vac services. SCA delivers economical solutions to its municipal customers by having its nearly 1,000 highly trained employees, safely operating the newest fleet of equipment, which utilizes the best available technology. Contact SCA by calling 1 (888) SWEEPING or emailing [info@sweepingcorp.com](mailto:info@sweepingcorp.com).



# Christmas Santa Claus, Ind.

*Jolly Old St. Nicholas greets visitors year-round to his namesake town in southwestern Indiana.*

By RAY BALOGH | The Municipal

*Photos courtesy of Spencer County Visitors Bureau*

## Regardless of weather or calendar, there is only one season in Santa Claus, Ind.

The town of 2,410, located in the southwest corner of the state, would likely not be welcoming more than a million visitors a year today had its original application to the United States Postal Service been approved in 1856.

The town was founded as Sante Fe — pronounced “fee” — in 1854 and applied to establish a local post office. The USPS denied the application, as there already existed an Indiana town by that name.

Several town meetings were held to discuss a name change, and historical narratives diverge between the probable unimaginative account and the inspiring legend that sprang up shortly afterward.

The prosaic truth is the townspeople, for some reason, wanted to keep the “Santa” element of the name, but no one could

think of a word other than “Claus” to complete the moniker.

According to the contrived tale evoking the magic of Christmas, the meeting was held in a small log church on Christmas Eve. The adults were discussing the name change as the children played inside. A sudden gust of wind blew open the church doors, and as the sound of sleigh bells wafted into the room, the children rushed to the door shouting, “Santa Claus! Santa Claus!”

In 1895 the United States Board on Geographic Names, a federal body operated by the secretary of the interior, changed the name of the town to one word, Santa Claus, to comport with a nationwide standardization for place names.



*The post office in Santa Claus, Ind., postmarks half a million holiday cards every Christmas season.*





*Opened in 1935, Santa's Candy Castle is purported to be the first themed attraction in the country.*



*Frosty's Fun Center is located in a 100-acre forest and features a family restaurant and indoor arcade.*

The amended moniker may have remained forever unchallenged but for the efforts of James Martin, who served as the town's 14th postmaster from 1914 to 1935. From the beginning of his tenure, he took it upon himself to personally answer letters to Santa mailed from children all over the world. He actively promoted the Santa Claus postmark and spearheaded restoring the town's name to two words in 1928, also winning a concession there would never be another Santa Claus post office in the country.

Each year the post office designs a special Christmas hand cancellation pictorial postmark for exclusive use during December.

The growing volume of holiday mail caught the eye of Robert Ripley, who featured the phenomenon in his "Believe It Or Not!" comic strip in 1929.

Today the Santa Claus post office postmarks half a million holiday cards and about 10,000 letters from children each year. Santa's official address in town is 45 N. Kringle Place, Santa Claus, IN, 47579.

The first tourist attraction in Santa Claus was built by Milt Harris, an entrepreneur from nearby Vincennes, Ind.

Harris created Santa's Candy Castle, sponsored by the Curtiss Candy Company, makers of Baby Ruth and Butterfinger candy bars. The red brick attraction was dedicated Dec. 22, 1935, and is reputed to be the first themed attraction in the United States.

Three days later, on Christmas 1935, Harris's competitor, Carl Barrett, dedicated a 22-foot statue of jolly St. Nick on the town's highest hill as a preface to constructing Santa Claus Park. In the ensuing years, the two men furiously grappled in court over land-ownership, and the costs of litigation scuttled both their dreams.

Retired industrialist Louis Koch stepped into the gap and in 1946 opened Santa Claus Land, recognized to be the world's first theme park, preceding Disneyland by nine years.

The park's name was changed to Holiday World in 1984 and again to Holiday World and Splashin' Safari when a water park was added. Attracting more than a million visitors a year, the leisure attraction includes The Voyage, repeatedly voted by enthusiasts as the top wooden roller coaster in the world.

The entire town carries earmarks of Yuletide festivity. The town's firetrucks are named Rudolph, Dasher and Blitzen. Street names include Candy Cane Road, Jingle Bell Lane, Chestnut by the Fire,



*The Santa Claus Christmas Store, one of several themed businesses, offers a variety of gifts, decorations, collectibles, fudge, roasted nuts and other treats.*

Ornament Circle, Sleigh Bell Drive and Tinsel Circle. One local motel is dubbed Santa's Lodge and features a pair of 12-foot fiberglass Santas on the front lawn. Some of the businesses in town: Jingle Bell Rock Family Sports Pub, Lake Rudolph Campground, St. Nick's Restaurant and Kringle Haus Werstatt variety stores.

Melissa Arnold, executive director of the Spencer County Visitors Bureau, lauded the town's participation in the Santa Claus theme and suggested other municipalities can carve their niche with some thought.

"Any town that can find a theme that resonates with businesses and residents alike can then propel itself forward," she said. "It is finding that connection that everybody can embrace."

She suggested anyone interested in visiting or learning about Santa Claus should "first and foremost visit our website, [www.santaclausind.org](http://www.santaclausind.org). It lists all the events and attractions, and the hours of operation are updated every month." **M**

**For more information, call (888) 444-9252 or visit [www.facebook.com/santaclausindiana](https://www.facebook.com/santaclausindiana).**



# Laurel, Md.



## The city seal of Laurel, Md., has a lot going on.

The seal, adopted by the mayor and city council on the city's centennial in 1970, combines elements of heraldry, royalty, agriculture, industry, community and geography.

"An examination of the emblem will reveal branches of a laurel bush on either side of a kingly crown that bespeaks the original British allegiance of the Calverts and other early settlers of Maryland," according to [www.cityoflaurel.org](http://www.cityoflaurel.org).

"The snowdrop and strawberry in the crown are pictorial representations of the interrelated Snowden and Capron names, the Snowdens needing no introduction and Horace Capron being the internationally famous resident who, while he lived here in the 1840s, shook us out of our lethargy and made Laurel Factory a well-known agricultural and commercial Maryland town.

"The clasped hands signify brotherhood, and the triangle reminds all that Laurel pinpoints the conjunction of Prince George's, Anne Arundel and Howard counties.

"The silhouetted lion and its fleur-de-lis decorations are taken whole from the Prince George's County seal and flag. The anvil proclaims the early Snowden preoccupation with mining and smelting iron, and the sheaf of wheat, the cog-wheeled gristmill that eventuated into a major commercial site.

"The horse and knight remind all that Laurel's racetrack and nearby military and other governmental installations have given the town's name new celebrity in modern times. The motto, 'Progressio Per Populum,' is the Latin way of saying 'Progress Through People,' rather than through luck or happenstance."

Though the city of 25,723 is a relative newcomer as an official municipality, its history starts with an extremely early settlement.

Richard Snowden arrived in the area in 1658 and built a home near the Patuxent, a powerful river southeast of present-day Laurel. Several successive generations of Snowdens spearheaded the growth of the settlement, which was known as Laurel Factory until 1875. Iron, cotton, grist and saw mills were commercial mainstays during Laurel's early history.

Horace Capron married into the family and established a cotton manufacturing company in 1835, employing approximately 500 townspeople until the facility burned down in 1855. It was immediately rebuilt and operated until "obsolescence necessitated its removal in the mid-1940s."

During and after World War II, the local population burgeoned, courtesy of nearby Fort Meade and the government employees of the National Security Agency. Laurel serves as a bedroom community to Washington, D.C., 20 miles to the southwest.

For more information, visit [www.cityoflaurel.org](http://www.cityoflaurel.org). 



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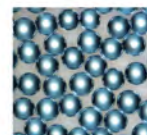


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# Focus on: 2019 Review 2020 Outlook

**\$10,000**

Vermont's Remote Work Grant Program awards qualified young professionals with a total of \$10,000, which can be used for qualifying needs, such as moving expenses, computer hardware or software not provided by an employer, broadband access or membership into shared workspace. This program is designed to entice young professionals into moving to the state.



*Learn more about how cities and states are drawing in new residents on page 24.*

**31,885**

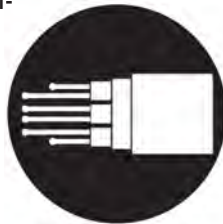
The number of gun violence deaths in the U.S. as of Oct. 25, according to the Gun Violence Archives, [www.gunviolencearchive.org](http://www.gunviolencearchive.org).



*Read how cities are addressing this increase on page 20.*

**500**

Of the more than 800 communities included on the Institute for Self-Reliance's fiber network map, 500 are served by some form of municipal network.



*Find out about Portsmouth, Va.'s fiber network project on page 26.*

**58,000 metric tons**

Grand Rapids' municipal facilities are estimated to emit this amount of carbon dioxide equivalents.



*Read more about Grand Rapids' efforts to meet sustainability goals on page 28.*

**4.6 seconds**

AAA noted texting takes a driver's eyes off the road an average of 4.6 seconds out of every 6 seconds. At 55 mph, this means 120 yards pass without glancing at the road. It also stated that distracted driving accounts for more than 4,000 crashes a day in the U.S.



*Find out how the state of Ohio is raising awareness to prevent distracted driving on page 30.*

**.69%**

New census statistics show that the average annual growth for the nation's 87 cities with populations over a quarter million have slipped to this percentage in 2017-18 — down from 0.76% the previous year, and from 1.21% in 2011-12, the highest average growth since the Great Recession.



*Source: [www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2019/05/24/big-city-growth-stalls-further-as-the-suburbs-make-a-comeback/](http://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2019/05/24/big-city-growth-stalls-further-as-the-suburbs-make-a-comeback/)*



# Dealing and healing from rising gun violence

By DENISE FEDOROW | The Municipal

**As of Oct. 25, the total number of gun violence deaths in the U.S. this year alone is a staggering 31,885 with 342 from mass shootings. These numbers would be unbelievable if we weren't seeing it play out nearly daily in the news.**

The Municipal wanted to check how some communities were dealing with gun violence and examine some tools that may help.

## Dayton, Ohio

In the early morning of Aug. 4, 2019, Connor Stephen Betts shot and killed nine innocent people and injured 27 within seconds. Dayton Director and Chief of Police Richard Biehl reported that the first shot rang out at 1:05:35 a.m. and Betts was brought down by officers in the area at 1:06:07 a.m.

Had there not been police officers nearby that death toll surely would have been significantly higher. According to Biehl, the 30 second response time was probably unprecedented. He added, "I haven't heard of any other tragedy being dealt with so quickly."

