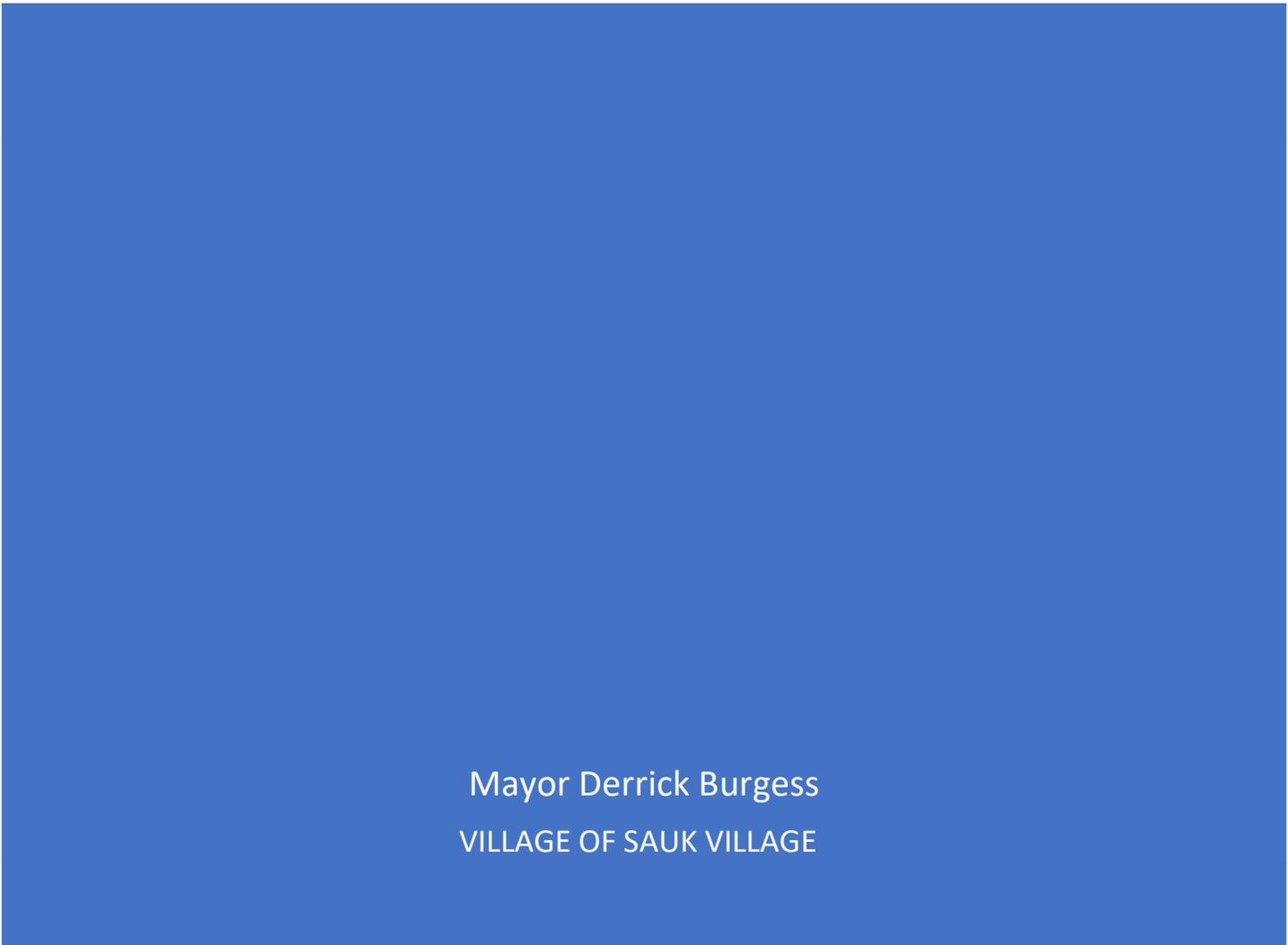




# STATE OF THE VILLAGE 2018



Mayor Derrick Burgess  
VILLAGE OF SAUK VILLAGE

Good evening and thank you all for attending tonight. I am very humbled and proud to serve as your Mayor and to present to you my first State of the Village address.

