

# State of the City 2024

How do we start describing 2024 other than what a year?

Our city staff have taken everything that 2024 threw at them and continued to provide our daily city services in every area. Our community is grateful for and appreciate what our staff have done over the last year.

Pea Ridge has a 2024 population of 9,352. Pea Ridge is currently growing at a rate of 7.74% annually and its population has increased by 40.34% since the most recent census, which recorded a population of 6,664 in 2020. This is from the World Population Review website.

Our city has grown geographically by more than 230 acres in 2024.

We continue to keep our mission set as: To continue to be a place of growth and opportunity, that value family, and cultivate community involvement.

We have been fortunate to receive Tree Grants from the Walton Family Foundation which allowed us to do two trees give away events last year and to plant trees around our community.

In 2024 we brought the Pea Ridge Fair with more than 10,000 people in attendance over the 4 days of the event.

Our future is bright thanks to the dedicated service of those who have preceded us in all areas of the city, whether city administration, city staff, city council, and planning commission members.

Highlights of 2024.

## **Street Department:**

- Took down Christmas decorations
- Placed salt/sand on snow covered roads
- Sinkhole on Greene St (lasted 2-5-2-9 full crew)
- Hauled off topsoil from school property
- Started soccer field behind city hall (hauled topsoil in for grading)
- Set up dog park benches/play spots/dog bags
- Reopened water fountain on Patton St and Davis St
- Cleaned out storm drain ditch behind Subway
- Completed soccer field behind City Hall
- Installed new water fountain at City Park
- Patched Greene St
- Tree giveaway
- Spring City Wide Clean-up
- City wide sign improvements
- Fixed washed out bank along Greer St

- Removed debris/sediment from below Peck Rd Bridge
- Removed debris from Sugar Creek Rd after storm event
- Trimmed trees across town where necessary
- Started walking trail, fix park around basketball court
- Opened splash pad for the 2024 season
- New walking trail around basketball court with concrete
- Cleanup from storm damage where needed
- Removed curb for replacement at intermediate school
- Started school driveway (cut and fill)
- Completed curb at Intermediate School, including seed and topsoil
- Edge sidewalk for fair and parking
- Tear out and backfill curb at primary school
- Mowed field in preparation of Freedom Fest
- Re-do box and curb inlet at Greene St
- Preparing for Freedom Fest
- Cleaned up trash/fireworks from freedom fest
- Completed Primary School driveway
- Remove existing concrete at PRFD
- Backfill & paint parking lot at fire station
- Repair drainage/curb and gutter on Chapman St
- Poured concrete pad in front of salt bay (40'x60')
- mowed, trimmed trees and brush (w/ side mount), and picked up trash east on Pickens Rd/East Hwy 72
- Remove existing PRFD parking for repairs
- Installed Riprap/B-Stone for Townsend Way bridge
- Preparation for Mule Jump
- Clean-up after Mule Jump
- City Hall, Todd Circle, and Turner Way "mass seal"
- New easement for new fence at City Hall
- Captain Good "bowl" drainage
- Placed concrete in ditch Turner Way to correct drainage issues
- put up Christmas Tree
- Benton Dr & Washburn Dr reclamation project began
- Excavated & replaced "The Garage" parking area

### **Parks:**

The Garage has transformed from just a building into a central point for fostering an environment where people of all ages can connect, engage, and grow.

Activation of the Amphitheater

This transforms City Park into a multi-use gathering space, increasing opportunities for shared experiences. The amphitheater is a venue for family-friendly events, concerts, and programs, drawing residents and visitors around.

Awarded with a \$500,000 grant from the Walton Family Foundation towards the inclusive playground. This funds an inclusive playground designed to accommodate children of all abilities, promoting equity in play opportunities. It demonstrates Pea Ridge's commitment to fostering inclusivity, supporting families, and creating welcoming public spaces.

Received 66 acres for future open space from members of the Walton family

The addition of 66 acres of open space will allow Pea Ridge to build recreational amenities such as a disc golf course and preserve green spaces and accommodate future expansion.  
Successfully partnered with RecDesk

An all-in-one platform, to simplify community engagement. This partnership now enables residents to easily register for events and programs, sign up as vendors, reserve facilities, and access a centralized calendar showcasing all activities across our parks and facilities  
Expanded Team with Parks Maintenance Supervisor

This new role helps keep our parks and facilities in great shape, making them safer, more functional, and enjoyable for everyone. It's a big step forward in showing how much we care about creating awesome spaces for our community to grow and thrive

## **Active Transportation**

### **1. Walk Audit with UCA and Crafton Tull**

We also conducted a walk audit in partnership with experts from UCA and Dave Roberts of Crafton Tull. This assessment provided valuable insights into our city's infrastructure and identified opportunities to improve pedestrian safety and accessibility. By taking a proactive approach to planning safer streets, we are ensuring that Pea Ridge is a welcoming and accessible city for everyone, from children walking to school to seniors enjoying a stroll.