Generally speaking, there are officers staged nearby in a central location to that busy Oregon District neighborhood as closing time for the bars and clubs nears. Biehl said the Federal Bureau of Investigation is still investigating the shooting, including the motive and mindset of the shooter.

Part of that investigation is trying to determine if the date had any bearing. "Is there

something specific about Aug. 4? Why did he choose that date?"

Biehl said from the start that they didn't see it as a hate crime. "Everyone wants to know why and I understand — but it's probably not very productive at this point."

Any information from the investigation would likely be made public, not only to the local residents but also to the general public, with Biehl noting, "We know it struck a chord nationwide."

When asked how the city was healing Deputy City Manager Joseph "Joe" Parlette said one thing that helped was what he described as a "pop-up concert of 30,000 people" put on by Ohio resident Dave Chappelle.

"It was incredibly inspiring and a much needed therapeutic concert," Parlette said. "Just the feeling and the vibe and the obvious emotion and healing that proved to be very helpful to the entire community."

Biehl noted, "The process is far from being complete. Internally and externally, we're in a state of recovery and trying to maintain a balance — some semblance of normalcy — as we figure out what does normal even look like after this."



*Thousands gathered in Dayton, Ohio's, Oregon District for a vigil after the mass shooting Aug. 4. At the end of the month, Dave Chappelle gave a benefit concert for the residents of Dayton. (Photo provided)*

He added not only the police but all emergency services and public safety employees in Dayton have been affected by the "extraordinary in magnitude" crises they've had to deal with in a short period of time. Aside from the shooting, there was a large white supremacist rally in the city followed by an EF3 tornado.



“Most public safety agencies never have to deal with one of these,” Biehl said. “We’ve had to deal with no less than three in as many months.”

The entire police department was mobilized for the Honorable Sacred Knights — a Ku Klux Klan affiliate — rally and its surrounding venues. He said later it was discovered that Betts attended that rally, protesting the white supremacists. “One can only imagine what could have happened with that crowd density of hundreds with that kind of weaponry.”

Biehl believes the sheer presence of the officers played a role in creating a buffer between the two groups with radically differing views. He said the only time he’s seen that level of crowd and police presence in his 40-year career was when he was involved in a 2001 civic unrest protest in Cincinnati. The HSK rally cost Dayton approximately \$700,000.

During preparations for the rally, the chief said officers were telling themselves they’d “be able to take a deep breath and relax on the (May) 26th and then the 27th happened.”

The EF3 tornado that tore through the Dayton area also had the city’s public safety and emergency services departments working with little sleep. Personnel were barely recovered from these events when a little over two months later the mass shooting occurred.

“In my 40-year view of policing, this is unprecedented,” he said.

### Possible solutions

Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine has pivoted somewhat from his August stance on red gun laws. He’s still calling his platform S.T.R.O.N.G. Ohio, which is an acronym for safety protection orders; thorough background checks; rigorous due process; ongoing help to those in crisis; new state background checks; and greater penalties for gun crimes.

Biehl said the governor’s approach addresses gun violence more broadly rather than focusing exclusively on mass shootings.

“The mayor (Nan Whaley) has been very clear she absolutely supports what the governor’s proposing but also that it doesn’t go far enough,” Biehl said.

The focus has shifted somewhat to a “pink slip” system, which allows the police to pick up someone and take them to a hospital for an emergency psychiatric hold, whether they want to go or not, if they’re deemed a risk to themselves or to public safety. If the legislation goes through, it may give them a window of opportunity to seize weapons and allow for a hearing to be held within three days for the owner to recover his or her weapons.

Biehl said he “absolutely supports the strategy, but it has limitations.”

One limitation is the vast majority of people with mental health issues are not violent, so it would be warranted for a narrow segment of the population, and only a small percentage of those pink slipped and taken to a hospital had a prior arrest.

Biehl related a situation awhile back where they pink slipped someone and brought them to the hospital. The hospital kept the person for three to four hours, and when released, the person murdered three people.

“But we did our job,” he said.

As for when the governor’s proposals might take effect, he said it has to pass the House of Representatives and the Senate where unfortunately gridlock on this topic is common.



Milford, Ind., Police Chief Derek Kreider shows the active shooter kits his department purchased at a recent town council meeting for all officers. (Photo by Denise Fedorow)

When debates occur about banning automatic weapons, there are nuances to be considered. Biehl said the weapon Betts used was sold as a pistol and was built out to function like an AR-15 rifle. He added magazine capacity has to be considered aside from the type of weapon. Betts shot 47 rounds out of a 100 round magazine. They recovered 39 casings but know he was able to shoot 39-47 rounds in 24 seconds — that’s shooting two people per second, six lives in 2-3 seconds.

“That matters.” He also noted, “Two of our officers did magazine change-outs.”

He commented that unfortunately a lot of weapons conversations are polarizing people.

Biehl talked about visiting Dayton’s sister city, Augsburg, Germany, where he asked about its gun crime. There was a pause and some confusion, and then the Augsburg representatives replied they didn’t have gun crime and all their guns are registered.

“Why is it other western industrial nations are able to escape (this) and we haven’t?” ▶



As for any changes the department made after the shooting, Biehl said they've done an assessment of equipment that's crucial for them to have when faced with any crisis and realized having enough tourniquets and medical supplies was crucial.

"Clearly there are things we want to examine, not just from this (shooting) but also the tornado and any other mass event," Biehl said.

Dayton also had a mass casualty crash two weeks later with 11 critically injured and a horrific scene. Parlette said a lot of the same first responders who responded to the shooting also responded to the crash. He asked Biehl to talk about the resilience training.

Given all the tragedies this year, Biehl said the department is currently in conversation with Rice State University on how to cultivate resilience in police officers and public safety personnel. "We see things that other people never see and that can rock you to your core."

There's a program that helps develop resiliency and maintain physical, mental, emotional and social health. It's called Mindful Mental Fitness Training — or MMFT — and Biehl said the military has employed this training for awhile.

### Active shooter kits

Even in a small Midwestern town with a population of about 1,500, the police chief wants his people to be prepared for a potential mass shooting. The Milford, Ind., Police Department has 14 on the force — five full-time, three part-time and six reserve officers. In September, all officers for the first time received an active shooter kit to wear.

Police Chief Derek Kreider said, "The opportunity arose with the funding being there, and with the climate being as it is with the rise in the country of shootings, I wanted our people to be prepared with the proper equipment if a situation should occur."

He admitted gun crime is not a big issue in his community; however, "It can happen anywhere. I want to give our people the best equipment to deal with a situation if it should happen. To me, that's important."

### Gun detection technology

There are several gun detection systems on the market now. One system by Athena Security detects a gun when it is brandished. Lisa Falzone co-founded the company with Christopher Ciaberra in 2017 after the Douglas Stoneman High School shooting.

"I kept hearing about all these mass shootings, and I wanted to create something to help," Falzone said.

The system works with current closed circuit cameras as long as they're not analog; any cameras installed in the last five to 10 years should work if they're IP based. Falzone said when someone draws a gun, within 3 seconds it sounds a text alert to the police or whomever the client is.

The system often gets confused with gunshot detection systems, but she said, "Our system alerts before a shot is fired."

Athena Security has some Fortune 500 companies, cities, religious institutions and schools as clients. "Anyone concerned about gun violence is a potential client," she said.

Unlike some gun detection technologies that alert on anyone carrying a weapon, Athena only alerts when that gun is brandished, and once there is an alert, clients are connected in real time to see what is happening.

Biehl shared his concern with some detection methods. "The challenge with gun detection is how to apply it broadly and that it can give false positives."

Parlette mentioned the HSK rally and what they saw on video. Biehl added there were at least 75 guns among the crowd.

Biehl said, "We are a concealed and open carry state, so how do you factor in the law?"

Ohio's state legislature allows even more latitude in guns being prevalent in the environment and also has a preemptive law that prevents the passage of any municipal laws that are more stringent than the state.

"In other words, we can't say in our city it's unwise to carry guns in certain environments or certain venues," he said.

He conceded the gun detection technology may have a place in some venues where crowd density is an issue but wasn't sure how it could be applied broadly within the law.

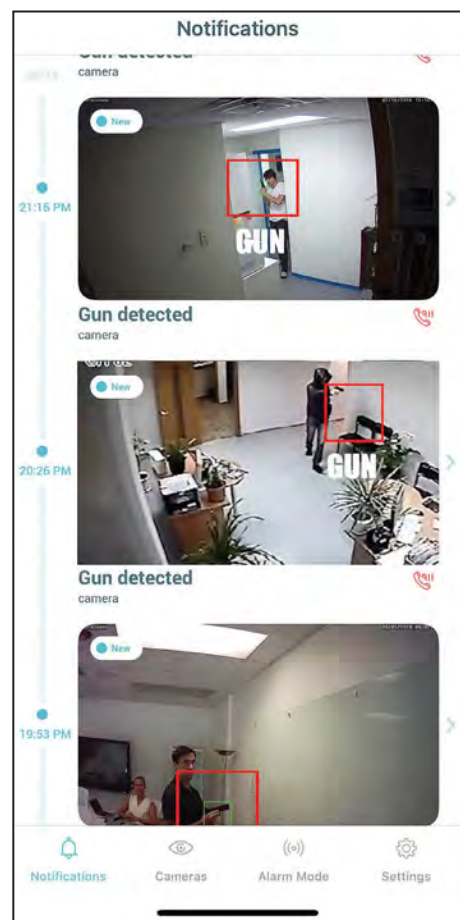
Still, for some cities and venues, gun detection might be a solid pursuit.

Falzone said even small communities with a limited budget could afford to install the Athena system. She said it typically costs \$100 a month per camera. "Versus the cost of a human monitoring a camera, it's a lot less expensive." And a city could choose how many cameras to install the system in — there's no minimum required.

Kreider said Milford's police department is currently using an app called Hero911 that



This photo shows the Athena Security app streaming an active shooter situation in real time. With the Athena system, once the alert is sent to the phone, customers are able to access real-time video via the CCTV cameras. (Photo provided)



This photo shows frames of an active shooter situation and the time stamps from the Athena Security system. Co-founder Lisa Falzone stated her system alerts when a gun is brandished rather than fired or simply carried. (Photo provided)




alerts when an active shooter is in the area and informs them what officers are responding.

### Moving forward

One thing all agreed on was some action needs to be taken.