I would like to thank our Village Board of Trustees for their dedication and service to the people of Sauk Village. Trustee Cecial Bates, our Senior Trustee, Trustee Kelvin Jones, Trustee Rodrick Grant, Trustee Linda Todd, Trustee Bernice Brewer, Trustee Beth Zupon and our Village Clerk Marva Campbell-Pruitt.

I am proud to introduce our hardworking and committed members of my administration. The Village of Sauk Village depends on their professional skills and drive to provide the best possible service to the residents of the community these include: Village Treasurer Judy Sutfin, Director of Finance Mohan Rao, Director of Economic Development Joe Wiszowaty, Director of Public Works Kevin Weller, Director of Community Development Sherry Jasinski, Police Chief Robert Kowalski, Fire Chief Alan Stoffregen and Director of EMA Allen Vavrik.

I also want to thank the employees of the Village of Sauk Village who collectively are on the forefront of providing services to our residents 24 hours a day 7 day a week. They recognize the needs of our residents some of them volunteer in our community outside of their normal work hours so thank you for all you do.

I want to also thank those members who volunteer on the Village's various Committees and Commissions. You all are an important link between our residents and the Village Board. You help us develop policies and programs that affect the residents of our Village and our business community.

Last but certainly not least I would like to thank my wife Juanita for her support and dedication.

This 2018 Sauk Village State of address highlights both our challenges and accomplishments of 2017 and our proposed plans for 2018 as addressed in Sauk Village's new Strategic Plan for Progress. This year we're focused on implementing the Pathway to Progress for Sauk Village. A refreshing start to 2018 with energy and drive for the future of our community.

***I am proud to say that we are VERY OPIMISTIC about the state of our Village***

Since the 2017 general election, my new administration has been working very hard to identify those challenges that hamper the forward progress of Sauk Village. To date we have initiated the following:

- Our Strategic Plan for Progress... I'm very pleased that the Village Board approved my plan and we have adapted it to fit our strategic goals.
- Affecting new policies and procedures to improve our various daily operations.
- Identifying critical job duties and documenting their purpose and process.
- Reviewing and revising our employee's job descriptions to coincide with industry standards and attaching corresponding performance

expectations so that everyone has a clear understanding of what is needed from each person.

- Centralizing personnel files to protect the privacy of each employee and reducing the risk and their subsequent need to be compensated via lawsuits. I want to personally thank our Human Resources consultant for executing the needed changes.
- Implemented weekly staff meetings so that the Village's Department Heads can report on the progress we've made on the agreed upon goals set by us collectively.
- Reviewing and evaluating the Village's financial processes and policies and overhauling them to gain efficiencies and transparencies of Village transactions and to be able to accurately apprise the success of our projected budget verse year over year actuals. We do this so that we may be able to invoke cost savings measurers immediately. I want to personally thank our Budget and Finance Committee, Finance Director and our new Village Treasurer for enacting these much-needed changes. *We as a village must learn to do much more with a lot less.*
- We have worked collaboratively with Cook County to remove most of the dead trees ravaged by the Emerald Ash Borer along Sauk Trail. While we acknowledge dead trees are a major issue for Village residents, we are committed to doing more as more as more resources become available.
- We have worked collaboratively with Bloom Township and were able to employ summer help to assist the Village, we plan on doing that again this year as well to give Sauk Village youth some summer employment opportunities.
- We were able to hire some seasonal part-time summer workers to help cutting tall grass and weeds on abandoned properties.

- We created a new position for Economic Development (*while eliminating two administrative positions for a combined savings of over \$32,000 annually*) and to date I'm happy to report that Sauk Village has taken inventory of and has discovered unclaimed commercial property owned by the Village. This information will be used to help market these properties to potential investors and commercial developers. We also were successful in securing a grant that will allow Sauk Village to update its 20-year-old outdated Comprehensive Plan saving the taxpayers \$200,000. In addition, we also anticipate closing on the sale of land the Village owns in the coming months. These economic Development initiatives implemented under this administration thus far will result in a gain of \$1.62 million and an economic investment of over \$6 million to our Village so far.
- WE ALSO ANTICIPATE CLOSING ON THE SALE OF LAND THE VILLAGE OWNS IN THE UPCOMING MONTHS. These economic development initiatives implemented under this administration thus far will result in a gain of \$1.62 million dollars... and an investment in the Village of about \$6 million dollars so far...

