

THEME: A RENEWED COMMITMENT TO PROGRESS

To the members of the Bessemer City Council, our elected officials, the business community, our faith leaders, city employees, and to all residents of the great Marvel City of Bessemer— Good evening.

I begin by giving thanks to God for blessing us with the opportunity to gather here tonight.

I also want to extend my sincere appreciation to Senior Vice President Jonathan Porter for that generous introduction. Thank you, Mr. Porter.

And to my wife, Yvonne—the First Lady of our city—thank you for standing with me through every season, through every challenge and every triumph. Your strength, your support, and your unwavering belief in me continue to inspire me to be a better man and a better servant to this community. Thank you, Yvonne.

After fifteen years standing at this podium, I can tell you this, the honor of serving this city has never felt routine. Not once. Every year brings new challenges, new ideas, new voices, and new reasons to believe in who we are becoming.

Our city is changing in ways that are bold, exciting, and unmistakably ours. And I'm here, as I have been for fifteen years, not out of habit, but out of purpose, ready to keep pushing, keep building, and keep believing in what we can achieve together.

And as we talk about where we're headed, it's only fair that we take a moment to remember how we got here. Because the story of this city isn't a straight line, it's a collection of moments, decisions, setbacks, and breakthroughs that brought us to tonight.

Some of you have been on this journey with me from the very beginning. You remember the early days, when we were trying to stabilize the basics, when we were fighting for every inch of progress, when we were laying foundations that no one could see yet. And others of you joined us along the way, bringing new ideas, new expectations, and a new sense of urgency. All of that has shaped who we are today.

What I love most about this city is that we don't stay stuck. We learn. We adjust. We grow. And we do it together. The past fifteen years

have taught us that when we stay focused on people, on their safety, and their futures, we move forward. Every single time.

Tonight, I want to talk about both sides of our story: the progress we've made and the work we're taking on right now. Because the past matters, it shows us what we're capable of. But the present matters just as much, because it's where we prove, day by day, that this city is still rising.

I continue to be committed to our city and to you all, as my main goal is to make Bessemer the city where every resident feels comfortable and safe. For the years that I have occupied this position, I realized the capacity of my responsibilities as the Mayor, which allowed me to look closer at our city through the prism of a leader and a long-time resident. Now, I can see that we have made major improvements in so many areas and avenues of our city. It is also important to emphasize that we can continue to progress in adjusting Bessemer to ever-changing needs of its individual citizens, businesses, and infrastructure. I want to assure you that, as Mayor, I will continue to invest all of my efforts to ensure effective and relevant development of our city.

I also want to admit the work our Bessemer City Council has done over the last several years for you to enjoy the residence in this city. An effective and mutually beneficial relationship between the mayor and the council is crucial to ensure the effective functioning of all the city's branches. Our collaboration has been particularly effective and fruitful over this past term. The way the Council maintained its affairs throughout this term is worth our gratitude and appreciation. I would like our City Council members to stand. Let's applaud the work and dedication each member of the council invested in serving us as their citizens.

I feel honored to stand before all of you tonight and provide you with the report on our progress as a city and the improvements we made over the last period. It is critical for us to discuss both the upcoming challenges and plans for the future, as I think that we cannot make progress unless we realize where our city needs to improve. This address today is not only part of my responsibility to you but also evidence of our transparency and responsibility as the leaders of this community.

At the same time, I would like you to focus on the tremendous developments we had within the last couple of years, showing our collaboration and resilience. We were able to innovate, improve, and adjust Bessemer to the growing technological, social, economic, and cultural needs. I noticed how we managed to support each other in the most difficult times, overcome political fluctuations, and address socio-economic challenges. At this time, we have to acknowledge both the goals we were able to attain and the gaps we have to address in the near future. To do this, I invite you to recognize where we are now and what we have to achieve in order to continue making this city the absolute best it can be.

