

ANNUAL REPORT
Craig A. Stough, Mayor
2011

Quality of life issues have always been important to us in Sylvania and the reason why many families and businesses choose to come to Sylvania. Sylvania has excellent schools and a vibrant Lourdes University. Sylvania is recognized around northwest Ohio for terrific recreation programs and venues serving all age groups. Our neighborhoods are safe and well maintained, we have beautiful parks, and our public services are efficiently delivered. We have excellent health care facilities at the growing Flower Hospital campus and at Regency Health Care. We have an active Senior Center. And we have maintained a friendly environment for business and job growth, attracting new jobs and investment.

Sylvania has a lot to offer and is a great place to live, work and raise a family. My thanks to all who work every day to make Sylvania a great place, and I look forward to even greater things to come.

A Busy Year in Sylvania

Sylvania is always a great place to be, and 2011 was no exception with lots of activities and programs for residents and visitors to enjoy.

Centennial Terrace's 2011 Summer Concert Series started with Alice Cooper on May 21st and continued with outstanding programs and performers all summer. The Sylvania Star Spangled Celebration was held Sunday, July 3rd with one of the best fireworks displays in northwest Ohio. During July 22nd and July 23rd the second annual Pizza Palooza was held by the Chamber of Commerce at Centennial Terrace with another great time for all.

Olander Park also offered a variety of outside music programs every other Wednesday evening during the summer beginning with Eddie Boggs on June 8th. Olander Park is a wonderful venue anytime during the summer, but especially so during their open air music programs on the deck overlooking Olander Lake.

Even though the annual Jamie Farr LPGA Classic took a break this year during the USGA Senior Open at Inverness, the Sylvania Area Chamber of Commerce continued hosting "Taking It To The Streets" downtown. In fact, there were three "Taking It To The Streets" this year on May 22nd, June 26th and July 14th. Our thanks to Councilman Mike Brown for organizing a classic auto show on May 22nd, bringing a large crowd and beautiful classic cars to downtown Sylvania.

The Sylvania Riverball Race was held Saturday, July 16th in Harroun Park to benefit the Sylvania Conservation Corps, with many terrific prizes donated by Sylvania businesses and residents. The 17 junior high school students of the Sylvania Conservation Corps were recognized at a family picnic for their many improvement projects around the community this summer.

On Sunday, August 7, 2011, Sylvania hosted the Sylvania Cycling Classic which is a Criterium bike race. A Criterium is a bike race on a street course held on city streets. The race was held in the neighborhood near Plummer Pool. There were 150 racers and the organizers were pleased with the results and the course. They plan on coming back in 2012 and expect to double the number of competitors. Thanks to Councilmember Katie Cappellini's efforts for bringing this event to Sylvania.

The circus came to town again this year on Friday, August 12th, with two shows presented by The Kelly Miller Circus at 4:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. under the big top at the corner of Brint Road and Centennial. The Sylvania Sunrise Lions Club sponsored the circus, with all proceeds going to benefit those in need around the Sylvania community.

The 31st annual Sylvania Triathlon/Duathlon was held August 14th at Olander Park. The event has brought thousands of world class athletes to Sylvania over the years. Also held the day before was the 25th annual Sylvania Superkids Triathlon/Duathlon, one of the oldest triathlons for kids in the country.

The Fossil Fest was held downtown on Sunday, September 18th with activities for adults and children alike. Fossil bearing shale was trucked downtown for fossil hunting behind the Sylvania Historical Museum. There was entertainment, vendors and other family oriented activities.

The annual Sylvania Fall Festival and Parade was held Sunday, October 16th. Thousands of people attended the downtown event with many more marching in the Parade. We also welcomed the Mayor Pat Sobiski of our Sister City of Woodstock to Sylvania. The organizing committee reported a record number of exhibitors and vendors.

The Sylvania Sister Cities Commission organizes and hosts the Fall Festival and Parade each year. Our sister city of Woodstock, Ont. was represented in the parade by Mayor Sobiski, Woodstock Police personnel and vehicles. My heartfelt thanks to the many volunteers that each year make the parade and festival possible, especially Fall Festival Chairman Jane Herwat, Sister Cities Commission Chairman Mike Leiber, and Historical Village curator Joy Armstrong.

