

Date: March 27, 2014

Contact: Erik Spande, Village President, 630-933-7150
Curt Barrett, Village Manager, 630-933-7115

Release: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

2014 State of the Village Address

Western DuPage Chamber of Commerce, March 26, 2014

Erik Spande/Winfield Village President

What a Difference A Year Makes

Reflecting on 2013 and Looking Forward to 2014

Good evening everyone.

Tonight I am presenting the State of the Village address for 2014. It is my privilege to be the first Winfield Village President to make a State of the Village Address to the West Suburban Chamber of Commerce. I will be reflecting on what has happened in Winfield in the past year and also looking forward to 2014 and beyond.

In the past year Winfield has made remarkable strides in addressing some of its long-standing challenges. We have had a busy year. And I have to say, what a difference a year makes!

First, the biggest achievement of the Village for 2013 is finally taking action on road repair. This has been a strategic priority of the Village for years, and citizens have consistently demanded action. All residents understand that poor quality roads degrade property values and reflect poorly on our Village. To highlight this point, a front page article in the January 14th Daily Herald demonstrated the sorry condition of our roads by showing a picture of a monumental pothole on Jewell Road – this where ambulances travel to and from Central DuPage Hospital. Residents have even told me they have lost tires on the potholes in the Village.

In 2013 Village staff quantified the road problem. Almost 30 percent of our roads are in poor to failing condition and are over 20 years old. Our \$4M backlog of road repair for our poor to failing roads will balloon to \$10M in 5 years if road repair continues on its current maintenance trajectory. In short, we would incur \$1M a year in unnecessary costs if we fail to take action. How can this be, you might ask? The answer is that our roads are in such bad shape that each year we fail to take action some of these roads will decay past the point of no return and will have to be reconstructed. This increases costs from about \$350K a mile to \$1.2M a mile.

Every attempt was made to keep costs as low as possible. We got grants for all eligible roads, saving taxpayers \$5M. Former President Birutis deserves credit for aggressively pursuing these grants – a terrific gift to Winfield citizens that shows her foresight and good management.

This was sobering information, and the current board had to make a decision. Do we kick the can down the road and knowingly incur a \$1M liability each year to Winfield citizens, or make a difficult choice and fix our roads?

On November 21, 2013, the majority on the current board broke the political logjam. We had the courage to approve a cost-effective way of repairing 40 percent of our roads. This will cost each household approximately \$4 per month—an incredible bang for the buck. You will

be able to see the results every day during the massive road program that will start this spring and continue for about 18 months.

Second, a long overdue revision to the Winfield comprehensive development plan is now underway. This was delayed by the previous board for over a year, and the Spande Administration started the Comp Plan process almost immediately after being sworn in. Our consultant Teska – a regionally renowned planning firm - began its evaluation last summer. The \$100K plan was 100 percent paid for by an IKE grant, which is an added bonus for Winfield residents.

The Comp Plan is the long-term vision for how Winfield can develop in the decade to come. It includes public input to identify what our community wants, market research will quantify what is realistic, and professional planning to show how it can be done.

Over the last year we've had extensive public comment, with workshops, surveys, citizen steering committee meetings, and other outreach. The draft plan is now in the hands of the Plan Commission, who will provide their recommendation in the next month or so. Then it comes to the board, and I expect a completed plan in early summer.

I am excited by the possibilities! This plan will lay the groundwork for thoughtful redevelopment of Winfield that preserves its character and also provides for additional housing and commercial development in key development areas. This time we are doing it right.

Third, in accord with Illinois state law, Winfield's Village budget is balanced. This is not new, since Winfield's budget has been balanced in previous administrations. In 2013 and now in 2014, the Winfield budget is approximately \$17M. This is divided into two primary funds:

- **The General Fund** is about \$4.6 M, and it provides the bulk of the funds for staff salaries, operations, equipment, and infrastructure such as roads
- **The Water and Sewer fund** is about \$6.2 M, and it provides all the funding for pass-through costs for City of Chicago Water, West Chicago sewage treatment, and pipes and sewers. It also provides some funding for operations.

Frugal spending in the last few years has allowed the Village to build up reserves to the upper end of the recommended 25 percent to 50 percent level. We have done this by estimating costs on the high side and revenue on the conservative side. This means that when unexpected expenses come up—and they always do, such as the recent back-to-back winter storms—that we have a cushion and are able to have a modest surplus at the end of the year. We have also kept our high credit rating of Aa2 which is possible due to our low debt and improving financial position.