### **2. DIY Bike Repair Stations in The Garage**

Finally, we launched the DIY bike repair stations at The Garage. This new resource empowers residents to maintain their bicycles affordably and conveniently, further supporting active transportation in Pea Ridge. It is a testament to our commitment to fostering a cycling culture and providing practical tools for residents to embrace biking as a part of their daily lives.

### **3. Oz Kids Crit**

The Oz Kids Crit was a standout event this year, introducing our youngest residents to the joys of cycling. By providing a safe and fun space for children to ride, we are helping instill lifelong habits of physical activity and outdoor exploration. Events like this strengthen family bonds and showcase Pea Ridge as a family-friendly city.

### **4. Bike Drive**

This year, we organized a successful bike drive that provided bicycles to those who may not otherwise have access. This initiative has helped remove barriers to transportation, promote healthier lifestyles, and strengthen our sense of community. By supporting mobility for all, we are creating a more connected and active Pea Ridge.

### **5. 144+ Volunteer Hours in less than 3 months**

Together, we reached an incredible milestone of over 140 recorded volunteer hours. These hours represent vital contributions to trail maintenance, community events like the bike drive and Oz Kids Crit, Jingle All the Way Fun Run, and more. Volunteerism is the heartbeat of our community, and these efforts demonstrate how working together can bring about real, visible change in our city.

These accomplishments reflect Pea Ridge's progress toward becoming a safer, healthier, and more connected community. Together, we have achieved great things in 2024, and I look forward to building this momentum in the year ahead.

## **6. Jingle All the Way Fun Run**

We introduced the Jingle All the Way Fun Run, a festive event that brought the community together to celebrate the holiday season while promoting physical activity. Participants of all ages joined in holiday attire, spreading cheer while giving back to our community. The toys and food collected during the event were donated to the local pantry, providing much-needed support to families in Pea Ridge. This run embodied the spirit of the season and highlighted the power of coming together for a good cause.

### **Water/Sewer Department:**

- Completed a one mile 8" water line on 72 east.
- Completed a water line on Price Coffee, east of Highway 72.
- Completed the installation of a Mag-Meter at the treatment plant. This will help quantify use data in the Easterling Basin.
- A meter supplier change was made in an ongoing effort to make real-time water use data available to our customers.

### **Fire/Ambulance:**

- Implemented fit for duty test for all current personnel
- Updated Box alarms (Cencom is still having issues, not fully fixed)
- Updated probationary books for full time and volunteers
- Implemented new hire physical testing
- Finished 5<sup>th</sup> bedroom
- Hired 3 new people
- Added a light and speaker to the day room
- Additional Extrication materials (Rams) ordered and received
- New Vent for the Ambulance
- Implemented PS Trax for more accurate and safe medication and narcotics tracking
- Applied for station 2 grant and was awarded it
- SOPs updated/removed/added to city
- Sent 3 personnel for training on our reporting software
- Implemented a new scheduling system able for firefighters to view via cell phone
- Inspector completed Inspector 2, ICC Fire Inspector II, and Plans Examiner certification
- Implementation of The Compliance Engine to further streamline inspections of fire protection systems

- Involvement with city planning. Assuring that new commercial and residential developments adhere to safety requirements in fire code.
- 105 hours of fire investigation training and completion of IAAI Principles of Fire Investigation multi-course program.
- Numerous business and school inspections. Bringing them up to and maintaining fire safety compliance.
- Obtained membership with the Arkansas Fire Marshal's Association and attended conferences in Spring and Fall with multiple ICC accredited classes.
- Numerous safety and functional improvements to fire station #1.
- New Durango for Fire Inspector
- ISO came we kept our same rating, but came up with a plan to improve rating
- Sharkey – Peer support group for NWA one of ours is on the team
- Provided Bentonville FD with a subject matter expert for their promotional testing
- Started outfitting our Volunteers with Class A shirts (part of the vision to unite volunteers and full-time firefighters)
- Chief went to NWA Metro Chiefs convention
- Chief completed High Impacted Presentations with Dale Carnegie
- We were awarded Pear Status from the Arkansas Department of Health for our Pre-Hospital Stroke alerts.
- Upgraded our current Safe's with a grant from Karen Sherman
- Chief interviewed High School students as part of their Mock interviews to prepare them for future employment
- Applied for and received Walmart Grant for \$2,000.00 that we use for public education
- Moved all maintenance items over to station 2 (will be the maintenance bay after station 2 is built) to streamline repairs
- Installed updated Storm Sirens and control box in station
- Worked standby for a bike event, first for our area
- Installed new hose racks in station 1 to hold all spare hose
- Mac Bowen (volunteer) completed NWA Metro Chiefs Rookie Academy FF1, & FF2
- Casey McDaniel completed FF1, & FF2 through Crowder
- Jeff Martz completed FF1, & FF2 through NWACC
- Dylon Jump – Medic
- Mac/ Natasha – EMT
- Isach Vanderhoff started the NWACC Paramedic Program
- 1403 Training burn instructor – Vanderhoff, Lucas
- September hire full time Fire Chief
- Funded 16 local angels for Christmas (FDPR)

