



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Presiding Commissioner Dixon highlights progress in State of the County speech



SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – Greene County Presiding Commissioner, Bob Dixon, gave his annual State of the County speech Thursday morning. He was this month's keynote speaker for Good Morning, Springfield, hosted by the Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce. The event took place at the DoubleTree Hotel on N. Glenstone in Springfield, MO. Dixon highlighted the work of the 13 independent departments in Greene County over the past year.

COVID-19 Pandemic Relief

One of the most ambitious tasks the Greene County Commission faced in 2021 was working directly with the federal government to distribute \$34.4 million in CARES Act funding. In all, over 450 small businesses were given grants, along with 25 school districts, 84 non-profits, and 18 units of government. One award went to firefighters who had been sharing masks and personal protective equipment. Another went to the downtown eFactory for video and networking upgrades. The Commission also distributed \$8.7 million in rental assistance funds to local agencies who help families in need. Over 4,900 awards were given. 58% of the funds have been paid out with the remaining money likely to be used by April of 2022. Greene County Clerk, Shane Schoeller, also oversaw the implementation of drive thru polling locations for local elections during quarantine orders in the height of the pandemic.

Economy & Residential Growth

The unemployment rate in Greene County has dropped to 2.8%. While the county's economy only grew 2% in 2020, the year to date growth for 2021 is an astounding 17%. That number is not adjusted for inflation. New 2020 U.S. Census data shows diverse and explosive growth in Greene County. Fair Grove grew almost 14%. Willard is up 20%. Rogersville is at more than 26% and the strongest growth in the county was Republic at 27%. The latter has seen new economic opportunities with Amazon's fulfillment center, Resource Optimization & Innovation's (ROi) facility, and Convoy of Hope's new world distribution center. Agri-business continues to thrive in the county too. Within a 100-mile radius, Greene County has the largest concentration of cattle in the nation. Show Me Genetic Services is experiencing exponential growth and is now processing orders for clients all over the world.

New Jail & Sheriff's Office

Construction on the new Greene County jail and Sheriff's office is on time and on budget. It's scheduled to be completed in May of 2022. The redesigned jail will save the county \$95 million in staffing costs over the next 20 years due to the use of technology and reduction of safety duplications. The team also budgeted for two additional projects, an on-site Training and Evidence Storage Facility and a water management system that will pay for itself in five years. After working with state leaders, the county has largely recuperated owed money for jail per diem. To highlight a few positive events, one of the county's detention officers recently helped a

man who was released at the county's current jail on N. Boonville by providing him with food, drinks and eventually connecting him to the O'Reilly Center for Hope. Also, 911 Lead Communicator, Summer Onyeukwu, used her own vacation time to help a stranded mother of three children to purchase groceries and connect the woman with local police.

2017 Tax Bonds

In February of 2020, the Commissioners refinanced bonds that were issued to build the Public Safety Center and county morgue. The county was able to pay down early \$3.7 million in principal and take advantage of a better interest rate. This created \$1.4 million in savings due to a reduction in scheduled future payments. In July of 2020, the Commissioners refinanced bonds that were issued to build the Dan Kinney Family Center for the Springfield-Greene County Park Board. This saved the county \$46k and provided the parks system a more desirable cash flow savings that will be used for maintenance.

Other Projects

The Greene County Highway Department has received final approval to proceed with the long-awaited Kansas Expressway Extension in south Springfield. Construction will likely begin later this year. The Highway Department is operating with a 13% shortage but still recently received an email from a citizen complimenting their work. "Thank you for your quick response. Every time I require your assistance, I receive professional, prompt service. Your department is truly the epitome of excellent government service. I am blown away. Thank you," said the Greene County resident. The Commission has also partnered with the National Association of Counties to assess the needs and opportunities of expanded rural broadband. The Springfield-Greene County 911 Center secured a grant to purchase back-up servers that, in cooperation with Jasper County, will allow each center to help one another in the event of a catastrophe. This is the first of its kind in the state and one of just a few in the nation. Finally, the Office of Emergency Management in Greene County recently completed a multi-agency full-scale exercise, called Operation Sling Blade, which tested the county's emergency capabilities and ensured proper certifications.

A Look to the Future

With the success of county's CARES Act and ERA programs, the Commissioners are anxiously awaiting final federal guidelines for how they can invest in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. A recent survey asked our community how the Commission should spend the \$56.8 million. It received more than 1600 responses. Mental health, addressing homelessness, and relief to small business were some of the greatest concerns. An internal team is now working on a needs assessment with local non-profits. The Commissioners have begun discussions on possible projects that will have long lasting impacts in the county.



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Greene County is the State of Missouri's fourth most populous county, serving more than 275,000 people (2010 census). Its mission is to provide all citizens of Greene County, including those in its cities, a safe and thriving community through excellent customer service, unparalleled dedication, and the efficient use of taxpayer dollars. The Greene County Commission is the executive body of Greene County operating under guidelines established in the Revised Statutes of the State of Missouri. Within that authority the Commission enacts ordinances, resolutions and policies, supervises the activities of county departments, fixes salaries, adopts the annual budget, provides for construction and other services, and conducts hearings on planning and zoning matters.

For additional information, contact Robert Jehle, Public Information Officer, at 417-844-4311 or rjehle@greencountymo.gov.