As with many communities, the Village strives to do more with less each year. Our objective is efficient delivery of key services.

Winfield received the **Distinguished Budget Presentation Award** and Audit Award (Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting) again in 2013. This designation is earned by only 10 percent of governmental units. This long-term diligence shows the care that Village staff put in to our yearly budget document to make it clear and understandable to the public.

Fourth, in the last year we've seen significant infrastructure improvements in the Village. The Village has been **aggressively pursuing grants** to improve our Village while significantly reducing cost to local taxpayers. A couple of examples:

- The Manchester Road resurfacing project cost \$460K, and was 70 percent grant funded
- The Manchester Road sidewalk project cost \$170K, and was 70 percent grant funded
- The Winfield Road bridge replacement cost \$490K, and was 80 percent grant funded

We have had some struggles with these project disrupting local activities, but unfortunately one of the penalties of having someone else foot most of the bill is that others control the contracting and administration. But the projects are done, and we are better for them.

The Village allocated the recommended **\$650K in road funding in 2013**. Some of this went to meet the matching portion of the grants, noted above. With remaining funds the Village repaired the following neighborhood streets: Parkway Drive and Winfield Scott Drive north of Waterford Drive.

Additionally, the Village spent **\$750,000 in major capital improvements**. These included items such as replacing vehicles that were past their life span, water and sewer maintenance and repair, and sidewalk repair.

Fifth, The *Ronald McDonald House* was approved by the board in late 2013. This institution will provide housing for families with sick children while they are being treated at Cadence Healthcare. Having a Ronald McDonald House in Winfield is an honor, and it shows that the Village is developing a positive and business like relationship with Cadence Healthcare. The planned facility will be a terrific improvement to our Town Center, too.

Sixth, DuPage County has completed construction of the Children’s Advocacy Center in Winfield. This is located south of the railroad and west of County Farm Road. It serves children that have been abused or traumatized. This structure is also a LEEDS building, which is a prestigious classification indicating green construction and high energy efficiency. This is another plum for the Village.

Seventh, the Village of Winfield and the Forest Preserve received a \$2M grant to engineer and construct a 3-mile extension of the regional trail network through our downtown. The West Branch DuPage River Regional Trail is a strategic priority of DuPage County and the Forest Preserve that is approximately 50 percent complete. The Winfield portion was one of the missing sections. Construction is anticipated to be complete in 2016, and it will be a boost to our Town Center businesses with hundreds of path users coming through our down town each day.

Winfield successfully worked with the Forest Preserve on this trail, showing that Winfield can work with other units of government to meet mutual needs with shared cost. As Forest Preserve Chairman Dewey Pierotti said in a press release: “This is a great example of what intergovernmental cooperation can achieve.”

Eighth, Winfield remains one of the hot spots for construction in DuPage County. Shelburne Farms on the western side of the Village is entering its final phase, with the likely completion of its two final complexes.

A shining star is the new **Silverwood Glen subdivision on east side of County Farm Road**. A total of 45 upscale single family homes are planned, and over dozen homes are going up as we speak. As of this writing over well over a dozen permits have been granted, and the builder anticipates pulling 4 more permits per month through 2014. I look forward to welcoming these new residents to our wonderful community!

Ninth, the Village of Winfield is effectively meeting the challenge of the emerald ash borer. In a few years almost all of our public ash trees will be dead. These trees will have to

be promptly removed to ensure public safety and since dead trees are a blight on our neighborhoods. Public works cost-effectively removed 240 of the approximately 900 remaining parkway ash trees in 2013. To save costs we purchased a stump grinder in 2012 and a lift truck in 2013. This equipment will pay for itself in a few years. Expect more ash tree removal in 2014.

Winfield will be replacing our lost trees with our **tree replacement program**, which was sold out in 2013. This **50-50 program** plants or replaces trees on public land in front of homes and businesses. With the die-off of ash trees this program has been very popular.

On a like note, Winfield was recently granted the **Tree City USA** designation due to our best practices in managing our urban tree canopy. Winfield joins other forward-thinking Tree City USA communities such as Wheaton and Warrenville. Our urban landscape is an asset for current and future residents, and it must be cost-effectively managed.