Falzone said, “We’ve got to do everything we can — even if we have political gun reform, this is still going to be a problem.”

“We train for the most dangerous situations, but we are glad to go our entire career without having to use it,” Kreider said. “But we have to be prepared.”

Biehl said, “Whatever your opinions are on this perspective, you need to engage in conversation. Put your strong ideologies aside and open up to hear other’s views. At the end of the debate, come up with reasoned and effective policies. To not have that conversation and get stuck in your views prevents anything from happening.” 



*Co-founder of Athena Security Lisa Falzone felt compelled to create a system that would help stop mass shootings after the Douglas Stoneman shooting. (Photo provided)*

## Gun violence statistics

According to the Gun Violence Archives, the number of gun violence deaths in the U.S. as of Oct. 25 from all causes is 31,885.

**Homicide/murder/unintended deaths** — 12,217

**Suicide** — 19,668

**Total number of injuries** — 24,171

**Mass shootings** — 342

**Mass murders** — 25

**Number of children 0-11 affected** — 169 killed and 405 injured

**Number of teens 12-17 affected** — 620 killed and 1,894 injured

**Source:** [www.gunviolencearchive.org](http://www.gunviolencearchive.org)

The Gun Violence Archive is an online archive of gun violence incidents collected from over 6,500 law enforcement, media, government and commercial sources daily in an effort to provide real-time data about the results of gun violence. GVA is an independent data collection and research group with no affiliation to any advocacy organization.



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## *Communities court new constituents with financial perks*

By JULIE YOUNG | The Municipal

**Although it has been 157 years since President Abraham Lincoln signed the Homestead Act into law – and 43 years since it was officially repealed – states across the nation continue to offer financial incentives in hopes of attracting new residents. From free land to tax credits, cash rebates and relocation reimbursements, there are places that will pay people to move there, but is it all too good to be true?**

### **What's the catch?**

There are a number of reasons as to why communities are turning to financial incentives in hopes of boosting their numbers. In some cases, they have a shrinking tax base or an aging population, and they need to attract younger people to the area. Others have earned a reputation as a seasonal spot and need to shore up their full-time residents.

Still, others have distressed neighborhoods in need of revitalization, and they need energized inhabitants to bring these blocks back from the brink of blight. Regardless of the reason, there is a wide range of options to help your municipality get its groove back.

On Jan. 1, Vermont became the latest New England state to offer money in order to entice young professionals to the region. The

Remote Worker Grant Program is designed for those folks who are employed full time by an out-of-state employer and are willing to make their home in the Green Mountain State. The program awards a total of \$10,000 that can be used for a qualifying need such as moving expenses, computer hardware or software not provided by an employer, broadband access or membership into a shared workspace. By April, Vermont had awarded 27 grants, and it has begun looking to expand the program.

Tulsa, Okla., began a similar remote workers program in 2018, which offers \$10,000 plus a \$1,000 housing stipend to those who are willing to make the move. The funds are paid out over the course of a year, and the worker must be willing to move within six months in order to qualify. The program has been a big





*Lincoln, Kan.'s, "free land" program offered free lots to entice people to move to the city. There are about 20 lots available through the program. (Photo provided)*

success, which the city hopes to continue for years to come.

College graduates have the opportunity to pay down their student loans provided they are willing to live and work in Maine. The Educational Opportunity Tax Credit originally applied to graduates of Maine's post-secondary institutions but has been expanded to those from across the nation who received their degree in 2016 or later.

All three programs are aimed at encouraging a new generation of people to move to the area and have garnered a lot of interest from those who are lured by the promise of a payback.

"We hope it will help recruit workers to our state and serve as a solid building block in developing solutions to the demographic challenges we face," said Vermont Gov. Phil Scott.

### **Free land**

The promise of free land has always been a powerful incentive to encourage a community's growth, and there are various ways cities have encouraged new residents to relocate. Newton, Iowa, offers \$10,000 for new construction plus a welcome package worth over \$3,000 while Baltimore, Md., provides a tax credit for those willing to rehabilitate homes in diminished and/or historic neighborhoods.

When Marquette, Kan., offered free building lots to families that were looking for an exceptional abode in America's heartland, folks responded. They were drawn to the friendly, affordable and peaceful lifestyle that Marquette promised along with the convenient access to larger cities such as Salina,

McPherson and Hutchinson. The city of Lincoln, Kan., took notice and decided to create a similar program. The results have been less than ideal, but there is hope that the program can have a positive turnaround.

"We have about 20 lots available, but only two houses have been built," said Kelly Larson, director of the Lincoln County Economic Development Foundation.


Larson said Lincoln's "free land" program began about 10 years ago as a progressive way to attract new residents to the municipality. The city leaders acquired a vacant parcel and installed the appropriate infrastructure in order to encourage new homeowners to live there by offering a free lot; however, they quickly learned that when it comes to building a new home, a lot is a small percentage of the overall price.

"The lot is free, but then they have to find an architect to design the house, a contractor to build it and, in a lot of cases, people realize they can buy an existing home for a lot less. The town took a risk on the program, which is a good thing, but there are still a lot of hurdles to get over once you get the land, and for some people, it's not worth it," Larson said.

Larson regularly fields calls from those interested in the "free land" program, but who do not understand that there are some perimeters as to the kind of home they can build on the lot.

"We hear from people who want to transform shipping containers into tiny homes, who want to park a RV on the lot while they build their house themselves and some who are simply looking to live off the grid," she said. "Programs like these are successful when you match the mission with the right resident."

Larson hopes that Lincoln can remarket the program so it can succeed in the future. She said the parcel is ideally located near the local hospital and schools and would be a great spot for new construction, so she hopes the city can partner with a developer, financial institutions and some local builders to help prospective residents turn their dreams into a reality.

"Incentives such as this can have a great impact on the community when they are executed right," she said. "There's no easy pathway for people who have to do everything on their own, but we have the basics in place so hopefully everything else can be tweaked." 



*Vermont's Remote Worker Grant Program is designed for young professionals who are employed full time by an out-of-state employer and are willing to make their home in the Green Mountain State. Pictured is Burlington, Vt. (Shutterstock.com)*



*In 2018, Tulsa, Okla., offered \$10,000 plus a \$1,000 housing stipend to remote workers who are willing to move to the city. (Shutterstock.com)*



*Recent college graduates have the opportunity to pay down their student loans provided they are willing to live and work in Maine, through the state's Educational Opportunity Tax Credit. Pictured is Augusta, Maine. (Shutterstock.com)*



# Portsmouth moves toward

*In July 2018, Portsmouth, Va., began to construct a fiber network that will span 55 miles. The project is expected to take five years to complete. (Shutterstock.com)*

By KATHLEEN MORAN | The Municipal

**P**ORTSMOUTH, VA., HAS UNDERTAKEN AN EXCITING endeavor to build its very own fiber network spanning 55 miles, a project that began back in July 2018. The city is not alone. The Institute for Self-Reliance has been tracking such fiber network projects, finding communities invest in telecommunications networks for a variety of reasons: economic development, improving access to education and health care, price stabilization, etc. The nonprofit maintains a map that includes more than 800 communities, as of January, that have invested in networks, of which 500 are served by some form of municipal network and more than 300 are served by a cooperative.



*Ronald D. Moore,  
director of  
economic  
development*

As for the Portsmouth fiber network, it has a projected timeline of five years, from start to finish, and will cost \$9 million. Schools and hospitals will serve as some of the anchor institutions while neighborhoods will make up the grids in between. Funded by the city itself as part of the Capital Improvement Project, Robert D. Moore, director of economic development, and Brian Donahue, assistant director of economic development, provided a preview of the process, which is intended to be thoughtful in nature.

The first year and a half to two years is focused on getting the conduit that houses the cables in the ground. With the idea of maximizing efforts, the first areas where the cables will be laid are in active zones of road repair where access is immediately available.

“Like power lines,” explained Moore, “it is important that the conduit not be disturbed after secure placement.” He added, “It is at this point that the conduit is considered dark fiber since the lines have been laid and no one has yet to turn them on.”

The next step is for a company to offer the means of connectivity. As Moore and Donahue indicated, the process is on schedule so far, but



*With a fiber network, Portsmouth aims to boost its economic development, education, quality of life and health care options. (Photo provided)*

they do recognize, as with any project of this scale, that the potential for future delays is possible.

As a smart city that will feature automated streetlights and early warning systems, Portsmouth plans to leverage its increased connectivity in order to make itself more productive and effective. The main areas wherein benefits are particularly anticipated for the city include economic development, education, quality of life and health care. The ability to advertise itself as a gigabit community will have obvious benefits in terms of Portsmouth’s economic development. Not only will this help to retain current businesses, it will also help to lure more companies to the area.

Moore acknowledges data as a form of currency onto itself: “For companies that feature international relations, money can be lost (or gained) in a matter of seconds, making increased connectivity speeds essential for such businesses.”



# becoming a gigabit community



As far as education, there is a unique opportunity for the physical and digital to meld into one entity of infrastructure. Moreover, a gigabit community will affect the city's health care system for the better by increasing access to care via telemedicine while simultaneously streamlining emergency centers where split-second decisions are routinely made.

The fiber network project is meant to benefit its residents as well. For instance, high-tech companies are a specific type of business the city plans to attract to the area. Doing so will create competition among broadband carriers, which in turn will eliminate the possibility of a monopoly. This will allow for affordable and better broadband services, which will be more widely accessed by the city's residents. In other words, competition between companies will essentially allow residents to save money. This is crucial given the fact that connectivity affects everyday life, becoming more of a basic necessity rather than a luxury.

"This will enable everyone to be on the same page as gaps in access are minimized," said Moore.

Jessica Bedenbaugh, business development manager for the city of Portsmouth, added, "IT is a vital part of advanced manufacturing." Hence, the fiber network will prove valuable for logistic companies and supply chains.

Additionally, Bedenbaugh noted, "The fiber network has allowed for the creation of relationships, natural collaborations and, of course, for the city to grow."



*Education is one area that will be improved through Portsmouth, Va.'s, fiber network. Pictured is the Portsmouth Public Library. (Bryan Pollard/Shutterstock.com)*

Overall, Moore emphasized the efforts of Daniel Jones, Portsmouth's chief information officer, whose vision of Portsmouth as a smart city helped to make the fiber network project a reality. He realized a need to build outward, to update and expand the city's digital infrastructure.

