

Mayor's Office

David A. Wood, Mayor

Lou Ann Hazen, Executive Assistant

Debra Gregg, Secretary

In the year 2021, I am proud to report that the City of Mishawaka continued to deliver world class City services, uninterrupted, that the residents of Mishawaka have come to know and expect. This year was again, a challenge, but events started taking place, meetings were held “in person” and the Covid-19 pandemic was slowing down. Life was taking on a “new normal” and the citizens of Mishawaka were attending park and other events in record numbers. Everyone was ready to get out!!!!

Following is the recap of the highlights of 2021 for the City of Mishawaka, Mayor's Office. The year started out slow, but ended with a bang.

Sub-heading

Each year Mayor Wood has the honor and privilege to present Drum Major Awards at the Annual Martin Luther King Day Breakfast. This year, with the Covid-19 Pandemic, the Martin Luther King Planning Committee had to think outside the box. How would you have this important breakfast with a thousand people and honor these deserving recipients? They knocked it out of the park and planned a Virtual Event. Attendees could get together with their small group or watch individually, but the event lived on!

Here at City Hall, the IT Department set up the event in the Council Chambers so that those who usually attended could still do so, just on a much smaller scale and safely. So, the City of Mishawaka had their first ever “Drum Major Award Watch Party” and were able to attend and support the Mishawaka honorees that were nominated by Mayor Wood.

Following are the deserving Mishawaka recipients who have made a significant impact in the City of Mishawaka and their surrounding community:

Dr. Michelle Migliore

Dr. Migliore is a board-certified Family Practice physician and native of Indiana. Dr. Migliore came to the Mishawaka Activate Health & Wellness Center on December 1st, 2015. Her focus since arriving with the clinic has been to work on preventive care for all employees and their families. She believes preventive care is a key factor in maintaining good health throughout a lifetime.

While striving to prevent onset of new diseases through proven, high-quality care, she has also focused on prevention of complications from already existing conditions. She visited every Department and spoke with every employee so that they could meet her and have confidence in using our clinic. Due to this outreach, 89% of the employees use the clinic.



Dr. Michelle Migliore

She has left no stone unturned. Over the past five years she has implemented many programs to keep all of her patients healthy. She has supplied blood pressure cuffs in every department so that employees can monitor their daily blood pressure, she has taught step aerobics at Battell Community Center, has organized an afterwork walking group and has even taken employee shared recipes and made them into healthier versions!

I am not sure if Dr. Migliore realizes there are only 24 hours in a day because she tirelessly works around the clock for all employees 36 hours a day, 9 days a week. She gives everyone the one-on-one attention needed, doesn't rush through appointments, makes you feel like you are her only patient, answers texts, phone calls and emails AFTERHOURS. Dr. Migliore has even made house calls. She is very judicious with spending money always looking for the best deals without sacrificing quality or service (that information came directly from our Controller, Becky Miller so I know it's true).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Migliore has been the resident Czar for all things COVID, for the City. She has advised every person, family member and department that has come into contact with COVID-19. She makes sure everyone is following CDC guidelines, and in the beginning, was the only person who administered the COVID-19 test, not wanting to put others in danger. She has COVID tested entire departments when needed and has volunteered to administer tests to other cities and government entities in our area. She has helped in developing protocol for each department to ensure we are operating in a safe, healthy manor and has not allowed anyone to deviate from these protocols.

I could go on and on about the qualities of this wonderful Doctor who the City of Mishawaka has been blessed with, but there is not enough time to do that today. So, I just want to introduce and thank this truly amazing and professional woman who is so deserving of this honor today.

City of Mishawaka Employees

What an extraordinary year we've endured. The City of Mishawaka employees have been through a lot in dealing with an unprecedented pandemic and they have met the challenge of their life, head on, together and with courage. I have witnessed countless acts of bravery, compassion and dedication by the staff of all departments throughout the year of 2020. I often say that it is the local level of government that provides the critical services that our citizens depend on the most. It is times, such as these, that our services matter the most to the citizens of Mishawaka.



Drum Major Award to City Employees

All employees had to overcome the stress of responding to an enemy that was heretofore unknown, develop emergency modified operations, and serve our public with professionalism even as they may have been unsure and fearful themselves. They had to report for duty when family members were at home worrying. I know this has caused a lot of stress and through it all, the employees of Mishawaka have delivered our services uninterrupted. The way they were delivered may have been a little different, but they have continued to deliver them, uninterrupted!