**Volunteers added 4, and 3 PRN**

## **Police Department:**

### **Advancing Toward Accreditation: Building Trust and Excellence**

The police department officially began the accreditation process this year and has made significant progress. Completion is anticipated in 2025. Accreditation ensures our department meets the highest standards of professionalism, accountability, and service. This comprehensive process involves reviewing policies, procedures, and operations to align with best practices in law enforcement. Achieving accreditation demonstrates our commitment to transparency, continuous improvement, and building trust within our community.

### **Crime Rates**

The police department successfully maintained low crime levels throughout the year.

### **Needs Analysis Completed**

The needs analysis for the new police facility has been completed, marking a significant milestone. This study identifies the tools, space, and resources required to serve our growing community effectively. These insights will guide the design and planning of a state-of-the-art facility tailored to the specific needs of Pea Ridge. We thank the community for their ongoing support and look forward to further updates as this vision becomes a reality.

### **Personnel and Training**

- **Officer Retirements:** Two officers retired after long and successful careers.
- **In-House Training Schedule:** Implemented a regular in-house training schedule to enhance departmental capabilities.

### **Technological and Operational Upgrades**

- **Timekeeping System:** Upgraded to improve departmental efficiency.
- **Fiber Internet:** Implemented fiber internet service to support large file transfers, Freedom of Information Act requests, and seamless digital data sharing.

### **Traffic and Safety Initiatives**

- **Intoxicated Driver Arrests:** Continued efforts resulted in increased arrests, reflecting a strong commitment to traffic safety.
- **Extra Patrols and Business Checks:** Increased frequency to enhance community safety.
- **Radar Speed Signs:** Acquired two additional radar speed signs and a radar/traffic counter using grant and donated funds.
- **Mini-STEP Grant:** Continued management of the state mini-STEP grant program, funding saturation-patrol overtime to enhance traffic safety.

### **Community Engagement and Events**

- **P.A.C.T. Event:** Successfully executed the Police and Community Together event with strong sponsorship support.
- **Blood Drives:** Hosted two successful community blood drives in collaboration with the Community Blood Center of the Ozarks, one of which set records for participation.
- **Public Education:** Partnered with the National Child Safety Council to distribute free public education materials on various law enforcement topics.
- **Community Policing:** Participated in several community and school events, such as Ernest Bowman's 100th Birthday Party.

### **Grant and Donation Successes**

- **State Local Law Enforcement Block Grant:** Secured \$7,400 for equipment and a \$75,000 grant for less-lethal equipment to be received in 2025.
- **MILO Training System:** Received a \$32,000 donation for an advanced simulation platform to enhance decision-making and tactical judgment.
- **Drone System:** Acquired a \$12,000 drone system funded by a generous donation. The drone will assist with search and rescue, crime scene documentation, tactical support, fire department support, and more.

### **Equipment and Evidence Management Improvements**

- **Evidence Custodian:** Since adding a part-time evidence custodian, stored items were reduced from 2,865 to 1,869, eliminating the need for evidence room expansion and saving significant funds.
- **Evidence Incinerator:** Purchased a new incinerator for destroying unneeded evidence, funded entirely by the drug fund.
- **Refrigerators for Evidence Storage:** Acquired new refrigerators to improve evidence security and chain-of-custody standards.
- **Video Redaction Software:** Researched and implemented software for faster and more efficient video redactions.
- **CJIS Security:** Updated procedures to meet FBI CJIS security requirements.

### **Looking Ahead**

This year's accomplishments reflect our dedication to professionalism, safety, and community partnership. We're committed to building on these successes in 2025 and beyond, continuing to enhance the services we provide to Pea Ridge.

