



CITY OF WARD

P.O. BOX 237 • WARD, ARKANSAS 72176 • 501-843-7686

CHARLES GASTINEAU
MAYOR

KRYSTAL RUMMEL
CITY CLERK

State of the City Report March 17, 2026

This report is presented pursuant to A.C.A. 14-58-302

To the City Council, City Clerk, City Attorney, City Employees, Planning Commission Members, Water Advisory Committee Members, and of course, our citizens, I offer my 2026 State of the City Report.

The State of the City is once again, EXCELLENT, OUTSTANDING and SUPERB! I know I said the same thing last year, but its TRUE! Ward continues to grow at a steady rate with new housing opportunities for young and old to purchase their own home and set down roots. Ward is a great place to live, away from the hustle and bustle of bigger towns, but close enough to get to the hustle and bustle, if you desire.

The financial health of the city is very good and continues to improve. City and County sales tax are both up, due in-part with new businesses in town and "to be frank"¹ (once again) new businesses in Lonoke county to include our sister-cities Cabot and Austin. Regionally, we all succeed when new businesses are brought in.

As always, I want to thank the men and women who work tirelessly for the city every day providing service to our citizens and visitors alike. It will continue to be our collective goal to provide the best experience that we can provide when you reach out to us with an issue or need service. From the youngest employee² to the one who's been here the longest³, we all strive – or should – to do what is right "even when no one is watching."⁴

I also want to thank the Ward City Council for their hard work. We may not agree on everything – and we shouldn't – but we do agree in doing the best for the city and its citizens.

¹ The phrase "to be frank" originates from the word "frank" which comes from the Medieval Latin term "francus" meaning "free," referring to the idea of freely expressing one's opinion without holding back, essentially meaning to be honest and direct

² Schyler Doherty, Water Operator – Age 19

³ Lt Sims, Ward PD – 28 Years

⁴ C.S. Lewis; "Integrity is doing the right thing, even when no one is watching."

Thanks also to the Planning Commission and the Water Advisory Board. They too work hard to do what is right for the community.

Finally, as always, I want to thank you – the citizens of Ward. You elected us to do the work for you and your family as best we can with your tax-payer monies.

Please visit our website below for more information about your city, its government and what we ALL can do for one another. The link below will also give you access to our other websites and social media platforms.

www.wardarkansas.gov

I continue to be inspired by the words of President John F. Kennedy:

**“Change is the law of life.
And those who look only to the past or present
are certain to miss the future”**

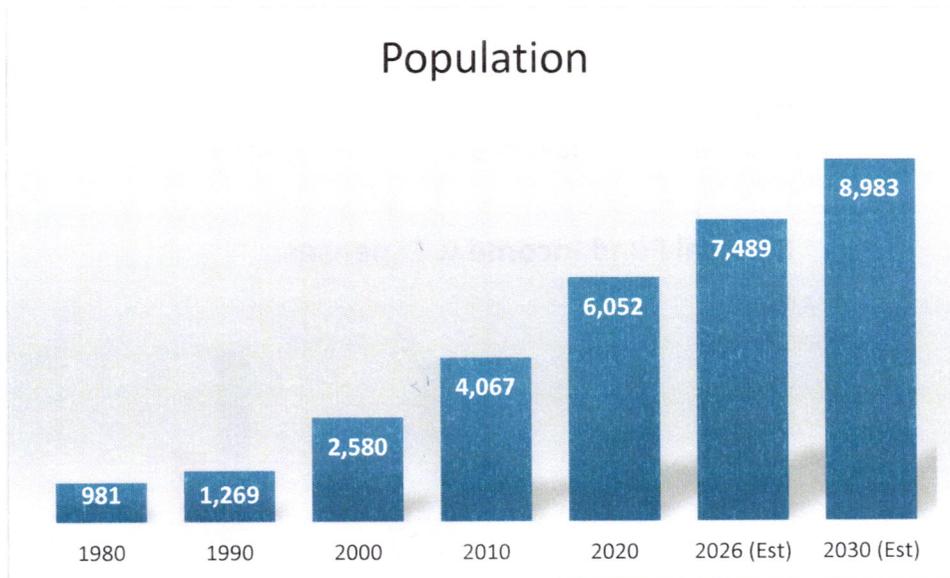
I’m also encouraged by former Arkansas Governor, Winthrop Rockefeller’s words from his 1971 Farewell Address:

**“Every citizen has the duty to be informed, to be thoughtfully
concerned, and to participate in the search for solutions.
Only by working together can we make the contribution
necessary to build the world we all yearn for.”**

Attached you will find the 2025 Financial Statements for our General, Street, and Water/Wastewater Funds. These are presented in accordance with A.C.A. 14-59-116 and 14-237-113. Overall, the City of Ward continues to be financially sound.

The City of Ward and the region as a whole strives to grow making northern Lonoke County one of the fastest growing regions in the state. The City of Ward is not only the 2nd largest city in the county but we are the 10th largest city in Central Arkansas. The World Population Review estimates our population change to be 23.01% since 2020⁴. At a 3.23%⁵ annual growth rate, the population of Ward will be approaching 9,000 by the next census. The chart below is pretty telling of our growth pattern.

⁵ <https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/arkansas/ward>



Some additional facts for 2026 from the Census Reporter⁶ about our city.

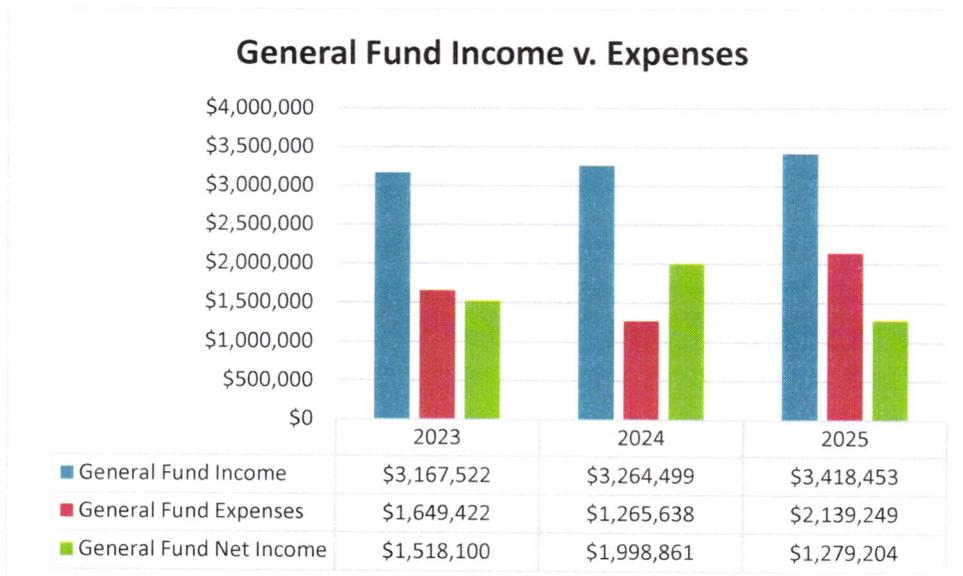
- Education Attainment:
 - High School Graduate or Higher: 88.7%
 - Bachelor's Degree or Higher: 22.1%
- Marital Status: 58% Married
- Median Age: 30.2
- Median Household Income: \$72,734
- Median Value of Owner-Occupied Housing: \$189,100
- Per Capita Income: \$29,305
- Population with Veteran's Status: 7.4%
- Race and Ethnicity:
 - White: 81%
 - Black: 3%
 - Hispanic: 10%
- Size: 4.4 sq miles

Financial Overview

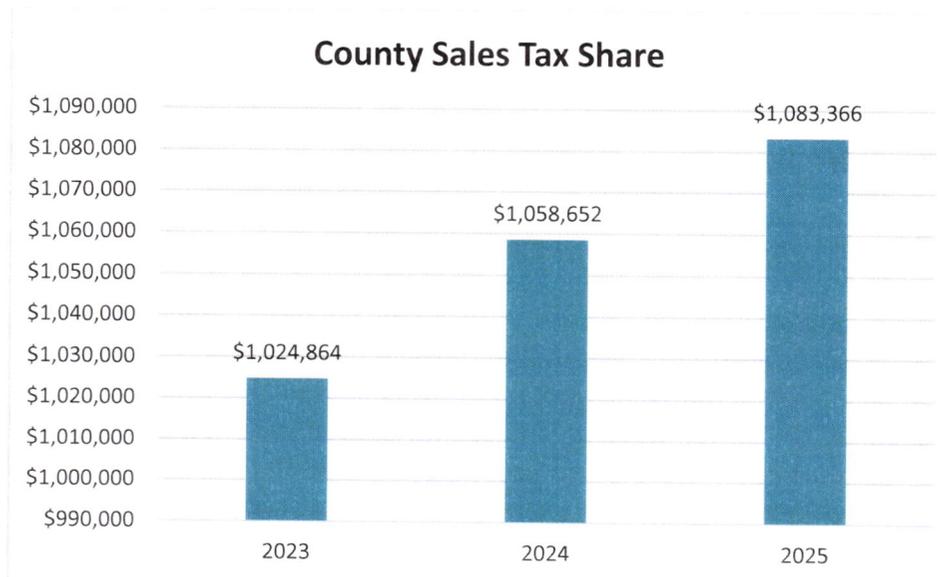
Overall, the finances for the city are in excellent standing. General income (sales tax, personal property taxes, etc) continue to rise at a steady pace. Expenses are higher this past year due in part to the improvements we've made to City Hall. If you have not visited or watched a City Council meeting, you cannot appreciate the much-needed changes to the council/court room we did last year to transform the 1970s era look to a modern design that will last for years. We also replaced the hallway flooring in city hall and have plans to upgrade the entrances and restrooms to better accommodate individuals with disabilities.

