STATE OF THE CITY
2020 ADDRESS
**HOMELESSNESS COALITION**

Since January, the City of Kingsport has focused on providing assistance to the homeless individuals within the city. This initiative includes an active Homelessness Coalition and also the hiring of a social worker and homeless liaison.

Among the people who have been served thus far, 71 have been placed in temporary housing and 32 have been placed in permanent housing. Twenty referrals have come through the city’s social worker for mental health help.

A primary goal of the Homelessness Coalition is to assess the services available through community partners and organizations. Following this assessment, the coalition will begin to plan a coordinated entry process that will help unhomed residents access housing and other assistance based on their needs and available resources. Phase two for the coalition will be to determine a time frame and cost for implementing the coordinated entry point.

Through federal funding, Kingsport was also able to temporarily house a portion of the homeless population during the onset of COVID-19 to provide a safe place to social distance. The city also donated to local organizations that provide resources to the homeless: $25,000 to Salvation Army and $25,000 to Second Harvest Food Bank.

**GREENBELT EXPANSION**

The Greenbelt expansion from the 0.4 mile marker near Exchange Place to the Cleek Road pedestrian path is now complete. This new section of the trail includes a raised boardwalk similar to other spots on the Greenbelt.

The paths along the Greenbelt are not just open to walkers and recreational runners, but to cyclists and skaters as well. You can go check out the new pedestrian bridge, pictured here, the next time you’re out for a walk or a ride on the Greenbelt. The city hopes that this newest section of the Greenbelt will be a valuable addition to the Kingsport community.

**MIRACLE FIELD**

The new Kingsport Miracle League Complex is now open to the public. It features a rubberized baseball field, along with an adaptive playground, pavilion and concessions. The state of the art complex is built to accommodate special needs children, along with wounded warriors and others.

The field is about a third of the size of a regular baseball field with the mound and all of the bases being flush so wheelchairs and amputees can run on the surface safely. Adjacent to Miracle Field is the BlueCross Healthy Place, an accessible playground designed for the enjoyment of all.
The Kingsport Public Library has installed a StoryWalk® in Glen Bruce Park to encourage reading and outdoor activity for families in an interactive format. StoryWalk, a system created for outdoor spaces with numbered stations that contain laminated pages from children’s books, can be found in all 50 states and internationally. The first book to be featured was “We’re Going on a Bear Hunt,” as retold by author Michael Rosen and illustrated by Helen Oxenbury. The library plans to change the stories quarterly, so head over to Glen Bruce Park and check out the current book!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY CAROUSEL!
The Kingsport Carousel celebrated its 5th birthday this year! It is a fully restored 1956 Allen Herschell carousel located in the temperature-controlled Pal’s Roundhouse in downtown Kingsport. More than 300 volunteers worked for five years to hand-carve and paint the carousel’s platform, sweeps and animals. Since opening in July 2015, the carousel has hosted over 341,000 riders!

GET BACK ON TRACK
The newly improved Lynn View Community Center track is ready for you! The new track has been completely rebuilt with new asphalt, green paint and white striping. The city has invested more than $1 million in facility improvements since acquiring the center. The track improvements are made possible by a $450,000 Project Diabetes grant from the Tennessee Department of Health with a goal of creating great spaces for community members to gather.

FARMERS MARKETS ARE ESSENTIAL
Amid a global pandemic, farmers markets – like all businesses – have been required to adapt operations for the communities that depend on them. The Kingsport Farmers Market was no different. Though the season began a little later than usual, this year has proven the resilience of KFM vendors, especially our local farmers. But through it all, both vendors and customers alike have adapted to new guidelines meant to protect everyone who comes to the market. With the support of the Kingsport community, the farmers market has been successful this year. There’s never been a better time to shop local!
One of only 12 cities in the nation to hold this honor, reaccredited in 2018.

Water Treatment Plant received EPA's Safe Drinking Water Director's Award

Wastewater Plant received Gold Peak Performance Award & Operational Excellence Award

Received the Adventure Tourism Award from Northeast Tennessee Tourism Association

Received 'New Facility' TRPA Four Star Award for Carousel Park

Received Comprehensive Annual Financial Report Award & Distinguished Budget Presentation Award

Received the Adventure Tourism Award from Northeast Tennessee Tourism Association

The COVID-19 pandemic has and continues to bring many new challenges to Kingsport, the likes of which we've never faced in our city's history. Yet through it all, we continue to prove our resilience as a community.