#### **Library:**

- Welcomed 571 new patrons
- Almost 19,000 visits to the library
- Circulated 14,104 library items
- Offered 306 programs with 3,991 participants

**Projects/Community Relationships**

- Partnered with the school to host the Pre-K classes at the library
- Installed automatic doors at the entrance thanks to a grant from the ARVEST foundation
- Started a Seed Library with the help of the Friends of the Pea Ridge Library
- Summer Reading program far exceeded the previous year
- Offered programs hosted by the Amazeum and Hobbs State Park
- Partnered with the U of A Extension Office to offer, Kids in the Kitchen, a four week program geared towards teaching kids about nutrition
- Partnered with Pedal It Forward to give away 20 bikes to local children
- Partnered with the Pea Ridge Fire Department to offer CPR classes
- Attended the Back to School Bash and Teacher Fair
- Offered two fine forgiveness programs (Christmas in July & Fines for Food); donated food was given to the Blackhawk Pantry
- Invited the Crystal Bridges Mobile Art Lab to join our Fall Festival
- Participated in the Mister Rogers Sweater Drive and donated 44 items to Bright Futures
- Participated in the Angel Tree Program

**Annual Highlights:**

- Hired a Parks and Rec Director
- Hired a Media Coordinator
- Hired an Active Transportation Coordinator
- Hired a new Fire Chief
- Building a relationship with ARDOT for highway and intersection improvements.

<b>Grant Use</b>	<b>Grantor</b>	<b>Amount</b>
All Inclusive Playground	Arkansas Parks and Tourism	\$210,000.00
Tree Grant	Walton Family Foundation	\$185,000.00
Outdoor Recreation Property	Members of the Walton Family	\$2,100,000.00
Hwy 94 Sidewalk Connector	ARDOT	\$164,000.00
Two Speed Signs	Local Law Enforcement Block Grant	\$7,400.00

STEP Grant	Arkansas mini-STEP Grant	\$30,900.00
Equipment	FOP	\$4,495.84
Active Transportation Coordinator	Walton Family Foundation	\$123,063.00
All Inclusive Playground	Walton Family Foundation	\$500,000.00
Non-Lethal Tasers	ADPS	\$75,000.00
	Total	<b>\$3,399,858.84</b>

### **Building Official / Inspections:**

- Added an additional inspector.
- Commercial, new construction 8 permits –, value – \$8,117,000.00
- Residential units – 392, value - \$109,812,443.00
- Miscellaneous Permits:
  - Building – 392
  - Electrical – 424
  - Mechanical – 422
  - Plumbing – 431
  - Total – 1,669
- Total inspections performed – 4,260.
- Impact fees collected – 610, value \$1,310,883.90.

### **Community Development/Planning:**

1. Partnership with PRSD and PRStreetDept to construct:
  - U16-19 Soccer field to the west of City Hall
  - Primary school lane addition and apron reconstruction
2. City Park Amphitheater
3. Master Plans:
  - MSP, FLU, Parks/Open Space
4. Provided aerial pictures and maps to promote economic development.
5. Amending Landscape Reg. – Placement of Trees
6. Zoning Code Revisions – Planned Zoning District (PZD) regulations.
7. Twenty-one new Business License’s issued.
8. Worked with PRStreetDept to correct drainage on Green St and Lynn Dr.
9. Mule Jump Staking & Layout
10. Code Revision for Signature Block – Certificate of Ownership & Dedication of Public Rights-of-Way/Easements.
11. Collaborated with Seay Construction/PRStreetDept to obtain new location and install dog watering station/drinking fountain on Hazelton Rd.
12. Coordination with Engineers on Pea Ridge projects:
  - McCulloch
  - N. Davis

- Hwy 94 Pedestrian Crossing

13. Assisted Planning Commission in reviewing and approving developments:

**Large-Scale (16 in total)**

- New-Life Church
- Dove Crossing Subdivision
- Yorktown Subdivision
- Concord Subdivision
- Rolling Meadows Subdivision
- Pea Ridge Apartments – Amended to include Clubhouse and Dog Park
- Casey’s General Store
- Pea Ridge Commons Phase 3
- Discover Church
- Ashton Gray Retail Space
- Comb Retail Space
- Pea Ridge Heights LLC
- Walnut Hills Phase 6
- Lexington Subdivision
- 7Brew
- Flash Properties

**Final Plats (6 in total)**

- Yorktown Phase 1 & 2
- Walnut Hills Phase 3 &4
- Wellington Hills Phase 2
- Concord Subdivision

**Rezones (7 in total)**

- Perin, Shirley
- Tilman, Daniel & Nicole
- Flash Properties
- Kinney Creek Development
- Haygood, Vicky & James
- Baioni Property Holdings LLC
- Clark, Amber & Brian Rezone

**City of Pea Ridge projected growth:**

- Year 2022 – population 6,559
- Year 2030 – population 15,235
- Year 2040 – population 25,864

**Pea Ridge Population History by Census Year:**

- 1940 – 72

- 1950 – 268
- 1960 – 380
- 1970 – 1088
- 1980 – 1488
- 1990 – 1620
- 2000 – 2346
- 2010 – 4794
- 2020 - 6559