⁶ <https://censusreporter.org/profiles/16000US0573130-ward-ar/>

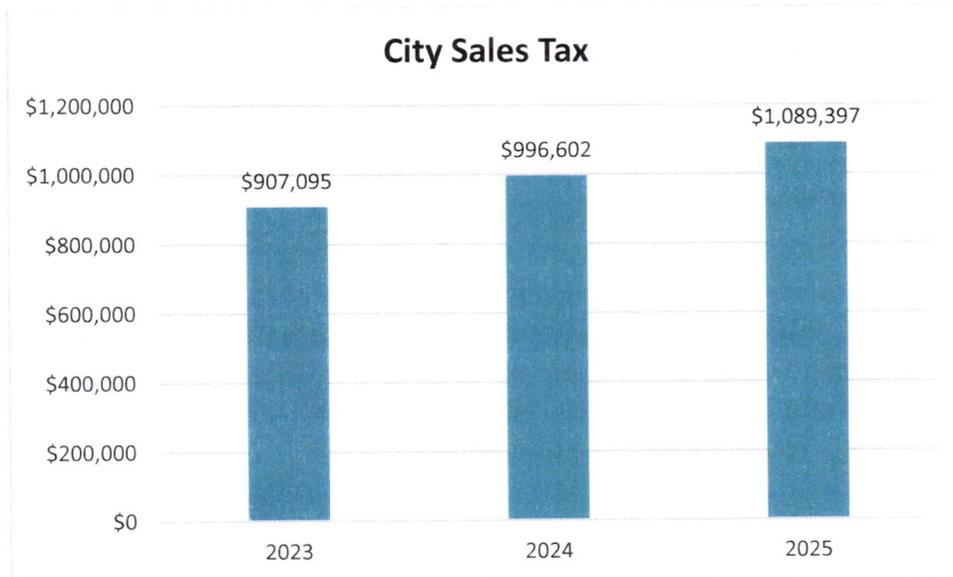
As always, my sincere thanks to my HR/Finance Director Courtney Ruble for keeping the books straight along with our contracted Certified Public Accountant, Don Davis. My thanks also to the Department Heads for keeping expenses down.



Our share of the county sales tax rose 2.3% over the previous year. As stated last year, the rise in county sales tax is due, in part, to the commercial and retail growth in Cabot. Shop Ward first, but if not, shop Austin or Cabot as we all share in the county's sales tax no matter where the transaction is within the county.



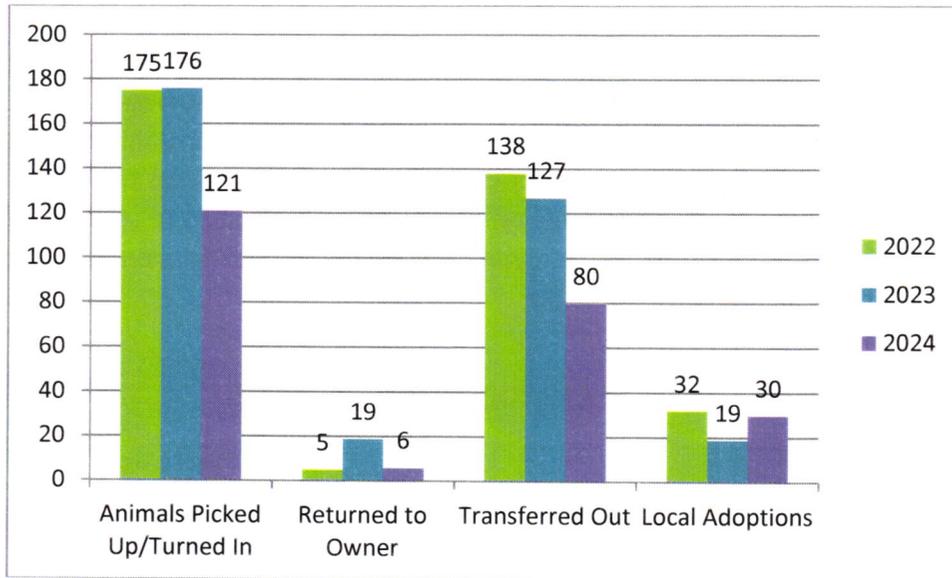
City sales tax increased 9.3% over last year down slightly from the 9.8% increase from 2023 to 2024. However, the January 2026 city sales tax revenue topped \$100,000⁷ for first time ever and was a 20.3% increase over January 2025. Remember, if you can't buy local, buy on-line OR have your goods delivered to your house. Sales tax is based on point-of-delivery meaning anything you buy on-line and have delivered to your house (Amazon, etc) is taxed at the local rate. It is a win-win as you get the convenience of front door delivery and the city gets the sales tax.



Department Summaries

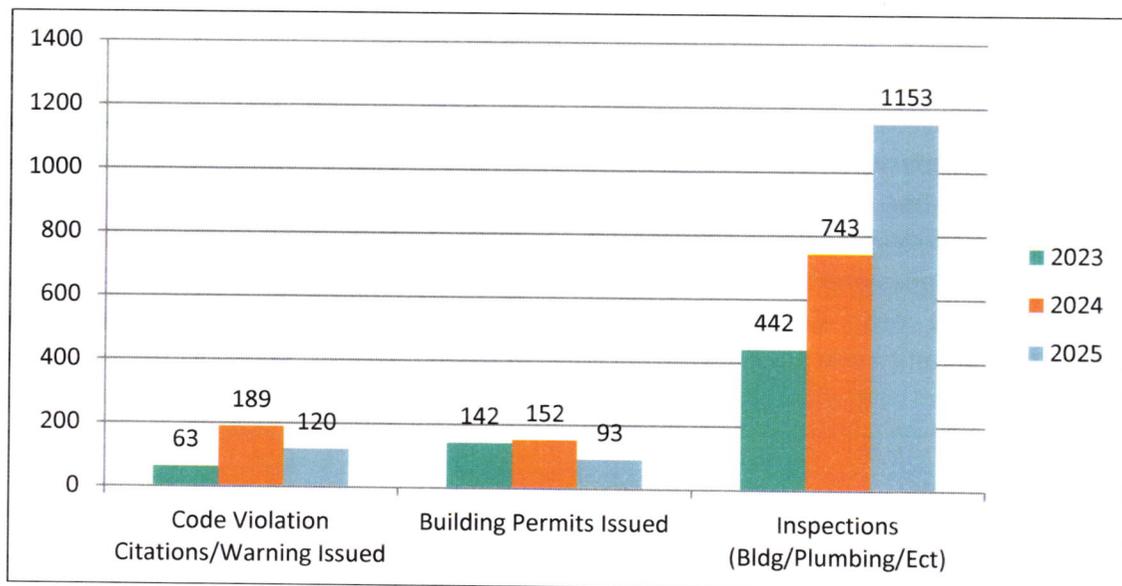
- **Animal Control:** With the recent departure of Taylor Barnes, Clarissa Byrom has taken over of as Supervisor and we expect nothing but the best from her...and whomever we hire to assist her. As with most every city and county in Arkansas and across this nation, the issues of stray and lost animals is a concern. As such, the shelter has a continuing need for supplies and food to care for the animals such as towels, cat/dog toys, cat/dog canned food, etc. Contact the Animal Control Office at (501) 843-6351 for more information or go visit their website, <https://wardanimal.wardarkansas.org/>

