

Lowell City News

**2018 Spring Edition
March, April, May**

**Community
Calendar**

Mayors State of the City Address 2018

Welcome. It is my great pride and honor to represent the great City of Lowell and to share with you many of our accomplishments over the past year and to share key aspects of our direction for 2018. I would like to extend my thanks to Raymond Burns and the entire staff of the Rogers-Lowell Chamber of Commerce for their continued support of this event. The Chamber's spirit of cooperation and partnership continues to assist Lowell with key economic development programs that attract new businesses to our beautiful city. I would also like to acknowledge all Lowell City Council Members and City Planning Commissioners. Our City Attorney, City Clerk, City Engineer, Department Heads, fellow co-workers, members of the Press, business owners, fellow citizens, family and all visitors.



Welcome to the 2018 State Of The City Address

2017 proved to be an outstanding year in growth for major road improvement projects, infrastructure projects, major corporation expansions, residential development and commercial startups. Lowell, Arkansas is uniquely positioned for innovative projects and progressive ideas. We continue to be recognized regionally and nationally for our great connectivity to all transportation routes and our centrality to the area has contributed to our sustainability. Businesses and families are attracted to our employment opportunities and our parks and amenities, such as the Razorback Greenway. As we go forward, we must continue to be proactive in our economic development and city planning programs to properly promote and manage a harmonious community that we are all proud to be a part of.

Our Planning Department, led by Kris Sullivan, helped in securing the following businesses that opened during 2017; Metro Appliance Center, Delta Systems, Anheiser Busch Distributors, Fed-Ex Ground, the new JB Hunt Tower on I-49, NWA Easy Storage and Flipside Ninja on W. Monroe. Other large development projects that are currently working with city departments and scheduled to open or start construction during 2018 are; Workman's Restaurant & Travel Center, The Arkansas State Police Headquarters and Crime Lab (serving 12 counties), Sassy Sue's Storage Expansion Project, The Grove Restaurant and Comedy Club, Harps Grocery, 405SB LLC, Providence Academy, Avad3, a New Event Center on Hwy 264 W., The First Tee Indoor Facility and another JB Hunt Tower off S. Bloomington. This growth spells more and more JOBS and is a clear signal that the economic forecast for Lowell will continue to improve. The Central Referral Connection, a weekly networking event that began last year here at City Hall, continues to grow and expand commerce within the city. The Planning department's **Karen Davis** has also been busy writing and attaining Park Grants - recently being awarded 2 grants during 2016 & 2017 totaling \$787,000 for additional trail connectivity and trail head development at KJMP. An additional grant request to NWARPC for \$250,000 has been submitted for 2018 to help with the overall project. The department is also starting preliminary work with the Census Bureau in collecting information for the 2020 census. The 2010 census revealed a Population of 7,327 and the U.S. Census update on July 1, 2016 estimated our population at 8,922. At the current rate of growth and considering future housing projects, Lowell's projected 2020 population will easily surpass 10,000 people and may have already. The department continues to assist the public in managing the development of the community, processing a record number of projects, engaging engineers and developers to protect and preserve the quality of life, promote a strong economic base and appropriate design - all in balance with the City's constraints related to environment and resources.

The Building Services Department, led by Matt Bailey, has the responsibility of seeing that all structures are built according to International Building Code Standards. The department issued a total of 2,456 commercial and residential inspections and 164 code violation inspections during 2017. The department also issued 98 residential building permits and another 33 residential alteration permits. There were also 17 commercial permits issued with an additional 13 commercial upgrade permits issued for a total of 161 permits. However, with all this growth, we still have room for you. Lakewood, Park Central and the soon to open Timber Ridge subdivision will most certainly build out quickly. The department currently reports over 200 available residential lots and 64 commercial lots. Approximately 400 business licenses were issued during 2017. The staff continues their yearly ICC training to ensure that Lowell is prepared to deal with every aspect of construction safety issues on large developments like the JB Hunt Technology Tower or a small business seeking to add a single room. Together the department is committed to excellence and has processed a record number of permits and compliance calls.