Since the onset of the pandemic, we prioritized maintaining essential city services to our citizens and businesses. Thanks to our dedicated employees, I am happy to report that there have been no interruptions to those services. We've also begun the process of safely resuming other services that were altered in the spring.

In a time when far too many headlines describe the financial stress for cities across the country, Kingsport remains financially solid. We have endured what others have not through conservative budgeting, sound financial management and continued support from the Board of Mayor and Aldermen. Decisions in the fourth quarter of FY20 allowed us to make significant revenue adjustments for the FY21 budget. As a result, we're positioned to weather the unknown and to make positive adjustments when we can throughout the year. We're good stewards of our resources, and the city is in a much better place right now than we expected.

As we manage this challenging time, we keep an eye toward Kingsport's future. Increased demand for housing has led to an all-time high of new residential development, and projects like the public-private development of Brickyard Park enrich our unique downtown neighborhood. We also remain true to our history as the industrial foundation of our city evolves to meet the ever-changing global economy.

As you read this document, I hope you see that your city remains focused and balanced to meet the needs of today and tomorrow.

Stay safe, and stay Kingsport Strong.
KINGSPORT STRONG
When COVID-19 appeared in our area, the Kingsport Chamber, along with other local organizations, started the “Kingsport Strong - Distance Socially, Support Locally” initiative to help businesses stay afloat through the support of the Kingsport community. The resources provided on the program’s Facebook page were extremely helpful in spreading awareness of newly implemented business hours and practices. Many Kingsport residents were able to use the page as a community resource to find local businesses who were offering delivery, curbside pickup or online gift card options during the pandemic. What a great way to showcase just how strong the Kingsport community can be!

PETWORKS
In November 2019, Petworks broke ground on its new adoption shelter and dog park off East Stone Drive. The 17,000-square-foot facility will house 180 animals and includes isolation rooms, adoption visitation spaces, educational area for training and a 1.2 acre dog park. The shelter celebrated a ribbon-cutting ceremony and is excited to welcome pets, and people, to the new ‘Good Steward Adoption Center and Dog Park.’

STORM DRAIN ART
For the past two years, the Kingsport Stormwater Department has hosted an annual Storm Drain Art Contest to help educate and bring attention to the effects of stormwater. Last year, five regional artists painted storm drains around Kingsport to raise awareness about the importance of protecting our rivers, stream habitats and aquatic wildlife. This year will be the third annual contest, so be sure to check out the storm drains around town and remember to do your part to keep our water clean!

LITTLE LIBRARIES
Thanks to an exciting project, several neighborhoods will have their very own Little Library to help them share books among residents. A community venture, this project is led by the Kingsport Neighborhood Commission to share the gift of reading with all our neighbors. One Little Library has already been set up over in Borden Park, so be sure to check it out the next time you’re in the park. You can bring books of your own that you’d like to share with the community.

COUNT ALL NEIGHBORS
Over the past year, the 2020 Census Complete Count Committee has worked tirelessly to ensure that Kingsport and Sullivan County accurately count all of its residents. The Census is used to draw congressional district lines as well as allocate federal funds. A significant under-count can cost our local governments several million dollars each year that could be redistributed back to other communities. Over the 10-year span until the next Census is conducted, tens of millions of dollars are at stake. Since its formation, members of the committee spread the word about the importance of the Census through radio and television spots, social media advertising, direct mailers and additional methods. As a result of their hard work, Kingsport’s final self response rate was above the national average.
PRESTON FOREST PARK
The three-acre park, located in the Preston Forest neighborhood, had significant improvements take place over the last year through a state grant. The new park features include an expanded eight-space parking lot; a looped, paved walking path; water fountain; and new benches and sidewalks. Previous park improvements include a new playground, a new roof on the pavilion and landscaping.

CEMENT HILL & BRICKYARD PARK UPDATE
The future of Cement Hill, the land behind Citizens Bank or former train station, has been decided. The hill will undergo development to become a passive green space - complete with hiking trails, biking trails and observation decks for the incredible views the hill has to offer.

Kingsport completed a land swap deal with Domtar to acquire Cement Hill, which connects with the current downtown project development of Brickyard Park. The area will include residential development, a bike pump track, a new Scott Adams Memorial Skatepark and green space. The plans complement the newly completed Miracle Field and adaptive playground.

