

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

City of Ramsey, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, MN 55303



Ramsey Mayor Strommen Presents Annual State of the City Address on Tuesday, January 23, 2018

Annually, the Mayor of Ramsey provides a *State of the City* presentation to Ramsey residents, property owners, and businesses during a regular City Council Meeting. The purpose of this presentation is to provide a review of City operations, updates, and achievements from the past year, as well as a look ahead at what is to come in the new year.

This year's *State of the City Address* was held on Tuesday, January 23, at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers at the Ramsey City Hall. "In my 2017 address, I noted that the opportunity to shape Ramsey's future had never been greater. This year, I believe Ramsey is ready for that future," Mayor Strommen's speech began. She continued on to share highlights and accomplishments from the year, centered on the City's four main strategic initiatives; maintaining financial stability, a connected community, smart-citizen focused government, and an effective organization.

In addition, three special presentations accompanied the Mayor's Address that evening, including recognition of the Ramsey Fire Department and their newest recruit firefighters who successfully completed their probation and training period, recognition of the lifesaving Ramsey Heart Safe Program, and an update on the City's partnership with the University of Minnesota's Resilient Communities Project. "These presentations will highlight how Ramsey as a community is ready for what comes our way, ready to provide important services to Ramsey residents in better and innovative ways, and even expand on those services," the Mayor stated.

Mayor Strommen's complete *2018 State of the City Address* is included below. For more information on Ramsey's *2018 State of the City Address*, please contact Kurt Ulrich, City Administrator at 763-433-9845, kulrich@cityoframsey.com.

City of Ramsey 2018 State of the City Address

Presented by Mayor Sarah Strommen, January 23, 2018

Members of the City Council, Administrator Ulrich and City staff, honored guests, and fellow Ramsey residents:

It is my honor this evening to present Ramsey's State of the City. In my 2017 address, I noted that the opportunity to shape Ramsey's future had never been greater. This year, I believe Ramsey is ready for that future.

To better illustrate why I believe that to be true, in addition to the mayor's address tonight, we've invited three special presentations. These presentations will highlight how Ramsey as a community is ready for what comes our way, ready to provide important services to Ramsey residents in better and innovative ways, and even expand on those services.

And, we do this in partnership. Preparing Ramsey for the future is not just the work of the City Council, but as our mission says, "working together" we will "responsibly grow our community and provide quality cost-effective, and efficient government services."

Therefore, tonight, as part of the State of the City Presentation, I'd like to recognize some of the outstanding achievements that make Ramsey "Ready for the Future" as well as the individuals who make those achievements possible.

This past year was one of significance for fire service in Ramsey. In 2017, the Insurance Services Office, or ISO, rating for Ramsey's hydrant area improved by dropping to a 4. This is the lowest ever and reflects improvements made in emergency communications, department operations, water supply, and community efforts to reduce loss by focusing on fire prevention and fire safety education. This lower rating at the city level can translate to lower insurance premiums for our residents.

All this is more impressive due to the fact that Ramsey does not have a full time Fire Department. Our paid-on-call system means we rely on members of our community to step up and help ensure the safety of the public. Tonight we have six individuals who have successfully completed the required training and 1-year probationary period to become regular, paid-on-call firefighters.

In 2015, Ramsey was honored to become a Heart Safe Community. This program is designed to teach bystander CPR and ensure adequate coverage of public use AEDs in our city. Just two years later, in 2017, Ramsey Heart Safe has trained more than 1,400 people in bystander CPR. Ramsey also now has more than 65 public use AEDs placed around our community. This significant achievement is due to the commitment of Ramsey resident, sudden cardiac arrest survivor, and Heart Safe Champion Tim Hoffman and of the Ramsey Lions, who have made AED purchase a major focus of their fundraising efforts. The important impact this program has on our community became real just a few weeks ago, when a customer at the Outpost Bar and Grill in Ramsey went into sudden cardiac arrest. Fortunately, because of the quick work of trained bystanders and an on-site AED donated by Ramsey Lions, a life was saved. While bystander CPR and AEDs are tools we all hope we won't have to use, Ramsey is ready when they are needed. Tonight I'd like to recognize the work of Tim Hoffman, the Ramsey Lions, and Amy Miller and Jacob Lowe, the bystanders who took action that night at the Outpost. Amy is here tonight, along with survivor, Mike Stueve, and his daughter, Cami Stueve, Tim Hoffman, and a representative from the Ramsey Lions.