⁷ \$118,677



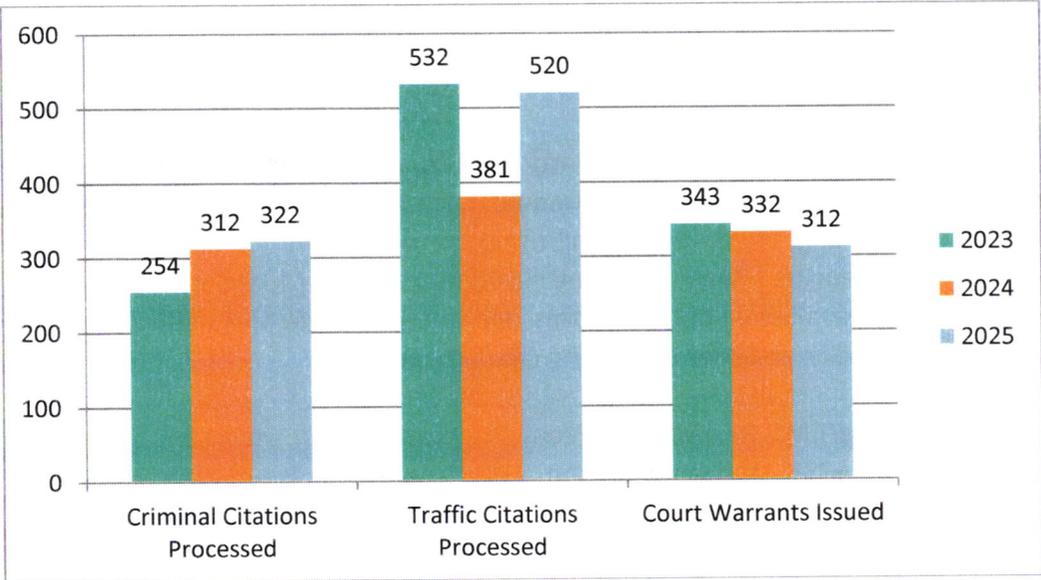
- Code Enforcement/Permitting/Building Inspection: In 2025 we opened a separate office as a one-stop shop for obtaining permits, code enforcement and building inspections. With the use of new software that provides a portal for citizens and contractors to request and track permits, business licenses, and code violation, we provide a more streamlined method for all. You can access the portal by going to:

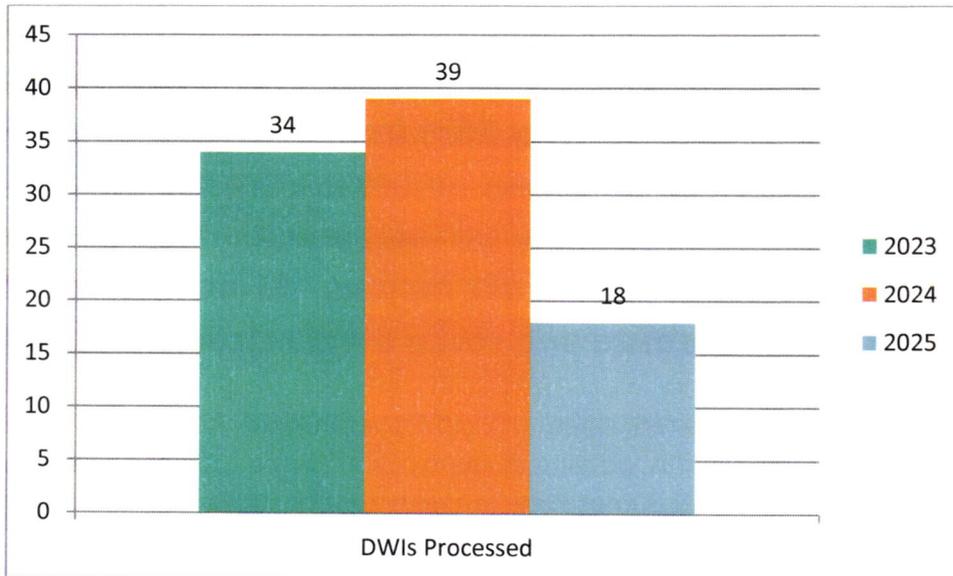
https://wardar_license.portal.iworq.net/portalhome/wardar_license



*****The next City -Wide clean-up day will be held on May 2, 2026 (Sat). Dumpsters will be set up at the Water Operations Facility at 404 E. 2nd Street (Hwy 367) from 8 am to 3 pm. To avoid traffic issues on 2nd Street and to ensure the process flows smoothly, we respectfully ask that you line up on North Street and follow directions of those helping. More information will be posted on our website and social media closer to the event. *****

- **District Court:** With the retirement of Beth Glover in 2025, Angel Williams was promoted to Chief Court Clerk and is working diligently to ensure the court’s work moves forward without any issues ...and is improved. Angel is continuing to work on her Certified Court Manager Certification and will graduate later this year. Monthly Court Dockets are posted at <https://www.wardarkansas.org/monthly-court-docket> and linked off our Facebook Page.

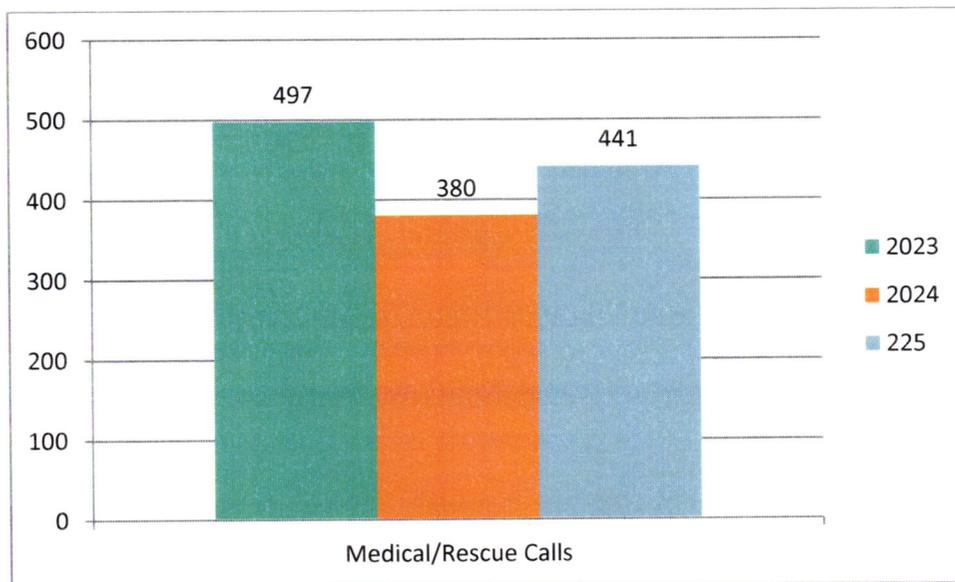
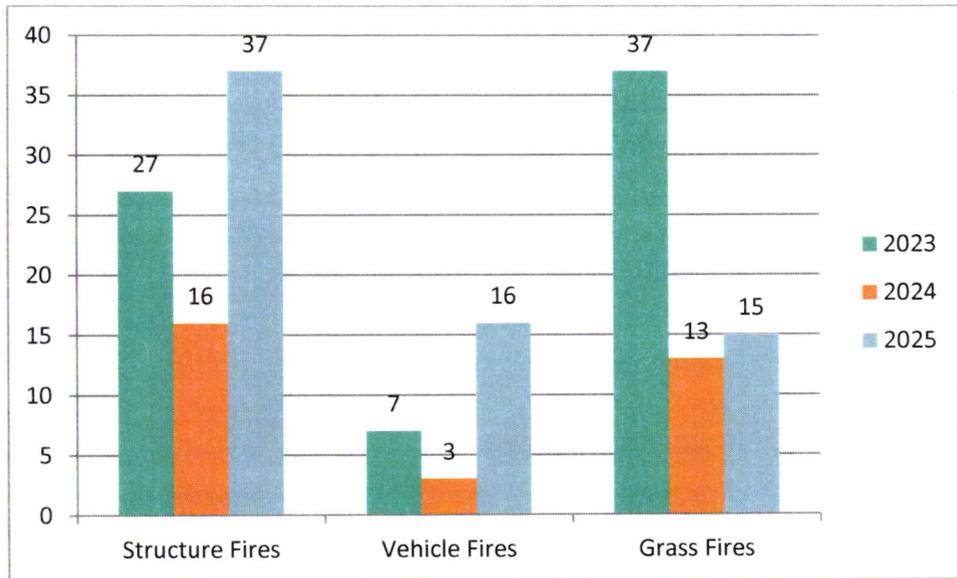




- **Fire Department & EMS:** 2025 was a busy year for the Ward Fire Department with all fire calls up along with EMS type calls. Chief Reaves and the men and women who volunteer – which includes responding to calls at all hours of the day or night – should be commended by all for what they do for ALL of us.

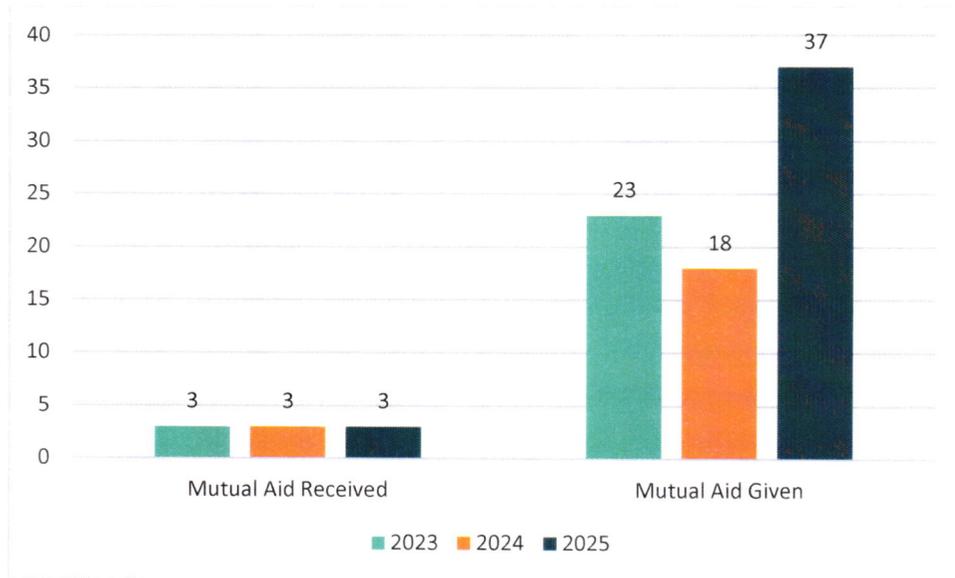
In late March of this year, Ward Fire Department will employ our first-ever full-time firefighters working a 48/96 schedule. This schedule will ensure we have at least one full-time firefighter on duty at all times to provide immediate response to fire and medical emergencies. More full-time firefighters will be hired in the coming years as funds become available; however, this will not eliminate the need to volunteer firefighters as we will need them for many years to come.

