Arrive at podium – give welcome & recognize The First Lady & Mayors

Welcome Blue Springs Business Leaders and Community Partners.

Today I have the privilege of presenting to you my fifth State of the City address.

Those who have attended my State of the City Addresses in the past know that I have a strong love of music.

The song you just heard, Take a Look Around, sets the theme for my presentation today.

I will take you on a moving tour as we ‘Take a Look Around’ at our accomplishments in 2012 here in Blue Springs ——— A City on the Move!
Helping me MOVE this great City along is your Blue Springs City Council:

From the 1st District:
Jeff Quibell and Dale Carter

From the 2nd District:
Chris Lievsay and Kent Edmondson

And from our 3rd District:
Ron Fowler and Grant Bowerman......until tonight’s council meeting, when Susan Culpepper will replace him. Councilman-elect Culpepper, please stand.

I’d also like to recognize our City Administrator – Eric Johnson and several of his staff members that are here. Please Stand.

A special thanks to Kim Nakahodo, Todd Pelham and David Watson for their work on my State of the City Address.

Thank you.
We in Blue Springs pride ourselves on providing quality services with a reasonable tax burden on our citizens.

The City of Blue Springs property taxes are the second lowest in the immediate metropolitan area.

The City of Blue Springs, also, has one of lowest taxing rates of cities in our surrounding area.

We continually strive to provide value for each tax dollar that you have entrusted us with.

Sales tax revenue is critical to the overall fiscal health of the city and is over 20% of the City’s overall revenue budget.

Each sales tax dollar goes to support the infrastructure you use, the people that make you safe, and maintains the quality of life that we enjoy.
In fiscal year 2011-12, the City again took a conservative financial position. Staff monitored and advised on changes in revenues and expenses that affect our operating budget.

And like most of you and your businesses, we too have had to adjust spending, implement cost savings strategies, and look for alternative funding sources.

We continue to listen to your input; and will invest in YOUR priorities for Maintenance of our Infrastructure, Public Safety, and Quality of Life Services.
One of the keys to creating a strong business climate, is investment in a solid transportation infrastructure.

In 2008 our voters, sent a clear statement in their desire to improve and expand our current transportation network.

Our City Administrator, Eric Johnson will now give us an update on our voter-approved Bond projects.

Video Will Play

Thank you Eric for those updates. I hope you are as excited as I am about how these transportation improvements will effect our community for decades to come.
You have seen that through our 2008 bond improvements, we are implementing an economic development strategy that improves the major corridors of our city for further growth and development.

We also continue to invest in our annual street maintenance budget. This five year program which began in 2007, looked to overlay 75 miles of pavement in five years.

I’m pleased to let you know that in year five of the program we have overlayed 101 miles to date.

Our investments are making an impact on public satisfaction as reflected in our most recent citizen satisfaction survey administered in January 2013.
Effective Community Planning is a top priority for myself and the entire City Council.

Our planning initiatives are making a difference in the perception of resident satisfaction.

I would like to highlight some planning initiatives.

We are currently working with the Mid-America Regional Council along the US 40 Highway Corridor as part of the Creating Sustainable Places Initiative. This regional effort aims to create a vision for sustainable development throughout the corridor.

Major components of the initiative include recommendations for transit, land use, economic development and walkability improvements.

Walkability is more than just a quality of life issue. Sidewalks that are connected and well-maintained increase property value and allow people a safe way to access employment and patronize local shops, businesses, and restaurants.

Building off of the City Council Livable Streets Resolution, the City hosted two events focusing on Walkability in our city.
The City partnered with the School District for the first event focusing on two elementary school areas: James Walker Elementary and Thomas Ultican Elementary.

As a result of this audit, the City applied for Safe Routes To School funding through MoDOT to address some of the recommendations, such as new crosswalk markings, pedestrian and school signage, and accessible sidewalk ramps.

The second event explored walkable and sustainable design solutions for the intersection of Highways 7 and 40 in Blue Springs.

Addressing safety issues and creating a more walkable city are priorities that we will continue to promote. I am also continuing to pursue Federal resources to improve walkability along Highway 7 where there are currently no sidewalks.
I am so excited to continue to report on the good work of our downtown group. Rejuvenation is full speed ahead in the heart of our City.

This passionate group of people working hard to invigorate our downtown are known as Downtown Alive.

Downtown Alive consists of volunteers from multiple organizations working together to revitalize Downtown Blue Springs. This program focuses on historic preservation, economic development and developing events to bring people back to downtown Blue Springs.
I’m not the only one complimenting their hard work; Jeanine Rann of the Missouri Main Street Connection Program said that Downtown Alive is a shining star at the Affiliate level in the state of Missouri.