Importantly, Portsmouth's project is designed to carry the city into the future, to keep up with the city's growing needs, which will only continue to increase in the face of the demands and challenges of everyday life. Businesses will remain plugged in and residents will better be able to connect with friends and family across the country; this allows for a win-win situation for all involved. **M**

## More local governments networking

The Institute for Local Self-Reliance has found through its community network map that, as of January, there are:

- 55 municipal networks serving 109 communities with a publicly owned FTTH citywide network.
- 73 communities with a publicly owned cable network reaching most or all of the community.
- 196 communities with some publicly owned fiber service available to parts of the community (often a business district).
- More than 120 communities with publicly owned dark fiber available.
- More than 150 communities in 19 states with a publicly owned network offering at least 1 gigabit services.
- At least 20 communities in four states with a municipal network delivering 10 gigabit services.
- 334 communities served by rural electric cooperatives.
- 10 communities served by one broadband cooperative.

Source: [muninetworks.org/communitymap](http://muninetworks.org/communitymap)



# Cities strive to meet climate goals



*Grand Rapids, Mich., has a 100% renewable energy goal, which has included exploring solar power options. (Photo provided)*

By LAUREN CAGGIANO | The Municipal

**Grand Rapids, Mich., and Lakewood, Colo., are two medium-sized cities that have taken on the weighty and hefty issue of climate change and related issues – and both have made strides in that regard.**



*Alison Sutter, Grand Rapids' sustainability and performance management officer*

Alison Sutter's position as the sustainability and performance management officer at Grand Rapids is proof of the city's commitment to this cause. She's been with the city for about two years. About a year ago, her job expanded in a strategic direction when she was tapped to lead the creation of the city's first strategic plan, which the commission adopted in April.

Sutter said the scope of her office's work is extensive, but the programs predominantly focused on what she refers to as "energy work" from the outset.

"I would say we are maturing into broader climate change work and climate change adaptation work. But some recent efforts we

have implemented include some energy and other environmental sustainability requirements into our marijuana licensing ordinance. We will also be amending our zoning ordinance to make it easier for small-scale solar installations in the community."

Related to that, Sutter said before her tenure, Grand Rapids had issued a request for proposal to put solar on a closed city-owned landfill, but plans were put on hold. She plans to restart that process while continuing to lead an assessment of installing solar on seven other city facilities.

In regard to addressing climate change specifically, Sutter said her department has identified several core values for the city and those are found in the strategic plan. Among them are sustainability, health and the environment.

But how will they measure success?

"We have a 100% renewable energy goal," she said. "And so one of the strategies is to identify the cost and the feasibility of actually achieving 100% renewable energy."

To that end, she said next year her office hopes to have a renewable energy strategy approved by the commission for how the city intends to achieve that goal. Currently, about a third of Grand Rapids' electricity for municipal operations is supplied by renewable energy. That being the case, Sutter said solar is poised to play a major role in the future. Reducing city facilities' carbon footprint is also a top





*Grand Rapids, Mich., celebrated six of its buildings earning Energy Star certification in 2018. (Photo provided)*



*Lakewood, Colo., is exploring ways to improve the citywide residential waste collection system as part of its sustainability plan. (Shutterstock.com)*

priority. She estimates the city facilities emit about 58,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents.

Lakewood, Colo. — which introduced its sustainability plan in 2015 — is on a similar path. The suburb of Denver currently has two sustainability projects in the works. Lakewood and Xcel Energy are partnering together through the Energy Future Collaborative to find ways to advance the city’s renewable energy goals. In 2018, both

integrated into everyday operations not treated like an afterthought.

“I think sometimes, some cities have sustainability or climate change efforts that are done somewhat in a silo,” she said. “But I think that you can have broader success if your sustainability and climate change goals and initiatives are incorporated into an overarching master plans, if you will, for the city. That can be hard and it takes time, but I think that’s something that is really important.” **M**

entities signed a memorandum of understanding, stating both parties’ goals and intentions to work together toward Lakewood’s community goals through an annual work plan.

They are also looking to effect change on the household level. According to its website, Lakewood is exploring ways to improve the citywide residential waste collection system. Residents are encouraged to visit the city’s website to learn more about the current system, provide feedback and sign up for project updates.

Lakewood and Grand Rapids are in good company in their climate change goals. In 2018, the western Michigan city signed on to the Zero Cities Project, a three-year pilot project helping a dozen cities develop a policy roadmap to a zero-carbon building sector through a community collaboration process that centers on equity and is informed by technical analysis. The project’s goal is to develop strategies to achieve a zero net carbon building stock while also creating a replicable model to share and deploy with additional cities to continue accelerating climate action. Zero Cities builds on Grand Rapids’ current progress to create a comprehensive set of strategies to achieve their goals and sets pathways for implementation.

Under the purview of Zero Cities, Sutter said the city is looking to decrease emissions from commercial and residential buildings to zero net carbon by 2050.

“When we looked at the square footage of buildings, we found that 51% comes from single-family homes. Still, when we looked at the carbon footprint of our building sector, 41% comes from commercial buildings that are greater than 10,000 square feet. So the bigger commercial buildings, if you will, account for a lot, and then the single-family homes account for 39% of our carbon footprint.”

Sutter said those figures underline the need for the city to partner with community stakeholders and residents to develop carbon reduction goals for the community.

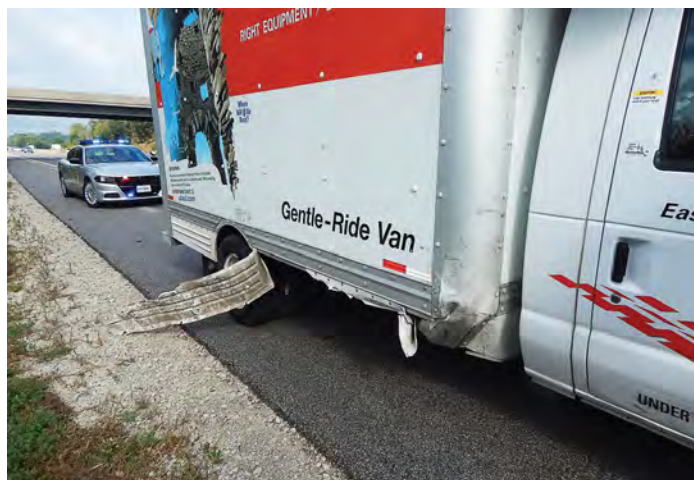
As for her advice to other cities that want to follow suit? Such initiatives need to be





# Distracted driving often ends in forever moments

**ABOVE AND BELOW:** The trooper was changing a tire on a disabled vehicle on the Ohio Turnpike, when a U-Haul truck went off the roadway striking a cruiser. The U-Haul did not stop at the crash scene but was located a short time later. (All photos provided by Ohio State Highway Patrol.)



**Distracted driving has taken many lives and is only getting more hazardous annually, especially for first responders and construction workers who are more likely to get hit since parts of their careers are on or near the roadside.**

By BARB SIEMINSKI | The Municipal

Some of the top driving disruptions include cellphone use; outside persons, objects or events; other occupants in the vehicle; being lost in thought; using a device brought into the vehicle; eating or drinking; adjusting audio or climate controls; using devices or controls to operate the vehicle; moving objects; and smoking- or drug-related acts.

Cities and states are addressing this dangerous behavior with programs to avoid these distractions and to be safer on the roads. In 2018, there was a 60% increase — 40 deaths — from 2017 of first responders being killed on the roadside. Last May, the National Safety Council noted 71% of drivers passing by emergency workers were texting and taking photos, which is nearly triple the normal average of 24%, with 60% admitting to posting these photos on social media. Two-thirds email about what they are driving by — wrecks, stopped speeders, etc. So far, of the 21 deaths this year, 10 were police officers. Fourteen officers were hit and killed in all of 2018.

One officer made the observation that all motorists believe that they're a better driver and less distracted than other drivers. While all states have a "move over" law requiring drivers to enable first responders room to function, police say probably only 50% actually do it. Once the sirens and flashing lights go on, drivers immediately change their behavior, said one police officer.

According to the National Safety Council, the cause for most wrecks is the use of cellphones, especially where texting was concerned. It's





*Ohio first responders expressed their fears of being hit by vehicles while working along roadways in a PSA.*

illegal in most states, and the AAA notes texting takes a driver’s eyes off the road an average of 4.6 seconds out of every 6 seconds. At 55 mph, this means 120 yards without glancing at the road. AAA also calculated that distracted driving accounts for more than 4,000 crashes a day in the U.S.

Years ago, one officer happened to pull up to a stoplight, and as he glanced over at the other car across from him, he noticed the teen driver was texting. The light changed and the teenager within a couple of minutes smashed into another car. The police officer was right there and took care of the wreck. The new driver was hysterical but otherwise fine; however, she had wrecked her mother’s brand-new car.

The next day, the mother showed up at the police station and asked to speak to the officer who had witnessed the wreck.

“Officer, I wanted to thank you again for handling my daughter’s accident, and I have a question to ask of you,” said the mother. “Can you tell me if my daughter was texting when the accident occurred?”

“Yes, ma’am, she was. I was next to her at the stoplight when I first noticed her texting,” the officer said, upon which the furious mother burst into profanity, saying the daughter had sworn up and down she was not texting and that she was going to get grounded for a month, with her cellphone being taken away.

Lt. Shad E. Caplinger, post commander for the Lancaster post of the Ohio State Highway Patrol and Public Safety, has been a victim of a drunk driver while sitting in his car processing another case. Though he wasn’t injured he hopes the department’s video — “Slow Down, Move Over” — will cause a change in viewers’ driving habits. The close-captioned



*Lt. Shad Caplinger of the Ohio State Highway Patrol Department*

PSA video was a dual effort of the Ohio Department of Transportation and the Ohio Department of Public Safety.

The PSA is unique as it shows first responders sharing their fears of being struck by a vehicle. Each survivor spoke from the heart, making his or her case personal and poignant.

Asked whether his own accident was the catalyst for starting the PSA for Ohio’s special campaign, Caplinger’s reply was not exactly — with a caveat.

“I was struck by an impaired driver in August 2005, but to answer your question specifically, no, that is not my full motivation,” said Caplinger. “I feel God has blessed me with a great opportunity to be an Ohio State Trooper. I want to keep persons safe and prevent them from getting hurt in a crash.”

Caplinger was not sure how many of his department have been struck on emergency runs.

