

**MAYOR MARK W. MYERS**  
**STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS 2024**  
**FEBRUARY 22, 2024**

Welcome to our beautiful Hubler Greenwood Fieldhouse. I'm thrilled to be here again this year. I can't think of a better venue to highlight our successes and the work of the countless people who make Greenwood a great place to live, work, and raise a family.

Thank you all for taking the time to be here today. Not just for this lunch hour, but for your friendship, support, and tireless work on behalf of our community. Today is about our City and the people who make it work.

To Aspire Johnson County, including Christian Maslowski and your entire staff, thank you for continuing to advocate for our city and for working to ensure that our businesses thrive. Please also join me in recognizing our corporate sponsors for today's event, Johnson Memorial Health and Williams, Barrett & Wilkowski. These businesses are fixtures in our community and their commitment to community leadership is to be commended.

Thank you to our City Councilors and our elected officials at the state and federal level. If you are an elected official, please stand and be recognized.

Thank you to each and every city employee, department head, and member of our city boards and commissions for dedicating your valuable time serving the community we love. We could not grow and prosper without your commitment to helping others. You are the backbone of our city.

And finally, to our veterans, who have served this great country, we thank you and owe you and your families a debt none of us could ever repay.

If you have served our country in the armed forces, please stand and allow us to express our deep appreciation.

As we enter 2024, I personally have much for which I am thankful.

I am fortunate to be married to my best friend. Stacie has been my rock. She has been with me through it all...including my Parkinson's diagnosis in 2019, the giant leaps we've taken as a city, and the past year of fighting to keep Greenwood on the right track. Also here is my mother Carole, the former First Lady of Greenwood, my sisters Patti and Nancy and my oldest son Mark. Would you all please stand and be recognized.

I believe that my son Jonathon is watching from Qatar as he is serving in the Air Force. My daughter Hope is tuning in from Ft. Hall in Arizona with my newest granddaughter, also in the Air Force and my daughter Grace is tuning in from St. Petersburg Florida as she is teaching 4th grade there.

If you have a mailbox or internet service, you are aware that 2023 was a tough year for our City. We endured the most divisive, ugly and expensive primary campaign in the City's history. A group of mostly non-residents spent a great deal of time attempting to divide our community. The events of last spring reminded me of the old proverb: "A Lie Can Travel Halfway Around the World before the truth has a chance to put its boots on." Often, the damage of artificial division cannot be corrected.

Thankfully, Greenwood voters, including many who had not voted in primaries in the past, came out to the polls and supported our vision for the City. I was especially heartened by the support of business leaders in this room despite the tsunami of disinformation. The result would have been much different without your commitment. I cannot sufficiently thank you. We have enjoyed some significant achievements over the past 12 years.

My team erased a structural \$3.5 million deficit, strengthened the City's balance sheet, built award winning facilities, and made long overdue infrastructure improvements.

We managed this historic growth responsibly.

Property values have sky-rocketed as have new jobs and wages. All of this progress was accomplished while keeping the tax rate flat and near the bottom of Indiana cities and our spending per capita near the bottom of Indiana cities. Every one of the 12 budgets I presented was balanced. Our actual operating results were also in the black, even during the pandemic.

My family has lived in Greenwood for generations. I was born here in 1962 and lived most of my life here. I love our rich traditions as much as anyone. One of the Greenwood's most cherished traditions is its focus on progress.

Our motto, "The City of Pride and Progress" dates back to our Centennial Celebration in 1964. I was a small child at the time, so I can neither take credit for nor even claim any memory of its creation.

Progress should not be feared. Growth is inevitable in thriving communities. People are attracted to places with nice parks, good schools and strong infrastructure.

The only way to stop growth is to quit improving or to look backwards. Some Indiana communities suffer from this situation. It isn't pretty.

We have strived to grow while staying true to our history. This building is a good example. It incorporates the architecture and history of the school which was repurposed while incorporating modern features which makes it energy efficient and attractive to residents, both young and old. By repurposing the existing building, the facility cost a fraction of what other indoor facilities have cost other Central Indiana communities. If you have not visited this

facility on a weekend, please give it a try. You will be proud of the level of community engagement.

Over the past year, we have made significant progress in each pillar of our administration: Public Safety, Infrastructure, Quality of Life and Economic Development.

As a former Greenwood police officer, firefighter and EMT, I'm a little biased, but I think we have some of the finest public safety personnel in the state. If you serve as a local police officer, firefighter or EMT, please stand.

Public safety has been a top priority for my administration since I took my oath in 2012. I inherited a police budget of \$5.8 million. My police budget in 2024 is \$10.5 million, an 80% increase. The fire budget in 2012 was \$4.5 million. The 2024 budget is \$12.1 million, a 169% increase. In 2012 we had 30 full time fire fighters budgeted, today we have 72. In 2012 we had 60 police officers budgeted, in 2024, we have 80.

Despite all of the economic challenges the city faced in 2023, we found a way to give all of our employees, including our fire fighters and our policemen 5% raises in 2024.

