

City of Gallatin
2013 State of the City



Presented by
Mayor Jo Ann Graves
to the
Gallatin Chamber of Commerce
Monday, September 9, 2013

Good afternoon.

I am Mayor Jo Ann Graves and welcome my 7th Annual State of the City Address.

It's 2013 and Gallatin continues to grow and prosper with new businesses and new residential areas. The word about Gallatin has spread across Middle Tennessee:

- a low property tax rate of 99-cents
- no tax increase in 7 years
- a growth rate of 33% in the last census
- great schools and a wonderful community college
- tremendous health care
- a good transportation system
- beautiful lakes and rivers
- numerous amenities that are all building blocks for an extraordinary quality of life

People are noticing Gallatin and all it has to offer.

Gallatin is a 211 year old community with a population of more than 30,000 people. Gallatin is the county seat and hub of Sumner County. Gallatin's annual general fund budget is about \$30-million. We have 381 full-time employees and 146 part-time and seasonal workers. Our total annual payroll with benefits is \$22,700,000.

Gallatin is fortunate to own its utility providers – both Gallatin Public Utilities, which is gas, water & sewer – and the Gallatin Department of Electricity.

Our combined budgets for the City of Gallatin total \$139-million.

For 7 years, Gallatin has held the line on spending and has not raised our property tax.

Our departments continue to improve to meet the needs of our citizens. As a city, our responsibility is to provide services that our citizens need for their health, safety, and welfare.

First let's talk about all the city departments and personnel who are the foundation blocks contributing to the growth and prosperity of Gallatin.

Public Safety

We are so fortunate to have a police and fire department that constantly strive to improve.

Police Department

Our police department, headed by Chief Don Bandy, has added four new officers to patrol and make our streets safer. Our overall crime rate continues to drop from year to year.

In order to stay in touch with our citizens, the P-D has held community meetings at the Shalom Zone and Guild Elementary.

Gallatin has again received national accreditation from the Commission that evaluates police departments. This is our fourth year of CALEA certification.

This year, the PD also took on the responsibility of property maintenance enforcement with great results.

And this summer, the U.S. military gave the department an urban protection vehicle – the equivalent of a \$658,000 donation.

Our Police Department operates on an annual budget of \$6,400,000 with 93 employees.

Fire Department

Our fire department, headed by Chief Billy Crook, has a new 28-foot public safety boat thanks to Ken Weidner and a \$250,000 grant from Homeland Security.

We also received a 100-percent grant for a new 75-foot aerial truck and equipment valued at \$1.2 million. These items are on order.

The State Fire Marshal's Office selected our fire safety clown troupe as the 2012 Tennessee Public Fire Educator of the Year. This year, the fire department is also starting an outreach program to pre-school children using Dora the Explorer.

The fire department has responded to more than 2,500 calls in a 13 month period. This ranges from fire calls, to rescue calls, false alarms and more.

Our Fire Department's annual budget is \$5,200,000 with 73 employees.

Human Resources Department

Our Human Resources Department, under interim director Amy Summers, has been busy.

H-R coordinates our wellness program which is in its second year. Employee participation in the wellness program has saved the city more than \$60,000. We have conducted health screenings, Weight Watchers programs, Walk to Wellness contests, and smoking cessation classes.

The H-R Department's annual budget is \$206,000 with 2 employees.

Public Works Division

Our Public Works personnel have been hard at work improving the lives of our citizens. Public works, headed by Ronnie Stiles, continues to improve drainage around our city:

- Coles Ferry Drainage Project – a \$193,000 project funded by a federal grant
- 500 Steam Plant Road Clean up – a \$1,000,000 project also funded by a federal grant
- And, the Richland Circle Detention Ponds – a \$150,000 project

The annual budget for Public Works is \$2,200,000 with 50 employees.

Sanitation Division

The sanitation division of Public Works is implementing a state of the art software system for waste collection and recycling. It offers real-time data communications between dispatch and drivers. This allows for more efficient route management.

Sanitation also just purchased a new automated trash truck for \$215,000.

The annual budget for Sanitation is \$1,900,000 with 15 employees.

Vehicle Maintenance

Our Vehicle Maintenance Division performed routine maintenance on nearly 500 vehicles and pieces of equipment:

This year, Jimmy Loper – our vehicle maintenance superintendent – collaborated with me on acquisition of new vehicles and the retiring of vehicles with excessive mileage. His expertise saved the tax payers approximately \$100,000.

This past year we opened the new vehicle storage warehouse and have plans ready to bid on a second warehouse to protect millions of dollars in vehicles and equipment.

The annual budget for Vehicle Maintenance is \$434,000 with 5 employees.