“I know recently we have had troopers hit and injured due to on-duty crashes,” said Caplinger, adding the department was self-insured by the state of Ohio. Construction workers and roadside workers are covered by their specific company with which they are employed.

“Some of the key initiatives have been launched to raise awareness include ‘Move Over, Slow Down,’ ‘Preventing Texting and Driving,’ ‘Distracted Driving,’ ‘Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over’ and ‘Click it or Ticket.’ (These are NHTSA (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration) campaigns we participate with,” said Caplinger.

According to Caplinger, there have been many safe years in Ohio, which recorded its seven safest years statistically.

ResponderSafety.com covers actual distracted driving incidents from all over the country, allowing visitors to filter results to year, month, state/province and the specific organization — fire, police, department of transportation, etc. — affected by each incident. For example, Wyoming had a crash that injured four Wamsutter firefighters along I-80; Kershaw S.C., reported a deputy being struck by a SUV at a school crossing; and Texas listed a drunk driver hitting a big rig on I-10 in addition to a second drunk driver hitting a fire truck.

To reduce these incidents, programs need to be targeted to adults, teens and even grade-school children, who will hopefully grow up to be more responsible drivers.

Sgt. Tiffany L. Meeks, Ohio State Highway Patrol, Office of the Superintendent, Public Affairs Unit, noted, “Yes, the patrol is dedicated to improving the quality of life for Ohio’s youth.”

She added, “In fact, troopers in partnership with local law enforcement and the Ohio National Guard have completed more than 1,300 Five Minutes for Life speech details — impacting 245,000 students across the state of Ohio. Additionally, troopers work with local partners on mock crashes and other educational opportunities to ensure students are making good decisions. The patrol also partners with the American Legion Buckeye Girls and Boys State and the Bigs in Blue (through) Big Brothers and Big Sisters of America.”

Meeks shared in detail more initiatives to combat distracted driving. ▶



*Sgt. Tiffany L. Meeks of the Ohio State Highway Patrol Department*



“One is T.R.I.A.D., which stands for target, reckless, impaired, aggressive and distracted driving — from the ground and air — allowing troopers to safely observe and target dangerous driving behavior,” said Meeks.

“We also partnered with the Ohio Department of Transportation in 2018 to create the first distracted driving corridor. Additionally, the patrol also partnered with Maria’s Message at the 2009 Ohio State Fair by utilizing its driving simulator and providing a realistic experience in a virtual environment to bring awareness on the dangers of being distracted.”

What if another state wanted to take up proposals to start its own distracted driving programs?

“Each state operates in conjunction with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and within their own initiatives and laws,” said Meeks. “However, the Ohio State Highway Patrol has partnered with numerous state and local partners on campaigns such as the

6-State Trooper Project, focusing on initiatives such as ‘Move Over’ and distracted driving.”

Meeks referenced a crash whereby the trooper was changing a tire on a disabled vehicle on the Ohio Turnpike when a U-Haul truck went off the roadway striking a cruiser. The U-Haul did not stop at the crash scene but was located a short time later.

Ohio’s move over law became effective in 2004 and continues to be a priority for the Ohio State Highway Patrol in efforts to keep all first responders safe. Numerous campaigns have been implemented to include PSAs for education and awareness, high visibility enforcement and the 6-State Trooper Project, for which it partners with state and local law enforcement.

And there you have it — ambitious and working efforts to curb distracted driving that bring home the message: “In a split second, you could ruin your future, injure or kill others and tear a hole in the heart of everyone you love.” **M**



*In 2013 Trooper Erika Englund was struck outside her vehicle at a crash scene. Her left leg was amputated because of injuries sustained that night, and she was forced to retire from the highway patrol at the rank of sergeant. (Photo provided)*

## On the Web

To view the Ohio Department of Transportation PSA, visit [www.youtube.com/watch?v=gH5OOLPkqfo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gH5OOLPkqfo). For further reading, visit [www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov](http://www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov) and [www.nhtsa.gov](http://www.nhtsa.gov).

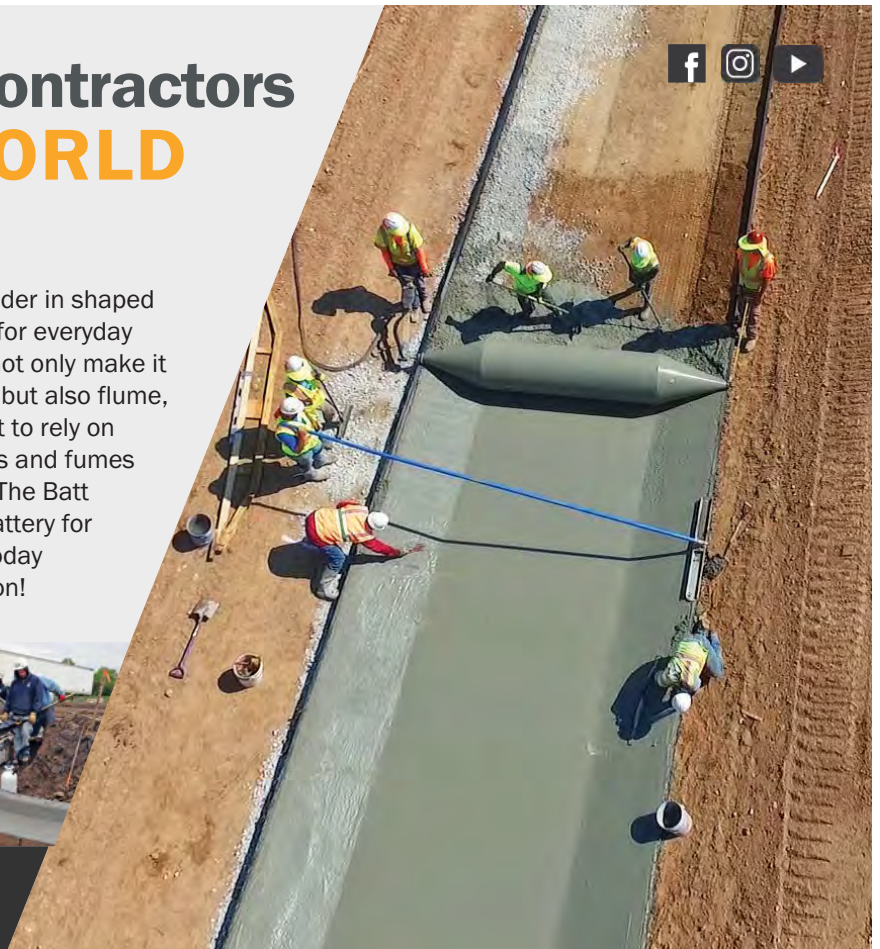
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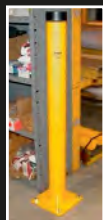
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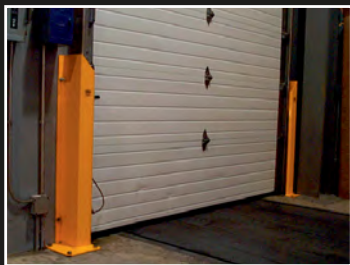
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Jeff Collins sits at his mayoral desk. He was elected mayor in 2019 after serving on the city council. (Photo provided)

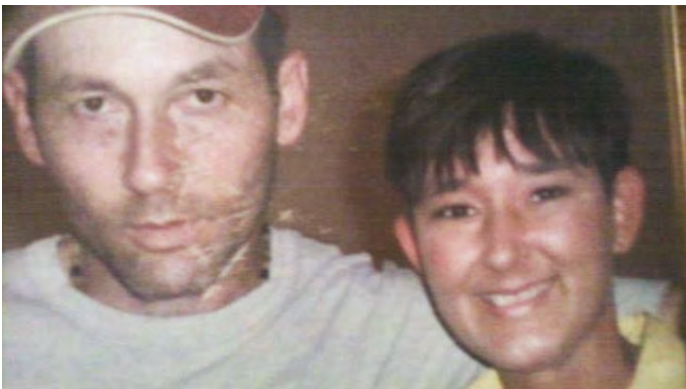


Collins is pictured with his family. (Photo provided)

# Collins leaves life of addiction, becomes mayor

By ANDREW MENTOCK | The Municipal

**Not that long ago, Jeff Collins of Augusta, Ark., was the last person one would want to run their city or town.**



Collins struggled with substance abuse until his heart gave out due to a completely blocked main artery. After that, his addiction to methamphetamines and other substances vanished. Collins is pictured here with his sister over 20 years ago. (Photo provided)

As the one-time owner of a trucking business, he began to use methamphetamines as a means to stay awake on long road trips, but like most users of the highly addictive drug, it began to destroy him.

“I was a typical meth head,” Collins said. “I had destroyed everything. I lost everything I had. The only thing I didn’t lose was my wife. She stayed with me and raised my children, and I lost everything else.”

After 20 years, his heart gave out due to a completely blocked main artery.

Collins said a heart surgeon tried to revive him with a defibrillator four times over the course of several minutes. During that time, he was considered clinically dead. Collins would attest to that and said he nearly spent the rest of eternity damned.

“The night that I died and laid on the table, I was at the gates of hell in the out-of-body experience I had that night,” Collins said. “I’m a firm believer, with all my heart, that God himself took me to the gates of hell to show me exactly what real hell was.





*Pictured is a sesquicentennial sign placed in 1998 to honor the city of Augusta's founding by Thomas Hough in 1848. Hough named the city after his favorite cousin, Miss Augusta Cald, of Virginia. (Photo by Brandonrush via Wikimedia; creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)*



*Mayor Jeff Collins hopes to tap into Augusta's history during his tenure as mayor, with the desire to refurbish old churches and create walkthrough museums. Pictured is the Augusta Presbyterian Church that President Woodrow Wilson attended as a child. (Photo by Brandonrush via Wikimedia; creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)*

"He wanted me to see firsthand what real hell was so that I could be able to tell my story because he knew that night that I would be making a choice, and he knew that I was a warrior."

Collins said the surgeon attempted to revive him once more, and miraculously, he woke up.

The doctors were shocked, according to Collins. They didn't believe he could survive given the damage he had sustained to his heart.

Yet, when Collins went back to the surgeon two weeks later, his heart was fine and his addiction to methamphetamines and other substances was gone. He took it as a sign that he needed to significantly adjust the path he was on, and within 10 years, after serving on the city council as the alderman, the residents of Augusta trusted him enough to elect him mayor.