Fire and Rescue/EMS Responses: From the graph below, structure fires are up 131%, vehicle fires up 433%, and grass fires up 23%. Volunteers are ALWAYS needed....



Mutual Aid: WFD has Mutual Aid and Automatic Aid Agreements with all surrounding Fire Departments and their districts. 2025 saw a 106% increase in the number of times WFD provided mutual aide to another departments. This increase is do in large part – I believe – to the ever-decreasing number of volunteers. According to the NFPA, our nation’s volunteer fire service loses an average of 12,000 firefighters per year, while calls since 2008 have increased 70%.⁸

⁸ <https://www.nfpa.org/news-blogs-and-articles/nfpa-journal/2026/02/11/volunteer-fire-service-crisis>



Community Involvement: Ward Fire Department takes pride in community involvement. The Fire Department is, of course, involved in all city events, and they also visit each preschool and Ward Central Elementary School at least annually during Fire Prevention Week and at other times too. The department conducted 21 pre-fire inspections in 2025.

To learn more about YOUR Fire Department, go to:

<https://fire.wardarkansas.org/>

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSMiN5r-GPlcrDrOleyDX_A

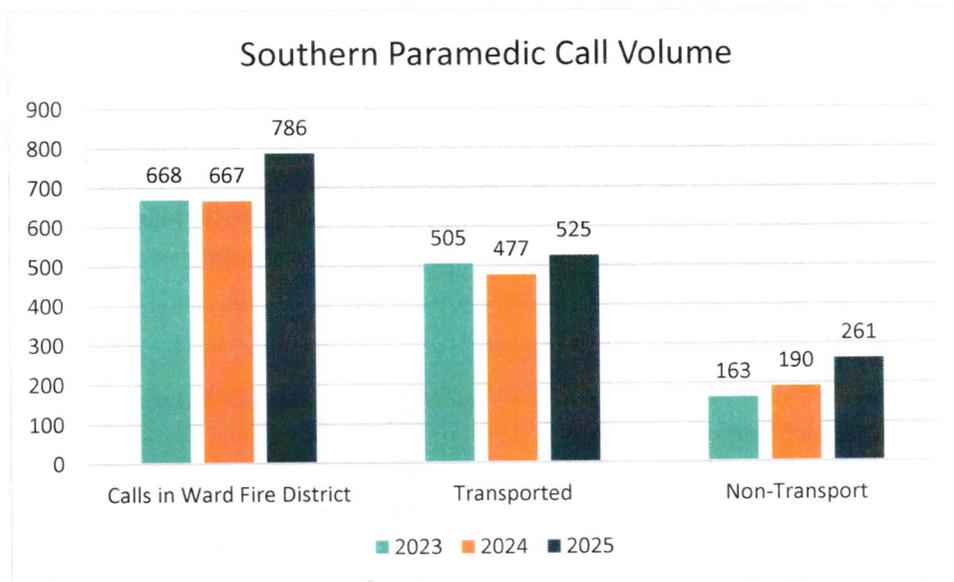
<https://www.facebook.com/CityofWardFireDepartment>

- Emergency Medical Service (EMS):** Southern Paramedic Service (SPS), our contract Ambulance service provider, provides high-quality pre-hospital care for our community. Overall, they cover approximately 25,600 acres, which includes the City of Ward and its Fire District, the City of Austin, CS&Z, and Mt. Springs Fire Districts. SPS also participates in many city events to include the “Meet the Machines”, 4th of July Celebration and the Christmas Parade.



This year, SPS responded to 786 calls within the Ward Fire Department District which is a 17.8% increase over 2025. Within the SPS coverage area EMS calls represented 70.48% of the total call volume. With 30% of all calls resulting in no one being transported – like last year – the strain on SPS resources (and other EMS providers) is evident. Nationwide there is a shortage of EMS personal and some services experience high turnover rates.⁹

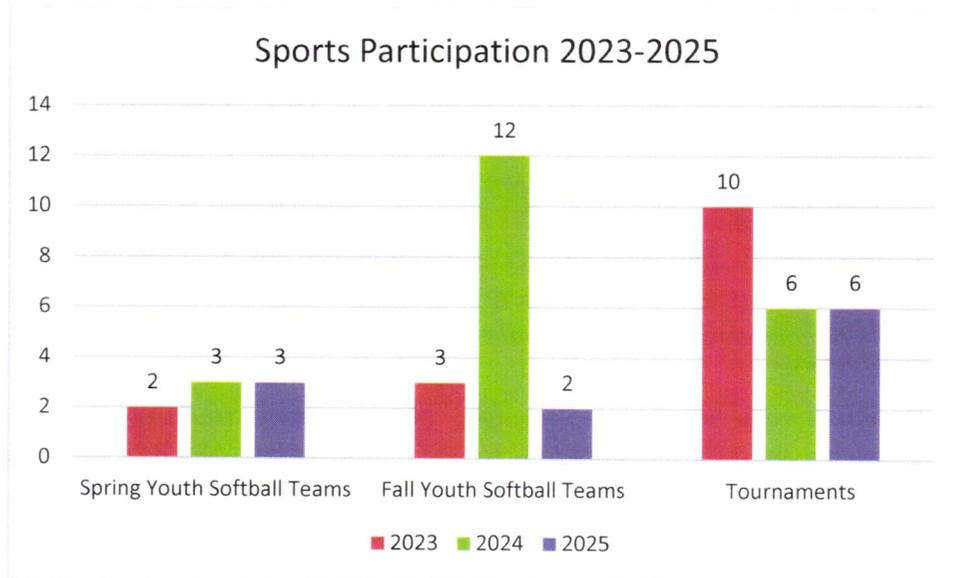
Southern Paramedic Service is a valued partner with the City of Ward. Go to <https://www.southernparamedic.com> to learn more about SPS and what they have to offer.



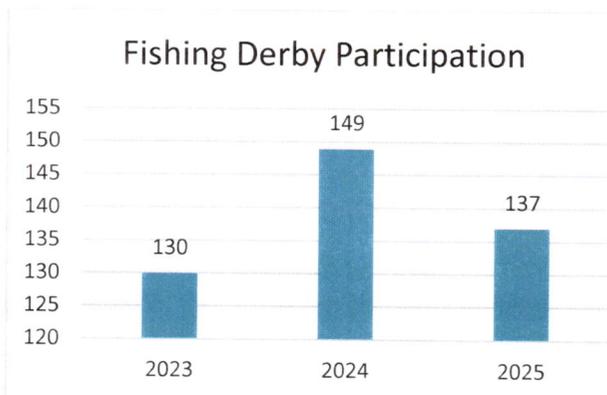
- Parks and Recreation:** Parks and Recreation Director Michelle Fitzgerald’s management of the city’s Parks and Recreation programs is nothing short of outstanding. She and her staff are always looking for better ways to serve the community and in particular the children with more and more sports activities geared toward kids. Michelle is also involved in other city events, such as Ward Eggstravaganza, Harvest Fest, as well as our annual Christmas Parade.

Go to <https://www.wardparksandrec.com/> to view their website.

⁹ <https://ambulance.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/10-30-2025-EMS-Shortage-NDAA-One-Pager.pdf>



In May, the Annual Youth Fishing Derby was held after the lake was stocked with almost 500 pounds of catfish. A total of 149 kids participated in this year’s event, and we gave away 72 fishing poles, 41 tackle boxes, and several other fishing-related items due in large part because of the generous donations. The biggest fish caught weighed in at 3 pounds and was caught by a 6-year-old.



We showed “Star Wars – The Rise of Skywalker” for Movies in the Park Night and even offered a “Star Wars” themed concession stand menu. About 45 people came out to enjoy the movie and participate in the trivia contest. In October we had another event showing “Hocus Pocus” with more than 60 people watching. And in November we showed “Beetlejuice” for Movies in the Park Night and offered

concessions with plenty of popcorn. About 35 people came out to enjoy the movie and kept warm by the fire. Expect more Movies in the Park this year!

