



Welcome to the 2021 State of the Village! Thank you for granting me the opportunity to speak with you tonight. It is wonderful to be back before you talking about our incredible community and the people that make it that way. I am especially excited about being here this year as we begin to see our world moving in a positive direction.



Before we begin, I would like to recognize the Johnsburg Area Business Association for hosting this 10th Annual State of the Village event and extend a special thanks to JABA's President Laura King, Vice President Donna Adams and the organizing committee consisting of Josh Hagen and John Huemann for their efforts in coordinating all of the arrangements.

I would also like to thank Debi Stuckwisch and her team at Stucky's Bar & Grill for preparing our dinner tonight, the Pistakee Yacht Club for the use of their historic facility and both Cheryl and Joe Twomey for their help this evening. Let's please stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Note the program at your table with acknowledgments related to tonight's presentation.



I realize that we have long ago grown tired of talking about the COVID-19 coronavirus but it's impossible to reflect on the State of the Village without recognizing the impact COVID-19 had on our community. Never could we have imagined that an international pandemic would befall us and so drastically change our lives.

The COVID-19 virus impacted us all in so many ways. As it began to spread around the world and the risk of being stricken by the illness increased, our lives quickly became restricted. In response to the pandemic, Governor Pritzker issued a Stay at Home Order and daily activities that we took for granted, like going to work and school, dining out, and shopping were significantly altered and many no longer possible. Phrases like "shelter in place", "essential services" and "social distancing" became part of our daily vocabulary



For many, weekly grocery shopping meant an online “trip”, with groceries either delivered or picked up from the safety of our cars. For those brave (or crazy enough depending on how you look at it) to go to the store, the event took on a whole new experience. Masking up, donning gloves, and wiping down every product purchased once home became the new norm. That is of course if you were fortunate enough to find antibacterial wipes, sprays and other cleaning agents, which were in seriously low supply along with paper towels, toilet paper and other grocery items regularly purchased. Let’s not forget standing in line, outside waiting to be cued into the store to insure that capacity limits were maintained.



The Stay at Home Order also meant students could not attend school in person and would instead receive their education remotely creating new challenges for parents, teachers and students alike. Zoom became a household name for those engaged in remote learning and also in the workplace for those of us fortunate to still be working. Along with that came Zoom “bombing” in which random people would join public meetings posting inappropriate images and comments.



Our business community was especially hard-hit by the Stay at Home order. Businesses providing essential services needed to reinvent the way they operated to insure the safety of their employees and the public. While others that were required to close, had to determine how they would survive and far too many did not.

In response, the Village Board suspended business related fees and allowed for installment plans for liquor licenses. To help revitalize our local economy, a voucher program was established that provided a \$20 voucher to every household in Johnsburg, which could be spent at participating Johnsburg businesses. The program, known as the “Johnsburg Bucks Program” is still in effect today so if you haven’t spent your “Bucks” yet, get out and spend it this summer and support your local businesses.

RESTORE ILLINOIS

A Public Health Approach To Safely Reopen Our State

Phase 1 Rapid Spread	Phase 2 Flattening	Phase 3 Recovery	Phase 4 Revitalization	Phase 5 Illinois Restored
<p>Strict stay at home and social distancing guidelines are put in place, and only essential businesses remain open.</p> <p>Every region has experienced this phase once already and could return to it if mitigation efforts are unsuccessful.</p>	<p>Non-essential retail stores reopen for curb-side pickup and delivery.</p> <p>Illinoisans are directed to wear a face covering when outside the home and can begin enjoying additional outdoor activities like golf, boating & fishing while practicing social distancing.</p>	<p>Manufacturing, offices, retail, barbershops and salons can reopen to the public with capacity and other limits and safety precautions.</p> <p>Gatherings of 10 people or fewer are allowed.</p> <p>Face coverings and social distancing are the norm.</p>	<p>Gatherings of 50 people or fewer are allowed, restaurants and bars reopen, travel resumes, child care and schools reopen under guidance from the Illinois Department of Public Health.</p> <p>Face coverings and social distancing are the norm.</p>	<p>The economy fully reopens with safety precautions continuing.</p> <p>Conventions, festivals and large events are permitted, and all businesses, schools and places of recreation can open with new safety guidance and procedures.</p>