The work being done in Blue Springs is being shared and praised by Missouri Main Street staff in other communities throughout the state as the model for establishing a sustainable and thriving revitalization organization.

If you are part of Downtown Alive, please stand and be recognized for your hard work!
I am proud to say even in these challenging economic times, that we continue to spur growth and recovery by making strategic investments in our community.

The City of Blue Springs takes great pride in providing quality Public Safety services.
In July 2012, the Blue Springs Police Department (BSPD) received Accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA).

This award places us at an elite level of law enforcement organizations. To the Blue Spring community, Accreditation is the recognition that your police department is one of the best.

In April 2011, voters passed the 1/2 cent dedicated Public Safety Sales Tax. I would like to give you an update on where we are in implementing those funds.

We appreciate the residents of Blue Springs for their support on this very important community initiative and we are working hard to implement your priorities.
We have worked hard to give our officers the tools they need to be a more efficient and effective police department.

Our vehicles have been outfitted with Mobile Data Terminals allowing officers to get the most up-to-date information from dispatch.

You may have seen these cameras mounted on a few of our cruisers. These license plate readers notify the officer immediately if a passing vehicle’s tags have been registered as stolen.
Outreach programs like the Citizen’s Police Academy give our residents a better understanding of how police services work in our City.

Graduates of the Citizen’s Police Academy often join the Volunteers in Police Services as a way to give back to their community.

To give you some perspective, the VIPS program has provided over 4,500 volunteer hours to our city. Thank you to those outstanding volunteers who make our City even greater.

Another amazing outreach program is the Shop with A Blue Springs Cop program. This program is designed to provide a happier holiday season to at-risk children in Blue Springs by providing a way for these kids to interact with police officers in a positive setting.
I am pleased to notify you that all of your community partners continue to invest time and resources into emergency management planning.

Here in Blue Springs, we are part of the Central Jackson County Emergency Management Agency.

The agency is working with stakeholders to update our local emergency operations plan.

This plan details how we would all work together in the case of a major disaster in our area.
There are many facets that go into making a community safe. Our commitment to you is to continue investing your tax dollars into police visibility, responsiveness and professionalism.

Blue Springs is a community of choice for many reasons.

I’m very proud of the quality of life that we offer here in Blue Springs. As you know, many things go into developing a high quality of life.
We are proud to continue our strong partnership with the Blue Springs Chamber of Commerce who celebrated their 50th year anniversary in 2012.

We share the same mission in creating a dynamic business environment that gives residents a chance to live, work and play in their own community.

The City of Blue Springs, the EDC and the Chamber work together to make Blue Springs a business friendly community. We strive to be a City that supports entrepreneurs, local employers and national companies.
Your City is committed to creating an innovative solution-focused business environment to encourage new business development and existing business expansion.

This past year, the City has launched an internal customer service campaign to streamline business processes, equip our employees with new training opportunities and develop feedback mechanisms to track our performance.

We live in a competitive economic development environment and are committed to improving our internal processes and providing excellent customer service.
We have always been a community that prides itself on raising healthy, well educated children.

Unfortunately, local and national statistics show a disturbing trend of childhood obesity in our communities.

In 2011, the City Council and I unanimously passed a resolution supporting the City’s designation as a Let’s Move! City.

Thanks to the coordination and facilitation efforts of StandUp Blue Springs, this initiative is having real-world results.

Last summer, kids were given the chance to compete against their peers in Blue Springs’ first Kids Triathlon presented by Blue Springs Hy-Vee. Over 100 kids between the ages of 4-14 were encouraged to compete and have fun swimming, biking and running with friends.
In 2012, over 35 gardeners enjoyed the inaugural season of the new Community Garden located in Central Park. This new garden allows residents the chance to not only grow their own fresh produce, but interact with other gardeners in a common space.

One of the standout components of the initiative is the “Let’s Move Saturday’s” program.

This free program entices kids and parents to patron local businesses, such as dance studios, golf courses, roller skating rinks and fitness clubs. This is a Win, Win situation for our business community to market their business, while exposing participants to healthy activities right here in Blue Springs.

This program is always looking for more volunteers, if you are interested, I encourage you to contact Stand Up Blue Springs to get involved.
There are so many programs offered by our City that impact the quality of life we enjoy.

Some highlights from this year include the new Blue Springs 5k Family Fun Run. Over 120 participants enjoyed a brisk run through historic downtown Blue Springs and we look forward to growing that event this year.

The Pink Hill Park Recycling Center celebrated it’s second anniversary this year. This resource continues to increase in popularity and the increase in the amount of materials diverted from the landfill is promising as we work toward a sustainable future here in Blue Springs.