It is unfortunate that our Bessemer City School System remains under State intervention, and that is a reality none of us take lightly. Yet I stand before you tonight with confidence, because I believe deeply that we will emerge from this period stronger, more focused, and better prepared to serve every child in our community.

I want to take a moment to recognize Superintendent Dr. Michael Turner. Over the past months, I have had the opportunity to meet with Dr. Turner, to hear his vision, and to understand the direction he is

charting for the Bessemer Board of Education. His commitment to academic excellence, accountability, and student success is clear, and his leadership brings renewed hope to our school system.

Dr. Turner, we welcome you to the City of Bessemer. We look forward to working alongside you as we build a brighter future for our students and families.

First I want to draw your attention to the historic improvements we made in the area of road and transportation infrastructure. I honestly believe that we have to focus on the 15-year period, as it will allow us to acknowledge how our tireless work and dedication helped to rebuild and modernize our streets, intersections, and bridges. The network of roads connects our neighborhoods, businesses, schools, parks, services, and our citizens.

Considering these significant changes, I want to thank our public and commercial organizations, federal support groups, and local workers operating in road and transportation infrastructure. Without your professionalism and tireless work, Bessemer would never been able to remain one of the safest and most accessible cities in Alabama.

I want to proudly report that from 2010 to 2025, we managed to pave 319 streets covering 96 miles of roadway. This investment represents The majority of these improvements were made in those neighborhoods that did not see paving for many years. This development alone helped to enhance the quality of life of many residents by expanding the accessibility and safety of Bessemer's roads.

We also had a very ambitious project of creating a multi-use trail expansion that our city could not afford for many previous years. This is why we decided to divide it into three phases by building 3,500 feet of new trail, which included two pedestrian bridges over Arlington and Berkley Avenues. The project also included building an ADA-accessible ramp linking the trail system to recreation and housing areas. This project cost us \$2 million dollars, which was embodied in the safe and walkable corridor along Highway 150, which reinforces the commitment of our city to the health and wellness of our citizens. This development required an investment of \$3.6 million dollars, which was critical for providing families and youth a safe crossing. The bridge also has necessary visibility and branding to make it more

accessible and safer for all of our citizens. We are planning a landscape improvement in 2026 to enhance the aesthetics of both approaches to the bridge.

I am also excited to announce a major roadway expansion this year. We have initiated the widening of Highway 150 from Morgan Road to Shannon Road by injecting \$2.5 million dollars in partnership with ALDOT. Also, Bessemer Water Company will contribute to this project \$800 thousand dollars for the water infrastructure relocation. Our professionals consider that this expansion will relieve the traffic congestion in this area by improving safety and supporting new commercial development within this busy corridor.

Our city completed structural developments to the Freeman Avenue Bridge last year by replacing the wooden deck and increasing the load capacity. This improvement eliminates longstanding weight restrictions that limited access to emergency vehicles and school buses. Some improvements were also done in streetscapes by completing a large federally funded TAP project that invested \$2 million dollars in our city. We are also planning another similar project in 2026 in order to improve 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Avenue North

between 19th and 20th Street, which will allow us to revitalize and preserve our historical landscape.

I also have to inform you that significant developments will be scheduled along the Lakeshore Parkway and Morgan Road, where the power lines and water lines will be relocated in the context of the new \$19 million dollar roadway project within the first several months of 2026. We believe that your patience with some minor inconvenience caused by these renovations and improvements will be worth your future comfort. Our road and transportation infrastructure has to comply with the changes the city experienced for a while, including the increased number of vehicles on the roads, expansion of business along the line, and population growth.

For the same reason, we also decided to improve traffic safety by completing the intersection redesign at 4th Avenue and McCalla Road in 2025, which aimed at reducing accidents and enhancing turning movements. It was also essential for us to continue to reinforce the safety of our bridges across the city. For example, the 19th Street Bridge has secured \$300 thousand dollars in the context of the

Rebuild Alabama Act for the rehabilitation of its foundation. This improvement is scheduled for the spring of 2026.