Thursday, November 10th officially started the downtown holiday shopping season with the annual Downtown Delights. The Sylvania Area Chamber of Commerce organized the event, with special activities throughout the evening. This event has been popular in the past and was so again this year.

On Saturday, December 3rd the Sylvania Historical Commission hosted the annual Holiday Happenings on Main Street in downtown Sylvania from 4:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. Santa Claus arrived in a carriage on Main Street early in the evening and met with all interested children at the old train depot. Carriage rides were provided, as were cookies and punch.

River Trail Construction Underway

After years of planning, grant applications, engineering, easement acquisition, permit applications and bidding, construction has finally begun on Phase I of the Sylvania River Trail and will add to the growing network of recreational trails in Sylvania and northwest Ohio. The River Trail will connect downtown Sylvania to the Flower Hospital campus with a scenic pedestrian/bike trail following Ten Mile Creek and the Ottawa River. Completion is anticipated by early summer, 2012.

The River Trail will provide new recreation opportunities for our residents and help attract new businesses to Sylvania. Our riverfront areas are an asset to our community and the River Trail opens them up for more visibility, use and enjoyment.

The River Trail follows the north side of Ten Mile Creek from Main Street behind the Wingate Inn east through the SOMO district until it reaches the North Branch. A trail extension connects north to

Monroe Street while the main trail crosses a bridge over Ten Mile Creek south to Harroun Park, where it continues east along the Ottawa River to Harroun Road. The River Trail is designed for pedestrians and bicycles and is ADA accessible, with seating areas provided along the way.

The construction contract was awarded to the low bidder, HPH, Inc., for \$1,295,819. More than half of the funding is coming from grant money: \$430,000 from the Clean Ohio Trail Fund, \$58,000 from Nature Works and \$200,000 of State of Ohio Capital Improvement funds obtained with the help of State Representative Barbara Sears. The remaining cost will be paid with funds from the city bond sale completed last summer.

The construction will additionally include installation of underground conduits for supplying electricity, telephone and data service to the SOMO district development. Some overhead utility lines along Monroe Street can also be moved underground into these conduits as development proceeds to improve the appearance of Monroe Street.

Phases II and III of the River Trail are planned to extend the River Trail west to Silica Road and east through the Flower Hospital Campus and under US 23 to Monroe Street near the expressway northbound exit ramp. Planning, grant applications and property easement efforts are underway for these future extensions of our new scenic Sylvania River Trail along Ten Mile Creek and the Ottawa River.

2011 Capital Improvement Projects

In addition to the River Trail project, the City worked on four other major capital improvement projects during 2011. The City's portion of these four capital improvement projects will be financed with low interest municipal bonds allowing the improvements to be paid for as they are used. No tax increases or property owner assessments will be made. All of these projects will improve Sylvania and help keep our community one of the best places to live and work in northwest Ohio.

Two Million Gallon Elevated Water Tank

A new water tower planned just north of Fossil Park west of Centennial Road was bid during 2011. The new tower will add additional water storage to maintain service during periods of high usage or supply interruption, and adequate fire flow pressure throughout the service area. The new water tank is the first increase in water storage capacity since the existing water tower was built in 1965 when Sylvania began purchasing water from Toledo. The tower will be 125 feet high, 95 feet in diameter and have a concrete base and steel bowl.

The \$2.9 million construction cost will be financed in part by a \$487,000 Ohio Public Works Commission grant and another \$487,000 interest free loan. City Council has approved a rate increase of 24¢ per 1,000 gallons, about \$1 per month for a typical homeowner, to pay the local share. Construction will take about 650 days and be complete in late 2013. Waterlines to serve Centennial Road, loop the existing water mains in the western part of the City and extend to the new water tower location were installed during 2011 at a cost of \$460,000.