Recycling

Also this year, the state awarded us a Go Green Litter Grant to add a new inmate crew dedicated to litter pick up and recycling efforts. As you can see in this chart, we recycle numerous materials – collecting about 265 tons last year.

Recycling saved the City more than \$27,000 last year, and it reduces the need for more acres of landfill.

Facilities Maintenance

Facilities Maintenance is a multi-faceted department that saves the City thousands of dollars. This team of five:

- Reinstalled the spire on City Hall which was a victim of heavy storms three years ago.
- Oversaw the updating of our Council Chamber which had not seen a major renovation in almost 40 years.
- And, they continuously install new hardware as well as upgrading older hardware to reduce costs and save energy

Facilities Maintenance has an annual budget of \$529,000 with 5 employees.

Public Utilities

We are so fortunate to own our utility department – Gallatin Public Utilities – and what a great job they do.

This year, GPU, headed by David Gregory, worked on water and sewer installation and improvement projects all over the city – investing nearly \$4,600,000 in new infrastructure.

GPU's water quality score from the State was 99 out of a possible 100! We continue to receive excellent scores year after year.

The annual budget for GPU is \$38,600,000 with 87 employees.

Department of Electricity

In the Gallatin Department of Electricity, Long-time Director Bill Draper retired this year. We appreciate his 41 years of service – 27 as Superintendent. Taking his place is Mark Kimbell who has 30 years of experience in the electric power industry.

This past year, the Department of Electricity has:

- Added 270 new customers
- Increased electric rates by 3%, but still has the lowest overall rates within the Tennessee Valley Authority's service area
- And they have completed the 27th straight year with no outstanding debt

The Gallatin Department of Electricity has an annual budget of \$64,800,000 with 29 fulltime and 3 part-time employees.

Engineering

Engineering, headed by Nick Tuttle, is a busy team that oversees numerous projects throughout our city. Let me list just a few:

- North Water Avenue Improvements
- Gateway Drive Extension
- Airport Road and Steam Plant Road pavement and RR improvements
- Town Creek Wall Rehabilitation which features a gabion wall design
- Albert Gallatin/Hatten Track now beginning the ROW acquisition phase
- Town Creek Greenway Section 2 is complete; section three is in ROW. In section two we partnered with the Boy Scouts who donated dozens of hours and equipment to enhance the wetland area
- 109 Bridge Replacement is funded 100% by TDOT
- Park Avenue Rehabilitation Project
- The Adopt-A-Stream program
- And, at the same time, Engineering oversaw \$500,000 worth of repairs to existing roads to keep our infrastructure intact. These projects are a vital building block for our future growth

Engineering has an annual budget of \$5,600,000 with 6 employees.

Codes & Planning

The Codes & Planning department – under interim director Katherine Schoch – oversees new and existing residential and commercial development.

In the Residential Market:

- Foxland Apartments is a \$21-million-dollar capital investment in Gallatin
- And the Fairway Farms Expansion, The Retreat near Fairvue, and The Reserve at Cambridge Farms are adding more than 400 homes to our city

In the Healthcare Arena:

- National Health Care is building a skilled nursing and assisted living facility which will add 190 jobs when complete. This is a \$37 million capital investment in Gallatin
- Also in healthcare, Aspen Dental opened a new walk-in dental clinic on Nashville Pike

In the Restaurants & Food Service Industry:

- Gallatin continues to attract large franchises like the International House of Pancakes and Jimmy John's – as well as unique, local eateries like Elizabeth's catering, Classy Cakes, Mama's Kitchen and The Butterbean, which is a Farm to Table restaurant in an historic home on Douglas Bend

In Commercial & Retail:

- A sample of the new businesses now open in Gallatin includes Advance Financial, Mattress Firm, Giggles – a salon for children, the non-profit Habitat Restore, and The Marketplace at Amber Leaf on the Square – which is a unique marketplace for more than 16 artists and vendors.

These are just some of the approved projects either coming out of the ground or opening this past year.

The Codes/Planning Department has an annual budget of \$970,000 with 13 employees.

Leisure Services

Parks

Amenities are an important part of the life of a city. Our Leisure Services Department, run by David Brown, offers everything from swimming to golf.

Gallatin has more than 600 acres of parks for our citizens to enjoy – not only do we have 13 softball fields and 10 baseball fields, but we also have 20 soccer fields for every age group.

Our park system also has many amenities including disc golf, fishing piers, a model airplane field, a dog park, a skate board park, a sand volley ball pit, a mountain bike trail, horseshoe pits, and more than 5 miles of linear parks or walking trails.

As a matter of fact, the last section of our linear park – the Greenway – is moving closer to construction and will complete the connection from Triple Creek Park into Downtown.

The Parks Department has an annual budget of \$1,500,000 with 30 fulltime and 110 seasonal employees.