I want to thank every employee in the City of Mishawaka from the bottom of my heart for their service and support. I am honored and proud to work with each and every one of them, and there are no greater people that I would want to face these challenges with than THEM. Thank you for your dedicated and continuing public service in 2021 and there are none more deserving of a Drum Major Award than the employees of the City of Mishawaka.

St. Joseph County Police Department

We are honoring the men and women of the St. Joseph County Police Department. While they serve all of St. Joseph County, they also back-up the fine men and women of the Mishawaka Police and Fire Departments. They are not employees of the City of Mishawaka, but they serve the City of Mishawaka, and they do it well.

There are so many things these heroes do on a daily basis without thought for themselves, that are too numerous to list. They have continued to serve the public during the COVID-19 pandemic, not in a lesser fashion, but have stepped up and realized that the need for service has increased with mental health and medical issues on the rise. They are medical providers, counselors, mediators, teachers, friends and protectors to all that they come in contact with. They have had to think outside the box to keep themselves and the public safe and they have stepped up and increased their service to the public. For this, I would like to include the men and women of the St. Joseph County Police Department as Drum Major Recipients.

Mayor Dave Wood Youth Advisory Council

The 2020-2021 Mayor Dave Wood Youth Advisory Council (MYAC) is proud to have completed another successful year of community service, local government studies, educational opportunities with businesses and volunteer work around the City. This year the group focused on the completion of renovating and renaming Hums Park. This Leadership Project began in 2019 but with the Covid-19 Pandemic could not be completed until this year.

This year’s group consisted of 32 members from the three area High Schools, Mishawaka, Penn and Marian. They would meet the first Monday of every month and learn about their local government from Mayor Dave Wood and his Department Managers. The students would have the opportunity to visit different Departments, meet with City employees, complete a community service project along with volunteering for special events and help with ribbon cuttings. They would be among the first to know about what was going on in the City of Mishawaka.

2020-2021 Mayor’s Youth Council	
Marian High School	Seth Becker, President; Max Christianson, Delaney Dennison, Christopher Hahn, Jacob Herczig, Treasurer; Atticus Horvath, Noah Majewski, Dominic Mammolenti, Maura Meyers, Avery Sharp, Evan Trippel, Olivia Whitaker, Vice-President; Emily Winters
Mishawaka High School	Ryan Allman, Kyla Bowman, Madeline Buraczewski, Alexa Cannon, Justin Fisher, Allison Gordon, Secretary; Lainey Kasznia, Alexis Katzelis, Garrett Sandefur, Jessica Stewart, Reese Sutherland, Grace Vandenburg
Penn High School	Delaney Godbold, Riley Niedbalski, Emmie Pica, Dylan Shely, Hannah Shely, Albert Spalding, Olivia VanLaere

Usually the first event of the year, is a meet and greet picnic but with the on-going Covid-19 Pandemic, the students first meeting was a Swearing-In Ceremony on September 14th at the Battell Center Auditorium. This large space enabled the students to invite family and friends while being able to socially distance and stay safe. The group was sworn into office, the same as elected officials are, and started the 2020-2021 MYAC year.



Marian High School



Mishawaka High School



Penn High School

Their first meeting was Monday, October 5th, with the election of Officers, designing of the MYAC t-shirt, and a presentation from Bo Hundt, Building Director and Joe VanNevel, Code Enforcement Director. The students learned first-hand what these two departments do and their importance to our community. Also, in October they passed out candy during the annual Table or Treat event on the Mishawaka Riverwalk. Thousands of goblins and ghouls attended this event and the students were impressed with the many different costumes.

November, Mayor Dave Wood gave a class on local government to the students and they worked on their largest community service project, the Thanksgiving Food Drive. Instead of delivering boxes to individuals at their homes, the students met at Healthline and handed out the boxes in a drive-thru fashion.



Thanksgiving Food Drive

The Youth Council learned how to get things done in the community while following the safety rules and CDC guidelines during the Covid-19 pandemic. December was the first ever “WebEx” meeting for the students, but they were familiar with this process as they were still doing e-learning at school. They talked about their largest fund-raising initiative, a Patronicity Campaign to pay for the Hammock Comfort Station that would be installed at Hums Park, the park that they began designing last Youth Council session. They started planning the park ribbon cutting event, slated for May 2021, and put together a committee that would design the t-shirt for the ribbon cutting.