Also, in May, we held our second “Meet the Machines” event which allows kids (and kids at-heart) to get close to some of their favorite machines. Some 100 people came out for this event, and it would not have been possible without our vendors; First Electric Co-Op; Zellas Trash Service, Connect2First Fiber, Hendricks Excavation, Austin Ready Mix, Ward and Austin Fire Departments; Ward Police Department and Southern Paramedic Service. All who came enjoyed the machines, bounce house, concessions, and hands-on activities.



In July, we were able to celebrate our nation’s birthday and capped the evening with our Annual Fireworks Show. After great success last year, we again contracted with a company to shoot the firework show which allows our volunteer firefighters to engage with the community while enjoying the show with their families. Because of generous donations, we were able to expand the number of water attractions and included a Chair Lift Carnival ride which was very popular again this year. We gave away 500 hot dogs and over 33 cases of water and had 19 vendors and five food trucks. Thanks to the “90 Proof” band for providing the music all day and the Little Rock Air Force Base Honor Guard for presenting our nations colors. All in all, it was a GREAT time as always and we look forward to this year’s celebration of our nation’s 250th Birthday on the 4th of July.

During the 4th of July celebration, we took the time to dedicate the park to Margie and Don “Dude” Spence who donated the land the park is in and was instrumental in the development of Ward as the city we know today.



In October, in conjunction with the Ward Chamber of Commerce, we held our annual Harvest Fest in the Sports Complex for the first time. We had 13 vendors, several food trucks and a carnival rides. It was a great success for all and we will hold future Harvest Fests here. We also, held our second Annual Pumpkin Float event at Busby Lake. About 50 people with 26 pumpkins participated.

In December we hosted our Annual Christmas Parade and Tree Lighting. Santa and his Elf helper joined us in the parade, along with Cabot High School Band, Cabot ROTC, Ward Fire Department, Ward Police Department, and many more. After the parade, the community enjoyed cookies, hot cocoa and "snow." All joined Santa and his helper as they lit the Christmas Tree. Santa was able to stay around and took pictures with all the families. We look forward to next year when Santa makes his return.



The Sports Complex has something for everyone besides the event's Michelle and her staff put together. There is a fenced-in ADA playground, a quarter-mile cement walking track around the ball fields and in the works, purchasing additional land to expand what all the City of Ward Parks & Recreation has to offer our community.

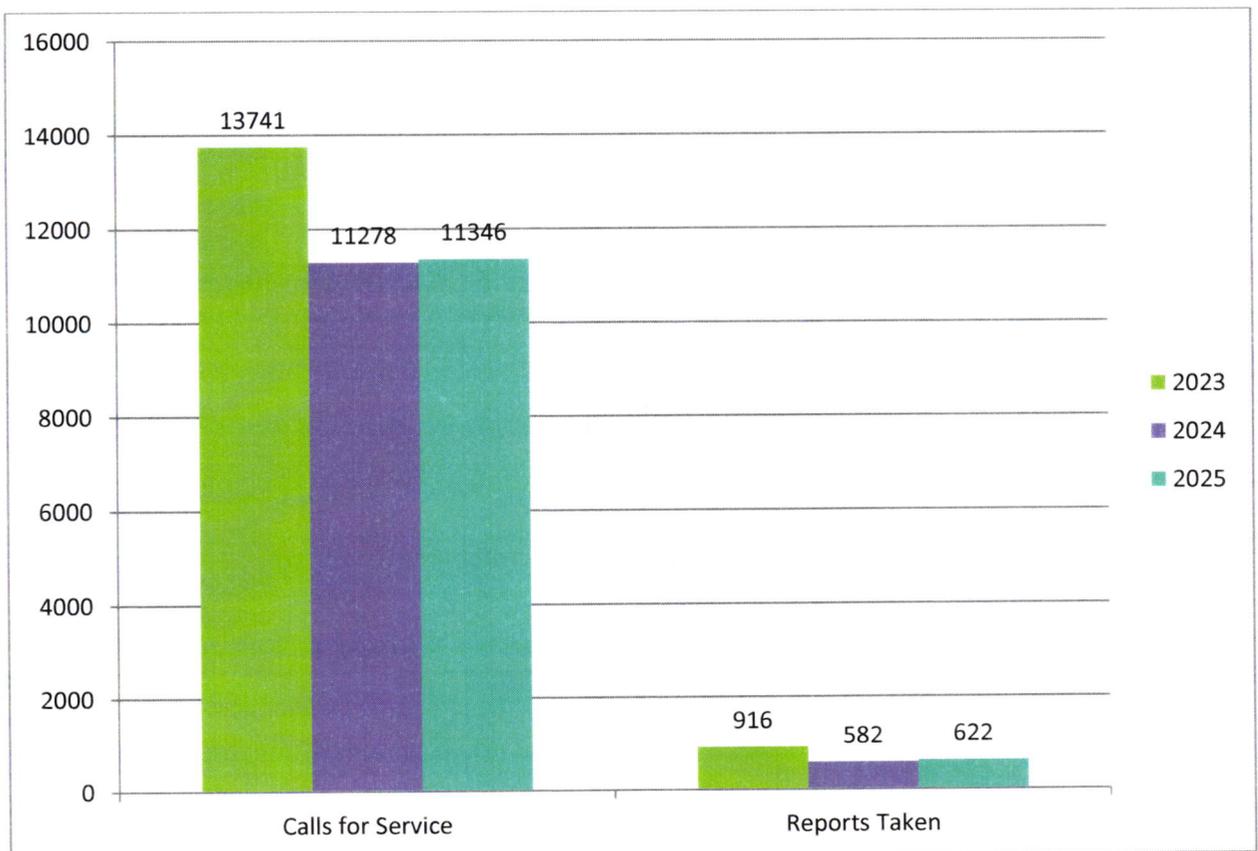


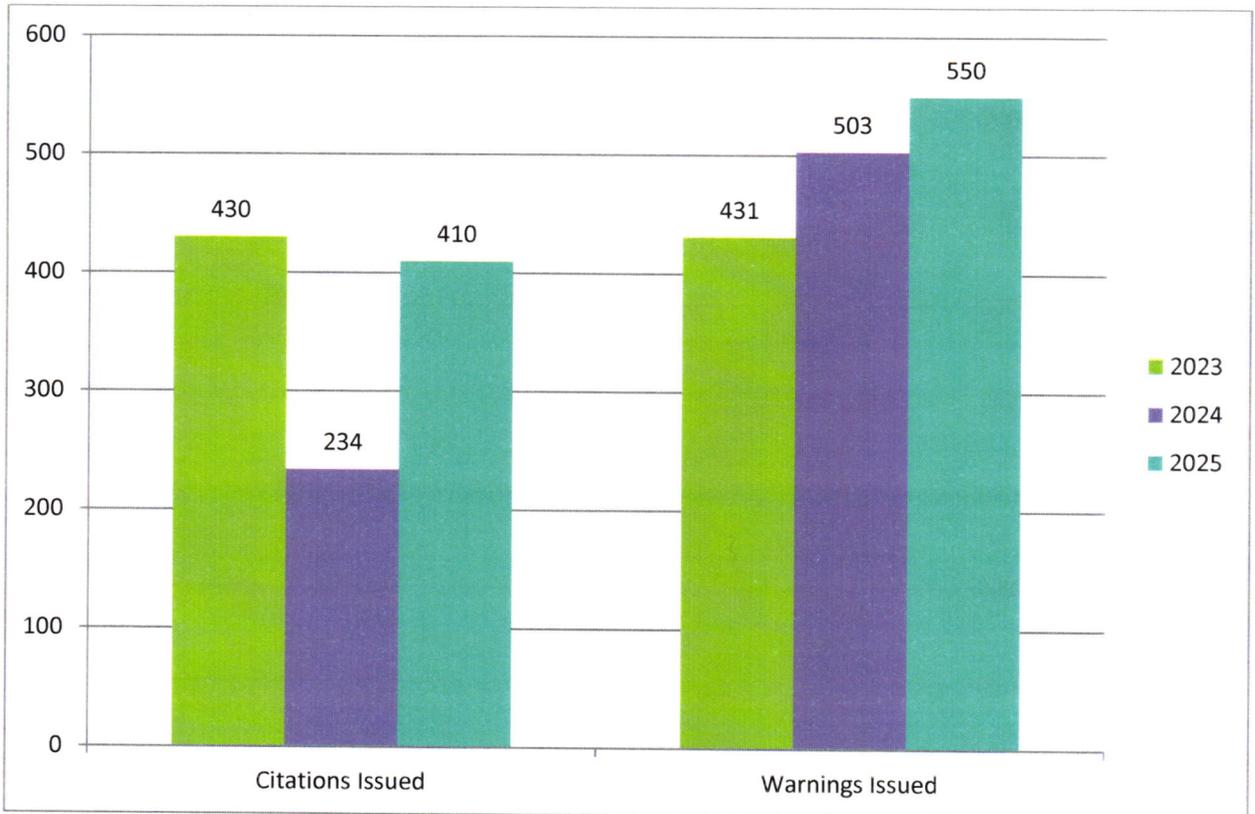
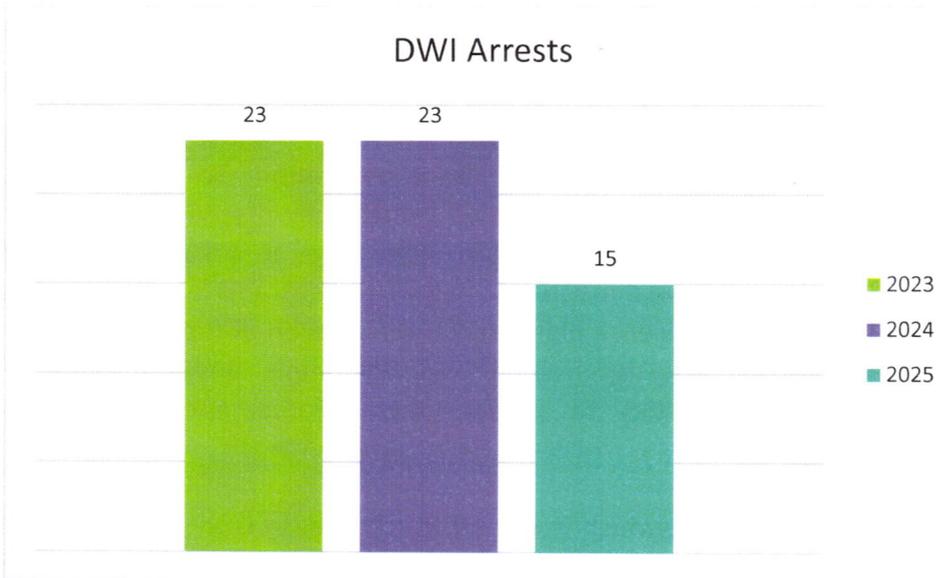
- **Police Department:** The men and women of the Ward Police Department (WPD), under the leadership of Chief Benton and his senior leadership, provide outstanding day-to-day police protection and emergency response to our citizens and those who are visiting, or just passing through. The cooperation between local agencies to include the Lonoke County Sheriff Office, Austin Police Department and Beebe Police Department ensure all within the area are protected by professional police protection. They work hand-in-hand for you.