Tenth, the Village implemented an innovative garbage disposal contract. In the past we've had a sticker program, which provides value to those with smaller households and those that are aggressive recyclers. The board negotiated a contract with Waste Management that kept the sticker program and also has a flat fee option. Larger households or homes with a lot of yard waste that anticipate generating more than one garbage can a week can save money with the flat fee. And everyone gets a high-quality recycling cart of their choice. This contract improves service and saves everyone money.

Having reflected on the accomplishments of 2013, now let's look forward to 2014 and beyond.

Winfield is at an exciting crossroads. Change is inevitable, and Winfield is changing for the better. But how do we ensure that this change will benefit the Village in years to come?

A clear vision is needed, and then a plan to get it done. As our founding father Benjamin Franklin noted,

If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail.

It is the job of the Village Government to get the vision and the plan right.

My vision for Winfield is a simple one:

The Village of Winfield will continue to provide a high quality of life that is unique in DuPage County. We will ensure continued safe neighborhoods and cost-effective government services through smart growth and neighborhood-friendly redevelopment.

My job as Village President is to work with the board, the community, and outside agencies to make this vision a reality.

As noted previously, the biggest change in 2014 will be **massive road repair**. This issue has been studied and talked to death. Residents have demanded action for years. Finally, the board decided additional delay was too expensive and we did what residents wanted – found a cost-effective plan and then acted.

Contracting on the roads will start in the next month or so, and the resurfacing will likely start when the weather breaks. Make no mistake, this is one of the most significant and positive changes in the Village in decades. It will make up for 10 or 15 years of underfunded roads.

Every resident will be impacted by road repair in 2014. Either you live on a road that will be repaired, or you will live near one. This will be an inconvenience, and the Village appreciates your patience. The Spande Administration will be updating information on roads that will be repaired, the schedule, and helpful information that you will need. Look for regular updates in the Winfield Word Village newsletter and periodic press releases.

My view is that Winfield can and should redevelop in a thoughtful way. The starting point is the **comprehensive development plan**, which sets out the vision based on market data, citizen input and best planning practices. A quality comprehensive plan will provide a blueprint for Winfield's future. I anticipate the Comp Plan will be finalized by the board in mid 2014.

The Comp Plan is a vision. But that is just the start. A guidance document like the Comp Plan does no good without the Village 'setting the table'. So we will be putting together a plan of action. Then the board must find a way to make the redevelopment a reality while respecting the interests of those that are affected. We will get only one shot at this, and a mistake could be costly and could result in an eyesore for generations to come. As Plan Commissioner Peter Dopper wisely noted, "...it is more important to do it right than do it fast."

In 2014 we should see the completion of the engineering work on the **West Branch DuPage River Regional Trail** that will go through our Town Center. As noted previously, this \$2.7M 3-mile trail is the result of collaboration with the Forest Preserve. A \$2M grant will fund the engineering and construction. Most of the trail is in the Forest Preserve, so they will bear the vast majority of the remaining cost.

This trail is one of the key elements that will help the **Riverwalk** project become a reality. To put this in perspective, think of the Riverwalk project as a Town Center public amenity, park, and destination that is constructed around the regional trail. The Riverwalk engineering is complete so the project is now shovel ready, and the Village will be pursuing opportunities for how to construct this Village improvement. The Riverwalk and the regional trail will help revitalize our Town Center.

Two residential projects will be prominent. Shelburne Farms will be at or very near completion. And you will see new homes going up at Silverwood Glen throughout 2014. Let the hammers fly!

Groundbreaking on the **Ronald McDonald House** occurred on March 18, 2014. I had the opportunity to say a few words during this gala event on how this will be a benefit for sick children and their families, Cadence Healthcare, and the Village. Current plans indicate completion on Valentine's Day 2015. I'm looking forward to this beautiful facility being constructed in our Village!

So, hold on to your hats – 2014 will be a busy building season for Winfield.

We must be ever mindful that the work of Village government is the work of many. I will take a few moments for well deserved acknowledgement and recognition.

My heartfelt thanks to all the **residents** that been supportive and have offered their thoughts and concerns to me and this board. The Winfield board is your board, and we will do a better job with your input. You are instrumental in helping this board find its way.