Over the next 24 months, we will be adding a new fire station on the southeast side of the City. This facility will require an additional 12 fire fighters, 2 new fire engines and a host of other equipment. The land has been acquired and plans are in the works.

In my 12 years in local politics, I have learned that politicians like to talk about supporting public safety. Some even buy old fire trucks and use them for campaign props and parades to demonstrate their commitment.

Talk is cheap. The litmus test for true support of public safety is casting the difficult votes to actually pay for it.

Our new fire station would not have been possible without the Common Council's approval of a petition for additional levy. The facility would have been delayed for years because there was no funding to operate it. The political courage of four councilors who voted in favor of the petition at both its first and second readings made the expansion possible. It is very easy to talk about supporting public safety. Mike Campbell, David Hopper, Ezra Hill, and Linda Gibson demonstrated real support for public safety by casting votes to fund its operations. Councilors, Campbell, Hopper, Hill and Gibson, please stand and be recognized.

The new operating revenue is being supported by growth in the City's tax base. Greenwood was eligible for the additional funding because of its extraordinary growth in assessed value over the past 3 years. The enhanced tax base will support the levy without any increase in the City's tax rate. Our controller, Greg Wright is here today. Please help me thank him and his staff for their excellent work on the petition.

Our fire department has a new leader. Chief Washel, please stand so that I can introduce you and publicly welcome you back to Greenwood. Jayme Washel is a Greenwood native, Greenwood High School alumnus and Purdue alumnus. Jayme took the reins in August.

Under his leadership, we have already completed station improvements, hired new personnel and added new equipment. Our recruits participated in the first-ever county-wide joint training consisting of nearly 3,000 hours. In 2023, the department engaged in nearly 9,000 hours of training. We purchased three fire engines, one of which is now in service at Station 94, and the other two are expected to be in service in 2025. We have also purchased a new ladder truck which should be delivered very soon.

The police department also expanded and improved in 2023. In May, I officiated the induction of 12 recruits, the largest class of officers in Greenwood Police Department history. Greenwood added eighteen new officers in 2023 and nine recently graduated from the Indiana Law enforcement academy. Chief James Ison and his team led our second annual Citizens Police Academy, which taught active and engaged members of the community how to support law enforcement and keep our neighborhoods safe. We have improved our security systems, and through grants, have added additional radar and surveillance equipment. We are thankful to our partners who helped contribute to a safer Greenwood, including Drug Free Johnson County and National Night Out.

I'm so proud of those who seek to give back to their community and want them to know they will always have a partner in the Mayor's Office as long as I occupy it.

Our population was about 7,000 in 1964, we are currently pushing 70,000. We have grown by 24% in just the past 10 years. Caring for our new residents and supporting our businesses requires more employees, more roads, more facilities and more money.

We must continue to maintain, improve and modernize our infrastructure to keep pace with our growing community.

The City recently commissioned a study for improvement of Main Street from Meridian Street to Five Points Road. Our goal is to create an attractive gateway, reduce congestion and create an better first impression to visitors arriving from Interstate 65.

We have also commissioned a study to widen Smith Valley Road to four lanes from Emerson Avenue to State Road 135, including a new two roundabouts at Woodman Boulevard and Averitt Road.

I have always loved our Old Town business district. My childhood home was near the corner of Wiley Street and Madison Avenue. In 2012, Old Town desperately needed some love and attention. In my very first campaign, I pledged to preserve and revive the area.

My administration has honored that commitment. Our multi-year plan to improve the streetscapes of Old Town Greenwood is well underway.

I urge you to experience the new walks, lighting and street enhancements. Residents and visitors can now walk our Old Town neighborhood and businesses safely with larger sidewalks and enhanced lighting that highlights our beautiful and historic buildings. After overcoming countless unknown, unforeseen and unavoidable challenges, the Streetscape at Main and Madison has been rebuilt for the first time since my father was in office, nearly fifty years ago. I'm proud to announce that more enhanced streetscapes are on the way. As part of The Madison development, Meridian Street and Madison Avenue will receive new lighting, wider sidewalks, and on-street parking, some of which is already complete or will be finished soon. Another phase of Main Street, from Meridian Street to Polk Street, is under design.

We have also designed and received the necessary permits to add sidewalks to both sides of Market Plaza. This project will allow pedestrians to safely travel from Old City Park to City Center Park, making it accessible for all throughout the year and during the many local events.

Our administration has focused on creating a vibrant and enviable quality of life for Greenwood residents. We will continue to ensure that businesses remain welcome and our residents have access to the very best events and amenities.

Freedom Springs continues to thrive. In 2023, the aquatic center welcomed over 95,000 visitors and earned over \$1.3 million in revenue. The facility's revenue covers all of its operating expenses. Very few municipal recreational facilities pay their own way.

Freedom Springs hosted 3 adult nights which were sold to capacity. It also is a popular venue for private parties. 351 children became swimmers through lessons last year and over 752 local dogs enjoyed a swim on its closing day.