I would also like to highlight our First Time Homebuyer’s program. This program helps people achieve the dream of home ownership here in our City.

Thanks to this federally funded program, there are 28 .... New .....Blue Springs homeowners! If you know of anyone currently looking to own their first home, please tell them about this excellent program.
An initiative close to my heart is the Veterans Way Memorial project. As you may remember, in 2010, the “The Wall That Heals,” was exhibited in Pink Hill Park in Blue Springs.

The idea for this memorial came from visitors commenting on the need for a permanent reminder honoring veterans of ALL wars fought in defense of our nation.

On Tuesday, April 2, I had the distinct honor of speaking at The Veterans Way Memorial dedication. I would like to thank all of the donors, the Veterans Way Memorial committee and countless volunteers for all of their hard work to make this memorial a reality here in Blue Springs.

I’m very proud of the quality of life that we offer here in Blue Springs. We take great pride in the fact that our community has been recognized as a premier place to raise a family.

Great communities don’t just happen. They are the result of hard work, extraordinary citizens and partnerships between public and private entities for the betterment of our community.
Today, we have talked about our accomplishments in 2012, but what I would like to “Take a Look Around” at our future.

Our vision for Blue Springs is a city that embraces our commitment to family, quality, and innovation.

The Blue Springs leadership team is committed to these values, and we are positioning Blue Springs for exciting things in our near and long term future. I would like to share a few of these projects with you this afternoon.
Last year in this very speech, I talked about a vision to explore the feasibility of building a Community Center for the City of Blue Springs.

With input from several different sources including community meetings, citizen surveys, and a Council appointed steering committee, I am pleased to announce that the results of that feasibility study will be presented to the City Council on April 29th at 6:30 in the Public Safety Building.

The study examined many different issues including community support for a facility, desired programming, location, and size and scope. On the 29th, the City Council will hear recommendations on all of these issues and review conceptual designs for the building.
We have longed been proud of our current Parks programming, but as our Community ages and we compete with neighboring communities for residents and jobs, I believe that we should take a strategic look at all of our Parks needs including maintenance on our existing parks, future park development, and current facility needs.

I look forward to working with our City Council and all of our community partners as we discuss how best to address these issues going forward.
Another critical planning issue that will be addressed in 2013 is the City’s Update of our Comprehensive Plan and Unified Development Code.

This Comprehensive Plan can best be defined as the city’s guide or roadmap for future growth and development. It is in a sense our Business and Marketing Plan for what we want our city to be and highlights our strengths to the Development Community.

The Development Code is really the guide book for doing business in Blue Springs and we truly hope that this process provides us the opportunity to clarify our codes and simplify the development process.
We will be launching our public outreach campaign soon, but we have staff here today if you would like to be part of this process. I encourage you to visit the City’s Website for more information.

I for one can’t wait to see the incredible ideas and plans that this process will produce for our City.

One of the key components to a successful Comprehensive Plan is an economic development strategy that is unique to your community and provides opportunities for quality jobs. One of our key long-term strategies to making this happen is the development of the Missouri Innovation Park.
We along with the University of Missouri remain firmly committed to executing this critical job creation strategy and the development of the entire Innovation Park.

We continue to work with our MU partners on building the Mizzou Center, a signature 60,000 sq. ft office building in the Park that would house the university and other tenants wishing to benefit from the research and educational strengths of MU.

The Blue Springs EDC and our MU Advantage Partners, recently hosted a well-attended Corporate Connections event for KC based companies wishing to explore co-locating in the Mizzou Center.

We were extremely pleased with the response from the business community and we are hopeful that this event will produce new opportunities in the Park and the Mizzou Center.
As we work on implementation of the Innovation Park and our Comprehensive Plan Update, we will continue to discuss the need for a regional transit system that brings people to Blue Springs and allows our citizens to access job opportunities in other areas of the region.

Commuter Rail is a key strategy in enhancing our Downtown revitalization, while also providing businesses access to employees that might choose to live downtown and not wish to drive a car.

I along with all of the Eastern Jackson County Mayors remain committed to working toward solutions to getting Commuter Rail and I remain encouraged that all of the plans include Downtown Blue Springs as a destination point for a commuter rail stop.

Please continue to monitor this situation and educate yourself on the benefits that Commuter Rail will bring to Blue Springs and the region.
So today, I again thank you for the opportunity to serve you as your Mayor. It truly is a privilege.

I hope that you enjoyed your “LOOK” around our community and that you leave today with information on our accomplishments, our present quality of life, and our incredible future opportunities. We need all of you to make this great City even better.

So as you can see.....We are a City..... On the Move!

Who is “On the Move” with me?

Flash Mob begins.

Music cues.