Highland Meadows & Griffith Park Improvements – East Phase

Larger storm sewers, additional catch basins, a new 8" waterline, a new sanitary sewer and new curbs and pavement were installed on San Reno, Gillingham, Gillingham Court and a portion of Grenlock. Each lot received a separate storm sewer tap for the Owner to connect downspouts and foundation tiles to improve storm drainage. The construction cost \$1.275 million as awarded to the low bidder, PHC, Inc. Phase I (West Phase) was constructed in 2010, and together the projects continue the City's commitment to rebuild neighborhood streets and improve infrastructure to keep our neighborhoods desirable and property values high.

North Main Street Improvements

North Main Street paving was improved from Maplewood north to the Michigan state line. Old curbs north of Erie Street were replaced and an old 4" waterline north of Erie Street was replaced with a new 8" waterline. The turning radius was improved from southbound Main to westbound Erie Street. Many large, old trees were unfortunately lost during construction, and were replaced with new lower growing species that will not grow into the electric lines above and require unsightly trimming.

Harroun Park Improvements

Water and sanitary sewer lines were installed to serve the Lathrop House and adjacent shelter house and planned restroom facility. Also included were underground electrical, phone and cable conduits. New fire hydrants were installed and the existing ADA walkway was paved. The City's portion of the shared parking lot with St. Joseph Church and School was extended to the east. The entire asphalt parking lot will be sealed and restriped in 2012.

Improvements Continuing Downtown

Improvement and revitalization is continuing in downtown Sylvania. A strong and vibrant downtown is important for attracting new residents and new jobs to the Sylvania area.

Revitalization was the focus almost thirty years ago in a 1982 market study that envisioned many downtown needs and potential improvements. Buildings were in decline and businesses were leaving with the space often used for warehousing. The City coordinated grants and assessments for upgrades to building facades, sidewalks, streetlights and trees. Overhead wires were buried and heavy truck traffic was relocated to US 23.

In the early 1990's, the City purchased the old Howard Gas and Oil bulk oil storage facility and gas station at the southeast corner of Main and Monroe Streets and the Carroll Motors auto dealership on the south side of Ten Mile Creek. The sites were cleared and marketed, and the Wingate Hotel and two new office buildings were built on these sites, together with River Centre Park.

North of downtown, the Sterling property, Museum house, old Dave White Auto Dealership, and old Post Office were purchased. All have been recycled into new uses, including the Maplewood Marketplace, Bumble store, law offices and Historical Village. This year the City purchased two duplexes north of the Maplewood Marketplace to continue improvements in the area.

During the past two years, the City has purchased and demolished the old Nelms Building and adjacent apartments south of Monroe Street. The 5.2 acre SOMO (South of Monroe Street) district is being readied for redevelopment to extend downtown east along Monroe Street and Ten Mile Creek. It is a beautiful site with views into Harroun Park. A market study by Boulevard Strategies was authorized to attract new businesses and jobs, and recommended office space, limited commercial and a conference center. Land will also be set aside for public use and to maintain views from Monroe Street to Ten Mile Creek and into Harroun Park and the Lathrop House.

The Sylvania Gateway project continued to improve the appearance of Monroe Street entering into our City from US 23. New wayfinding signage was installed last year. New banners and tree lighting have been installed. More flowers and plantings were installed this year. Overhead wires are being studied for burying and new streetlights are being planned.

Earlier in 2011, the City of Sylvania was awarded a \$15,000 CDBG planning grant from the State of Ohio. This starts a National Trust for Historic Preservation Four Points (Organization, Design and Streetscape, Economic Restructuring and Promotional Strategy) Main Street Center comprehensive commercial district planning process to build sustainable community revitalization. As the City works through this process, \$400,000 capital improvement grants become available. Downtown business owners are participating in the process, and planning meetings were held for public input.

In November, the City of Sylvania published a brochure highlighting the city titled "Open For Business". The main purpose of the brochure is to assist the city with its economic development endeavors. Copies are available via our web site.

Sylvania is already a great place to live with excellent schools, terrific recreation programs, attractive neighborhoods and efficient services. Improving our downtown will help keep Sylvania one of the best places to live in northwest Ohio.