"Now here I am, the mayor," Collins said. "It's such an awesome feeling to know that I'm sitting in the mayor's office of the town that I grew up in, where every single person knew that I was an addict and most of them knew I was strung out. They all said, 'I told Jeff he ain't never going to be worth a crap. He will never be worth a damn.'"

He uses his position and his story to hopefully turn the lives of others around as well while he manages a small municipality, with an economic outlook that's changed significantly during his lifetime.

"We're a small town. We're 2,500 people in this town," Collins said. "We don't have any big industry left. At one time, we had four big factories in this community and we only have one left."

Now he said most people commute out of town for work, and he has trouble convincing young adult residents to stay.

What Collins is now attempting to do is highlight what the town does have, which is an unassuming history and world-class duck hunting. He's decided to refurbish old churches, including the one President Woodrow Wilson went to as a small child, and create several walkthrough museums, hoping to attract hunting tourists to other aspects of the town.

The biggest advantage that Collins said his town has is that it's the only city in the state that owns and operates all of its utilities, including water, electricity, gas and garbage.

"We actually generate our own money," he said. "So we're very unique in that we're able to tap into things that a lot of towns and cities can't. And I think in the past, administrations haven't tried to tap into those things. So that's what I want to do. I want to bring a different look to our town."

That doesn't mean Collins has stopped giving back to the people he said he once did nothing but leech on.

"Here I am now, in this office, and the same people who I used to run around and get high with have to come in here and ask for help," he said. "Because with us owning our own utilities, we're able to help people. If an elderly person or somebody has trouble and says, 'I can't pay my bill this month,' I am blessed because we own this electricity so I can give you a break."

They can also see firsthand the transformation he's undergone and realize anyone can turn their life around. **M**



# A sign of the times for Charleston, W.Va.



By **BARB SIEMINSKI** | The Municipal

## Chief Opie Smith Jr. of the Charleston, W.Va., Police Department recalls early in his career the encounters he had with hearing-impaired citizens.

“The only way I had of communicating with them was through handwritten notes,” said Smith. “Obviously communication is very important in law enforcement.”

Smith, who has been police chief for 10 months, had started in the patrol division. Then he was asked to be a field-training officer, and from there, he was on the streets working with a certified K-9. After that, he worked the SWAT team for 10 years before moving to the special enforcement unit and later the hybrid unit. He was up for retirement in November 2018 but was offered the police chief position, making for 21 total years with the department.

During that time, Smith had kept the thought of training his department, especially first responders, in sign language at the forefront of his mind.

“When you are a young officer without rank, sometimes the administration doesn’t listen to your ideas,” said Smith. “Now that I am in the position of police chief, I plan on making some changes. I am checking into sending one of my officers, Major Jessi Redden, to get

trained so she could be available for callouts and also train other officers in our department.

“This is like any new skill when you are learning it for the first time. It can be a little overwhelming. You just have to practice it as much as possible. Also, during our training, we were taught how important facial expressions were when using sign language.”

During accidents or other emergencies when first responders respond, the victims may be frantic and might be unable to vocalize or sign, especially if one or both hands are restricted, such as being immobilized in a wreck. What will they do then? How are officers going to tell if a person in a wreck is deaf if they seem not to understand?

“Most of the time medics are dealing with injured people during traffic accidents,” said Smith. “Once we get more training out to officers, I hope they would have the skills to recognize if the person is hearing impaired. I think I will reach out to the fire department and medics to see if they have had training in this area. Also, when Major



**LEFT:** Deputy Chief Paul Perdue and Police Chief Opie Smith Jr., in plain clothes, observe Major Jessi Redden demonstrate some ASL signs. (Photo provided)

**RIGHT:** Sgt. Wendy Cox of the Parkersburg, W.Va., Police Department conducts a sign language class for members of the Charleston Police Department. (Photo provided)



Redden can start training us, she can also incorporate training fire and medics.”

Such training can shape how officers handle certain situation. For example, if someone fails to respond to police commands, they may not be ignoring or disobeying but rather unaware of them or unable to respond.

“I think training, such as ASL (American Sign Language), makes officers aware that not all situations are what they seem to be,” offered Smith. “Training like this makes you think twice before taking any actions. We train in driving vehicles, weapon retention and multiple other areas so why not train on how to communicate with people who are hearing impaired, dealing with PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder), on the autism spectrum or with dementia?”

Early in his career Smith was dispatched to a 911 hang-up right out of roll call.

“As I was responding, metro advised of past domestic disturbances at this residence,” said Smith. “As most officers do, I was thinking of different scenarios while I was responding to the scene.

“Upon arrival, I encountered a female on the front porch frantically waving at me. Due to this, I radioed metro and advised them I would be making entry inside and couldn’t wait for backup. I ran toward the front door and the female stepped inside and motioned for me to come in. I again advised metro over the radio so they and my backup would be aware of the situation. I looked left and right before I stepped inside as the female continued to motion me to come in. I stepped into the living room and the female stepped into what appeared to be a dining room. At the time, she began pointing to her left, and I was thinking the worst.

“As I entered the dining room and turned to my right, I was surprised to see a teenage child bailing water from the floor and dumping it into the sink as water poured from the ceiling. The female made a motion with her hand that gave me the impression she could not speak. At that time, I began to point up and saying ‘upstairs,’ hoping she could understand. Once she did, I quickly went upstairs and located the issue under the sink in the bathroom.”

According to Smith, the waterline break was before the shutoff valve so this did not help the situation. He then started pointing and saying “basement,” hoping she could understand and lead him to the basement.

“Once in the basement, I was able to turn off several shutoff valves and eventually got the water shut off,” recalled Smith. “The only thing I could think of was to exchange handwritten notes. I was able to make contact with her insurance company to start the process of the repairs.

“Approximately one week later, I received a card at roll call. To my surprise it was a card from the hearing-impaired family thanking me for what I did. I read it to all the officers in roll call and was very appreciative they took the time to send me a thank-you card. To this day, I still have the card.”

Smith spoke of another encounter with a hearing-impaired lady who was involved in a traffic crash. The other person driving was very upset so he tried to explain the situation that the lady was hearing-impaired.

“I think that helped and I was able to resolve it peacefully,” said Smith.

“The only other encounter was one day I was at a convenience store in our city and was tapped on the shoulder. Once I turned around, I was surprised to see the lady who I had the 911 call hang-up call from in the past. We were both very excited to see each other and passed handwritten notes for awhile just to catch up. I wish I would have had a better way to communicate, but I was just excited to see her and happy that she remembered me.”

Though Smith really can’t give a good time frame for when his officers will begin the ASL classes regularly, but work is underway.

“My goal is once Major Redden gets some of the training under her belt, she can begin training the entire department,” said Smith. “As you probably know, this falls back on money and our police department being short-staffed, which makes it difficult to get all the training we need. We will make it happen, but I wanted to get the process started.”

One thing the officers can also do while learning ASL is interact deaf people signing in a public place and attempt to start a conversation. It’s been said many times that the deaf community is delighted when a hearing person learns sign language, no matter how basic their training is. This author has witnessed the phenomenon several ▶



times. How much more pleased they will be if an officer cares enough to learn their language?

The Charleston police force also engaged Sgt. Wendy J. Cox, of the Parkersburg Police Department, who taught a sign language for law enforcement class to members of the Charleston Police Department.

Cox shared why she was inspired to learn sign language in the first place.

"I met a young man on a 911 call who was deaf from birth and was struggling with teenage emotions and began acting out, which led his parents to call for help," said Cox. "I felt so helpless being unable to communicate with him that day and then I tried putting myself in his shoes. I imagined how he must feel so disconnected from the world around him and I wanted to try to bridge that gap for him and the other deaf members of our community who may feel disconnected or excluded."

As to the cost ASL training, it depends on many variables. "For instance, how far I might need to travel would affect the fee," said Cox.


Cox gave credit to BridgeValley, which helped with the training due to the proximity of its campus and the fact it had sign language instructors who were willing to come and assist with the training.

"They took turns interpreting while I lectured and they helped teach signs when we broke into small groups," said Cox, adding the sign language she had learned had come from personal lessons taught to



Charleston, W.Va.'s, police department has been working to implement American Sign Language training to reach more of its community members. Pictured, from left, are Deputy Chief Paul Perdue, Police Chief Opie Smith Jr. and Major Jessi Redden, all with the Charleston Police Department. (Photo provided)

her by a deaf friend who was a social worker for 40 years. The friend also helped with teaching signs to the officers in that class.

"In conclusion, only positive things can come from making efforts to include often-forgotten members of our communities." 



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# Twin Lakes Library System goes high tech to serve community

By JANET PATTERSON | The Municipal

**Innovation is making the rural library system in Milledgeville, Ga., even more essential to the surrounding community thanks to a recent technology known as TV White Space.**

TV White Space captures the unused space between digital signals coursing through the air to power Wi-Fi networks, especially in areas that are underserved by regular internet providers. In Milledgeville, the supercharged signals are joining the Twin Lakes Library System to three city parks to make the internet accessible to more residents in the rural Georgia town.

The Twin Lakes system is one of only eight public libraries nationwide that received a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services to make Wi-Fi accessible to local residents.

The Twin Lakes Library System is located in Baldwin County where the communities have high poverty rates, community members without reliable transportation and low numbers of library card holders. “I think we are able to reach people where they are in their point of need, if they can’t make it down to the library,” Twin Lakes Library System Director Stephen Houser said, noting basic needs such as homework help for students and job applications require internet access, which some in Milledgeville cannot afford.