Civic Center

Our Civic Center has undergone a recent facelift with new skylights, new paint, new mirrors, updated bathrooms, a repainted pool, new equipment, and more.

Our rates are very competitive.

The Civic Center has an annual budget of \$1,300,000 with 8 full-time and 62 seasonal employees.

Long Hollow Golf Course

Long Hollow Golf Course has also had a transformation. There is a new patio for outdoor dining; a new golf cart shed where you can rent a space for your personal golf cart; improved cart paths; and new golf carts to rent.

The golf course's annual budget is \$977,000 with 7 fulltime and 21 seasonal employees.

City Recorder

The City Recorder's office, headed by Connie Kittrell, is another office very familiar to the public. It handles business licenses, property taxes, tickets, records preservation and our Do Not Solicit List. Many services are offered online.

The City Recorder's annual budget is \$478,000 with 7 employees.

Finance, IT, City Attorney & City Admin

Our other departments that offer internal support are Finance, Information Technology, City Attorney and City Administration. Their combined annual budgets are \$2,000,000 with 13 employees.

Economic Development Agency

For Gallatin to continue to grow and prosper – to add building blocks of success – we must have a strong Economic Development Agency. This department – headed by James Fenton – is working hard on developing our new industrial center.

The new road into our 200-acre addition was paid for by the State of Tennessee through a State Industrial Access Grant valued at \$1,880,000.

To facilitate access to our new industrial center, Gallatin Public Works is rehabilitating the existing Gateway Drive at a cost of \$150,000.

There is also a virtual building program being finalized for various sizes of buildings in our industrial center. This program has all plans and permits approved for the business upon purchase which will expedite the permit and approval process.

Existing Industry

The strength of a city is based on its ability to retain its existing industry which is a critical foundation in the building blocks of success.

Gallatin is undergoing 9 major expansions in our existing industries:

1. **ServPro** is renovating and finishing an expansion of nearly 100,000 square feet – a \$6,700,000 investment creating 90 new jobs
2. **RCTenn** is expanding by 23,000 square feet – a \$1,300,000 investment creating 45 new jobs
3. **The Gap** is investing \$35,000,000 and creating 90 new jobs by taking over additional distribution responsibilities for the company
4. **Hoeganaes Corporation** is putting \$5,000,000 into equipment upgrades and adding 6 new jobs
5. **CSI Medical** is expanding by 4,000 square feet, which is a \$750,000 investment
6. Jamison Bedding is adding 25 new jobs
7. **TimBar Packaging & Display** is adding to its third shift creating 20 new jobs
8. **ABC Fuels** is spending \$1,000,000 to install new equipment and hiring 25 more employees for a new product line
9. **ITW-CIP**, which had its best quarter in company history this year, is adding 30 new jobs

All total, the expansion of these companies is resulting in 331 new jobs and a more than \$49-million investment in new capital in Gallatin.

Gallatin was awarded a Fast Track Development Grant, thanks to a partnership with TVA, the State ECD, the City of Gallatin, ABC and Hoeganaes.

This grant repaired the rail spur to area industries, facilitating their ability to receive raw materials.

The Gallatin EDA worked with TDOT for additional signage on State Route 386 to give better directions to the City of Gallatin and all its exits.

TVA also partnered with us for new signage at our industrial center.

Another indicator of Gallatin's strength is our sales tax collections which have been growing. They are up 21% in four years.

The Economic Development Agency does all this on an annual budget of \$545,000 with 2 employees.

Events

Community events pull our citizens together and intertwine their lives. Each year, Gallatin adds new events as well as building upon existing ones.

New this year:

- **Derby Day Run** – Thanks to the efforts of Kathryn Kisner, Karen Goodall and the entire Community Enrichment Committee, more than 100 runners and walkers braved the rain to participate in this inaugural event. Even Scott Weitecha, the winner of the Country Music Marathon, participated in Gallatin's run.
- **Recon Run** – this very successful event organized by Paul Jack, our trainer at the Civic Center, is a 5K obstacle course run
- **Movies at the Market** – Greater Gallatin is showing a movie at the Farmers Market on the first Friday of the month through October. Thanks to Councilwoman Julie Brackenbury for helping with this event.
- **Grand Fondo Bike Race** – sponsored by the Lion's Club – gives bicycle riders two options: a 31-mile or a 62-mile course

- **Sumner County Fall Ride for Food** – this motorcycle ride, which starts downtown, raises money for the Sumner County Food Bank – thanks to community volunteer Homer Bradley for organizing this event

And we have continued favorite events:

- **Taste of Gallatin** – sponsored by the Chamber and held this year in the new pavilion at Triple Creek Park
- **Walk Across Sumner** – this event gets hundreds of children and adults walking in the month of September
- **4th of July** – a little rain didn't stop our Independence Day celebration – we just moved it inside to the Civic Center. The 129th National Guard Army Band kicked off the evening with their 48-piece band. They were followed by the Garage Band Revival which brought the house down. Then the Army Band returned to play live music during the spectacular fireworks show – which launched just as the rain stopped.
- **3rd Thursdays on Main** – is in its fourth season and continues to be a summertime favorite bringing thousands of people to our historic square. Greater Gallatin does a fabulous job of lining up the music to suit everyone's tastes.
- **The Bold Enough Challenge Rodeo** – this family event grows in attendance and excitement every year – it raises money for the Sumner County Anti-Drug Coalition
- **Independent Film Festival** – this is also brought to us by Greater Gallatin. The second season of this festival runs from September through April
- **Tuba Christmas** – the increasingly popular Tuba concert will have its 5th season this year. We are teaming up once again with the Tennessee Tech Tuba Ensemble – which packed the house last year at First United Methodist

Church. Thanks to John Arnold and the church for making this partnership possible.

- **The Cemetery Tour** – is a fundraiser for the Sumner County Museum – it uses community actors to give you the history of the area as you walk through the city cemetery
- **The Main Street Festival** – on October 5th this year. The Beaker Street Blues band will play on the Thursday night before Main Street.
- **And, Squarefest** is always the last Saturday in April – this event was voted the most popular in Sumner County. Both the Main Street Festival and Squarefest are sponsored by Greater Gallatin and draw thousands of people to downtown.

Awards

Gallatin continues to be recognized locally, regionally, and at the state level.

- The News Examiner recognized several Gallatin businesses in its Reader’s Choice Awards this year:
- Sumner County Council of Governments chose Mayor Jo Ann Graves as Mayor of the Year and Councilman Ed Mayberry as Legislator of the Year.
- The Tennessee Chapter of Landscape Architects recognized Gallatin with the statewide Built Environment Merit Award for the Town Creek Greenway.
- The Tennessee Chapter of the American Planning Association honored Gallatin for its Transit Ready Development at Greensboro North.
- Mayor Graves was named for the third year in a row to the Nashville Post’s prestigious “In Charge” list.
- The Nashville Business Journal Sumner County Impact Awards – given to citizens who are making a difference – recognized several City employees, elected officials and board members as having an impact on Gallatin.

- The Beacon Center of Tennessee, an independent non-profit and non-partisan research organization ranked Gallatin in the top 20 “most business friendly cities in the state.” The award was based on Economic Vitality, Business Tax Burden, and Community Allure.
- Greensboro North Specific Plan District was also awarded the Governor’s Stewardship Award for its environmentally friendly design. It was one of 11 projects recognized out of more than 100 from across the state.
- The Greater Nashville Regional Council honored Gallatin with:
 - The Communication Award – for the Mayor’s quarterly newsletter, email updates, State of the City, new City website and Mayor’s Night In.
 - The Parks and Recreation Facilities Award – for “recycling” the old county school bus garage into a covered, open-air pavilion in Triple Creek Park.
 - The Planning Award – for adopting a new electronic agenda at Planning Commission meetings, saving staff time and print costs.
 - And, the Water & Wastewater Award – GPU received this award for the new Wastewater Treatment Plant and Bio-solids facility. The Bio-solids Facility, one of a few in the state, turns sludge into fertilizer which you can pick up at no charge.

Other unique projects that continue to draw recognition include the new SR 109 Gateway Bridge. It was the cover story on a national engineering trade magazine this year. As the magazine states, this is “not your standard bridge-building project – in fact nothing like it has been built in the area before” because of the inclusion of railings, lighting, a walking loop, and waterway signage.

The latest update on the bridge is that traffic will be moved off the old bridge and onto the new one at the end of the year.

And, the TVA retrofit of the Gallatin Fossil Plant is a \$1-billion investment. This is another unique and mammoth project that will require several years to complete. It will bring in more than 800 special craft workers to Gallatin. They will be living and doing business in our City. We'll have more to share on this project at a later date.

As you can see, Gallatin is thriving and has a strong economy. Our City is attracting tremendous interest and new people are moving here to take advantage of all we have to offer.

Our low tax rate and no tax increases in seven years make us attractive not only to businesses but also to individuals.

The word about Gallatin is spreading. With proper planning and vision, we are building a foundation for success and making Gallatin "the place to be in Tennessee."

Special Thanks:

Gallatin City Council

Greater Gallatin

City Department Heads &
Employees

The Gallatin News

The News Examiner

Members of all City Boards &
Commissions

The Nashville Business Journal

The Gallatin Chamber

The State of the City Committee

Thank you for coming!