As you can observe, all of these projects, both small and large, are developed in synergy to strengthen the city's transportation network. These improvements helped us to reinforce safety, support economic improvement, and enhance the connection across different areas of the city. In addition, I want to add that these projects represent the promise we, city servants, gave to this city by favoring safety and stability for the commuters and pedestrians of Bessemer.

Another essential part of my address is the significant improvements performed by our Building and Inspection Department. Major commercial and residential projects have already been completed within the year 2025, and many more are scheduled for construction in the upcoming 2026.

Specifically, the Building Department managed to perform inspection services on new construction and improvement projects. For instance, it was possible to issue permits exceeding \$25 million dollars for commercial developments and \$10 million dollars for residential

developments in the city. I am especially excited to inform you that the investments in Bessemer were made by constructing the Housing Authority's Dream Center, Central Alabama Community Food Bank, One Life Fitness, Southern Tire Mart, and Royal Builders.

All of these commercial projects contribute to the economic and social development of Bessemer. It is especially important to emphasize that the development of new businesses and construction projects represents a major enhancement of our city and our residents' lives. For instance, another fitness center will increase the citizens' access to health and wellness services, while the food bank will help our low-income residents to access healthy food in times of need.

Tonight I am proud to highlight what will be one of the most transformative developments in our city and state's history: Project Marvel. As many of you are aware, we are working closely with Logistics Land LLC to bring a major data center development to the City of Bessemer. In preparation for this opportunity, the City Council has updated our ordinances to include the necessary provisions for data center construction, positioning Bessemer to compete in a rapidly evolving technological landscape.

This project represents the largest single investment in the history of the State of Alabama, with an anticipated \$14.5 billion in economic impact. It is a scale of development rarely seen, and it places Bessemer at the forefront of innovation and long-term growth.

I recognize that, as with any major change, there are differing opinions. Many people are opposed, but a far greater number of our residents have expressed excitement. That is the nature of progress, change is inevitable.

What I can assure you is this: Federal, State, and local officials will work together to ensure that every step of this project is handled responsibly, transparently, and with the best interests of our residents at heart. We are committed to getting this right, and to making sure that Bessemer benefits from this historic investment for generations to come.

In addition, a large number of our local businesses invested in their improvements. Altogether, more than 20 enterprises decided to improve their buildings and construction, including groceries, dermatology services, educational facilities, and commerce

businesses. Improvement of access to products and services in our city is an important element of Bessemer's development goals, which will continue to meet the needs of the citizens.

While the population of Bessemer continues to grow, the demand for new housing increases as well. I am happy to inform you that in 2025, our city managed to grow and develop new residential homes for our families. At least seven companies initiated the expansion of residential buildings or their interior improvements.

For instance, Willow Trace initiated a new subdivision on Eastern Valley Road proposing 93 new homes, and Smith Douglas Homes started to build 197 new homes in Cedar Creek & Crosswinds.

Heritage Crest has proposed a New Subdivision where 243 new homes will be constructed. As you can see, these are only a few projects that will allow our citizens to access comfortable and affordable housing, as the need to increase the housing fund grows.

As we all know, some of the buildings are beyond repair, and it is crucial to provide space for the new buildings and construction.

Consequently, our city made 27 demolitions in 2025. As the

Department informed me, it is essential to revitalize our neighborhoods and improve the quality of life for all residents of Bessemer. One of such demolitions was performed in the Bessemer Estates trailer park, as it, unfortunately, does not comply with the quality and safety requirements of our city standards.

Here, I also want to mention the progress made by the Frank House Golf Course. It remains one of the significant assets for Bessemer, as this course brings substantial revenues and attracts outside investment to the city. The total revenues for the Golf Course exceeded \$1 million dollars. The Golf Course managed to improve its revenues by 3% within the last year. The revenues of the company have increased each year since the business was re-opened in 2015. The financials of the Golf Course continue to grow year by year despite the previous challenges in the form of the devastating Tornado of April 2014 and the challenges during COVID-19.

