

City of Loveland – Year in Review

2018 was an exciting year of progress and revitalization for the City of Loveland. The positive momentum is in large part due to collaboration and community involvement. While much of our progress can be seen with a walk or drive through town, many other, equally important, milestones are less visible. As part of the City's commitment to keep the community informed and engaged, this is a City of Loveland update and recap of 2018:

Recovery, Rebuilding and Revitalization of Historic Downtown

The 2017 fire that ravaged the 200 block of West Loveland Avenue in historic downtown Loveland will forever remain a heart-breaking event in our City's history. Our town was incredibly fortunate that the property owners affected by the fire never wavered from their determination to rebuild and, just as importantly, to do so with a commitment to historic preservation of the structures.

Throughout this year, we watched as these buildings and businesses recovered brick by brick; and the excitement and anticipation grew among our residents, business owners and visitors. As each of the buildings impacted by the fire re-opened, we were awed by the thoughtfulness, creativity, quality and workmanship reflected in both the physical structures and the new or returning businesses. Ramsey's, Tano's and Bishops's Quarter have lifted historic downtown Loveland to a whole new level of dining and entertainment. These businesses are a wonderful complement to our other coveted Downtown establishments, making Downtown Loveland a true destination. We also appreciate that Alley Boutique (formerly Cincy Fashion Wheels) and Comey and Shepherd, also affected by the fire, chose to continue to make Loveland their home, and we welcome all the new businesses that came to Loveland in 2018.

Investment in Human Resources for Continued Progress, Optimal Safety

2018 was a year of investment in City operations, as many positions were filled to better serve the residents and enhance the City's growth opportunities:

- Assistant City Manager position was filled with the highly qualified Tom Smith.
- Assistant Finance Director Michelle Byrde was selected to fill the vacant Director of Finance position.
- Barbara Turcotte is now serving the City as Assistant Finance Director.
- The part-time Human Resources Manager position, which had been vacant for many years, was filled by Loveland resident Julie Robinson.
- James Johnson joined our maintenance team to keep pace with our City's growing need.
- Officer Jesse Moore was placed as the Loveland City School District's full-time, on-site School Resource officer (see detail below).
- Officer Jacob Steinkoenig was hired to backfill Officer Moore's position.

Safety is always a top priority among our city leadership, with no greater concern than the more than 4,800 students attending Loveland City Schools. Beginning early in the year, Police Chief Sean Rahe and School District Superintendent Dr. Amy Crouse worked cooperatively to place Officer Moore as the district's School Resource Officer (SRO). Jesse's enthusiasm and personality made him the ideal candidate for the position, and his on-campus presence brings an added level of safety for every student in our district, as well as peace of mind for parents and residents.

Growth & Progress

New development:

- The 138-unit Deer Ridge apartment development along Loveland Madeira Road is nearing completion and will allow many new residents to call the City "home."
- Approval of the Oasis Turf and Tree headquarters at the former bowling alley property on Loveland Madeira Road.
- Hamilton Clermont Cooperative opened in the vacant London Computer System building on Cottonwood Drive.

Infrastructure Improvements:

- Safety Center Improvements - The City began much-needed improvements to the Safety Center including roofing, HVAC, electrical upgrades, bringing the Police Department's evidence/property room into compliance, and an addition to expand the Fire Department's living quarters.
- Water Tower Painting - Water towers at the Commerce Park and White Pillars were drained, inspected, cleaned and painted.
- Water Valves in the Heights - The City received a grant to install new valves to reduce water service outages in this area.
- Street Resurfacing - The City hired Stantec to complete a Pavement Condition Assessment and Report; this will help provide a roadmap to determine the order of street resurfacing, and to create a strategy to move the City towards a sustainable street resurfacing schedule.

New City Services:

- Website Improvement - The City's website was completely redesigned with new features including: the ability to sign up to receive important notifications and to report issues, improved navigation and incorporation of Loveland's new logo and branding. Visit the new website at <https://lovelandoh.gov/>
- Simple Recycling - The City contracted with Simple Recycling to offer curbside textile recyclable pickup.