Our Community Center saw record growth and membership continues to increase. In 2023, Greenwood Parks hosted thirty-four community events. Over seven hundred kids experienced Kid City on field trips.

We held our first Fishing Camp at Freedom Park, implemented a new Sunday High School Lacrosse League, and served over 200 children weekly in our 2023 Summer Camps. Our wildly successful Freedom Festival drew over 40,000 attendees.

We've also completed improvements to Westside Park, Northeast Park, Freedom Park, Freedom Springs, Craig Park and The Fieldhouse. The Recreation Center is currently being remodeled to expand the fitness center.

In the coming year, I look forward to opening the Greenwood Sports Park, and all of the programs and opportunities this addition will bring. The park will have four baseball diamonds,

four softball diamonds, a soccer field with a cricket pitch, and a playground and splash pad accessible to children with disabilities.

Our new Freedom Park Pickleball Complex will have 16 pickleball courts and will allow those who participate in this rapidly growing sport for all ages to stay active and healthy.

Sometimes protecting our Quality of Life requires removing toxic enterprises from our community.

For too long, our public safety resources were consumed by a dilapidated and poorly managed hotel near the Interstate. It was a home to many criminals including several drug dealers. It violated our health codes and building codes. I am very happy to report that, pursuant to a court order obtained by the City after months of litigation, the Red-Carpet Inn and Fanta Suites is being demolished.

I support the free market and our business owners, but I care deeply about this community. I'm grateful to our health department, fire department, police department and all other agencies involved in the Fanta Suites condemnation. Together, we are improving the gateway entrance to our city and making it a safe and welcoming haven of opportunity. Or chose to expand their businesses here.

Greenwood's strong public safety, top-notch infrastructure and ever improving quality of life has made our city popular to both new residents and new businesses. Greenwood's economy is thriving. Last year, over \$250 million in new residential and business projects were completed inside our city limits. Our population has grown by over 13,000 people in just the last ten years.

In 2023, we welcomed numerous businesses, big and small, to our Greenwood family and several more have chosen to expand here. Last year, we welcomed: Eli Lilly, PLS Pros, Peterman Brothers, Endress and Hauser Sales Center and Vision Quest Eye Care as well as ERMCO.

These are just a few of the businesses, please see the screen to see many others that have come to Greenwood or chose to expand their businesses here.

Those of you who were in the market for a home last year are aware that high demand has made them both scarce and expensive.

Thankfully, builders are working to alleviate the problem. In 2023, 201 new single-family residential homes were constructed in Greenwood. We expect another 450 homes to be constructed in 2024.

The combination of improved quality of life and new housing options have given our children both reasons to remain in Greenwood and a place to live after they graduate. It warms my

heart to hear of students choosing to return to Greenwood after college because of our amenities and quality housing options.

2024 is off to a fast start. On the business side, Endress+Hauser has broken ground on its new \$40 million corporate headquarters expansion. This facility will preserve existing employment on the campus and create 100 new jobs with average compensation of \$100,000. per year.

Del Webb has been issued site improvement permits and will begin construction of a restricted age single family home development this Spring. The development will provide upscale housing residents over the age of 55. The project will have 540 homes when completed as well as \$12 million in recreational facilities. It is expected to increase the City's tax base by \$110 million.

Let me take a minute to brag about our airport. When I took office in 2012, it needed significant tax subsidies to keep its doors open. Many of its hangers were in disrepair. It needed attention.

After some significant capital investments which attracted many new users, the airport now operates in the black. It hosts over 28,000 landings a year and provides an \$15 million economic impact to the City.

It consistently wins awards, including Indiana's 2022 Airport of the Year. We continued improving the facility in 2023 by adding underground stormwater detention. This improvement will allow us to expand the runway to service a wider range of aircraft.

Last year the airport opened its Aeronautical Technology Center. The facility gives high school students from Central Indiana the opportunity to build an airplane which will be licensed by the FAA and flown. The program was made possible by the support and generous donation of State Representative, Mike Speedy. Mike is a licensed pilot. Thank you, Mike, for encouraging these kids to pursue their dreams.

Year twelve is in the books and I am excited about thirteen.

In 2024, we will continue to prioritize the safety and security of Greenwood residents, ensuring law enforcement is supported and properly funded.

Our infrastructure will continue to be expanded and modernized to keep pace with communities with whom we compete for residents and businesses.

We will continue to improve and expand quality of life initiatives including parks, trails, recreation facilities and family events.

We will continue to be one of the most efficient communities in the country. Our tax rate will remain at the bottom of Indiana cities as will our spending per resident. Our budgets will be balanced.

Greenwood doesn't have the same face it did when my dad served as our mayor in the 1970's, but it has the same heart, and I couldn't be more blessed to lead our team and our city into the future.

If you attended this event last year, you may remember my friend Eric Prime's kind words about our work. He ended his presentation by expressing the hope that we have "another four years".

Eric, your wish was granted. We have another four years.

Ladies and gentlemen, It's year 13. Let's get back to work!