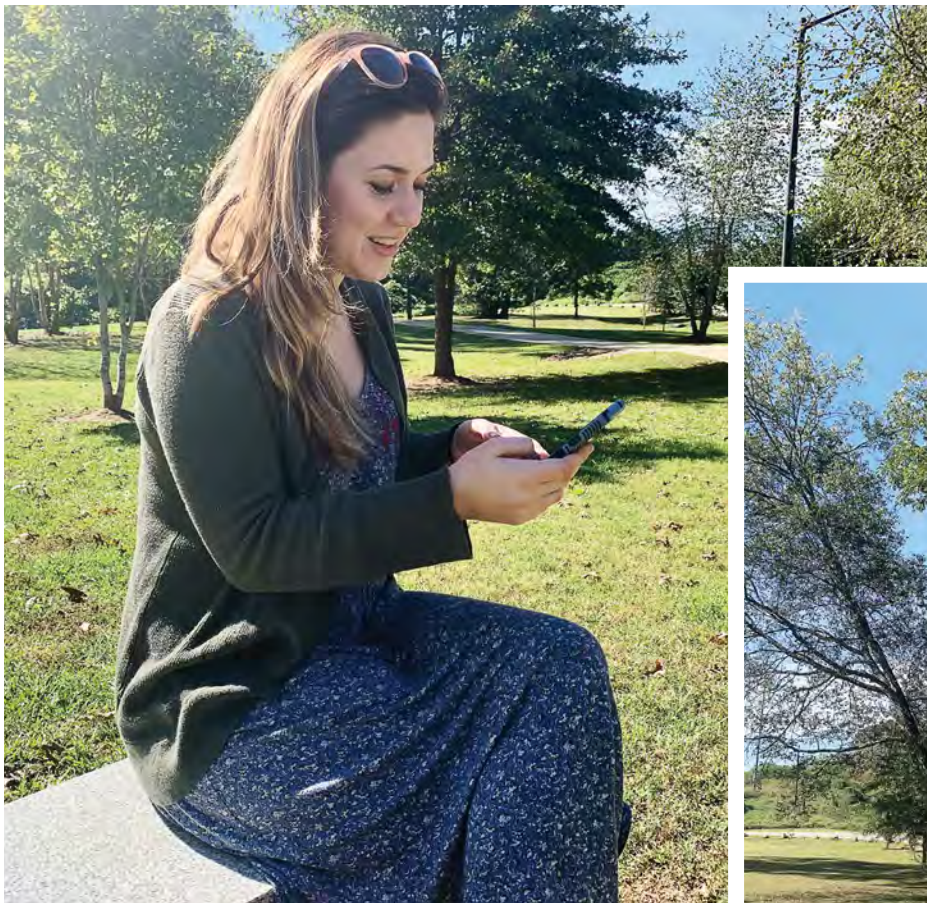
“Our state librarian Julie Walker first alerted me to the grant program,” Houser said. “She felt it was a good fit for our rural library system.”

Beyond the everyday needs that the Wi-Fi system serves, the TV White Space system can provide access to communities during emergencies such as tornadoes, hurricanes and wildfires, explained Don Means, director of Libraries Whitespace Project created by



*Since adding TV White Space equipment in three parks, Twin Lakes Library System has clocked 2,000 logins a month, making this method of tapping into the internet an invaluable addition to the community. Pictured is downtown Milledgeville. (Jim Davis/Flickr.com, <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>)*





**LEFT:** Milledgeville, Ga.'s, park department and Twin Lakes Library System have used the technology TV White Space to bring internet accessibility to three city parks. (Photo provided)



**RIGHT:** TV White Space equipment is shown on a streetlight at one of Milledgeville's parks. (Photo provided)

Gigabit Libraries Network. "These systems become a kind of second responder in times of emergency."

In fact, the versatility of TV White Space systems makes it possible for libraries to connect with schools, clinics, hospitals and other institutions during a regional emergency by means of a project called SecondNet. Hot spots can be redeployed and placed strategically to create a backup communication system. "It makes communities far more resilient in emergencies," Means said.

Even during the everyday routine use of the TV White Space system, hot spots can be moved for the convenience of the community it serves.

"For instance, in Manhattan, Kan., one of the units is moved from the city swimming pool in the summer to the ice rink in winter," Means added.

The system in Milledgeville is available in three city parks, two of which are located in neighborhoods where poverty and unreliable transportation are issues. The service "covers three directions from the library... those that we felt had the clearest path from the library's radios to the receiving units," Houser continued.

The collaboration between the library system and the park system in Milledgeville has been an incomparable match.

"Being a small rural town, we benefit greatly when we partner with other agencies in town. We are able to be more than the sum of our

parts when we can partner on projects... especially with grants," he added.

Milledgeville added \$1,000 to the \$15,000 IMLS grant to bring the system online in June, about two years after the grant was awarded. "We had some technical and equipment issues that we had to work through, but we kept at it and made it work," Houser said.

The Wi-Fi system is open to anyone who can access it. Houser said the library is already seeing about 2,000 logins a month. Since the parks are outdoors and the weather in Georgia was hotter than usual this summer, library and park officials did not expect such active use of the system.

While they know how many logins they've had, they have not tracked what the patrons are searching on the internet. Houser noted, "We're big on patron privacy, so we don't track what the usage is for, though we work with our internet service provider to filter certain content out."

The library plans to host a series of community events starting next spring to promote the system and give it a "big push" in the community.

Means said the TV White Space project is an essential part of increasing the value of libraries to the communities they serve. "We believe the best way to design a community is to design its library. This project helps libraries go beyond the walls to serve the community." 





# Cities show pride in heritage with unique holiday traditions

Shutterstock photo

By NICHOLETTE CARLSON | The Municipal

**While cities throughout the country typically celebrate the more traditional holidays such as Easter, Christmas and New Year's, the residents may not celebrate these holidays in the same way. In fact, some cities and towns choose to make the holiday their own by creating unique traditions. These unique traditions tend to showcase the particular city's heritage or industry.**

## Gainesville, Ga.

"Gainesville is known as the poultry capital of the world. As poultry is one of the largest industries in our community, we have come to embrace that title with fun events such as our Spring Chicken Festival and also our real chicken tourism ambassadors that 'free range' Gainesville and share stories about our attractions and events," Regina Dyer, Gainesville Convention and Visitors' Bureau manager, explained. What better way to celebrate Christmas than with an annual lighting of the chicken? The lighting of the chicken coincides with the annual Jingle Mingle event.

"Jingle Mingle was an event that signaled the start of the holiday season, and when one of the downtown buildings placed a large metal chicken sculpture on the roof of its building in 2013, we thought what a better way to kick off the holidays than the lighting of the chicken," Dyer commented.

In 2017, the tropical winds from Hurricane Irma took out the beloved chicken structure. A partnership between the building owner, the city, a local construction firm and a technical college brought the chicken back, bigger and better than ever. "The 25-foot chicken is a proud reminder of Gainesville's resilience and a quirky event that each year brings thousands to the downtown square from all over the region," Dyer affirmed. It has since grown to include a sound and light show along with a crowd countdown.

## Morgan City, La.

On Nov. 30, 2018, Morgan City, La., unveiled its own Cajun Christmas display. Born and raised in Morgan City, Lee Romaine, an Emmy Award-winning artist, chose to create and donate a Christmas display that would also highlight the city's "Spirit of Morgan City" shrimp trawler.



*Known as the poultry capital, Gainesville, Ga., welcomes the Christmas season in style with a lighting ceremony, featuring a large chicken atop a local business. (Photo provided by the city of Gainesville, Ga.)*

Since the city's mayor was a former classmate, Romaine contacted him about creating something special for his hometown and donating an updated Christmas display. While he briefly considered a typical Santa and reindeer display, he ultimately chose to incorporate elements from the surrounding area instead. This idea made his display Cajun themed, with a Santa wearing shrimper boots and muskrat fur on his jacket and while white alligators lead the boat instead of reindeer.

Bringing this display to life took about a year with 12 to 15 artists working on the project.

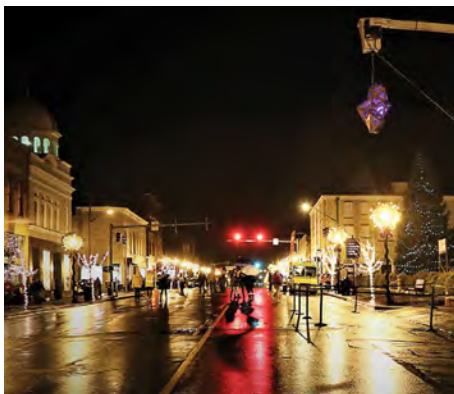




*As a way to give back to his hometown, famous artist Lee Romaine created a Cajun Christmas display for Morgan City, La., which also highlights its famous shrimp trawler, "The Spirit of Morgan City." Instead of the typical Santa and his reindeer, shrimp trawler Santa leads the boat with albino alligators. (Photo provided by the city of Morgan City, La.)*

Romaine acted primarily as creative director while also sculpting a few of the pieces himself, including Santa's face. The Santa was sculpted using traditional methods, with a 3D computer aiding in design and routing being used. For some of the alligator parts, 3D printing was also used.

Each year the city crews will be responsible for putting up and taking down the display. The plan is for the display to be put up before Thanksgiving with an annual lighting ceremony



*The city of Marion, N.C., chose to ring in the new year by combining two of its local industries. Originally, the city would drop a gold nugget in honor of the early gold rush days and the local Gold Foundation. After a downtown doughnut shop won a prestigious award, the city chose to drop the gold nugget into a giant, edible doughnut each year. (Photo provided by the city of Marion, N.C.)*

on Thanksgiving night. This Cajun Christmas display will remain up until around the second week in January.

### **Marion, N.C.**

The famous gold nugget drop in Marion, N.C., has been a collaboration between the city, the Marion Rotary Club and various community organizations and businesses. The committee that plans the drop is made up of Rotary members, city staff, chamber of commerce staff, emergency services personnel, members of the nonprofit community and local residents. The committee begins planning the event shortly after each celebration and meets regularly throughout the year.

According to Landdis Hollifield, executive assistant to the city manager and public information officer, "The city of Marion began its New Year's Eve gold nugget drop in 2009 as a nod to McDowell County's gold heritage. Many people do not realize it, but the gold rush in the U.S. actually started in western North Carolina. McDowell County, where the city of Marion and North Carolina Gold Foundation are located, played an integral part in that history."

The first gold nugget was designed by the Gold Foundation and dropped every New Year's Eve until 2016. After that it was replaced with a more modern gold nugget created by the local Turtle Laboratories. In 2015, a unique addition was made to the New Year's tradition.

A local donut shop, Mr. Bob's Do-Nuts, won first place in the Food Network Magazine's Apple Ugly Contest in 2015. The city decided, in 2015, to include this honor as part of the celebration. Since then, the city has dropped the gold nugget into a 10-foot doughnut made by Mr. Bob's.

"Adding the giant doughnut to the nugget drop seemed like a sweet addition to the New Year's Eve celebration," Hollifield said.

This year the event kicks off at 8:30 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 31. It includes carriage rides, a costume contest, children's story time, a historic ghost walk, music, vendors and a downtown scavenger hunt. At 11:59 p.m., the gold nugget will be raised and dropped at midnight, using a cement truck from McDowell Cement Products. After the nugget is dropped, visitors are invited to take a piece of the doughnut to eat.

