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**Derrick Burgess- Mayor**

# 2019 STATE OF THE VILLAGE

***PATHWAY TO PROGRESS***

# 2019 State of the Village “Pathway to Progress”

## **To: the Residents and Businesses of Sauk Village**

Good evening and thank you all for attending for coming out tonight. As I have said before, I am very humbled and proud to serve as your Mayor and to present to you my second State of the Village address. Not even cold weather can shut down the progress that we have made here in the last 21 months.

Since we met last year, we have made significant progress on getting our Village back on track. I attribute that success to the hard work and dedicate staff that we depend upon to provide professionalism and drive to serve our residents and our community.

Thank you to my staff:

- Village Treasurer Anthony Finch
- Director of Economic Development Joseph Wiszowaty
- Director of Public Works Kevin Weller
- Police Chief Malcolm White
- Fire Chief Alan Stoffregen
- Director of EMA Allen Vavrik
- Administrative Assistant Mary Klopp
- HR Consultant Dr. Alicia Straughter

I want to also thank those Trustees who support our Strategic Plan for Progress and helping to ensure that we move forward on that Pathway to Progress. A special thank you to all of our employees who are on the front line providing the services to our residents each and every day, they recognize the critical needs of our residents.

I want to say thank you to all those who volunteer in many capacities in our Village. You are all an important link between our residents, businesses and the Village Board. I would not be here today without giving thanks to my biggest supporter my wife Juanita, you have been my rock. Finally, I want to thank God for all His blessings upon our community.

This year's address will include our plans for 2019 while highlighting our successes since 2017. This year we are staying focused on our Pathway to Progress for Sauk Village.

A new start to 2019 with a renewed commitment to:

- Approaching our goals with more energy and drive for the future of our community and focus on success.
- Continued accountability
- Continued Balanced Budgets
- Greater security for our residents.
- Expansion of Youth Services.

**I am proud to say that the state of our Village is STRONGER than before!**

We faced many challenges in 2018 as we began the year with much enthusiasm and confidence that we would bring about the Change that we were committed to when we began our journey in 2017. Many try to resist change, **CHANGE** was mandated by the people of Sauk Village in the 2017 election.

We continued to bring about that change in 2018 as the Status Quo was not going to continue. The residents want us to get our Village on that Pathway to Progress and in 2018 we made significant changes in both personnel and the way that we are doing business day to day.

I reported last year when I took office in May, 2017 that the Village had been in financial chaos, I'm pleased to report that the financial chaos is over!

Today I'm happy to report that we have been able to:

- 1- Adopted responsible Financial Policies and Procedures
- 2- Adopted a Balanced and Responsible Budget with realistic projections
- 3- Reduced our overall deficit by \$2 million
- 4- Established the Village's first ever RESERVE FUND
- 5- Stopped regularly taking money out of the Water Fund
- 6- Implemented an automated payroll service
- 7- Reduced our overall financial risk
- 8- Approved a Bond Issue to save us \$160,000 in interest
- 9- Approved a Bond Issue that will provide \$2 million for infrastructure improvements
- 10- Reduced our Legal Bills by \$400,000 per year

## 11- Reduced our legal exposure by sound HR practices

I am pleased to report to you that the village is now able to issue bonds once again because we ended that financial chaos.

I am also pleased to report we eliminated the status quo. Our aging report (backlog of unpaid bills) which routinely exceeded \$1 million during prior administrations has been virtually eliminated.

We lowered our property tax levy by 21.9% which will reduce property tax burden for residents and businesses....

**Finances have not been our only success.**

**We have made big strides in Economic Development since 2017.**

I was pleased to report to the residents, businesses and to the Village Board in 2018 we closed on the sale of 32 acres of land the Village owned for 14 years. We sold this property and made \$1.35 million dollars on the deal. Not only were we able to sell this property but we negotiated with the buyer to bring in private investment of some \$10 million dollars.

I want to thank Len McEnery for bringing Gas-N-Wash to Sauk Village, a great addition to our community that will bring in over \$500,000 in revenue to the Village each year, which will provide our residents with a gas station, car wash, restaurant and about 80 new jobs. Sauk Village has not had such a commercial development since 1998. Look for a grand opening celebration as we welcome Gas-N-Wash to Sauk Village this spring.

Economic Development has been a key component to our Strategic Plan for Progress and reiterates our commitment in our new Comprehensive Plan. We have secured a \$350,000 grant for Phase 1 Engineering in our LogistiCenter. The study is critical for the expansion of our industrial park which will bring Sauk Village new business opportunities. The study will get underway in 2019 and will be completed by 2020.

Ladies and Gentlemen, ***This is PROGRESS...***

**These have been major steps on our journey on that Pathway to Progress I have spoken about.**

## **WHERE WE ARE GOING:**

So we will focus on continued Progress in 2019!

We will focus on a balanced budget in the coming fiscal year, crime is everywhere, and Sauk Village is not exempt. With our new budget, I plan on bringing on additional police officers to increase our police presence and provide better security for our residents and businesses.

I have asked our departments to continue do more with less, work smarter not harder, give the residents value for their tax dollars. We will continue to negotiate fair contracts with our employees, both fair to the taxpayers and fair to our employees. We cannot irresponsibly sacrifice our future by squandering a one-time cash infusion by making commitments we cannot keep leading us back to financial chaos.

