

Tony Craig, Mayor
Elizabeth Craig, Councilmember, Place 1
Scott Baker, Councilmember, Place 2
Claude Lang, Councilmember, Place 3
Terry Mann, Councilmember, Place 4
James Mann, Councilmember, Place 5



Christie Eason, City Clerk
Jason Dobbins, Police Chief
Bruce Swanson, Fire Chief
Matt Balch, City Attorney
Tom Jarvinen, City Attorney
Jake Roth, City Engineer

June 12, 2025

My Fellow Residents of Owens Cross Roads,

Since August 2020, our city has been on a journey of remarkable progress and positive change. Together, we've laid a strong foundation for a brighter future by enhancing our infrastructure, prioritizing public safety, fostering community engagement, and ensuring responsible governance. I'm proud to share the key accomplishments that reflect our collective efforts:

Ensuring Efficient Governance and Justice

Our Municipal Court has implemented significant changes to ensure the efficient processing of cases:

- We've added an additional Magistrate, **Teresa Carpenter**.
- **Upgraded software systems** enhance organization, improve cross-referencing with other local and state agencies, and enable **online payments** from defendants.
- We've **audited and closed out old citations**.
- An account with **Municipal Intercept Services** was established to recover owed fines and costs.
- New software allows us to **scan and archive old citations and cases** for future review, aiding in attorney requests (motions for discovery) and background checks.
- We've implemented a **diversion program** for drug and alcohol-related offenses, with referrals to our assigned state-approved Court Referral Officer (CRO).
- Court personnel are current on all **Court Liaison Unit (CLU) courses**.
- **Polly Blalock** served as the city's first female judge.
- **Nathan Wake** is our new Municipal Judge.
- We've implemented **separate court dates** for traffic offenses and more serious misdemeanor/ordinance violation cases.
- We now offer **defensive driving courses**, including a 4-hour traffic safety course (for those over 25) and Alive @ 25 (for ages 16-25).

Investing in Technology

We've embraced technology throughout City Hall:

- We now **accept credit card payments** and offer **auto-payments for sewer accounts**.
- Technology in the courtroom has been **upgraded**.
- Our commitment to efficient record-keeping is evident in the **updated archive system for City documents**.

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- City Hall has been modernized with **updated computers, software, and technology**, including electronic locks, enhanced cybersecurity protection, a generator, and an upgraded server room.
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Investing in Our Infrastructure

We've made significant strides in improving our city's infrastructure:

- We **secured substantial grant funding** to build a **new wastewater treatment plant**. Groundbreaking occurred in November 2024, with completion projected for May 2026.
 - Another successful grant allowed us to **upgrade the sewer infrastructure along Brockway Road**, a project completed in 2023.
 - We also secured grants for **sidewalk repair and upgrades on Wilson Mann Road**, and to **improve the entrance to Owen Road from Highway 431 South**, enhancing safety and accessibility.
 - A local citizen **donated land for a Public Safety Facility** to house the Police and Fire Departments. Plans for this facility are currently underway.
 - We also received a **land donation to establish a small walking park** along Highway 431 South.
 - We've contracted with a firm to **assess sinkhole occurrences** around the Fire Hall and Sneed Park.
 - Our Sewer Works Supervisor is diligently working to **identify and repair locations where stormwater infiltration** is unnecessarily taxing our sewer system.
 - Plans for future road improvements include an **annual paving contract** for road repair in numerous locations, as well as **widening Craft Craig Road and G. Carpenter Road**.
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Strategic Growth and Development

We're fostering strategic growth to build a stronger city:

- Through **strategic annexations**, we've expanded our city limits, allowing for planned growth and a stronger city boundary.
 - **Four new subdivisions** have been completed, supporting continued growth and providing more housing opportunities.
 - We've begun and are continuing to work on **cleaning up blighted areas**, enhancing the beauty and quality of life in our city.
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Prioritizing Public Safety

Our commitment to public safety remains paramount, with significant advancements in both our Fire and Police Departments.