### **Lebanon, Pa.**

This year will mark the 24th annual bologna drop for Lebanon, Pa., as part of its New Year's Eve celebration. This local tradition began

in the early 1990s and was a collaboration between the city of Lebanon and Godshall's Quality Meats.

Bologna was developed by the Pennsylvania Dutch in Lebanon County and became a common item by the early 1800s. Being produced in the county, it has become a staple of the community.

Each year Godshall's Quality Meats donates a 12-foot, 200-pound bologna for the New Year's Eve drop. On Eighth Street, between Chestnut and Cumberland streets, the bologna is raised and then dropped at midnight. The event also includes music, food and warm beverages.

The bologna drop is "reflecting the slow-cured and smoked sausage traditions of western Europe, specifically Germany," Amy Kopecky, downtown Lebanon Main Street manager, explained. Once the bologna is dropped to the center of downtown, it is donated to the local food bank. **M**



*This year will mark the 24th year of Lebanon, Pa., teaming up with Godshall's Quality Meats for a unique bologna drop. Each year Godshall's donates a 12-foot, 200-pound bologna that is raised up and dropped at midnight. The bologna is then donated to the local food bank. (Photo provided by the city of Lebanon, Pa.)*



For a complete list of all upcoming events, visit [themunicipal.com/events](http://themunicipal.com/events).

To list your upcoming conference or seminar in The Municipal at no charge, call (800) 733-4111, ext. 2307, or email the information to [swright@the-papers.com](mailto:swright@the-papers.com).

## DECEMBER

### Dec. 2-4 Safety & Health Conference

B Resort & Spa, Lake Buena Vista, Fla.  
[www.ffca.org](http://www.ffca.org)

### Dec. 3-4 Connecticut Conference of Municipalities Convention

Foxwoods Resort Casino, Mashantucket, Conn.  
[www.ccm-ct.org](http://www.ccm-ct.org)

### Dec. 3-5 Groundwater Week

Las Vegas, Nev.  
[www.groundwaterweek.com](http://www.groundwaterweek.com)

### Dec. 3-6 Florida Parking & Transportation Association Annual Conference & Trade Show

Wyndham Grand Clearwater Beach, Clearwater Beach, Fla.  
[www.flapta.org/november-conference/](http://www.flapta.org/november-conference/)

### Dec. 6 Creating Solutions in a No Option Culture: First Responder Mental Health Conference

Loyola University Medical Center, Maywood, Ill.  
[www.Disaster-Ready-Solutions.com/events](http://www.Disaster-Ready-Solutions.com/events)

## JANUARY

### Jan. 7-9 Landscape Ontario Congress

Toronto Congress Centre, Toronto, Ontario, Canada  
[www.locongress.com](http://www.locongress.com)

### Jan. 9-14 ACA Winter Conference

San Diego, Calif.  
[www.aca.org](http://www.aca.org)

## JANUARY

### Jan. 12-17 NRPA Event Management School

Oglebay, Wheeling, W.Va.  
[www.nrpa.org/careers-education/education/event-management-school/](http://www.nrpa.org/careers-education/education/event-management-school/)

### Jan. 13-15 FDSOA Fire Apparatus, Safety and Maintenance Conference

Scottsdale Plaza Resort, Scottsdale, Ariz.  
[www.fdsOA.org](http://www.fdsOA.org)

### Jan. 14-16 Northern Green 2020

Minneapolis Convention Center, Minneapolis, Minn.  
[www.northerngreen.org](http://www.northerngreen.org)

### Jan. 22-24 U.S. Conference of Mayors 88th Winter Meeting

Capital Hilton Hotel, Washington, D.C.  
[www.usmayors.org/meetings](http://www.usmayors.org/meetings)

### Jan. 22-25 Fire-Rescue East

Ocean Center, Daytona Beach, Fla.  
[www.ffca.org](http://www.ffca.org)

### Jan. 23 Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns Convention

Crowne Plaza Hotel, Warwick, R.I.  
[www.rileague.org](http://www.rileague.org)

### Jan. 24-25 Massachusetts Municipal Association Annual Meeting and Trade Show

Hynes Convention Center and Sheraton Boston Hotel, Boston, Mass.  
[www.mma.org](http://www.mma.org)

### Jan. 27-30 Heavy Duty Aftermarket Week

Grapevine, Texas  
[www.hdaw.org](http://www.hdaw.org)

### Jan. 28-30 Underground Construction Technology: The Underground Utilities Event

Fort Worth Convention Center, Fort Worth, Texas  
[www.uctonline.com](http://www.uctonline.com)

## FEBRUARY

### Feb. 3-7 World of Concrete

Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas, Nev.  
[www.worldofconcrete.com](http://www.worldofconcrete.com)

### Feb. 11-13 Indiana Parks and Recreation Association Conference and Expo

Horizon Convention Center, Muncie, Ind.  
<http://inpra.evrconnect.com/conference>

### Feb. 11-14 ARFF Leadership Conference

Rio All-Suite Hotel, Las Vegas, Nev.  
[www.arffwg.org](http://www.arffwg.org)

### Feb. 12-14 Arkansas Municipal League 2020 Winter Conference

Statehouse Convention Center, Little Rock, Ark.  
[www.arml.org](http://www.arml.org)

### Feb. 17-20 WWETT 20

Indiana Convention Center, Indianapolis, Ind.  
[www.wwettshow.com](http://www.wwettshow.com)

### Feb. 18-21 Missouri Park & Recreation Association's Conference and Expo

The Lodge of Four Seasons, Lake Ozark, Mo.  
[www.mopark.org/conference](http://www.mopark.org/conference)

## FEBRUARY

### Feb. 27-29 NUCA Annual Convention and Exhibit

Loews Ventana Canyon Resort, Tucson, Ariz.  
[www.nuca.com](http://www.nuca.com)

### Feb. 28 Integrated Response to Active Threats Conference

Benedictine University, Lisle, Ill.  
[www.Disaster-Ready-Solutions.com/events](http://www.Disaster-Ready-Solutions.com/events)

## MARCH

### March 1-4 DRI 2020

Westin Savannah Harbor Golf Resort & Spa, Savannah Georgia  
[www.conference.drii.org](http://www.conference.drii.org)

### March 2-4 MSTPA Spring Conference

Sandestin Golf & Beach Resort, Sandestin, Fla.  
[www.mstpa.org](http://www.mstpa.org)

### March 2-6 EMS Today: The JEMS Conference & Exposition

Tampa, Fla.  
[www.emstoday.com](http://www.emstoday.com)

### March 3-6 NTEA's 20th Work Truck Show and Green Truck Summit

Indiana Convention Center, Indianapolis, Ind.  
[www.ntea.com](http://www.ntea.com)

## APRIL

### April 6-8 NAFA Institute & Expo

Indiana Convention Center, Indianapolis, Ind.  
[www.nafainstitute.com](http://www.nafainstitute.com)



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## News & Notes

### Register now for The Work Truck Show 2020, Green Truck Summit, and Manufacturer and Distributor Innovation Conference

**FARMINGTON HILLS, MICH.** — NTEA - The Association for the Work Truck Industry — announced the full schedule of events for Work Truck Week, including The Work Truck Show



2020; Green Truck Summit; and Manufacturer and Distributor Innovation Conference. Registration for North America's largest work truck event, which celebrates its 20th anniversary, is now open at [worktruckshow.com](http://worktruckshow.com).

The Work Truck Show 2020 runs March 3-6 at Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis, Ind. Educational sessions, Green Truck Summit and the Manufacturer and Distributor Innovation Conference begin March 3. The exhibit hall opens March 4 and runs through noon on March 6.

Work Truck Week features three days of educational programs; multiple networking opportunities; a two-day Work Truck Show Ride-and-Drive; the industry's leading alternative fuels and advanced technology conference; an event dedicated to improving manufacturing techniques and efficiency; and an expansive exhibit floor displaying the most innovative commercial vehicles, equipment and technology.

"The Work Truck Show 2020 will highlight what's best about our industry: emerging technologies, groundbreaking new vocational vehicles, robust educational sessions and the opportunity to connect with those who are passionate about the commercial vehicle community," says Steve Carey, NTEA president and CEO. "For 20 years, the show has helped energize and transform the industry, and we look forward to continuing to make an impact."

Access the complete schedule of events, session descriptions, floor plan and registration at [worktruckshow.com](http://worktruckshow.com). For more information, call (800) 441-6832 or email [info@ntea.com](mailto:info@ntea.com).

Join the conversation on [facebook.com/TheWorkTruckShow](https://www.facebook.com/TheWorkTruckShow) and Twitter [@WorkTruckShow](https://twitter.com/WorkTruckShow) with the official Work Truck Show hashtag [#worktrucks20](https://twitter.com/hashtag/worktrucks20). Text

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### (2) 2011 INTERNA. 4400

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### 2012 INTERNATIONAL 4300

#### ALL NEW SNOW PLOW PACKAGE

DT 466 Diesel 240hp, Allison Auto, 10' Meyer Plow, Central controls, Stainless tailgate, Sander, Strobe lights, 10' Godwin dump, 18 ton hoist.



## Most stable housing markets in the country

SmartAsset has been monitoring the housing markets for growth and stability and released its results in July. According to the site, it “collected and analyzed data on home values over time to find the metro areas that are the best bets for growth and stability. Specifically, we compared home value data for every quarter during the 25-year period from the first quarter of 1994 up to and including the fourth quarter of 2018.” All of the data came from the Federal Housing Administration.

Using this data, it determined that Boulder, Colo., led the pack for the fifth year in a row. SmartAsset noted that Boulder’s numerous career opportunities have helped its consistently strong performance in the housing market. Other metro areas filling out the top 10 include:



- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Boulder, Colo.</li> <li>2. Midland, Texas</li> <li>3. Austin-Round Rock-Georgetown, Texas</li> <li>4. Fort Collins, Colo.</li> <li>5. Bismarck, N.D.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. San Francisco-San Mateo-Redwood City, Calif. (Tie)</li> <li>6. San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, Calif. (Tie)</li> <li>8. Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, Colo.</li> <li>9. Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, Texas</li> <li>10. Cheyenne, Wyo.</li> </ul> |
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—Nicholas Mancuso, Service Manager, Municipal Repairs Town of Kent

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