Response and Reports:

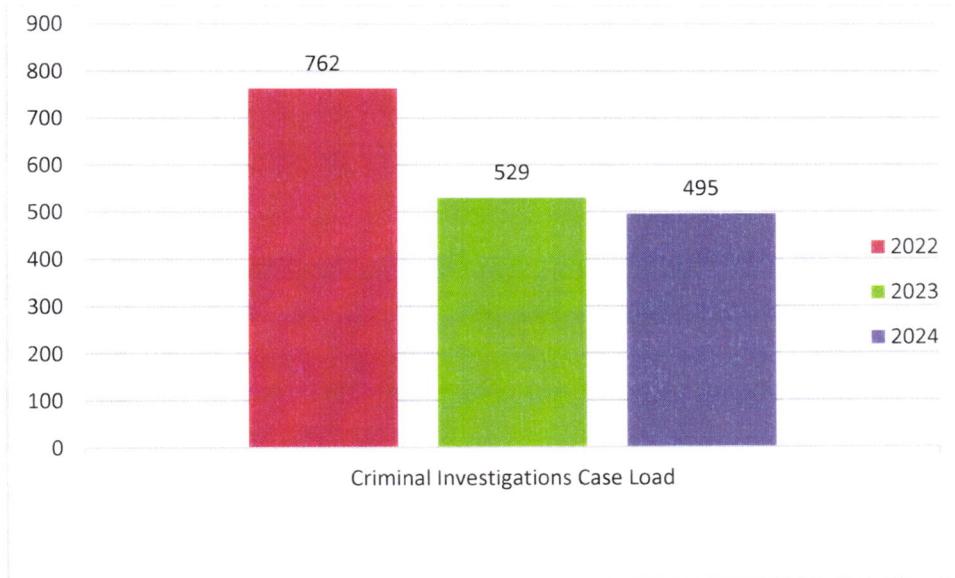
2025 saw a slight rise in calls for service and reports taken. This trend is likely to continue but is proportionate to the rise in population. To augment our patrols, the department employees the use of strategically placed license plate reader cameras. These devices, deployed in many cities in Arkansas and across the nation, provide additional means for patrols to seek and locate wanted persons and vehicles via their license plate and/or description of the vehicle. In 2026 we will deploy two live-view cameras in the Sports Complex and Busby Lake to further enhance our capabilities to provide law enforcement protection to our community.

DWI arrests are down, which is a good thing. Please DON'T DRINK and DRIVE!! Issuance of citations are up 75% with warnings issued up 9%. Our officers have the discretion to enforce the law based on the situation at hand and issue the appropriate document, as needed.



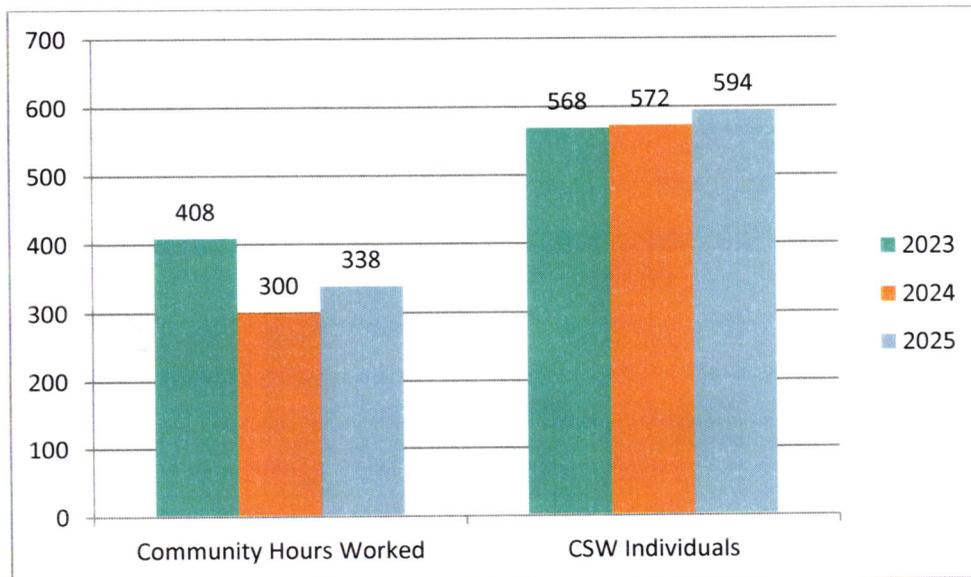


Criminal Investigation Division (CID): While the number of cases being worked by CID is down slightly, the nature of the cases seems to be getting bolder with more and more cybercrimes, identity theft, and unfortunately crimes against children.

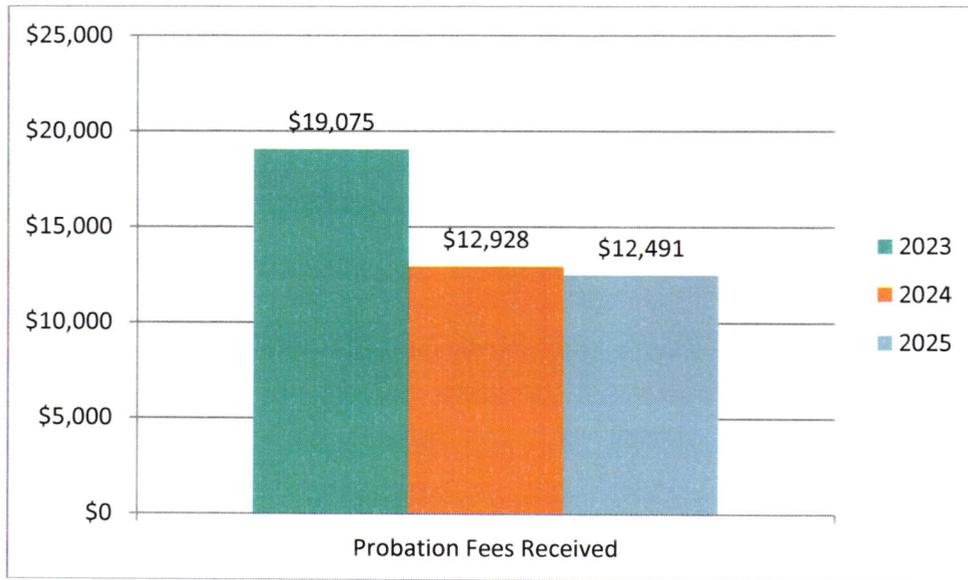


Community Involvement: Annually our officers – and some non-officers – participate the Torch Run for Special Olympics. As the torch comes through Ward on its way to Searcy, our officers and others have an opportunity to carry the torch. For more information about Arkansas Special Olympics and how you might be able to help, go to <https://www.specialolympicsarkansas.org/>

- **Probation:** Probation Officer Gilley manages the Court’s Probation Program in a very professional yet personable manner while mentoring Community Service Workers (CSWs) as they work off their fines.