The examples of such businesses instill a hope in me as mayor that it is possible to attract large and medium enterprises in our city, as it will improve the economic and social characteristics of Bessemer, and it can help us to refine our service revenues. The city benefits from

more businesses and is interested in their success due to the increase in job opportunities, a possibility to expand the city's funds, and address the needs of residents in terms of their better access to new products and services.

I am eternally grateful to every entrepreneur for new ideas for small, medium, and large businesses that can invest in our city's health and wealth.

In 2025, the Bessemer National Airport reached an important milestone with its reclassification as a National Airport, an achievement that reflects our city's growth and expanding aviation footprint. With 162 validated aircraft now based at the airport, we are preparing for the 2027 publication to ensure full compliance with this new designation.

Last year also brought significant private investment, including the construction of three new aircraft hangars totaling more than \$2 million. These additions strengthen our local economy and position Bessemer to attract even more business and transportation-related development.

Our airport secured two major FAA grants—an Airport Infrastructure Grant and an Airport Improvement Grant totaling \$2 million—to reconstruct taxi lanes and design the repaving of the parking ramp, with completion expected in 2026. These investments underscore the confidence federal partners have in our long-term vision.

Innovation continues to take center stage at the Bessemer National Airport. Thanks to Congresswoman Terri Sewell, we received a \$500,000 HUD grant for the construction of the Drone Cage, complemented by a \$425,000 investment from the Innovative Alabama program. Guided by researchers at the University of Alabama, this project will advance drone research, expand workforce development, and train the next generation of drone pilots. It stands as one of the most forward-thinking initiatives in our region.

We can all take pride in the high-impact projects taking root at our airport, and I am confident that even more innovation and R&D opportunities will follow. As we celebrate these advancements, we also recognize that progress in aviation must be matched by strong, reliable operations across our entire city government. Innovation thrives when every department is working at its best.

I want to thank our Fleet Maintenance Department for an exceptional year of progress. Their disciplined leadership and commitment to innovation kept our fleet operating at peak efficiency, allowing employees across every department to perform their duties without interruption.

By improving maintenance schedules, reducing vehicle downtime, and adopting smarter repair and tracking systems, the department strengthened the reliability of our entire fleet and demonstrated responsible stewardship of public resources. Their efforts—along with securing favorable vendor contracts—saved taxpayer dollars and reflected the kind of forward-thinking management our residents expect.

The department also invested in its workforce. Technicians earned new certifications, advanced their skills in modern vehicle technologies, and benefited from expanded training and internship opportunities through partnerships with institutions like Lawson State Community College.

I am grateful to the leadership and staff of Fleet Maintenance for their dedication to efficiency, sustainability, and service. Their work keeps our city moving and ensures we remain focused on the needs of our residents.

As we continue to discuss the state of affairs in our beloved city, I want to remind you about the importance of efficient resource management.

Particularly, I want to highlight our achievements in managing financial resources, because they speak directly to the strength and responsibility of our city government. I extend my deepest gratitude to our Finance Department for their leadership in this work.

The American Rescue Plan Act, passed in 2021 in response to the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, provided cities across the nation with critical relief. Bessemer received thirteen million, nine hundred and seventy thousand dollars in federal assistance funds that were fully obligated by 2023.

And I am especially proud to share that one million dollars of this relief was dedicated directly to Housing and Utility Assistance for our

residents. At a time when families were facing unprecedented challenges, the City of Bessemer made a deliberate choice to put people first and ensure that our neighbors could remain safe, stable, and supported in their homes.

This effort would not have been possible without strong partners. I want to extend a heartfelt thank-you to The Birmingham Urban League and DeCarr Consulting for administering this vital assistance program with professionalism, compassion, and integrity. Their work ensured that these dollars reached the households that needed them most.

Together, we demonstrated what responsible governance looks like, using federal relief not only to stabilize our city, but to uplift our residents when it mattered most.