MYAC Service

The meetings throughout the year were held at either Battell Center in the auditorium or consisted of field trips. This group learned about HR, Law, visited the Mishawaka Police Department to learn about the K9 unit and see the K9 dog in action, and a few lucky students got the opportunity to shoot a taser gun. Mayor Wood gave them a tour of the WPA wall that was unearthed at Eberhart Golf Course, and they attended a field trip hosted by the Mishawaka Fire Department where they put on the fire gear, saw the inside of an ambulance, sprayed water from the fire hose and took a ride in the bucket truck about 100 feet into the air.



Fire and Police Tours

The students work continued on the renovation of Hums Park and they still needed to come up with a new name for the park. Several names were suggested: Peppermint Park, Bent Bridge Park, Winn Park, Dead Shot Park, Perkins Park, Gregg Smith Park, Smitty Park, Flex Complex, Outdoor Zen Park, Stay Awhile Park, Outdoor Evolution Park, and Heroes Park. This process took a lot of hard work, meetings and discussions by the students, but they finally agreed on a name. They would then need to take this name before the Mishawaka Parks Board and get approval for the name change.

Here is what their presentation said:

“This past year has been very trying with the Covid-19 Pandemic and the Mayor’s Youth Advisory Council felt that it would be fitting to dedicate this park to the people of Mishawaka who have gone above and beyond in their duties to keep life safe and as close to normal as possible. This park will be dedicated to the First Responders: Fire Department, Police Department, Paramedics, teachers, healthcare workers, grocery store workers and City employees who have provided the City of Mishawaka citizens with the world-class service that they are given day in and day out.

*For this reason, the Mayor’s Youth Advisory Council would like the Mishawaka Parks Board to approve the name we have chosen: **HEROES PARK.**”*

It was a unanimous “YES” vote by the Mishawaka Parks Board and the name change was approved.

The Mayor’s Youth Advisory Council decided to take the naming process a bit further and felt it would be fitting to name each amenity in the park after heroes in their lives. These amenities were named after people in the community who had touched the lives of these students in one way or another. The students felt that these individuals deserved this special recognition that would be remembered for years to come.

Here are the names that the students chose for the amenities in Heroes Park:

Heroes Park	
Youth Playground	The Firehouse
Volleyball Court	Anderson Brothers Court
Athletic Field	Violi Field
Teen Area including the Hammock Station	Smitty's
Orchard	Educators Orchard
Pavilion	The Precinct
Trail Around the Park	Rohrer Trail
Basketball Court	Cannady Court

In April, the group met and painted the existing pavilion and restroom structure with colors they chose that would match the park's youth playground and ninja warrior court. In May, they met and planted all of the fruit trees that would be in the Orchard, had their handprints put onto the ping-pong table, and met to discuss the final agenda and ribbon cutting for the Park. On a beautiful sunny Sunday, June 6th at 3:00pm, the students greeted family, friends, and guests and held a ribbon cutting ceremony. It was attended by several hundred people.

Past and present MYAC members talked about the leadership opportunity given to them by Mayor Wood and unveiled each amenities name and talked about why they chose to put this amenity in their park. Demonstrations of the ninja warrior court were given by "official" ninja warrior competitors (they had competed several times in this event on television) and last, the students unveiled the name of the Park. Heroes Park is a first of its kind, a newly renovated park in the City of Mishawaka designed by teens for teens. These students have left a lasting piece of themselves in the hometown they grew up in and can be proud of the work they did. It was a leadership project that most would never forget.



Heroes Park Ribbon Cutting

The last meeting of the year took place on June 21st, much later than normal (but what has been normal about this year), and the students attended a Mishawaka Common Council meeting where they would see their local government in action; the government they have learned so much about. The students were impressed by what they saw, and who knows, maybe one of them will be sitting in one of the chairs of a Councilman, City Clerk, Council Attorney or possibly Mayor in the future. This is what this program is all about: teaching students about local government. The government that impacts their day-to-day life the most

Mayor Ley and Officials Visit from Auburn, Indiana

It has been said that "Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery", and I am proud to say that the City of Mishawaka can relate to this saying. In January of 2021, the Mayor's office was contacted

by the office of Mayor Mike Ley, the Mayor of Auburn, Indiana. Mayor Ley has been impressed with the growth of Mishawaka's Park Systems and especially impressed with the things going on in downtown Mishawaka that he was hopeful he could share with Auburn city leaders.