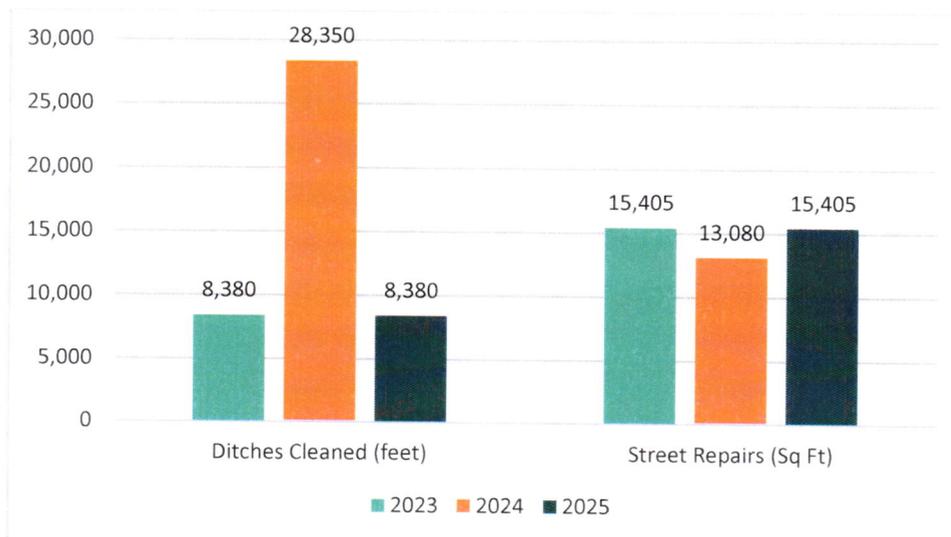


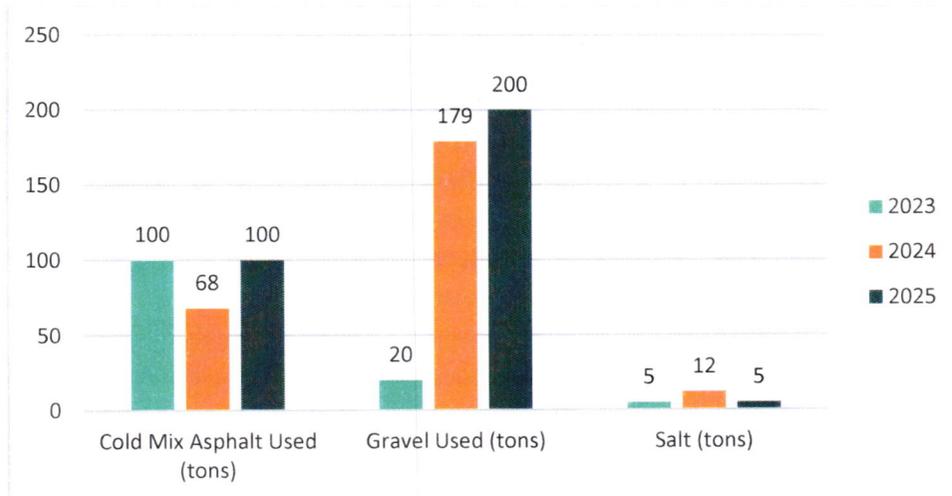
CSWs are required to pay a \$20 Probation Fee for each month they are on probation.



- Street Department:** Ward's Street Department (Public Works), works day in and day out to ensure that not only the city streets are maintained as best they can be, but they are also responsible for ensuring the city-maintained drainage ditches flow freely and keep the grass mowed in certain areas in town.

Snow Removal: Responsibility for snow removal and for pre-treating for ice/snow falls to the Street Department crews. While we have very good equipment for removing snow, nobody (especially smaller cities) has the capability to remove built-up ice like we had earlier this year. We did the best we could and I'd like to thank them for being out in the elements while we all slept. Thanks guys!

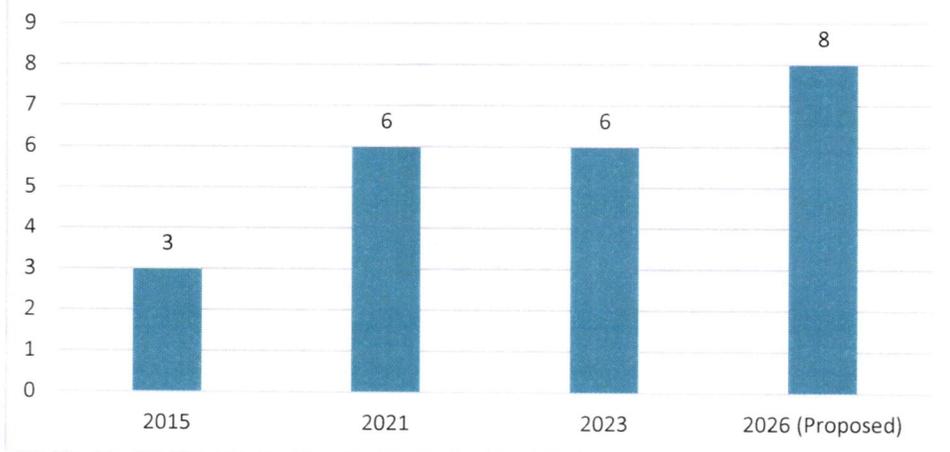




State Street Aid Program: The State Aid City Street program was created by Act 982 of 1975 and was funded with Federal Revenue Sharing Funds until 1981, at which time the revenue sharing program was eliminated. Act 1032 of 2011 amended Arkansas code by establishing the State Aid City Street Program to be administered by a State Aid City Street Committee, whose responsibilities would include determining which projects receive funding through the program. On November 6, 2012, Arkansas voters approved Issue #1, a constitutional amendment, which temporarily increased the state sales tax to fund surface transportation improvements and permanently dedicated one cent per gallon of the existing motor fuel tax to the State Aid City Street Fund

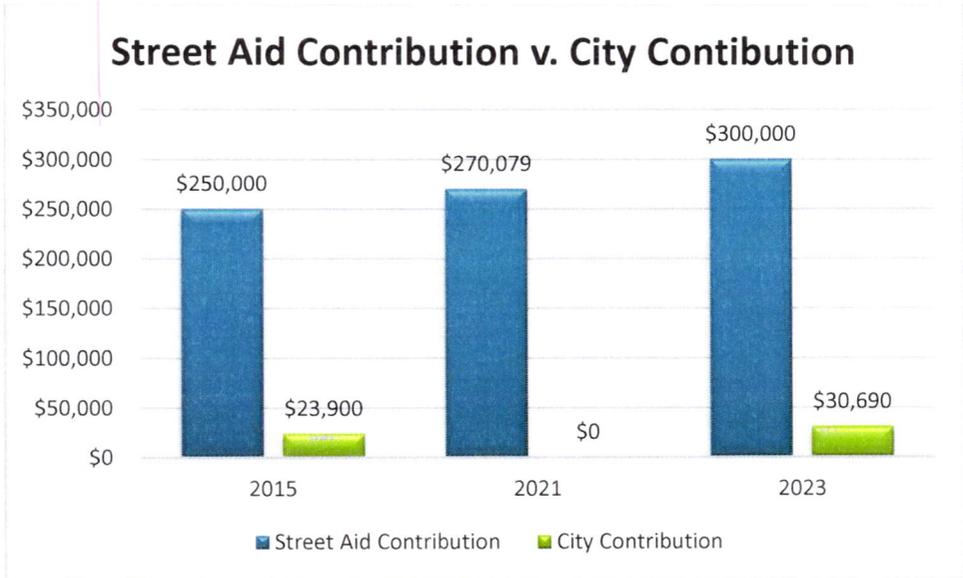
The City of Ward has been very successful in obtaining funds under this program as noted below. The proposed streets for 2026 were first applied for in 2025 but were turned down. We will submit the request again this year.

**ARDoT Street Aid Project
Number of Streets Overlaid**

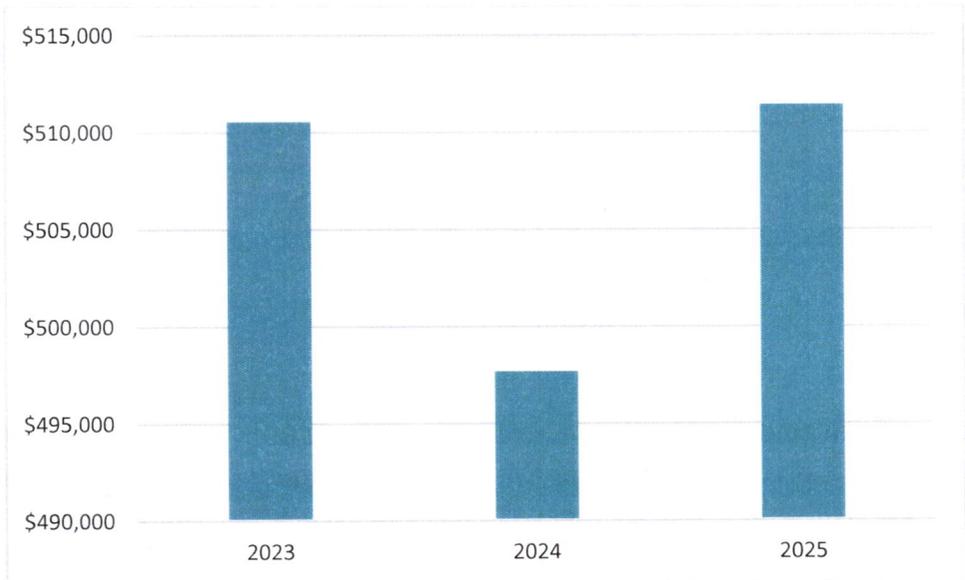


2015	2021	2023
Brewer St (Hwy 319 to county line)	Wilson Loop (Brewer St to Weatherwood)	Markham St (Hwy 367 to Brewer St)
Moon Rd (Wilson Loop to county line)	Lakeside Dr	North St (Hwy 319 to Hwy 367)
Old Austin Rd (Austin City Limits to Hwy 38)	Willow Lake Dr (to Lakeside Dr)	Moore St (Hwy 367 to RR Tracks)
	Willow Cir	Owen St (RR Tracks to Markham)
	Helen St	Elm St (Hwy 367 to Hickory)
	Opal St	Marshall St (Hickory to Griffin)

2026 (Proposed)
Scott St
Washington St
4 th St
3 rd St
Elm St/Front St
Corner St
Spring St
Griffin St



Street Turnback Funds: The city receives funds from the state from various taxes and other fees that are passed to cities for use by their street funds.