Monroe Street Railroad Crossing Repaired

Norfolk Southern Railroad finally completed repairs to its Monroe Street crossing in lieu of their previously announced delay until Spring, 2012. They began work Monday, December 5th and despite rainy and snowy weather completed the work in just two days. This was good news for the Sylvania community concerning this heavily traveled main arterial road. We appreciate Norfolk Southern's cooperation to repair the crossing in 2011 before winter weather set in.

The crossing timbers were found to be collapsing early in 2010 and were removed by Norfolk Southern crews in November, 2010. Temporary repairs were made at that time by Norfolk Southern and were maintained by City of Sylvania Streets Division since. Now rebuilt by Norfolk Southern crews, the railroad crossing on this very busy road in the City of Sylvania will be smoother for years to come.

Temporary detours had to be posted during the crossing repair. Eastbound traffic on Erie Street was directed to continue east to Summit Street and south to Monroe Street. Eastbound traffic on Monroe Street was detoured north on Judi Young Lane to Maplewood, east to Summit Street and south to Monroe Street. Westbound traffic on Monroe Street was detoured north on Main Street to Maplewood and west to Erie Street.

Traffic light timing was adjusted to help accommodate the heavier detour traffic loads, and police officers monitored traffic conditions. Thank you for your patience during these railroad crossing repairs and detours. Rush hour traffic is always heavy and was more difficult than usual with Monroe Street temporarily closed.

Safe Routes to School Grant

The City of Sylvania is continuing to pursue state and federal grants to assist with local programs and capital improvements. Most recently the City has been notified of a \$202,465 Ohio Department of Transportation grant from the "Safe Routes to School" program.

The grant will provide safety upgrades for students walking to Highland, Maplewood and Sylvan Elementary Schools and McCord Junior High School. Improvements are scheduled to be constructed in 2012. The State of Ohio hopes the funded safety improvements will also encourage more students to walk or bike to school.

The grant will pay for improved crosswalk striping, pavement markings and new signage at all four schools. Work at Highland, Sylvan and McCord will also include overhead flashing beacons, pedestrian push buttons, speed measuring signs and crossing guard booths. Traffic signals at or near the schools will be equipped with "countdown" pedestrian signals.

The City of Sylvania's local match for the improvements will be the engineering design for construction, estimated at \$21,414. In addition, the City funded the earlier engineering study required as part of the grant application.

The grant was pursued by the City of Sylvania in response to parents requesting a traffic light be installed to assist students crossing McCord Road to and from McCord Junior High School and Sylvan Elementary School. In the interim, a crossing guard has been working at McCord Road and Gaines

Mill Drive for two years, funded the first year by the City of Sylvania and the second year by the Sylvania Schools.

The Safe Routes to School study results did not warrant the installation of a traffic light on McCord Road, nor does the grant provide funding for employing crossing guards at any of the schools.

Future grant applications could include funding for construction of sidewalks where needed for students walking to school.

City Affirms Bond Rating & Sells Bonds

Standard and Poors Rating Service affirmed the City of Sylvania's AA+/Stable bond rating in a report issued June 15, 2011. The rating is one of the the highest available and confirms the financial strength of the City as viewed by the Standard and Poors' analysts. The excellent rating resulted in 3.2% and 3.4% interest rates on \$14,790,000.00 of long-term bonds issued in two series by the City in late June and early July.

The 20 year tax exempt bonds were sold to finance three years of street, bridge and utility capital improvement projects: Greyston/Gregory, Alexis Road, Angleview, Acres Road, Elliot, Roan, Indian Trail, Arrowhead, Main Street and Monroe Street, River Trail Phase I, Old Post Bridge, new water lines and water tower. Recent street, bridge and utility improvements had been financed with short term notes in anticipation of this bond sale, which was timed to coincide with low market interest rates.

The new bond issue also included refinancing of \$1,090,000 of remaining principal from a 1998 bond issue in order to receive a lower interest rate. The lower interest payments will save over \$10,000 per year for the remaining eight years of this issue.