In 2017, Ramsey was selected as a community partner for the University of Minnesota's Resilient Communities Project (RCP). The mission of RCP is to connect communities with U of M faculty and students to advance local sustainability and resilience through collaborative, course-based projects – in other words, to ensure that communities are positioned to meet the challenges of the future.

Over the course of the semester, 150 students from the U of M have worked with our staff on a variety of projects, covering topics such as community identity and engagement, land use and transportation, environmental stewardship, housing, and economic development. Earlier this evening, we held an open house during which the students presented their work. I am extremely impressed with the way in which they approached Ramsey issues with fresh and innovative perspectives that reflect the values of our community.

Ramsey also continues to measure accomplishment and readiness for the future by our strategic plan, which outlines four key areas of focus:

- Financial stability;
- A connected community;
- Smart, citizen-focused government;
- An effective organization

Tonight I'd like to share some highlights of this work.

Financial Stability

The City continues in a strong financial position and is meeting our goal to grow revenue by expanding our tax base while balancing our expenditures.

In 2017, we welcomed 17 new businesses to Ramsey. These businesses include Your Computer Hero, Physical Therapy Consultants, and ZTECH Precision. On the housing side, approximately 200 new homes were constructed. This includes the launch of the new Riverstone community located just north of and along Highway 10, west of Puma Street.

One of our key projects in 2017 was approval and initiation of a new business park, comprised of 115 acres west of Armstrong Boulevard. With construction beginning last fall, Ramsey is now ready for additional business growth for the next 20 years. Ultimately, this project is expected to generate \$2 million in annual property taxes and create 3,000 jobs.

The total new construction value of both residential and commercial/industrial projects invested in the community in 2017 was \$35 million.

Ramsey's sound financial management continues to be recognized in the reaffirmation in July 2017 of our AA+ bond rating and in the City's award of the Certificate of Achievement in Financial Reporting for the 23rd consecutive year.

A Connected Community

Toward the goal of creating a connected community, Highway 10 continues to be the focus of our efforts. In 2017, we continued progress by completing an important piece of frontage road, the extension of Riverdale Drive between Traprock Street and Ramsey Boulevard.

We also completed a segment of the Mississippi River Trail from the Armstrong Interchange to the Elk River border. The Mississippi River Trail, or MRT, is a designated bicycle and pedestrian trail that traces the path of the Mighty Mississippi River, thereby connecting Ramsey to the headwaters at Lake Itasca and to the Gulf of Mexico.

And speaking of migration along the Mississippi, in 2017, I was proud to join other local executives in signing the Mayors' Monarch Pledge. In doing so, Ramsey joins other communities from the U.S., Canada, and Mexico in an effort to save an iconic species whose populations have declined by 90% in the last 20 years. To mark the Pledge, Ramsey designated a Monarch Trail around Lake Itasca, and working with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, we are restoring 6.5 acres to a natural habitat designed to support monarchs and other pollinators.

Smart, Citizen-Focused Government

The next area of focus in our plan is smart, citizen-focused government. Our goal in this area is to continue the delivery of quality services to ensure the City will have safe and thriving neighborhoods and business districts, and a clean environment.

One key way in which Ramsey prepares for the future is through the comprehensive planning process and development of a 20-year vision for our community. In 2017, Ramsey implemented the City's most robust citizen engagement process to date. Through this process, our residents have readied Ramsey for the future by ensuring in our 20-year vision we balance rural character and urban growth, create an active community, foster a learning environment, and develop a connected community.

Also in 2017, Ramsey initiated an organics recycling program. In only six months, 82 Ramsey families registered for the program, resulting in 2.27 tons of material being captured for recycling rather than being sent to the landfill.

Effective Organization

The final area of focus in our plan is building and maintaining an effective organization. In 2017, we continued to implement new technologies that make our organization more effective, efficient, and customer friendly. The Human Resources department implemented NeoGov, an online HR management and recruitment system. Meanwhile, the Community Development Department is now using an electronic plan review and project management system. This allows for more customer self-service and cuts the plan review time by half.

Also in 2017, the City began work on a new, more user-friendly website. This website will be available in Spring 2018.

In summary, 2017 was a year of great achievement in Ramsey. And there's no doubt that Ramsey is ready for the future, and that future is bright. For this, I thank our residents, volunteers, and staff. Thanks too to my colleagues on the City Council for the dedication you bring to your job and the passion you share with our community.