In the early Spring, the number of COVID-19 cases continued to climb and in response, the State released the Restore Illinois Plan, which consisted of 5 phases and divided the State into 11 regions. Towards the end of May, new cases began leveling off and the Governor moved Illinois into Phase 3, the Recovery Phase, which allowed for a partial reopening of some businesses. Finally, our restaurants were allowed to open for more than just pickup and delivery, provided that all dining took place outside and social distancing was maintained.

The warm weather and outdoor activities of the summer seemed to have a positive impact on slowing the spread of the virus and we saw the number of COVID cases decrease enough to warrant a move to Phase 4 just in time for the 4th of July holiday. In Phase 4, restaurants could begin serving both indoors and outdoors and youth and recreational sports could resume with restrictions. A return to normal life was beginning to take shape, albeit the new norm.

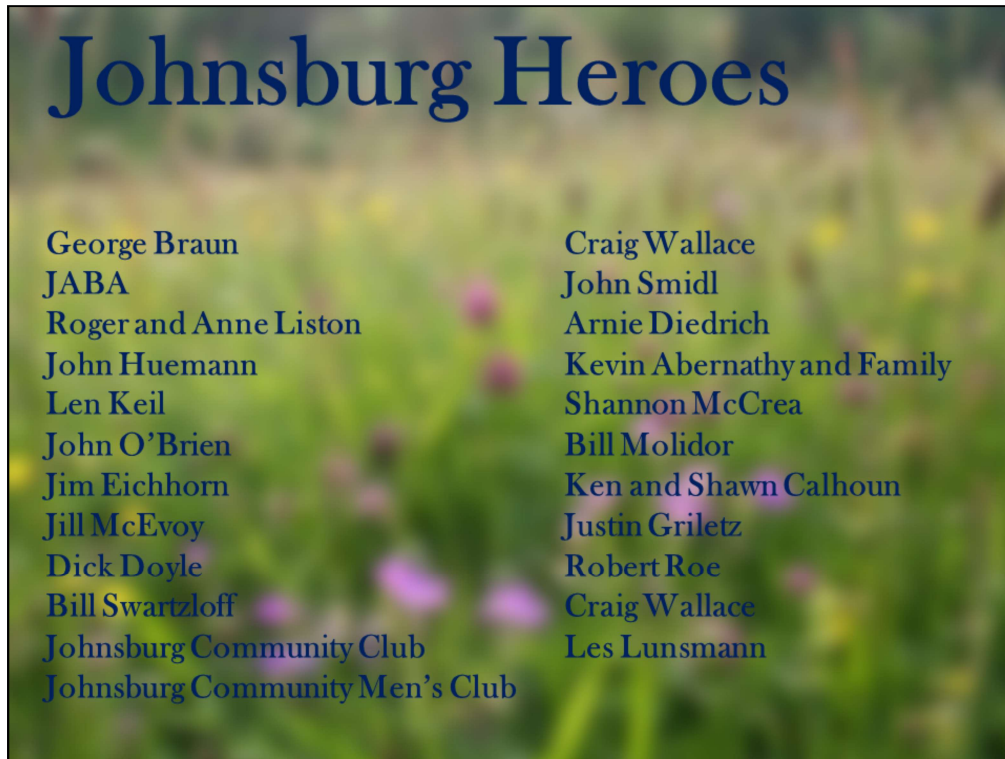
As the weather turned colder, new cases of the virus rose and by November we were experiencing record high cases. In response, Governor Pritzker again shut down indoor dining and restricted capacity at retail establishments. Fortunately we began to see the number of cases decline and the new year brought new hope as vaccines became available and began being dispensed. Today we are not yet over the pandemic, but we are making great progress as more of our population becomes immunized.