NEW SIGNS AT BAYS MOUNTAIN PARK
How do you measure up against the wingspan of a raptor? You can find out at Bays Mountain Park! This sign comes as part of a larger project by the park’s exhibits team to create engaging and interactive signage throughout the park. Each new sign, whether it’s for wayfinding or animal education, is designed and crafted in house by the exhibits staff, Allen Davis, Gabriel Gould and Cassy Rose.

"To be able to open Cement Hill back up for the public is pretty special and something we’re excited about."
-City Manager McCartt

KINGSPORT AQUATIC CENTER
There’s a new outdoor pool at the KAC. Completed this spring as part of a larger expansion, this heated pool is designed for multipurpose use and caters to teens and adults. The summer season may not have gone as planned this year, but plenty of swimmers enjoyed swimming laps and taking part in water aerobics classes against the backdrop of Bays Mountain. Other additions to the KAC include an outdoor pavilion, more family changing restrooms, and an administrative extension to provide more office space for operational, programming and support staff.
NEW TRANSIT GARAGE
Thanks to the Improve Act Grant from TDOT, the Kingsport Area Transit Service has been given the green light to start the process of building a garage adjacent to the current transit center. The garage will allow buses to be parked out of the elements, light bus maintenance, and a wash bay to help keep buses clean. The project is set to kick off this winter with completion taking roughly 12-18 months.

NEW CITY HALL UPDATE
Phase 1 of the City Hall Relocation project largely consisted of the renovation of floors three through six. The upper floors all received new flooring, paint, ceilings, and lighting to provide an updated look to the spaces. New sprinkler lines were also installed. Extra attention was given to help improve the existing office spaces to best serve the new user, and to provide a more cohesive appearance throughout. Phase 1 also included a Board of Mayor and Aldermen meeting room on the third floor that will host work sessions, BMA meetings and other public events. City staff anticipate the move to the new city hall to happen this winter.

PAVEKINGSPORT
Through the Sustainable Paving Plan, Kingsport is improving roads in various parts of the city. In the past year, another area in Lynn Garden was completed, Area 11, which consists of Upper Sevier Terrace, with over eight miles being paved. Paving crews will tackle east Lynn Garden, Eastern Star and the airport areas over the next couple of years.

MAIN STREET PROJECT
Kingsport staff continue to work through the right-of-way process to acquire the necessary property and easements for the Main Street project. Construction is expected to start in spring 2021 and will last approximately 24 months. The completed project will provide Main Street a facelift, including updates to roadways, sidewalks, landscaping and water and sewer lines.

WILCOX DRIVE OVERPASS
If you've driven under the Wilcox Drive railroad bridge in the last few months, you might have noticed the new landscaping and fresh coat of paint on the bridge. This project comes from the city striving to improve the look of city entrances and this one, that leads straight to downtown, was significant to enhance.

"The move to Church Circle will enhance the business operations of the city, but more importantly, create an extraordinary customer interaction for our valued citizens."
- Deputy City Manager McReynolds
When the COVID-19 pandemic brought challenges to all aspects of Kingsport life in 2020, the educators, students and families of Kingsport City Schools stepped forward in new and innovative ways to meet the academic, social and physical needs of our community.

Students and staff shifted to an environment of virtual learning in March 2020, utilizing the district’s 1:1 technology program that provides academic content through a district-issued technology device to all students in grades 6-12. Additional devices were made available to students in lower grades, as well as printed educational packets for our youngest students. Teachers at all grades supported continual academic growth through virtual meetings, small group online sessions and electronic contacts.

When virtual learning began, KCS School Nutrition Services shifted into high-gear to continue to provide healthy meals to all children ages 18 and under throughout Kingsport, regardless of whether or not they were a KCS student. Partnering with the KCS Transportation Department and additional KCS employees, more than 313,000 meals were given to Kingsport’s families through neighborhood deliveries and at-school pick-up sites during the spring semester. All meals were free of charge proving an incredibly valuable service to the community.

At all times, the KCS Maintenance and Custodial staff worked tirelessly to provide the safest possible physical environments. Many additional cleaning supplies and materials have been added to KCS facilities, as well as added COVID-19 disinfecting processes aimed at keeping students and staff safe. KCS Nurses have stepped forward to provide vital services to support good health, ensuring both children and adults have access to high quality and expert health care.

This team approach and much hard work have resulted in tremendous success for KCS students and staff during unprecedented times. These efforts will continue to drive our community forward as we seek new and innovative ways to support our vision to Inspire... Cultivate... and Impact the lives of all involved with Kingsport City Schools.