

Summers always seem to fly by, they are full of activities, traveling, gatherings and yard work! I hope you and your family's summer was safe, fun and you were able to enjoy some of Gretna Days, the new Farmer's market or play some pickleball. I truly enjoy Nebraska's falls, but especially here in Gretna. There are so many things to do; following the school activities, spending time at Vala's or visiting one of the area State Park's are some of my favorites. With the opening of Gretna Crossing Park, we have one more great place to enjoy. Here's to the changing of the leaves, cooler air, pumpkins on the porch and health. Gretna continues to be growing and very active, below are some of the highlights.

*Mike Evans
Mayor, City of Gretna*

Gretna Crossing Park, sponsored by United Republic Bank.

September 16th was a special and historic day. It's been about 8,000 people and over 55 years since we have added a community park. When our citizens approved an additional sales tax to pay for this park, they not only voted to create a place for them and their families, but they gave a gift for generations and ensured Gretna will always be a place that values quality of life and community. The opening of the park was not the end of a journey for the park, but just the beginning of a new chapter. Building this park represents the values and commitment our community has in keeping Gretna, The Great Life! I am so excited to start this chapter.

Our future matters, our community matters and Gretna matters

This is the statement we are using with our new Comprehensive Plan being conducted by the Lakota Group from Chicago. There are 3 phases with this: Engage & Assess, Envision, Plan & Implement. The comprehensive plan will help us guide our growth and ensure that we can define our community. By doing so we will create sustainability, resiliency, economic development and help maintain Gretna's charming small-town feel. We have collected information from a variety of individuals and groups over the summer and are almost ready to start the second phase, Envision. To take the survey, learn more or stay up to date visit www.GretnaCompPlan.com

Budget 2023-24 We are not just operating a City, but we are building a Community.

The new budget was approved by the City Council, Tuesday September 19th. Last year, for the first time in 13 years we were able to lower the levy. This year while we were able to keep the levy at it's current rate (.454678 for \$100 assessed value), we understand the amount you pay in taxes still may go up. Our staff, City Council and myself strongly believe in being fiscally conservative and all worked very hard to keep our budget as lean as possible. Below are some of the key points and drivers to this year's budget. This year was a big step for our community. I am proud of our staff and the City Council for working hard to manage our growth, and keep our levy one of the lowest in the Omaha Metro area. For additional information and narrative about this year's budget please visit www.GretnaNE.org.

2023-2024 Budget Key Points and Drivers

Annexation

During calendar 2023 the City experienced the full effect of the annexation. Our population increased 90%, the city limits increased 198% and the area we are responsible for increased by 13,000 acres. This has required us to scale the City's organization to responsibly care for our assets and provide services to our residents.

Continued Growth

Gretna continues to experience strong growth, which requires us to not only operate a city, but to invest in infrastructure, add services and staff to accommodate the significant additional population and geographic area.

Inflationary Pressures

The increased cost for labor, products and services not only effect businesses and households, it effects the cost of operating government as well. It's important we pay our employees a fair rate for the great work they do.

Additional Revenue - \$9,864,816

Estimated Additional Property Tax Revenue \$701,007 (13%)

Est Increase Sale Tax (Annexation & NEX): \$3,600,000 (approx. \$3,500,000 for GXP Bond Payment)

Estimated Increase Sales Tax (City Limits): \$270,000

Infrastructure Payments Received from Previous Projects: \$8,824,388

New Expenses Incurred - \$11,309,690

Paid Fire & Emergency Medical Services - \$750,000

Increased Staff & Equipment to Service New Annexation: \$1,894,960

Infrastructure (Roads, Sewer, Water & Trails): \$8,665,000

Library News

Like so many of our services, buildings and organizations, the Gretna Libraries were designed for the community they were serving. Gretna's population is now nearly twice that size, and not getting any smaller. The Gretna Foundation completed a planning study of the community and the results reinforced that our current structures are much too small to serve a community this size, definitely not one that is projected to be much bigger. They have started their capital campaign to raise funds for this project. Both the library and the city are developing plans we feel that will serve our community and also be good stewards of tax payer dollars. As our plans become more definitive, we look forward to sharing this exciting news. Until then, I ask that you support this very important project, like Gretna people always do!