Even though the resulting economic and lifestyle impacts of the pandemic have been severe, our community rose to the challenge. The outpouring of good will over the past year from the citizens of Johnsburg overwhelms me, proving once again that by uniting together and supporting each other, we can overcome any challenge.



Reflecting on our past is important, but we also need to recognize the time to move forward. That is more true than ever today. This past year brought about challenges never imagined but we persevered and there are much better days ahead. That is what I would like to focus on for the remainder of my presentation, but before we continue, I would like to take a moment to recognize some people who help us achieve our goals.



Each year at this event, I take a moment to recognize individuals and organizations who go above and beyond in support of and in service to our community. This slide lists those heroes we've recognized in the past and we are very grateful to them. This year I would like to recognize long time residents Steve and Cathy Hurckes. I grew up and went to school with Steve and met Cathy in high school when I became best friends with her brother Kevin. I have many stories I could share from those days, but we'll save that for another time. Steve and Cathy raised their three children Abbie, Steven and Katie in Johnsburg. Abbie and her husband Cliff and Steven and his wife Kristy are here with them tonight, but unfortunately Katie and her husband Kip are out of state and unable to join us.

Steve served on the Village's Planning Commission in the late 80's and into the 90's and was instrumental in shaping the vision of our community. Today, Steve is retired and volunteers his time as a member of Johnsburg Community Men's Club and helps to maintain the Club's grounds. Cathy and Steve are both actively involved in and have contributed greatly to the FISH food pantry.



This past year Steve and Cathy approached the Village with a desire to support a local project and after considering several projects, they chose to contribute to the purchase and installation of playground equipment in Rescue Squad Park. The park, situated adjacent to the Community Club has quickly become a popular gathering place for events and activities but it lacked a play area for the children of our community. The improvements have been a great addition to the park and I would like to thank both Steve and Cathy for their generous contributions to our community. You both truly exemplify our Hometown with Spirit.

Sound Leadership



Now I would like to take a moment to introduce our Board of Trustees. As many of you know, we recently said goodbye to Trustee Kevin McEvoy, who resigned this past year. Kevin served 7 years with the Village as a member of the Public Works Committee and 10 years as a Trustee and Chairman of the Public Works Committee. We are grateful for all of his efforts and he will be greatly missed. I would like to introduce you to our newest Board Member, Scott Letzter. Scott brings much experience to his new role on the board having served more than 20 years on the Village's Planning and Zoning Commission. We look forward to working with Scott in his new role with the Village.