Owens Cross Roads Fire and Rescue Department

We are committed to providing our community with the best Fire and Rescue Department:

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- **Enhanced Training and Professional Development:**
 - We celebrated the **graduation of our first group of volunteer firefighters** from the Alabama Fire College program, significantly increasing our certified personnel.
 - Our members have successfully completed the **Alabama Fire College emergency vehicle driver's training**, ensuring the highest standards of safety and efficiency.
 - Our team is currently engaged in the **Alabama Fire College apparatus operator pumper course**, further developing critical operational skills.
 - **Improved Equipment and Resources:**
 - The department has **purchased four new first-response vehicles** to bolster our capacity to respond effectively to both Emergency Medical Service (EMS) and fire incidents.
 - We are continuously purchasing necessary equipment and conducting comprehensive training to ensure the **highest level of fire service provision**.
 - **Expansion of Services:**
 - The City of Owens Cross Roads Fire Department is committed to providing **EMS service** to the community, addressing immediate medical needs.
 - We are diligently working towards an anticipated **start date of August 1, 2025**, for the full operational capacity of our fire services, a significant milestone for our city.
 - **Growth and Community Engagement:**
 - We are actively **recruiting and building our volunteer membership**. The dedication of our volunteers is paramount to our success and reflects a strong community spirit.

These accomplishments underscore the Owens Cross Roads Fire and Rescue Department's unwavering commitment to our citizens. Under the leadership of Fire Chief Bruce Swanson, appointed in March 2025, the department continues to prioritize its mission of providing comprehensive fire protection and safety through prevention, education, emergency medical services, and hazardous material mitigation, especially as our community continues to grow.

Owens Cross Roads Police Department

Our Police Department has made significant strides in enhancing its capabilities and service to our community:

- Established a **reserve officer department**.
 - Added a **K-9 officer** with certifications in Search and Narcotics Detection.
 - Acquired **drone capabilities** for search operations.
 - Officers have completed **thousands of hours of continuous training**.
 - Acquired an **Emergency Rescue vehicle**.
 - Currently, **four officers have completed Investigator Academy at JSU**.
 - **Two Traffic Homicide Investigators** are certified with IPTM and ALEA Troopers Division.
 - Formed a **Peer Support group** for officers.
 - Currently, **three CIT (Crisis Intervention Team) officers** assist with public mental health needs.
 - One officer is a **Certified Mental Health Officer**.
 - Established **new Policies and Procedures** to conform with State and Federal laws.
 - Established a **Body Cam program**.
 - Updated software for the **Evidence collection and Case Reporting system**.
 - All command leadership has completed **Phase 1 of Command College at JSU**.
 - Created a more thorough **training program**.
 - Updated **Tasers** for all officers.
 - We have **in-house firearm and Taser instructors**.
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- Created the **first-ever Investigations Division**.
 - Established a **Chaplain program** for the department and the City as a whole.
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Enhancing Communication and Community Engagement

To ensure our residents are well-informed and connected, we've taken several steps:

- We established a **city website, a strong social media presence, a new city app, and installed a new City sign**.
 - We also introduced a new tradition with the **annual City Christmas Parade**, fostering community enjoyment, involvement, and celebration.
 - We held a **City Celebration in October 2021**, inviting citizens to celebrate the City's growth with elected officials and city employees.
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Investing in Our Team

Our city has grown, and so has our team:

- We've increased our dedicated employees from **15 to 22**.
 - We believe in education and training; our employees are encouraged to take advantage of all available training to encourage **growth for both the employee and our city**.
 - We've also **updated our employee handbook and training programs** to be more thorough and definitive.
 - Our commitment to our employees' well-being is shown through our **improved health and life insurance policies**, including paying up to \$1000 per month towards full-time employees' medical insurance.
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These accomplishments are a testament to the hard work of our city staff, the dedication of our elected officials, and the support of our wonderful community. While we have achieved much, we remain focused on the future and committed to continuing to build a thriving and vibrant Owens Cross Roads for all.

Thank you for your continued support. It's truly an honor to serve my hometown.

Sincerely,



Tony Craig
Mayor
City of Owens Cross Roads
