

Annual Report
City of Lewisburg
January 1, 2011-December 31, 2011

Introduction

It has been my pleasure to serve as your mayor for the last eight years. A great deal has happened over the last year, so I thought it would be good to present a summary and to point out a couple challenges on the horizon we need to prepare for.

We live in a fine community, one that is the envy of many others in the state and around the country. Fine communities do not happen by chance; they happen because a wide variety of people work hard to make it that way. Among these community builders are merchants, arts organizations, non profits, educational institutions, our churches, property owners who take pride in their properties, and people of all sorts who help out in so many ways—our numerous volunteers.

I thank you for the good work that you do.

I would also like to thank the employees of this city for their hard work and dedication to this city, its residents and its visitors. When I think of “government,” our city employees are who comes to mind—our police and fire officers who keep us safe, the workers who plow our streets and maintain our parks, who recycle our items at our curbs, who work around the clock to provide us clean drinking water and fix the leaks to keep that water coming to our households, and the support staff who keep it all running smoothly. I am proud of our city employees, and I hope you are as well.

Thanks are also in order for each of the numerous volunteers in this city who serve on our boards and commissions. They serve without pay, they put in a lot of time and effort, and sometimes they take a lot of heat for trying to do what is best for the city as a whole.

Finally, I would like to commend the continuing commitment of the members of City Council. They participate in many meetings, both at the committee level and as a Council, and many are very lengthy and detailed. And there is prep work required prior to each meeting. Council members work hard, do their homework and engage in active discussion and debate about issues central to improving our community. I am honored to work with such a team. I would be remiss if I did not also thank our local news media for covering our numerous meetings and reporting to their readers, viewers and listeners what city government is doing and planning. Government cannot operate both fairly and effectively in a vacuum, and the media keeps us on our toes. Many of the items that follow have been reported upon already in the media, but it is useful to list the significant ones all in one place.

Accomplishments

Public Works

Water

Replaced 70 year old downtown waterlines along McClung, South Court, East and West Washington Streets (\$1.5 million project). Coordinated with Mountaineer Gas Company for them to replace their older gas lines along West Washington Street and bury their lines in the same trench.

Lewisburg water system now serves 4887 customers (2063 of them within city limits).

Finalized design of larger water tank in Fairlea (300,000 gallons) to improve capacity and fire flow for southern part of service area.

Installed first 700 replacement water meters as first step of replacing all 4887 water meters in the system and converting them to provide water usage data electronically. Funds are provided through a \$2 million Green Stimulus Grant. Project will improve system efficiency and identify water leaks more promptly.

Stormwater

Rebuilt Foster Street/South Court Street storm water drainage structure and grate (\$61,000).

Improved drainage ditch in Lamplighter subdivision.

Streets

Constructed Phase I of Route 219 North sidewalk project from Arbuckle Lane to Silo Lane (\$400,000 Transportation Enhancement grant).

Rebuilt sidewalk on Arbuckle Lane reusing existing flagstones. As part of project we installed new wrought iron fence, rebuilt the rock retaining wall and refaced it with brick along the inside wall and installed several lampposts along the walkway. Project included installing storm water drop inlets and drainage guttering.

Built 300 feet of sidewalk plus curb and gutter along North Court Street near Arbuckle Lane. Installed new storm water drop inlet to improve drainage.

Resurfaced 3200 linear feet of city streets, including portions of South Court, McClung, McIlhenny and East Foster Streets plus Stratton Alley and Ray Drive. McIlhenny Street was widened as was 800 feet of East Foster Street. Work on East Foster also improved drainage issues by raising storm drains and providing paved gutters. The 300 foot walkway through the cemetery beside Old Stone Church was also repaved.

Closed lower section of Kirkpatrick Lane to improve pedestrian safety and reduce storm water runoff onto East Washington Street.

Successfully advocated to WV Department of Highways to resurface sections of Route 219 north and south at the same time they were resurfacing Route 60 downtown.

Parks & Recreation

Received award for \$57,600 in WV Trails and Recreation grant monies for Phase II of the L&R trail (design and construction for section between Frazier Street and Holt Lane).

Constructed bump-out on West Washington Street expanding Center Green. Improved safety for Center Green users and added attractive feature to center of town. Done in collaboration with WV Department of Highways and Lewisburg Foundation.

Formally adopted Center Green into city parks program.

Installed new toddler playground equipment at Dorie Miller Park.

Partnered with the Greenbrier County Commission to enhance the green area at the corner of Arbuckle Lane and Route 219. City provided the equipment and skilled operator; County provided the funds for topsoil, grass seed and straw.

Recycling

Continued curbside recycling pick-up.

Fire

Responded to 824 requests for service.

Signed agreement providing several months of official back-up fire response service to town of Ronceverte resulting from legal challenges to their fire service.

Police

Responded to 3712 requests for service.

Added drug dog to the police force.

Installed new radar units in police vehicles.

Provided traffic control for PGA Tournament and WV State Fair.

Sponsored Fourth Annual Dare to Cruz event in September, bringing visitors and participants downtown while raising funds for D.A.R.E. Program.

Public Safety

Passed ordinance prohibiting the sale of synthetic cannabinoids.

Passed ordinance banning oil and gas drilling operations (fracking) in the city until state regulations adopted. Passed resolution expressing concern to legislators and governor for our water system from unregulated fracking operations.

Passed resolution of concern regarding Opana and other prescription drug abuse.

Approved multijurisdictional hazard mitigation plan with Greenbrier County.

Planning and Zoning

Continued review and update of Lewisburg Zoning Ordinance with Planning Commission.

Finance

Initiated payment of water bills/municipal service fees by webpay. Continued accepting utility payments by automatic bank draft—nearly 400 customers pay this way now.

Continued to achieve cost savings through participation in the State of WV purchasing card program.

Miscellaneous

Lewisburg named Coolest Small Town in America 2011 by Budget Travel Magazine. Signs indicating this recognition were erected at entrances to town on Routes 219 and Route 60 plus east and west of town on I-64 (Thank you Delegate Tom Campbell.). City erected new entrance/welcome sign on DOH right of way just south of the interstate overpass.

Received Community Enhancement Award from the WV Municipal League for L&R Trail Project.

Upgraded heating and cooling system in old library building on Courtney Drive with energy efficient units through \$37,960 in Green Stimulus funding. Replaced roofs and gutters on old library building and library annex.

Received approval to host an Americorps worker with North House Museum and Lewisburg Historic Preservation and Enhancement Alliance.

Began update and electronic codification of city code.

Received Tree City USA Award for 9th consecutive year.

Prepared for and cleaned up after numerous special events downtown, including Shanghai Parade, Chocolate Festival, Battle of Lewisburg, TOOT and Christmas Parade.

Hosted Holiday Angel Program for 13th year which helped 30 children in need.

Delivered annual holiday food drive items from city employees and local residents to Family Refuge Center.

Named Mike Kidd 2011 Volunteer of the Year.

Hosted showing of film, "Not in our Town, Light in the Darkness" in Council chambers.

Began research into establishing a relationship with a "sister city."

Provided over \$64,000 annual operational support for city library.

Challenges

Planning and paying for major improvements at the water treatment plant and distribution system.

Replacing Fire Station #1.

John Manchester, Mayor
City of Lewisburg, WV
January 17, 2012