

## **2016 STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS**

**Mayor Thomas Ratzlaff**  
**Monday, July 11, 2016**

As Mayor and Common Council it is our responsibility to protect our citizens, offer a good quality of life, provide necessary infrastructure for residents and businesses, and keep our community strong. To that end, the city is involved in several important projects.

This construction season has been very busy. The city has taken advantage of 2016 market timing. With low oil prices and a hot mix plant located near our city this summer, we have chosen to pave a number of city streets. Our main thoroughfares -- 1st Avenue, 3rd Avenue, and Division Street -- have been all been repaved.

Reconstruction of 5th Avenue South from Division Street to 9th Street South is also underway. Construction began in April and is progressing well. We expect this project to be substantially complete by October 3rd. The city received grants totaling \$1,360,917 to assist in funding this \$2.8 million project. The balance of the project will be paid through low interest loans from the DNR Safe Drinking Water and Clean Water Funds. We are very excited to bring this improvement to our city.

In 2017 the Department of Transportation will resurface State Trunk Highway 182 and replace the Highway 182 bridge. Working in conjunction with this DOT project, the city is currently designing street reconstruction for 8 blocks of the downtown area. This \$2.5 million downtown project qualifies for \$500,000 in principal forgiveness, or essentially grant money, from the Safe Drinking Water loan program. The city has also applied for a CDBG grant. This grant may provide an additional \$500,000 for this project. If an acceptable funding package can be achieved, the downtown project will be scheduled for 2017.

Community pride abounds in Park Falls. This is evident in two new improvements at our Athletic Field Complex. Funded entirely by donations, a new bathroom building is under construction as well as a complete replacement of the press box at the track and football field. Our thanks go out to all who have made these projects possible.

The City of Park Falls CDBG Housing Rehabilitation Grant revolving loan program remains active and continues to offer zero percent, deferred payment loans. Qualified Park Falls applicants can receive zero percent interest loans for repairs or improvements including roofing, siding, heating, electrical, insulation, foundation, windows and doors, sewer and water laterals, and handicapped accessibility. In addition, eligible families who are renting can access zero percent, deferred loans to assist with a down payment toward the purchase of a home. We encourage Park Falls residents to take advantage of this loan program.

Additional affordable housing money will become available in 2018 with a funding increment from our Tax Increment District No. 2. It is our intent to use this revenue to improve housing throughout our city.

Recreational opportunities have been expanded by adding new segments to our multi-use trail system. A new trail in the wooded area behind the city garage is now open. This new trail provides connectivity among Tourist Park, Riverside Park, and Hines Park. Residents will find many uses in all seasons as this new trail segment is open for hiking, biking, snowshoeing, and cross country skiing. We encourage everyone to explore our trail system.

I would like to commend the Council for their leadership and commitment. Together we continue to make Park Falls an exceptional place to live, raise a family, and do business.

Thank you.