Mayor Ley attended a Northern Indiana Mayors' Roundtable in October of 2020 which was held at the Ball Band Biergarten and The Mill at Ironworks Plaza. Mayor Ley loved what was going on in Mishawaka and felt these were things that they could do in the City of Auburn. He wanted Auburn city leaders to see firsthand some of the great development and happenings in Mishawaka's downtown and told Mayor Wood that these developments and happenings are the very ideas and visions he has talked about with his administration and would like to see them happen in Auburn.

The Auburn group included three Common Council members, members of the Plan Commission, Redevelopment Commission, Board of Public Works, City Department Heads and representatives of the volunteer Auburn Main Street organization that promotes Auburn's downtown. They arrived in Mishawaka on June 16, 2021 around 1:30pm and met at the Center for Hospice Care where they learned why Hospice chose this area to build in downtown Mishawaka. They were then given a golf cart tour of the Mishawaka Riverwalk by some of the CAP volunteers as well as a tour of The Mill at Ironworks Plaza. Later, they met at the Ball Band Biergarten to eat dinner and have a question and answer session with Mayor Wood and some of his key staff about what they had seen in our City.



*Auburn Mayor Mike Ley (l) with
Mishawaka Mayor Dave Wood*

“The City of Mishawaka is hitting on all cylinders right now. Development's almost pouring into downtown and the things Mishawaka is doing can be scaled down to fit Auburn's downtown,” Auburn Mayor Ley commented. “I think Auburn is poised to do the very same things with its proximity to Ft. Wayne, Ohio and Michigan. People would move to Auburn to have a quality of place and live in a vibrant downtown. Mishawaka has built their downtown around their parks. I foresee using Auburn's Cedar Creek as the centerpiece of family-friendly attractions, including our plan to install a historic former railroad bridge over the creek connecting downtown to the DeKalb Outdoor Theatre. I thank Mayor Wood and his team for taking their time to let us tour their City and share their expertise with us.”

Needless to say, the group came away excited with unlimited ideas and visions from their visit to the City of Mishawaka.

Proclamations

Each year Mayor Wood is called upon to honor notable events and occasions with proclamations. Following are the 2021 Mayoral Proclamations:

City of Mishawaka Retirements

- Jim Adkinson, Central Services, 38 years 01/26/2021
- Steve Weston, Sewer Department, 10 years 01/29/2021
- Jim Schrader, Mishawaka Utilities, 15 years 03/30/2021
- Mark Moreland, Mishawaka Police Department, 43 years 08/20/2021
- Toni Claeys, Mishawaka Utilities Business Office, 20 years 08/31/2021
- Connie Hesiben, Mishawaka Utilities Business Office, 17 years 09/17/2021

Other Notable Proclamations

- Bicentennial of Greek Independence Day 04/28/2021
- Worker's Memorial Day 04/28/2021
- Arbor Day 04/30/2021
- National Day of Prayer 05/06/2021
- Emily & Andrew VanWeber Day 09/09/2021
- National Rail Safety Week 09/20/2021
- Lawson Fisher Day, 50th Anniversary 09/24/2021
- Deb Starkweather Day, Retirement Jordan Ford, 32 years 10/04/2021
- Emergency Nurses Week 10/10/2021
- Mike Hoffman Day, Retirement WNDU, 36 years 12/02/2021

Arrival of Santa

On a cold winter evening, Friday, December 3rd, Mayor Dave Wood and Santa Claus led the procession on the decorated firetruck to host the annual lighting of the Mishawaka Christmas tree and kick-off the holiday season in the City of Mishawaka.

With the construction of the Ironworks Plaza in downtown Mishawaka becoming the future location of the "official" Mishawaka Christmas tree, this year Mayor Wood decided to use the Christmas tree on the corner of Church and 1st Street in front of the Mishawaka Police Department for the annual event. This Christmas tree is the tree that was used for the tree lighting ceremonies by former Mayor Robert Beutter during his tenure as Mayor. Since the Mishawaka Police Department building will be sold in the near future and the City of Mishawaka will no longer own this property, what better way to end 2021, but by honoring the legacy of former Mayor Robert Beutter and using this tree for the lighting ceremony.

Mayor Wood and Santa arrived amid cheers from the children, disembarked from the truck and proceeded to the stage to do the countdown and light the tree. Three, Two, One and the tree was lit. Santa stayed and visited with the children to hear their Christmas wishes. Hot chocolate and cookies were served by the Mayor's Youth Advisory Council students and Christmas carols were sung around the tree. Welcome to Christmas in the City of Mishawaka!