Richard Stone with utilities and special services has reported an increase of 50 Step systems during 2017, leaving only 4 lots of the original 314 lots that are designated for this alternative sewer system. As the graph shows, the complete build out of these systems has basically occurred. The department is in transition from tank installation orders to promoting a more extensive maintenance program. Richard has also assisted with multiple easement acquisitions to be utilized for drainage purposes. He helped negotiate several property donations during 2017 that support drainage and city infrastructure needs across the city. Some of our goals for 2018 include working with the Corps of Engineers to study the Puppy Creek Basin from the Links apartment complex to the headwaters East of town, updating our FEMA flood plain maps, several creek bank restoration projects, and working with FEMA on a major Sabre Heights restoration project that the December floods of 2016 destroyed. Richard serves on the board of directors for NACCA and also The Beaver Lake Water Alliance. Richard will be working with city engineers to determine the best course and use of \$250,000 recently received directly from the office of our Governor, the honorable Asa Hutchinson. This special assistance confirms that the Governor recognizes Lowell's economic importance to the region and is ambitious to help us study the Cross Creek Drainage Basin that includes the environmentally sensitive recharge area. These funds will give us a head start this year on research, design, feasibility, and in determining accurate cost projections. We are appreciative to Senators Cecile Bledsoe, Bart Hester, and Jim Hendren for their support in this effort.

City Council Meeting

6:30 PM

March 20, 2018

April 17, 2018

May 15, 2018

Tech Plat/Work Session

6:00 PM

March 5, 2018

April 2, 2018

May 7, 2018

Planning Commission

6:00 PM

March 19, 2018

April 16, 2018

May 21, 2018

Court Dates

Arraignment

8:00 AM

March 12, 2018

April 9, 2018

May 14, 2018

Discovery

9:00 AM

Trial

10:00 AM

March 16, 2018

April 13, 2018

May 18, 2018

Holidays

Memorial Day

May 28, 2018



Police Chief Randy Harvey continues to build a department that is well-trained and equipped to serve and protect our community. The department participates in annual Active Shooter Training classes and works with area schools and other city departments in conducting drills. The department will also offer a women's self-defense class for employees, scheduled for 2018. The department has had several equipment and weapon upgrades, including 3 Dodge Chargers last year and 3 more this year. Each department is inspected yearly and I am very proud of the professional appearance and the updated fleet that represents our city. During 2017 the department added 1 fulltime officer and 3 part time auxiliary positions. The 2018 budget allowed us to add 3 more patrolmen to our growing police force. A new poll by an independent data research firm recently revealed and declared Lowell as the second safest city of our size IN ARKANSAS. We moved up in rank from eleventh to second place in one year. Again, I wasn't surprised because I know the department has worked hard to accomplish and retain good law enforcement practices and community relations skills. The department held its first annual First Responders Day in conjunction with the Lowell Fire Department. The event was well-sponsored and hosted a DJ, a cook out, inflatables, a climbing wall, and other amusements for the public to enjoy. The departments performed demonstrations throughout the afternoon and this proved to be a perfect setting for emergency personnel to interact with residents of all ages. The department also participated in the Special Olympics Law Enforcement Torch Run, the Joe Landers Memorial Ride, local Veterans Day Ceremonies, and other regional events. With sentiment toward law enforcement and emergency personnel shifting unfavorably across much of our nation, I for one, am very proud of the integrity, sacrifice and courage of our Lowell Police Department.

Our Courts Department led by Johnna Clayton, continues to operate with professionalism and efficiency, working directly with Judge Conner in processing criminal, DWI, juvenile, ordinance violation and traffic violations. I find it interesting that overall crime from 2010 to 2017 has decreased, given our rising population and increased traffic. I asked my assistant, Melanie Houston to prepare this chart for an example. (2010 and 2017 comparison chart) This reveals tremendous progress and key information as to why we were chosen as the second safest community of our size in the state. This progress should make us all feel very good about our streets and neighborhoods.

Our Fire Department Chief, Mike Morris, has been busy with expanding facilities, equipment and personnel, (adding 12 new fire fighters on January 2 of this year). Lowell's new Westside station is located at the corner of Bellview and Zion Road and will open this spring. The facility will house personnel 24/7 to serve the growing needs of our community. With our ambulance service now firmly established, we can assure residents that the department is fully prepared and stands ready to respond to all emergency needs, bar none. I have received numerous reports of our shortened response times and quality of care given to those in their time of need. The entire department has done a tremendous job in continuing to provide excellent service during this transition period. In the 7 years I've been here, the department has grown from 8 line personnel and 2 shift officers to 27 line personnel, and 2 staff officers. (Those numbers include 9 paramedic positions). To each of the Firefighters and Medics that have risen to the challenges of growth, adjustments, and transition - I appreciate and encourage your continued commitment to public safety and support your faithful service. To the recent new hires, I would encourage you to allow these men to train and shape you into the best you can possibly be. Allow them to mentor you as the department continues its expansion program. Remember that honor and respect must be earned.