- Fire Sprinkler Installation Assistance Program – The City is waiving fees for the installation of approved sprinkler systems in commercial buildings, in an effort to incentivize the protection of structures within City limits, and to protect our firefighters.
- Paperless Utility Billing-Residents and other customers are now able to make payments online.

Collaboration for Positive Outcomes

No force powers the positive momentum of our city more so than the collaboration between City government, businesses, organizations and individual residents from our community:

- Special events and programs that bring the community together and make Loveland a special place to live include: the annual Homecoming Parade, Christmas in Loveland, Fourth of July, Loveland Strong Street Festival, Valentines Ladies Program and the weekly Farmer’s Market (May – October).
- Approximately 75 individuals volunteered their time, talent and effort via participation in city committees, commissions, and Boards, doing important work that cannot be accomplished by city staff and council members alone.
- The City reached an agreement with the Loveland City School District to offer tax incentives to businesses looking to come to Loveland.
- The City re-joined the Little Miami River Chamber Alliance, and collaborated with the Chamber on various events throughout the year.

Recognition

The Loveland Symmes Fire Department (LSFD) received the esteemed recognition of the Accredited Agency Award from the Commission on Fire Accreditation International in Dallas, Texas. LSFD is one of only nine fire departments in the State of Ohio to have this prestigious accreditation, and one of only 11 departments in the entire country with dual certification in both fire and emergency medical service.

Louis G. Rockwood Community Service Volunteer Award, which seeks to recognize the time and accomplishments of volunteers serving the City, was awarded to Kay Bolin, co-owner of Whistle Stop Clay Works, for her countless hours as a volunteer in Loveland.

Business Enhancement Award, given to businesses which have demonstrated an increase in business and employees, and exhibited the most effort to enhance their property and business, was bestowed upon Cappy’s Wine and Spirits, and Narrow Path Brewing Company.

Losses to the Loveland Community

While the year was filled with excitement, the City also said goodbye to treasured members of its family.

- Retired Police Chief Denny Rees passed away this fall. Denny served as Police Chief from 1995 to 2008 and was active in the community long before his appointment as chief, leaving his mark with his commitment to the area youth.
- In the spring, we mourned the loss of longtime Loveland Symmes Fire Department Chief Financial Officer, Candy Cook. Candy's commitment to the department and the community she served was unsurpassed.
- Lu Boike, wife of former Mayor/Vice Mayor Doc Boike, and a Valentine Lady, passed away this past August.
- Laurie Gordon, 2016 Valentine Lady, and a well-known and well-loved presence in Loveland, passed away in January of this year.

Continued Progress for 2019 and Beyond

In addition to the many accomplishments of 2018, a great deal of planning and work was completed for future benefit:

- The 2019 City budget includes funding for the following:
 - Upgrade lighting along the bike trail
 - Downtown sidewalk replacement
 - Improvements to McCoy Park
 - Replacement of the water main on Loveland Miamiville Road
 - New signage at the City's entry points
- The City has begun a Downtown and Comprehensive Master Plan. While these plans are important, they are only successful with public input. Please stay tuned to the City's website for notifications on planning work which we hope will be well attended by our residents, stakeholders and business owners.
- The City continues to work toward short and long-term solutions to traffic and parking concerns.
- Charter Review – a committee has been working on reviewing the City Charter, which has not had a comprehensive review in many years; the revised Charter should be ready to take to the ballot in November for a vote.
- Historic Preservation Initiative – The City sought and was approved for designation as a Certified Local Government. This certification makes Loveland eligible for state funds for historic preservation guidelines and related efforts, and lays the foundation for the City's efforts to protect the architectural assets and preserve the historic charm of our town.

- Commencement of the City of Loveland Citizens Leadership Academy. Modelled after a similar program in the City of Montgomery, the program will allow residents to learn the inner workings of City operations.

It gives me a tremendous sense of pride to share the events and accomplishments that defined the past year, as well as the knowledge that our progress reflects the collective effort and talent of so many elected officials, city employees, business owners, community leaders, committee members and individual residents. Together, we are stronger and better, and I look forward to all we will accomplish as a community in 2019!