We will continue to focus our effort on cleaning up Sauk Village. Dead trees will be removed throughout the Village as we continue our efforts to remove eyesores along the parkways.

I'm pleased to report that we will continue our grass mowing efforts on vacant homes this summer. Last year we were able to mow over 178 vacant homes, cleaning garbage out of many homes

We do not just want to mow vacant homes, but we want to fill these vacant homes with homeowners. That is why we will continue working with the South Suburban Land Bank and Cook County Land Bank as well as private investors to get these homes back on the tax rolls. Some of these homes which are deteriorated are in the cue for demolition and will be taken down. I'm pleased to report that we have applied for an additional \$75,000 grant to assist us with the demolition of these homes for 2019. Last year the Village received \$75,000 and we hope we can continue that progress this year.

We have reintroduced home inspections last year and will continue that effort in 2019, raising our standards is critical to getting our Village back on track, raising property values and ensuring safe homes for our residents.

We will re-examine our Standing Committees of the Village Board in May of this year. I want to thank those Trustees who have accepted the challenge in 2018 and who have provided us with guidance and input on their respective assignments. These may not be committee meetings, but they provide invaluable counsel in the role in which they were entrusted.

**Thank you to**

**Trustee Cecial Tate** who has been helpful and instrumental in securing the IHDA Grant which has allowed us to maintain the 178 properties in 2018 and for 2019. Trustee Tate will complete his term as Village Trustee in May but that will not complete his commitment to service.

**Trustee Rodrick Grant** who has helped with getting our Village finances back on track and also worked to get our Financial Policies and Procedures completed and approved by the Village Board. Trustee Grant will continue in his role as Chairman of the Village's Budget and Finance Committee and has done an outstanding job.

**Trustee Beth Zupon** who has worked with Police, Fire and EMA as well as worked to get our Village Newsletter back up and running. She is also working on the Village's new webpage as well. In addition to getting a Community Policing initiative begun with our New Chief of Police. Trustee Zupon will continue to work on improving communications with our residents and businesses which was a key component in our Strategic Plan for Progress.

**Trustee Ronald Carter** who has been helpful in providing guidance on Community Outreach and Community events. Trustee Carter was appointed in 2018 and brings a level of professionalism to the Village Board that we can truly appreciate. Trustee Carter will focus on implementing youth programs and will work on community events in 2019.

**Trustee Linda Todd** who has worked on reviewing Village Ordinance referred to her and her committee. Trustee Todd has done a great job on getting ordinances reviewed and back to the Village Board for approval in a timely fashion.

Again, I want to thank those Trustees who believed in getting our Village on a Pathway to Progress and who have supported the initiatives of this administration and our Strategic Plan for Progress.

In 2018, we began a new Comprehensive Plan. This process has been long and required input from the community. Our consultant on this project has hosted numerous meetings, community events and town hall meetings and in 2019, we will complete this plan and begin implementation of this plan.

Being recognized and identified by agencies such as Cook County and South Suburban Mayors and Managers as a Community that is truly working hard to turn our Village around truly shows the progress we have made.

I'm pleased to report that Sauk Village has also been selected by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning to host a staff employee for the next two-years. Our new Planner will among other things assist us with the implementation of our goals and objectives of our Comprehensive Plan and assist with identifying funding sources for which we can tap for other projects as well. The goal of the position is to leave a lasting legacy in place for future staff to carry on. The best part about this new Planner is that it will not cost the taxpayers of Sauk Village a penny. This is funded for the next two years through CMAP...

Many things we have been working on would not be possible without grant funding. I would be remiss if I did not identify all of the grants that we have been working through and toward over the course of the last couple of years.

- \$560,000 Federal Grant 2017 which allowed us to complete long over-due roadway and sidewalk improvements on 223<sup>rd</sup> Street and Cornell Avenues.
- \$75,000 Invest in Cook Grant 2017 which assisted on the same project.
- \$135,000 Local Technical Assistance Grant which allowed us to begin our new Comprehensive Plan which will be completed in 2019.
- \$75,000 grant from the Illinois Housing Development Authority which allowed us to mow vacant and abandoned homes in 2018 and this year as well.
- \$100,000 in preliminary engineering assistance from Cook County which allowed us to apply for and receive a \$350,000 Invest in Cook Grant in 2018 for our LogistiCenter Phase 1 Engineering Study.
- \$200,000 in CDBG Street Maintenance Grant Funding which will allow us to repair streets in 2019.
- \$150,000 in staff support from CMAP to fund a two-year salary for a Planner for our Village.

- \$8,483 in a police camera grant which is underway.... and \$2,400 for replacing bullet proof vests...
- Last month we also applied for an additional \$75,000 through the Illinois Housing Development Authority to assist with housing demolition.

***That is some \$1.7 million in grants and other assistance that we have received, utilized or we are working toward just in the last 19 months.***

We continue face many challenges ahead in 2019 and beyond as we go into an election cycle. I hope we can set aside politics and work toward what is going well for our community.

We will focus on what truly matters in 2019, Sauk Village has already begun to make big strides on that Pathway to Progress!

I'm confident that with the continued support of the residents of Sauk Village we will continue to achieve great things.

I thank you for coming out tonight.

God Bless you and God Bless our Village.

Respectfully Submitted

***Derrick N. Burgess,***

***Mayor***