Animal Welfare, under the leadership of Ray Drummond, continues to grow. The purchase of an adjacent lot next to the existing facility allowed a needed expansion to meet the needs of our community. New residential developments continue to represent an increase in pet ownership, resulting in the need of even more kennel space for 2018. I am proud to report that many hours of volunteer service by several special individuals help this department in taking extremely good care of our refugees. The department participates in weekend pet adoption events and on-line adoption programs with expectation of placing these pets in safe and secure environments. The implementation of microchipping by ordinance (with over 300 now implanted) has already proven to be very efficient in reuniting pets with their owners - generally within 24 hours. Well done!

The I.T. Department has been busy this past year, installing a new phone system, assisting in building a new City website, installing new equipment in emergency vehicles, troubleshooting the City's multiple computer network systems, desk top support, maintaining our city-wide storm warning system, running the IT booth, working on campus security systems and numerous other special projects. We appreciate everything Patrick Fahey does in keeping things running smoothly around here.

Museum Director, Liz Estes, organizes numerous special events each year, including the Museum's Anniversary, the annual Lowell Easter Egg Hunt, Veterans Day Ceremonies, Elza Tucker's upcoming 100th birthday, Elementary School Tours, Mudtown reenactment plays, the Back to School Bash, Christmas Open House and many more. The Lowell Historical Museum Foundation of NWA (a 501c3 organization) continues to help the museum in their capital raising efforts to build a new facility at KJMP. This facility will most definitely reaffirm Lowell's commitment to preserve our local and regional history, while also focusing on education and honoring area Veterans. The future 10,000 sq., ft. facility (including 6,000 sq. ft. of exhibit space), will also include a Veteran's appreciation room, a children's learning center, a community room, a café, a large lobby to house the Butterfield stage coach, covered outdoor spaces and a special rose garden in honor of the late Kathleen Johnson. Thank you Liz for all your efforts in preserving our Hometown heritage and keeping our history on the minds of our wonderful community.

Our Public Works Department, led by our Director, Jim Hendrix, has overseen the following completed projects in 2017: the Mt. Hebron Road Improvement Project, the Park Central street and drainage improvement project, Bellview waterline project, the new and improved BMX Track, RC car track, new Northside Admin parking lot, Billie Acres Water line project, multiple drainage and park projects, and many other city improvement projects. The department receives weekly praise by residents and visitors alike for their attention to detail in the management and maintenance of our city parks and growing trail system. They also work very hard in making Mudtown Days and other city events enjoyable for all who attend. Some of the ongoing infrastructure improvements and goals for this year include: Utility relocation project and construction start up for the South Dixieland Road Extension, the cooperative completion of Highway 265 / Old Wire Road widening project (a ARDOT project), East Monroe Extension Design, The engineering of North Goad Springs Road, the Sabre Heights Drainage project (a FEMA assistance project), Bellview and West Monroe signalization project, Ward Nail Park stage area improvement project, Puppy Creek Trailhead road improvement project, The completion of the 412 & I-49 interchange area including the Goad Springs and Razorback Greenway repairs (another AR DOT) project, KJMP sewer project, Greenway trail connectivity project at KJMP and Trailhead Facility, and many ongoing city street resurfacing projects. Over half the sub-division streets have been overlaid the past few years and the current goal is to finish the remaining ones over the next 3 years. A special project that Jim and I have worked on with the Arkansas Missouri Railroad is a new Rail Road crossing warning system. It will be installed this summer at McClure and Lincoln, providing a much safer crossing for vehicles and pedestrians. The Public Works department maintains hundreds of acres of parks, trails and road easements within the city as well as overseeing the building maintenance needs of most other departments.

These things would not happen without the support of the taxpayers, and that's why the city needs experienced and exceptional oversight of city finances. Each year, **Finance Director, Jerry Hudlow**, continues to assist in providing the Council a year-to-year, fiscally responsible and balanced budget. Our 2017 budget ended the year with a combined total of city and county sales tax collections amounting to \$4,847,945.00 (that figure includes a \$22,945.00 surplus over revenue projections). Sales Tax continues to make up the 'lions share' of revenues for the General Fund. This pie chart breaks down our 2018 General Fund budgeted revenue sources. This chart indicates how the City Council has chosen to distribute these collections. The 2018 budget was adopted with a balanced budget in the General Fund, a \$352K surplus in the Street Fund and a balanced budget in the Utilities (S.T.E.P.) Fund. The 2018 budget also provided a 3 % wage increase for most staff that is determined by employee evaluations performed by the City Directors. Interestingly, this graph shows that the city's expenditures have not exceeded its revenues since 2010. The graph also shows that combine funds are averaging approximately \$2,500,000.00 more each year since 2015. (Mainly, because of a competent staff that works well with the Mayor in finding grants and other funding sources to accomplish city goals).