Over the past two years, we also replaced outdated manual processes with a modern digital platform—bringing finance, accounts payable, payroll, revenue, and public improvements fully into the digital era. By the fall of 2025, even the building component of this system was

completed, marking a full transition to a streamlined, efficient, and transparent financial operation.

Today, our professionals can digitally track public service requests submitted by residents through an advanced interface. I won't overwhelm you with every technical detail, but I do want our citizens to know in the near future you will have the ability to complete many of your interactions with City Hall online, without needing to visit our offices in person. That is real convenience, real efficiency, and real progress.

And because numbers matter, let me share this with you. Our total budgeted expenditures were seventy-five million, three hundred fifty-three thousand, two hundred fifty-six dollars. We actually spent seventy million, nine hundred forty-three thousand, four hundred nineteen dollars. That is a clear demonstration of strong financial discipline and responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars.

Our budgeted revenue aligned with our approved expenditures, while our actual revenue exceeded expectations, reaching seventy million, eight hundred fifty-two thousand, seven hundred and three dollars.

The department also renewed four thousand, four hundred and sixty-eight business licenses in 2025, with the majority of those businesses paying occupational taxes throughout the year. These numbers reflect a city that is economically stable, growing, and full of opportunity for both workers and entrepreneurs.

Because transparency is a core value of my administration, I want our residents to know that our Finance Department was fully validated by external auditors. The State of Alabama Department of Examiners of Public Accounts conducted comprehensive audits of our 2023 and 2024 fiscal years. Their findings confirmed that our city adheres to all state and local regulations governing the use of public funds. This independent review is an important affirmation of our accountability and integrity in public service.

After reviewing these achievements, I can say with great pride that we are using and distributing Bessemer's resources in ways that truly benefit our residents. Our finance professionals have demonstrated unwavering dedication to making this city more efficient, more transparent, and more sustainable. The combination of federal grants

and strong local revenues has allowed us to improve the quality of life in Bessemer and optimize the services we provide.

Another department advancing this same mission of efficiency and service is our team of IT professionals, who work tirelessly to strengthen the services we provide to our citizens and to ensure that our offices operate with greater effectiveness. This past year, the IT Department adopted a proactive maintenance model, an important shift that allows our technicians to identify and resolve issues before they disrupt operations. It has become a strategic improvement that enhances service delivery and optimizes the systems we rely on every day.

In addition to this change, the department implemented citywide mapping capabilities by joining the Jefferson County GIS Consortium. Through this partnership, Bessemer now has access to a robust regional mapping system that has already improved our planning efforts and strengthened our emergency response capabilities. Our data has also been migrated to secure, cloud-based platforms that meet the modern demands of today's digital environment.

But perhaps the most groundbreaking advancements came through the integration of artificial-intelligence-based tools for remote management and monitoring. This is one of the most significant technological steps forward in our city's operations. These tools have already enhanced our ticketing processes, improved system patching, and strengthened asset management. From what I have seen, this innovation has streamlined troubleshooting, reduced downtime, and saved the city considerable resources that would otherwise be spent on hardware repairs and software failures.

Our IT professionals continue to push Bessemer toward a more modern, resilient, and efficient future, and their work is making a meaningful difference in the daily operations of our government and the services we deliver to our residents.

The IT Department will have already developed a strong strategic plan that will integrate new technology in every division of our offices to ensure that all services are provided in a timely and sufficient manner.

More specific plans relate to the expansion of cloud applications and supporting integrated data services. You may ask how it affects our offices and you specifically. These innovations will make the networks in our offices faster and more accessible, which will help the citizens and the city to interact in a more sustainable manner.

Again, I share my gratitude to the entire IT team for innovating our city's systems and allowing us to use funds more purposefully.

As we continue highlighting the departments that strengthen the daily life of our city, I want to turn to an area that reflects the very heartbeat of our community, our Parks and Recreation Department. If you ask me, one of the clearest indicators of a thriving city is the quality of its community spaces and recreation programs. Here in Bessemer, our recreational facility remains one of the most beloved places in town.