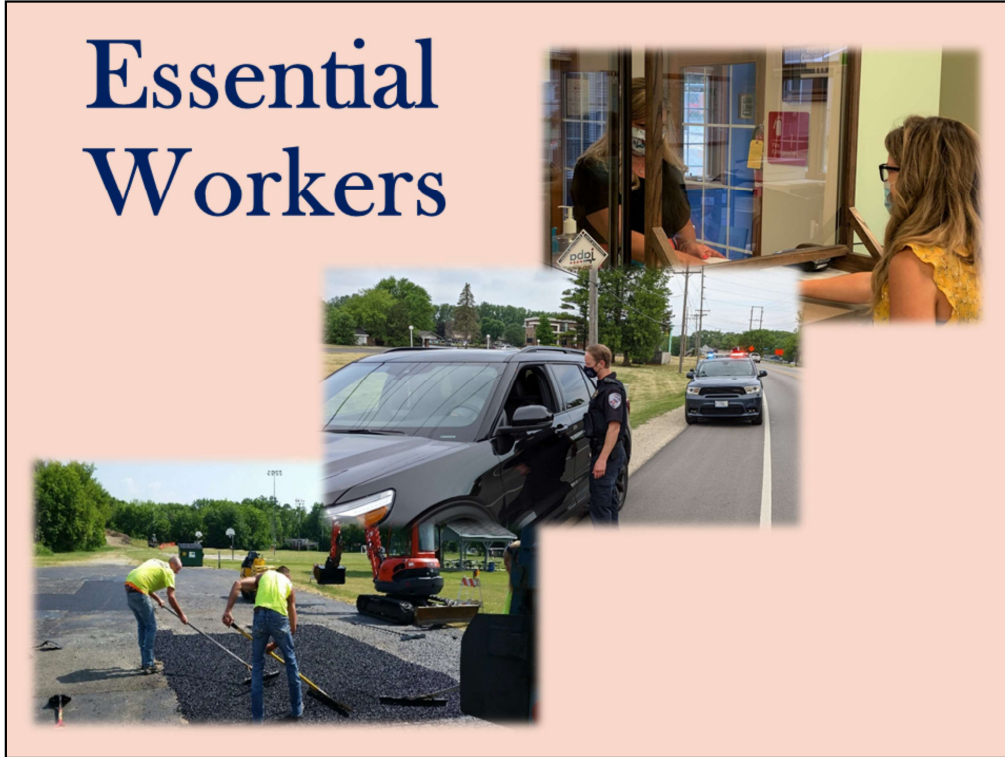


I also would like to take a moment to recognize the hardworking volunteers that serve on our committees. Although the pandemic restricted our committee's activities for a good part of the year, they still met when able and accomplished much. We are fortunate to have many committed residents that generously donate their time and talents serving on one of our committees. Tonight's program includes a list of committee members to whom we are truly grateful, for without them, our successes would not be possible. Several of our committee members are in attendance tonight. Could you please stand. Thank you for your continued service to the Village.



I would be remiss if I did not recognize the many local organizations which are also listed in tonight's program whose members generously volunteer their time to make Johnsbury the community we are proud to call home. I see some members of those organizations here tonight. If you serve as a volunteer through one of our local organizations, please take a moment and stand. I realize this past year created challenges in carrying out your initiatives and I commend you for your accomplishments and for sticking through the tough times. I am truly grateful for all that you do.

Essential Workers



I would like to extend a special thanks to our A-Team. Village services are considered essential and as such the Village continued to operate throughout the pandemic. All employees reported to work daily and all departments remained fully functional. In April, Village offices were required to close to the public, but our departments still performed at full capacity. In addition to carrying out their regular responsibilities, our team provided crucial support to help guide the community through the challenges associated with the pandemic. They proved once again how they can adapt and tackle any challenge thrown their way.

In response to the shelter in place order, our Administration staff increased the Village's online capabilities to insure that the public's needs were met and instituted Zoom meetings so that the Village Board remained responsive and available to the public. As frontline workers, our police personnel were faced with the real possibility that they were placing their own health in jeopardy each time they responded to a call. Our public works and parks department employees continued to carry out their tasks, utilizing safe work practices to help guard against the virus and they did so without missing a beat. Several members of our A-team are present tonight, please stand and be recognized. Thank you for all that you do. A list of all our employees is included in tonight's program.



Strategic planning is a tool used in many industries to set overall goals and develop a plan on how to achieve those goals. The process requires us to step back from our daily routines and question where we are headed and establish priorities. The Village has engaged in Strategic Planning several times over the past 26 years. The most recent session was held last February right before the pandemic at the Lost Valley Visitors Center in Glacial Park. The session was well attended and exciting ideas were exchanged as we planned for the future of our community. A draft report was developed by the session's facilitator, Frannie Glosson and now that restrictions are lifted, we can finally arrange for a follow up session to discuss the report generated from those efforts. Watch for the final report which will be posted to the Village's website in the near future.