“Fiscal responsibility and transparency in government practices are always paramount in maintaining public trust and confidence in its leadership.”

While these department reports are always exciting and show the progress we continue to make within our city, I thought I would close my remarks tonight with some glimpses into the character of the people that live and work here. I find that the people of Lowell, its businesses and our surrounding friends are very giving of their ideas, their money, their resources, their time and energy. These are the things that help define our communities and our City.

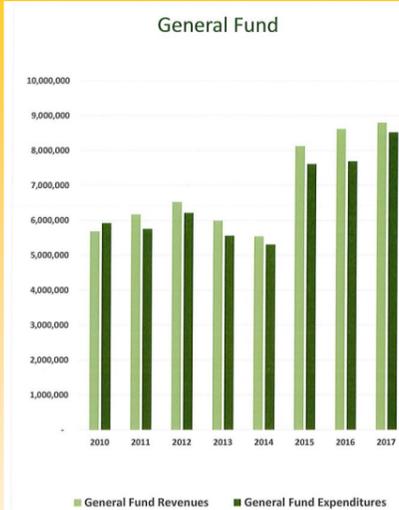
Some of our City personnel achievements include:

- ~ 2017 Spirit Award Winners from the Roger-Lowell Chamber of Commerce: Officer Sean Harding, Police Chief Randy Harvey, Fire Chief Mike Morris and Fire Captain Justin Watkins.
- ~ Sgt. Aaron Pile received the 2017 Employee of the Year Award.
- ~ After several attempts, Fire Marshal Nolan Jones was able to secure a \$1,000,000.00 safer grant to be utilized over the next 3 years to subsidize the wages of the new Fire Department personnel.
- ~ Police Chief Randy Harvey celebrated his twentieth year serving the community of Lowell and was also awarded the highest level of Police Chief Certification recognized in the State of Arkansas.

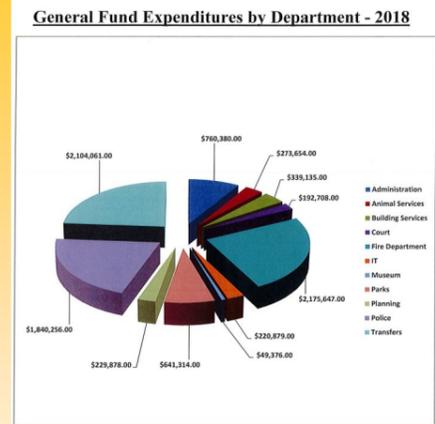
There were other noteworthy community awards and honors that our residents received during 2017, such as:

- ~ Adam Haynes received the RLACC Elbert S. Graham/Elza Tucker Award
- ~ 2017 Rogers-Lowell Chamber of Commerce Small Business of the Year Award winner was Kelly McCool of Daylight Donuts Lowell.
- ~ And, Alex Toll was recognized with honors for his bravery, when setting aside his personal safety and rescuing an individual from a burning vehicle on South Bloomington.

Being a lifelong resident of Benton County and a Lowell resident for 40 years, there's at least one thing I know about the people of Lowell



THEY KNOW WHERE THEY'VE COME FROM
 THEY KNOW WHAT THEY WANT
 THEY KNOW WHERE THEY'RE GOING
 THEY ARE PROUD OF THEIR HEIRITAGE
 THEY ARE FAMILIAR WITH STRUGGLES
 THEY ARE QUICK TO RESPOND TO LEGITIMATE NEEDS
 THEY ARE UNAFRAID OF CHALLENGES
 THEY ARE OPTIMISTIC IN THE FACE OF CRITISM
 STRONG IN THE MIDST OF CONFLICT
 THEY EMBRACE THE FUTURE
 THEY ARE RESILIENT
 YES, THE PEOPLE OF LOWELL LOVE AND PROTECT THEIR COMMUNITY



In closing, when I reflect upon the past seven years, I go back to the severe recession of 2007 to 2010 and consider the economic impact and the toll that period took upon our nation, our state and our city. I recall the building in our sub-divisions came to a complete stand still, record numbers of foreclosures were being filed at the county courthouse, the abundance of For Sale signs along our city streets, the unemployment crisis, how the long lines formed in front of the Lowell Tyson Employment Center, the huge bank and corporate bail outs that occurred across our nation, many of our own small businesses could no longer keep their doors open, our local strip malls were running their lowest occupancy levels since they opened and I remember the tax shortfalls in our sales tax collections. Yes, things were tough and uncertain concerning the future of our nation, our state and our beloved city.