The analysts at Standard and Poors issued the excellent AA+ bond rating based on Sylvania's good management practices, financial flexibility and reserves. Standard and Poors believes the City's debt profile will remain manageable due to a moderate debt burden, average principal amortization and modest near-term borrowing plans.

This is the fifth time I have participated in a bond rating process for the City of Sylvania. The first two times, I had to travel to New York City, the last time in February, 2002 shortly after 9/11. As a result of 9/11, Moody's opened a field office in Chicago for our region of the country, where I traveled in March, 2004. In 2008 and this year the bond presentation to analysts was made in a telephone conference call from the Sylvania Mayor's Office without the expense of traveling to either New York or Chicago.

Following this bond sale, the City of Sylvania remains below the legal limit permitted the City, and about average for a city of Sylvania's size. The use of these long-term bonds has allowed the City to update and expand its infrastructure and to pay for those improvements over the course of their useful life.

Sylvania City Charter Amendment

For the first time in over a decade, Sylvania City Council voted to place a City Charter Amendment on the ballot for voter consideration. The proposed amendment was Issue No. 22 on the November 8th ballot and was approved by the voters, eliminating the requirement that the City Treasurer be a resident of the City of Sylvania. Removing this residency requirement allows this position to be filled with the best qualified person regardless of where they live.

The City Charter dates back to the early 1960's when the Village of Sylvania's population rose above 5,000 in the 1960 census. The City Charter was approved by the voters fifty years ago in 1961

establishing Sylvania as a City in lieu of the earlier Village. Amendments to the City Charter require a majority vote in favor of the proposed changes.

The Charter has remained mostly unchanged since 1961, except as required to comply with changes of State law and as warranted to conform with the needs of the City. The Charter position for a Clerk/Auditor was updated in the mid 1980's to permit the previously elected Clerk/Auditor to be appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by a majority of City Council. As with the current Charter Amendment, that 1985 amendment allowed the City to seek out the best financial person to manage the City's finances without a residency requirement, and in that case without an election requirement.

Because the City has a fulltime Finance Director, City Treasurer is not a fulltime position and is combined with other management responsibilities, currently Personnel Director. Deleting the residency requirement for the City Treasurer will allow the City to select the most qualified person to perform the current duties of City Treasurer as well as other administrative responsibilities.

Congratulations to Lourdes University

We have all been reading about the growth and successes at Lourdes College over the past few years. The lower tuition, the increased enrollment, the construction of new facilities, the opening of student housing and the new athletic teams have all been positive news for Lourdes. Now, as the result of all that growth and new graduate and undergraduate academic programs, Lourdes College has changed its name to Lourdes University.

Having Lourdes College in Sylvania has been a great asset for our community. Lourdes University will offer even more opportunities to enrich the lives of Sylvania residents and broaden our horizons. New students are now coming to Sylvania from around the country and the world to study at Lourdes. Congratulations to University President Robert Helmer and our thanks to the Sisters of St. Francis.

Lourdes University is sponsored by the Sisters of St. Francis. The Sisters of St. Francis came to Sylvania in 1916, ministering to whatever the community needed. Those ministries concentrated in teaching and nursing. Headquartered here in Sylvania on a beautiful campus, their growing ministries also includes hospitals, medical centers and senior housing facilities in Ohio and Texas.

The transition to Lourdes University occurred on August 19th at the annual Convocation Ceremony. The transition had been years in planning and was included in a visionary seven year strategic plan unveiled by President Helmer in 2008.

The Lourdes campus is continuing to grow. The apartment complex southeast of Brint and McCord Roads was purchased in 2010, renamed Lourdes Commons and two buildings converted to student housing. Two more buildings were converted to student use in fall 2011. A new dining hall adjacent to the academic buildings on the main campus was also opened in fall, 2011. More campus improvements are being planned for coming years.

We are indeed fortunate to have the Sisters of St. Francis and Lourdes University here in Sylvania. On behalf of the entire Sylvania community, I congratulate them on their successes at Lourdes University and thank them for their continuing ministries in our community.