- At the beginning of the presentation I discussed the challenges we faced this past year, but despite those hardships, we also experienced many successes.
- Last Spring, the Village Board authorized the pursuit of bonds to support the David G. Dominguez Municipal Center expansion project and the extension of sewers into our North Sewer Service Area. Both projects are now underway.
- We had a balanced budget and operated within the confines of that budget.
- We secured \$3 million in grants to improve Johnsburg Road and Riverside Drive and received \$280,000 in CURES funding to help offset expenses associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Grants were pursued to construct the downtown parking lot and make additional improvements to the boat launch.
- Important amendments were adopted to our ordinances and codes related to Short Term Rentals, Signage, Traffic, Nuisances and Parks.
- We worked with Heartland Development and KLM to facilitate the completion of homes and townhomes in Remington Grove Subdivision and annexed the Novotny property into the Village in the fall of 2020 followed by the annexation of a parcel along Spring Grove in December.
- We participated in the Fox Corridor Study to help identify current impacts to the Fox River, discuss ways to mitigate those impacts and plan for sustainable development along the river.
- We pursued a significant storm system repair on Ringwood Road and resurfaced roads and installed new street name signs in Sunnyside and Jak-anna Subdivisions.
- Last fall, in response to failing septic concerns, the Village moved forward with the extension of sewers on Stubby and Middle Avenue enabling 15 additional households to connect to our wastewater treatment system.

- Following several years of discussions, residents along Sunnyside Beach Drive petitioned to move forward with an SSA to fund the improvement of their privately maintained road. The project, which is currently being bonded, is expected to be under construction next Spring.
- Pedestrian lights were installed in Rescue Squad Park and improvements were completed at the 19th Hole, orchard and pump house at the Golf Course

David G. Dominguez Municipal Center



It seems we've been talking about the municipal center expansion for quite awhile, but finally after year's of analyzing alternatives, interviewing architects, and debating designs, we are beginning to see the fruits of our efforts rise up from the ground.....literally.

On April 11, 2021 we broke ground on the David G. Dominguez Municipal Center. Sue Dominguez along with members of the Dominguez family joined us as we celebrated the start of a very exciting project. A lot of hard work went into determining where the center should be located and how to design it to meet our needs, but when it came to determining how it would be named, we did not have to ponder the subject for long. Johnsbury is a community of hardworking, dedicated people and Dave Dominguez was a leader that knew how to bring people together, harness all of those qualities and do great things. This facility honors the vision of a great man who was instrumental in making Johnsbury the community we know and love and it is a symbol of what we can accomplish through good planning and by working together to turn dreams into reality.

The improvements are expected to be completed by the Christmas holiday and I know our officers are excited about their new home and eager to settle in as soon as possible.

Be sure to watch for information about an official ribbon cutting ceremony and open house in the New Year.

North Sewer Extension Project



Another project that is soon to get underway is the extension of sewers into the North Sewer Service Area. Expanding our sewer system to serve businesses along North Johnsburg Road has been a Village priority for several years. This project will take the sewers from their current terminus on Sunnyside Beach Drive, north to Lakeview Avenue. It will enable the system to serve residents and businesses in need of wastewater treatment alternatives such as Angelo's Market, Raymond's Bowl, Sunnyside Tavern and Johnsburg Mobile. The extension sets the platform for future extensions into adjacent neighbors and eventually up to the Oakcreek Townhomes property. The timing of the project will also enable us to connect the David G. Dominguez Municipal Center to the system.

Although pursuing the project in phases has taken additional time, we have made great strides in accomplishing this goal. Since 2007 when the Village first embarked on the West Side Sewer Collection System, we have extended the system to serve 165 homes and businesses. The North Sewer Extension Project will immediately provide for 25 additional connections and set the table for 250 more in the near future.