But today, I am thankful and so proud to stand before you and share what a difference the past seven years of hard work and determination has made for our local economy. It is stronger than ever, rebounding the city into a growth period never before experienced by our citizens.

When it comes to statistics concerning the City since 2010, NO ADMINISTRATION has achieved more trail ways, added more new park areas or amenities, constructed more new streets, improved more infrastructure, built more sidewalks, overlaid more city streets, received more grants and donations, inspected more homes, sold more residential and commercial building permits, added more Fire and Police personnel, purchased more emergency equipment, placed more public safety devices within the city, presented more economic development plans to the Planning Commission, passed more ordinances and resolutions, collected and budgeted more revenue, recorded more business growth, witnessed more job creation, processed more court cases, or rounded up more dogs and cats.

When I speak of the ongoing progress currently taking place within the city that includes the highly-valued and professional staff that has been with me every step of the way. I am thankful for each Department Director and city employee for their teamwork, helping me to deliver the very best services we have to offer to the residents of this city. I want to publicly thank each of you for your contributions.

Yes, these are good times birthed from a time of despair and uncertainty, but God came to our rescue and it is now evident that the City of Lowell has been extremely blessed. Our prosperity now testifies to all those around us that God's Hand IS still upon our City. I ask you all, as coworkers and fellow citizens, to join me in giving Him all the Glory for the great things He has done through us.



April 29, 2018
10:00 a.m.
Celebrate history with us!

479-770-0151

info@fbclowell.com

A new "Thrift Corner" and "Jewelry Sale" to fund-raise using donations of used jewelry and gently-worn clothing has opened at Lowell Senior Activity Center! You can help by simply sorting your clothes!

We are a 501© Charity and all donations are tax deductible. The majority of items have been from a simple sweep (or two) of our staff's closets and costume jewelry donations from certain consumers. PLEASE consider us by donating:

Recycle your un-needed Holiday presents by giving to LSAC!
Gently used coats/jackets, clothing, shoes, accessories. Even t-shirts! They go quite fast at \$1.
Spring clean your house and donate gently-used linens, housewares, kitchenware, etc.
Jewelry, from costume to real. De-clutter your home and help a friend!5.
Tax-deductible financial contributions are always helpful.

Turn your TRASH to our TREASURE!

We are happy to schedule a time we can come pick up items. Just give us a call! Or please bring to LSAC at 704 E. Monroe in Lowell from 8:30 am – 2:30 pm, M-F

LOWELL HISTORICAL MUSEUM'S ANNUAL EASTER EGG HUNT

WHERE? - Ward Nail Park on McClure Ave

WHEN? - March 31, 2018 at 1:00 PM

Any children in grades K-5 are welcome

Bring your own basket to hold your eggs



PRIZES! PRIZES!

PRIZES!

Hang out and take photos with our Easter Bunnies!



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Phillip Maness has been with the Lowell Post Office over 24 years. He started when there were only 3 routes and the Post Office was across from the water tower at Monroe and Lincoln. Now there are 7 routes total. Phillip will be retiring March 30, 2018. To commemorate his retirement, he has requested donations be made to the Lowell Animal Shelter. Any donation big or small will be appreciated. Even a \$1.00 helps he says. Our Animal Welfare crew says the main needs are small to medium size dog treats, hard and soft, dog chews, cat litter,, unused towels, blankets, rugs. There is a collection box at City Hall. Phillip's last day at the Post Office is March 30, 2018.

Be sure to stop by the Post Office and wish Phillip a Happy Retirement.

What a great accomplishment Phillip and Thank you for thinking of our Animal Shelter!