The Kenneth E. Gulley Recreation Center has one thousand, nine hundred and forty-one active members who use its facilities and Roosevelt Park on a regular basis. Over the past year, this facility hosted two hundred and fifty-five events, welcoming thousands of guests and reinforcing their role as true community anchors.

One of the most significant upgrades this year was the installation of a new Lightning Detection Warning System, designed to alert guests of approaching storms at the pool and across the baseball fields. This technology enhances safety and gives our residents real-time information about weather conditions, an important improvement for families and athletes alike.

Our Parks and Recreation team also continued to enrich the lives of our residents through meaningful programming. Our senior citizens, through the Silver Boomers, and our young people, through the Extended Care Enrichment Program, enjoyed opportunities for development, wellness, and social engagement. These programs reflect the department's commitment to serving residents of every age with creativity, compassion, and purpose.

To our Parks and Recreation Department—thank you for your dedication to the leisure, wellness, and joy of our citizens. And I am excited to share that this year we will construct a state-of-the-art gazebo at the Kenneth E. Gulley Recreation Facility, giving families yet another beautiful space to gather, relax, and enjoy all that our parks have to offer.

One of the most essential divisions in our offices is the Fire Department, as it is responsible for keeping us all safe and protected. I express my utmost respect and appreciation to the fire department as these men and women run to what others run away from. We are planning to build our new station #2 annex at Carolina Avenue in 2026, as it is crucial to prioritize the safety and sustainability of our community.

During the past year, we renovated our drill tower to improve training of the novice employees and the experienced professionals. The department also raised \$12 thousand dollars during the annual event dedicated to breast cancer and donated to our local organizations, which deserves a round of applause.

The fire department will partner with Bessemer City High School to train students in the Emergency Medical Technician certification class. This intervention will help to enter the healthcare workforce for those students who want to receive a degree in this area. In addition, a new contract for ambulance service with Northstar EMS was negotiated to provide the citizens with improved emergency medical transportation. It was also decided to hire 11 new employees in the

Fire Department this year. Considering these achievements and the future plans to improve the security and health of our citizens, I want to ask you to give another round of applause to the entire team of firefighters and all healthcare providers. Thank you for what you all do.

In FY 2025, the Bessemer Municipal Court collected One million, ninety-four thousand, nine hundred, sixteen dollars and twenty-two cents in fees, fines, traffic tickets, and bond money. Municipal judges adjudicated 77 DUI arrests, 4,230 traffic tickets, 99 domestic violence arrests, and 2,155 non-domestic violence cases, while 33 defendants completed Driving School. The Court is also reinstating the ABC program, offering first-time misdemeanor offenders an alternative path through continuing education. Participants may pursue certification as nursing assistants, construction apprentices, Class B CDL licenses, or a GED. Upon successful completion, charges will be dismissed—providing accountability while opening doors to opportunity.

As we continue strengthening the core services that protect our residents, I want to share the progress made by our Police Department

in twenty-twenty-five. This past year, our emergency communications center received one hundred twenty thousand, nine hundred fifty-seven incoming calls—a major decrease from one hundred eighty-two thousand, nine hundred fifty-three the previous year. That is a thirty-three percent reduction in overall call volume.

Calls specifically directed to police and fire services totaled forty-one thousand, two hundred thirty-two, showing a slight increase from twenty-twenty-four. To meet this demand, we hired seven new dispatchers, ensuring that every resident who reaches out for help is answered quickly and professionally. And let me be clear: an increase in service calls does not mean our city is becoming more dangerous. In fact, it often reflects something positive—greater trust between residents and their police department, and a willingness to report concerns rather than remain silent.

Our City Jail also made important staffing decisions, hiring five new correctional officers and increasing revenue by 43%. While the inmate population rose by 23%, we remain committed to prevention over incarceration, and we will continue working to reduce the number of individuals entering our correctional system.