In November of 2018, the Village applied for a Safe Routes to School Grant to install much needed sidewalks from the roundabout to the Chapel Hill Road bridge. We were thrilled when notified that we were awarded the grant and eager to get the project underway. Two and a half years later, our sidewalks are in! See, good things do come to those who wait. Immediately after the installation, people could be seen strolling along the sidewalk, enjoying the ability to safely walk around our downtown separated from the traffic on Chapel Hill Road. Our team is currently working to secure additional funding to extend sidewalks along Fairview Avenue from the bridge to Johnsburg Road and on Spring Grove Road from Johnsburg Road to Church Street. These sections are key to establishing a sidewalk network in our downtown area so that our children can travel safely to school. Our overall goal is to establish a system of sidewalks, paths and bike lanes along arterial roadways and neighborhood collectors for pedestrians and bicyclist to enjoy.

Non-Highway Vehicles



Along with our bike and pedestrian transportation network, we are also working to develop a designated path system to facilitate the movement of non-highway vehicles throughout Johnsburg. At the current time, golf carts and UTV's are permitted to travel on Village roads with speed limits less than 35 miles per hour. That allows for relatively free movement throughout our community, however there are still areas that cannot be accessed without the establishment of an off-road path network. The Village has been working with private property owners to secure permission for the use of their land to install paths for non-highway vehicle use. A map will be developed reflecting the road and path network so that users will know where they can travel as they move about the Village. The Village has also updated its codes related to non-highway vehicle use and increased fines for users violating regulations to insure that the activity does not adversely impact the community.



In 2022, the Village will be moving forward with another exciting project that will further our efforts in developing a multi-modal community. This past year, we were successful in securing a grant in the amount of \$1.5 million to resurface and improve Riverside Drive. This project will include the replacement of storm structures under the Riverside Drive bridge and resurface Riverside Drive from Johnsburg Road to the Village limits at Running Brook Farm subdivision. Sidewalks and a bike path will be installed to safely separate pedestrian and bicyclist movement from vehicular traffic. Riverside Drive is a major arterial roadway and the inclusion of multi-modal improvements along this stretch of road is a huge step in furthering our bike and pedestrian network. We want to encourage a healthy community that supports active lifestyles and in order to do so it is crucial that we provide accommodations for pedestrians and bicyclist.

Berkshire of Johnsburg



Another project we've been discussing for some time is the redevelopment of the former Bush School site, known as the Berkshire of Johnsburg development. General Capital first approached the Village with their concept to construct senior housing on the site in 2017. Now, four years later, the construction of the facility is nearly complete and scheduled to open later this year. The facility will provide 68 affordable housing units for persons 55 years of age and older. In addition to revitalizing the former school site with a housing product not currently available in the Village, the developers are also making improvements to our water and sewer systems in the downtown area and resurfacing Johnsburg Road from Fairview Avenue to the roundabout. The Berkshire Development is a fantastic addition to our community and we are eagerly awaiting its opening.



The pandemic may have delayed our efforts to secure funding for the Dutch Creek Aquatic Restoration Project, but we continue to work with the Fox Waterway Agency to further channel dredging and land reclamation projects. This project is a high priority for the Village as the Bay and adjacent channels have not been dredged in nearly 30 years and siltation has created challenges for boaters attempting to navigate through these areas.

This year, in coordination with the Dutch Creek Homeowners Association, the Fox Waterway will be dredging an area at the mouth of the Dutch Creek Bay and we hope to expand on that effort in the near future. With restrictions being lifted it is likely that Federal and State agencies will be able return to full operations, which will enable us to resume our efforts to secure funding for our project



In addition to the playground equipment newly installed in Rescue Squad Park, additional improvements are taking place at other parks throughout the Village. Recently, the Village with the help of the Community Affairs Committee, pursued two outcroppings at our fishing pond on Hickory Way Drive. This improvement is already proving to be a welcomed addition. On the day of installation, the first outcropping was already being put to good use as the second one was being installed.

We also worked with the Land Conservancy this past year to develop a pollinator site. The Village set aside vacant land on Sandalwood Lane in Lake Dawnwood Subdivision for the project and prepped the property with the help of our Public Works and Parks Department employees. The Land Conservancy seeded the site and fencing was installed to protect the area as the plantings germinate .