Pictured: Left to right

Becky Drummond
Donnie Knotts
Phillip Maness
Ray Drummond

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Mr. & Mrs. Darrell Armstrong, Mr. & Mrs. Bill Brandt, and Mayor and Mrs. Eldon Long recently attended the Grand Opening Celebration of the NW Arkansas Children's Hospital. The Kathleen Johnson Diagnostic Services area of the third floor was partially funded by a one million dollar grant donated by the Leonard and Kathleen Johnson Trust who Bill and Darrell serve as trustees. This area of the hospital opens with clinical services starting January 9th, 2018. This floor will be one of the busiest floors of the hospital and will serve families by treating their children for generations to come. Other departments at the hospital are scheduled to start up over the next few months. "The Beacon of Hope" (a 5 story bright blue tower) visible for miles from I-49 was also lit for the first time during the celebration to symbolize the new hope that this new facility will provide many Northwest Arkansas families and children. The Honorable Governor Asa Hutchison was also present to address the group with his support and thankfulness to over 1400 contributors that made this past dream an amazing new reality by cooperating together for the medical needs of the regions children.

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Police Chief Randy Harvey recently celebrated his 20th anniversary with the City of Lowell. Thank you Chief for your service to our great city!

Christmas at the Museum!
Seniors just want to have fun too!

#KnowTheFlowNWA

STORMS ON STREETS DRAIN TO CREEKS



easter egg hunt
Come join the fun!

First Baptist Church Lowell
Breakfast, Egg Hunt, Candy
Devotional, and lots of fun!!!

Saturday, March 31
Bring your children and whole family
Join us at 10:00 a.m.

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*Rogers Schools
Groundbreaking*



Elementary School #16 Facts

Location: 3131 W. Garrett Road
 Size: 89,177 square feet
 Capacity: 716 students
 Floors: Two
 Features: Gymnasium designed as safe room
 Three computer labs
 Tool box room for special instructional space
 Cost: \$22 million
 Completion: June of 2019

How the hand of God works!

We had a couple who came in recently looking for their lost min pin. She had gotten away from them last night when they were involved in a car accident in front of Marvin's. She is skittish and they worried that she would not come to anyone trying to help her. They had looked all morning with the help of family and friends, but could not locate her. About 2:00 they came by the shelter again looking for her and said that they had a sighting of her in the field on 71 just down from Marvin's. We spoke with them for a while and decided that the best way to try and catch her was for them to set a trap overnight in the field and for them to keep an eye on it several times during the night and morning. For some unknown reason, it was taking some time for us to get the trap situated and paperwork done. Low and behold, as we were standing at the back of their truck showing them how to operate the trap out in front of the shelter, Cherry yells "T", and here comes her dog running across the parking lot from the back of City Hall. She runs straight into the arms of her relieved owner who proceeds to cover her with kisses and hugs. After all the tears and hugs were over (and 2 bowls of water drank), a miracle was proclaimed and we gave thanks to the Lord for watching over. Why it took us so long to get things done and hold them up, we don't know. They had just come from walking the field and hollering for her with no success. We decided that she just needed that little extra time to catch up with them, so God had us hold them up.

Credit: Becky Drummond — Animal Welfare

Don't Litter



Do your part! Bring unused and out of date medicines to the Lowell Police Department. There is a collection box in the lobby. Let's do our part to fight the out of control opioid crises. Arkansans are faced with the reality that opioid abuse in Arkansas is already at the emergency level, state policymakers, healthcare and lawmaker enforcement officials are moving forward with a number of directives.

A recent report by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) shows all but nine of Arkansas' 75 counties had overall opioid prescribing rates higher than the national average of 66.5 prescriptions per 100 people. As a state, Arkansas has an opioid prescription rate of 114.6 per 100, second only to Alabama 2016 average of 121 per 100 people. Staggering Stats!



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH LOWELL

EASTER

SUNDAY | **EARLY** | **BRUNCH** | **LATE**
APRIL 1 | **9:00 AM** | **10:00 AM** | **11:00 AM**

City of Lowell

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The Day a Hawk Went to School!

On a recent morning, a hawk got into Tucker Elementary School. The Lowell Animal Control Officer was called. With the help of a Lowell Employee's spouse, the hawk was captured and released with no harm to anyone or the hawk!
Thank you Ray and Steve!

The LOWELL ANIMAL SHELTER always has a GREAT selection of Dogs, Puppies, Cats and Kittens available for adoption. For a limited time, the adoption fees for the cats and kittens are waived. To view available animals visit : petfinder.com



A HUGE Thank You to the Rogers-Lowell Chamber of Commerce for their generous donation to The Lowell Animal Shelter. Every donation is much appreciated!

www.lowellarkansas.gov 