To improve efficiency, the Police Department expanded its Records Division and Warrant Division, aligning staffing with increased revenue and operational needs. And I want to proudly highlight a major milestone: 2025, the Police Department hired thirty new police officers, bringing our total sworn staff to one hundred and seven officers. This investment strengthens our patrol presence, enhances response times, and reinforces our commitment to public safety.

Our patrol force issued three thousand, three hundred and eighty-six traffic citations—a 38%—as vehicle volume grew across the city.

Officers made three hundred ninety-one felony arrests, a 19%, and eight hundred seventy-three misdemeanor arrests, a 10% increase.

They also arrested eight hundred and twenty-three individuals on active warrants, reflecting a 9% increase in enforcement.

Our Special Operations Unit completed more than seventy missions, resulting in seventy-five felony arrests, five misdemeanor arrests, one hundred forty-one felony warrants, and two hundred six total arrests.

Many of these operations were conducted alongside the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office and federal partners. One joint operation with the FBI led to a major multi-state narcotics investigation and the

seizure of a significant quantity of methamphetamine—an important victory in the fight against drug trafficking.

And now, the most important news: crime is down across all major categories in Bessemer. Compared to 2024:

- Robbery decreased by 21%
- Felony assault decreased by 5%
- Rape decreased by 25%
- Unlawful breaking and entering vehicles decreased by 20%
- Residential burglary decreased by 36%
- Stolen vehicles decreased by 54%, one of the most significant improvements citywide
- Weapons recovered increased by 6%, reflecting stronger enforcement
- Homicides declined from ten to nine, with one ruled justifiable

These numbers tell a powerful story: Bessemer is safer today than it was a year ago. This progress is the direct result of the dedication, courage, and professionalism of our police officers, who put their

lives on the line every day to protect our community. To each of them, I extend my deepest gratitude.

In 2025, Bessemer Water Service strengthened the city's infrastructure by replacing aging mains, upgrading service lines, and supporting new growth with tap installations. Major projects like McAshan Drive/Flying J were completed, with Lakeshore Expansion and McCalla Road scheduled for 2026. The department advanced tank maintenance, secured \$9 million from ADEM for storage rehabilitation, and improved reliability of our drinking water system. The Water Laboratory renewed certification, passed the State Public Health Audit, expanded water quality protections, and improved customer service to same-day response.

Bessemer Electric met significant growth with major improvements, completing the Morgan Road–Lakeshore relocation, expanding service in Flint Hill, and supporting commercial development at the former CVS Warehouse site. Investments in equipment, staffing, and system upgrades position the utility for continued success in 2026.

Bessemer Utilities also entered a modernization contract with NISC to upgrade accounting, billing, meter reading, and account setup, with financial upgrades completed in April and service upgrades expected by October 2025.

Tonight, I stand before you not as someone asking for your faith, but as someone who has earned it, year after year, challenge after challenge, victory after victory. fifteen years ago, we set out to prove what a united city could accomplish. And look at us now. We are stronger. We are safer. We are smarter. We are more resilient than at any point in our history.

But hear me clearly, we are not finished. Not even close. The next chapter of this city will not be written by chance, it will be written by courage, by discipline, and by the same relentless determination that brought us this far.

So tonight, I'm calling on every resident, every business, every partner, and every believer in this city to lock arms and push forward with me. Because when we move together, we don't just make progress, we make history.

And if you believe in the work we've done... if you believe in the direction we're headed... if you believe that our best days are still in front of us, then I'm asking you to stand with me for four more years. Not for me, but for the future we are building together.

This is our moment. This is our momentum. And as long as I have the honor of serving you, I will fight every single day to make sure our city rises higher than anyone ever thought possible.

Sixteen years behind us. A stronger, brighter future ahead of us. And together, Always together, we will not just reach it, We Will Define It! Thank you and May God Bless All of You.