In coordination with the Johnsburg High School Athletic Department, a new home run fence was recently installed on the Mustang Field at Hiller Park. This summer three new scoreboards will be erected to serve the Showcase Field, Mustang Field and the football field. The project is being pursued by the High School Athletic Department in coordination with the Village's Community Affairs Committee. Johnsburg High School currently use the fields at Hiller Park as their home field for all ball games.

The recent installation of park improvements in Running Brook Farm subdivision has been a welcome addition to the residents. Running Brook Farm is one of the Village's newer developments and is situated further away from the center of town where parks and amenities are located. This park was greatly needed in the neighborhood for families to enjoy. This year picnic tables have been moved over to the park and a new bench has been ordered and will be installed later this summer.



We all know that business development was significantly hindered by the pandemic. New businesses were not about to start when existing ones, were not even able to open. As a community our economic development goals are to support our existing businesses so that they can thrive and to seek out new business opportunities that can provide additional employment, service, shopping and dining opportunities in our community. I spoke earlier about the Johnsburg Bucks Program and the steps we took to assist our businesses during the pandemic. More recently, the Village entered into an agreement with a marketing firm to help us improve our digital presence in an effort to shine a spotlight on all Johnsburg has to offer. We believe our local businesses will be positively impacted by this effort. Our goal is to showcase our community in hopes of attracting visitors, businesses and new residents.

Since the last State of the Village, key properties situated along Johnsburg Road were rezoned for business activity. The area strategically links our Downtown with the Route 31 corridor and has the potential for valuable business development. In addition to being a conduit between the Downtown and the Route 31 corridor, the area is also ideal as it can provide the necessary transportation, utilities and other infrastructure to accommodate business development.

Over the past year, we have also had several discussions with developers interested in vacant parcels along our Route 31 corridor. While I cannot tell you the nature of those discussions yet, I can tell you that the businesses discussed would be welcome additions to the Village.

Return to Norm



After a year of sheltering ourselves at home, we are all eager for our lives to return to normal. We've longed to spend time with family and friends and come together again as a community. This year's Memorial Day festivities marked the first post COVID event held since Holiday Magic 2019! It was a real pleasure to see our community come out and honor those that lost their lives serving our country.

I am happy to report that many of our favorite annual events are back this year and thanks to the efforts of Trustee Foreman and our hardworking Community Affairs Committee, I know they will be better than ever. Mark your calendars for a new twist on "Burgers in the Burg", this year. The Committee has been organizing "Party in the Burg" which is an adult night out event that will take place on Friday, August 6th in Rescue Squad Park. The BYOB event will include dueling pianos for entertainment and food trucks for tasty treats. Watch for more information about ticket sales in the near future. Plans are also underway for this year's Celebration in the Park and Holiday Magic events. I hope to see you all come out and enjoy the fun.



In the past, funding has always been the one of the major hurdles we face in accomplishing our goals. That will likely always be the case, but in light of the pandemic, our greatest challenge is keeping our community healthy and our businesses thriving. To tackle the funding challenges, our dedicated team has been very successful in securing grants to help achieve our goals. They will continue to do so as we face new unfunded mandates and ever increasing costs to provide services and maintain and improve our infrastructure.



The pandemic affected us all in many different ways. Some of us lost a loved one to the virus, and some lost their livelihood. After sheltering at home, I think many of us would agree that we nearly lost our minds. I realize this past year has been difficult but I believe we are strong and resilient and there is light at the end of the tunnel. I am proud of the way our community pulled together. We have accomplished great things in the past and there are many more to come.

I thank you for your support and urge you to join us as we work to make sure Johnsburg continues to be the place we proudly call home.



I thank the Johnsburg Area Business Association for the opportunity to present to you this evening and all of our residents and business owners who have given me the honor of representing them as your Village President.

Thank you for sharing your time.