These new approaches are designed to attain the desired goals and to ensure action is only taken based on information as opposed to business as usual, past practices, personal preferences or special interest groups or allegiances.

So, where are we as a Village and what prompted the changes we've made thus far?

We came into office with a mandate of the people to get us on a ***Pathway to Progress*** to obtain results without the same old game of politics. As stated, our immediate needs must be focused on the following:

**ESTABLISHING LEADERSHIP** - This Administration observed there was an apparent lack of leadership in Village operations when we took office.

**THE LACK OF EFFICIENCY** by which we utilize our employees and identifying personnel issues that have led to excessive lawsuits by Village employees. These deficiencies affect the Village's bottom line budget and ability to meet resident's basic needs and services.

**FINANCES**— Even though our new administration could publish and pass a budget plan within 30 days of taking office to meet the State of Illinois' statutory deadline, the full magnitude of the overwhelming outstanding debts and backlog owed to vendors, decreases in property tax revenues, decrease in revenue collections coupled with massive increases in cost associated with collective bargaining agreements, benefits and other compensation have hit this village hard this past year.

With over \$1 million dollars in revenue shortage in our operating budget looming, words like "consolidation", "realignment of duties" and "operations efficiencies" will be very common in this year's budgetary process.

Risk management, union contracts and pension funding obligations are under review.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**— Along with the Village's declining tax base over the years, we had been losing businesses along with many other suburbs. There was no uniformity of how we addressed the needs of our businesses and residential communities.

There was no one person available on a full-time basis to outline the deficiencies and the lack of an updated Comprehensive Plan was glaringly apparent when new business ventures were encountered.

As the national economy improves so we shall expect the same for Sauk Village. But, we must be proactive in our governing to ensure we are ready to participate in the nation's economic recovery. We must have shovel-ready projects in the queue and ready to go as Government funding becomes available.

**RESIDENTIAL HOME VALUES-** A bright spot for Sauk Village in 2017 was that Sauk Village saw the biggest increase in home sale prices in 10 years. Home prices increased by 30% year over year from 2016. We also saw an increase in our Village's over-all equalized assessed value, the first time since 2007. We still have much to do to get back to the highs we had in 2007, but we will keep up the challenging work we started in 2017.

**PROPERTY TAXES-** I'm pleased to report some good news. In 2017, we saw our Equalized Assessed Value increase for the first time in a decade resulting in a decrease in the village's actual tax rate... Our property tax levy... which most of the Trustees supported was lower than that passed in 2016... This was the first decrease in the property tax levy in many years....

### **What we will focus on in 2018...**

We will continue to focus our effort on cleaning up Sauk Village. We had the dead trees removed along Sauk Trail which were eyesores for years. We will continue our efforts to remove dead trees along the parkways throughout the village.

We had our public works summer help keeping grass mowed in the vacant homes, we will continue our effort to keep vacant homes maintained. More importantly we have begun an initiative to establish a vacant home registry, this will help the village manage vacant homes and get those abandoned homes sold and filled with homeowners.

We established Standing Committees of the Village Board that allow our Trustees the opportunities to get involved more closely with the

functions of Village Governing and policy making. In 2018, I will begin to challenge our Trustees in providing the Village Board with more guidance and more input on the assignments for which their committees were established to focus.

In 2018, we are committed to improving communications with our residents and we will also focus more attention on our business community as well. We will disseminate a newsletter as well as via other media avenues that will be issued more frequently to keep everyone informed and provide them with useful up to date information on what is going on in Sauk Village.

We face many challenges ahead in 2018 and beyond but if we set aside politics and focus on what truly matters, Sauk Village will begin to make solid advances toward our Pathway to progress...

I'm confident that with the continued support of the residents of Sauk Village, we can achieve greatness for our Village...

I thank you for coming out tonight... God Bless you and God Bless our Village....