The **Winfield board** deserves credit for the good works of 2013. The previous board had a difficult time, and the meetings were often painful and unproductive. The previous board had agenda items languishing unresolved for over a year, and we almost never finished a meeting's agenda items. I'm pleased to say that our daunting backlog of agenda items was resolved within the first few months of the start of the Spande Administration, and we've tackled some contentious issues and made decisions that will benefit the Village in years to come. The tone of the current board has improved. My sincere thanks to: **Trustees Tim**

Allen, Jack Bajor, Jim Hughes, Jim McCurdy, Phil Mustes, and Tony Reyes for their service to the Village.

Communication between Village officials is better, but needs further improvement. In the last election Village residents sent us a clear message that they expect all public officials to behave in a professional manner. That does not mean we always have to agree. In fact, disagreement and discussion can result in better policy if it is done with mutual respect. But there has been an unfortunate trend back toward the unpleasant and combative behavior that typified the previous board. I'd like to challenge all board members to be courteous and remember the *Golden Rule: do unto others as you would have them do unto you.*

Village staff also deserves recognition for their many accomplishments. The board sets the policy (and, I might add, hogs all the credit!), but Village staff does the work. Winfield has a lean staff that excels at doing a lot with a little. Everyone wears many hats, and the job gets done.

Where would we be without **Village Manager Curt Barrett**? Curt has weathered the storms of the previous board – proving his mettle and professionalism. Since being elected in April 2013, I have been networking throughout DuPage County and Curt is known as a rising star. I even had one of his former colleagues express regret that he was no longer with their organization. Winfield is very fortunate to have Mr. Barrett!

We have a new Finance Director – **Lynn McCammon**. Lynn has hit the ground running and brought a wealth of knowledge and innovation to Winfield. She has repeatedly received kudos from the board for identifying best practices and her auditing expertise that has improved Village operations. In a short time she has demonstrated an amazing command of the issues.

Public Works Director Tye Loomis and his staff are the unsung heroes of Winfield, fixing water main breaks in the depths of the night, plowing our streets during one winter storm after another, and always behaving in a professional manner. Mr. Loomis and his staff have saved this Village hundreds of thousands of dollars in the last few years in EAB tree removal alone. The Public Works crew has done an amazing job keeping our roads clear with the record snowfall, and I've lost count of the compliments I've received due to the excellent work Tye and his team has done this last winter.

Village Attorney Kathie Elliott has changed employers but has not changed jobs here in Winfield. She has a history of providing excellent legal advice, and is also battle tested. It is a pleasure to work with her.

Village Engineer Dan Watson of Rempe-Sharp has served the Village for about two decades and knows more about how the Village works than just about anyone else. He has warned Winfield boards for over a decade that our roads were not funded properly, and I'm pleased this board finally did something about it.

Community Development Director Peter Krumins has done a great job, combining efficiency, an admirable command of Village policy, and the ability to juggle many competing priorities.

Our **Police Department** continues to provide excellent service and has a record of accomplishment under the leadership of **Chief Stacy Reever**. In January we were pleased to welcome two new patrol officers. And officers **Mike DeWitt, Joe Gaske, and Matt Goeb** were recognized during the November 7th board meeting for commendable DUI enforcement.

Volunteers are the life blood of Winfield. They work for the Village because it is their passion, and I am deeply grateful for their hard work. Over **65 residents** serve on many committees and service groups, which are:

- Admin and Finance
- Bikeways Planning Group
- Board of Fire and Police Commissioners
- Communications and Technology Commission
- Economic Development Task Force
- Plan Commission
- Public Works Committee
- Zoning Board of Appeals
- WEMA
- Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee

My heartfelt thanks to all of you!

Winfield is more than the Village Government. The Spande Administration will continue to establish positive working relationships with other **key institutions**, including: Cadence Healthcare, Cantigny, Fire Department, School District 33, School District 34, School District 94, and School District 200, Park District, Library, Forest Preserve, and DuPage County.

And now, my State of the Village Address draws to a close. Some of you will be sighing with relief, and others may be as enthusiastic as I am about our accomplishments in 2013 and opportunities in 2014.

To sum everything up: **what a difference a year makes!**

Winfield will be having a very busy 2014. We already have an incredible list of achievements that we know will occur. What we don't know is what other opportunities will come forward – but I know this board will be ready for them.

We have so much promise. I believe that with a shared vision we can make a great Village even better. I am grateful to serve a wonderful community such as Winfield.

Stay tuned – the best is yet to come!