With these funds we have been able not only keep our streets fairly clear of potholes, clean stormwater ditches, but we have been taking a very aggressive approach to overlaying streets not by Street Aid funds. Below is a listing of streets we have overlaid to date and we plan on continuing in 2026.

2023	2024	2025
Balding	Industrial Dr	Miliam
Miliam		Cross
		Campbell

2026
Stevens
Spencer
Kirkland
Hilburn
Grant
Circle B
Marshal (from Grrffin to End)
City Hall Front Parking Lot

- Water and Wastewater:** Public Works Superintendent Bruce Jones, along with Foreman Don Fitzgerald, and Office Manager Brittany Gibson, continue to do outstanding jobs to ensure our Water and Wastewater systems operates within the guidelines set by the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) and the Arkansas Department of Energy and Environment’s Division of Environmental Quality (ADEQ).

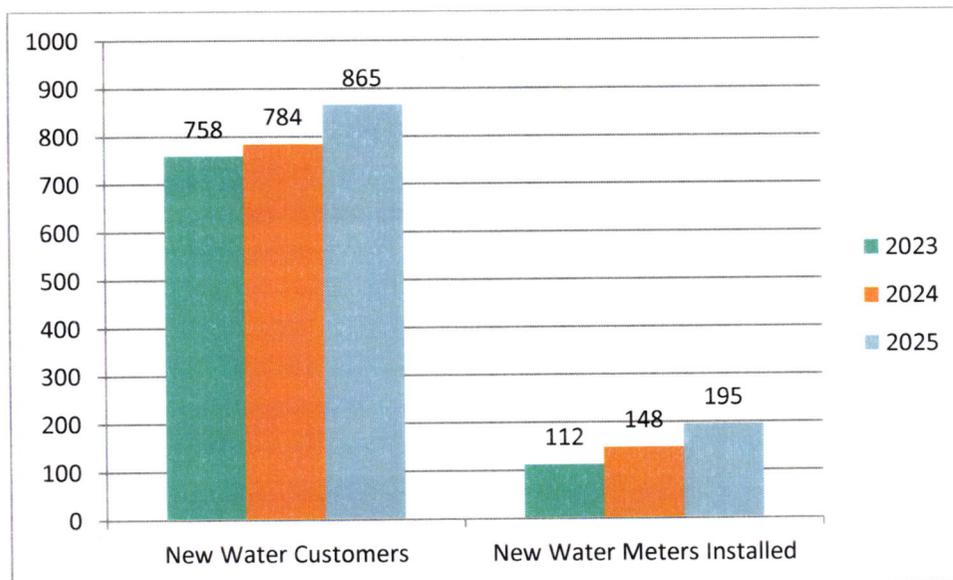
In 2025, we completed a much needed, long overdue cleaning and repairing of our water storage tanks. This project, which cost \$611,509 and was paid for with reserve funds without raising water rates.

Approved in 2023, we are currently requesting bids to finally remove all the remaining homes (and one apartment complex) off the very antiquated vacuum sewer system. The project, which is estimated to cost \$1.2 million will be paid for, in part, with a \$500,000 grant from the Arkansas Economic Development Commission, and either a loan from the state and/or city reserve funds.

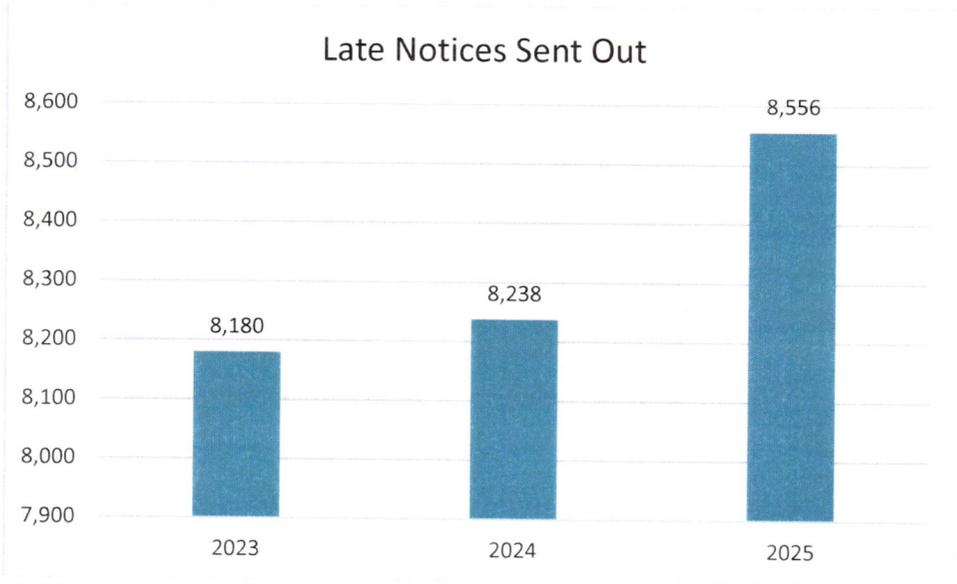
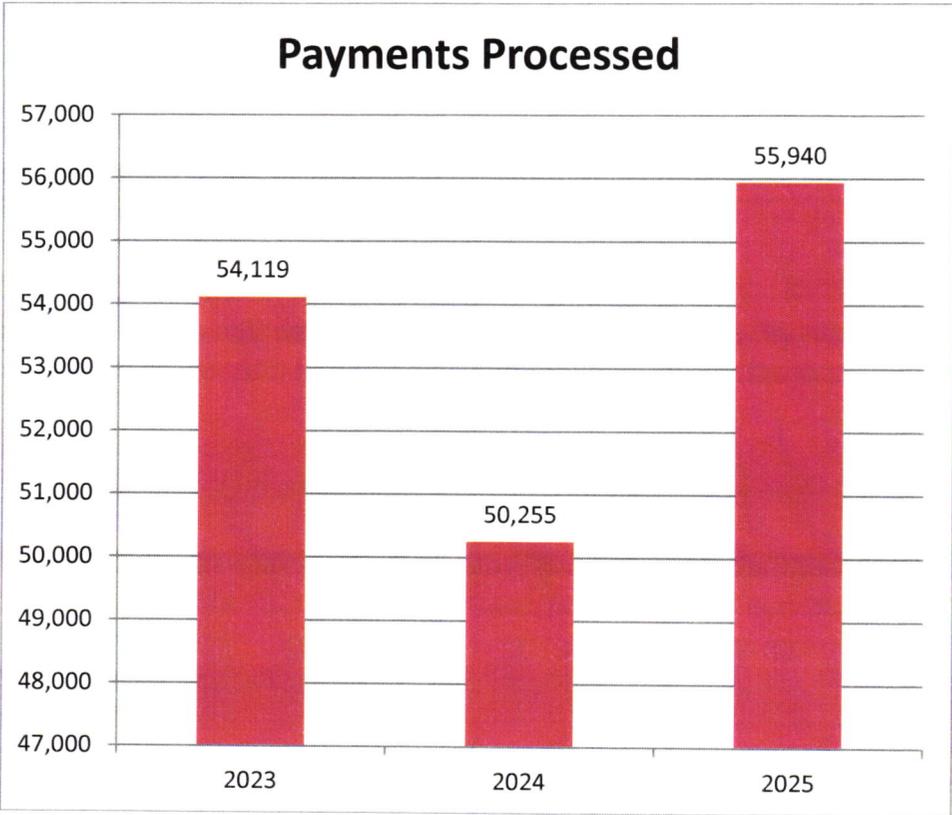
Water Office: Office Manager Brittany Gibson and her staff, simply put, provide outstanding service to our customers. With the new radio-read meters, they can now be even more proactive in notifying customers of continuous flows¹⁰ and/or when a customer has a question about their usage, they can now look at their individual meter and determine when the continuous flow began and help them determine the issue.

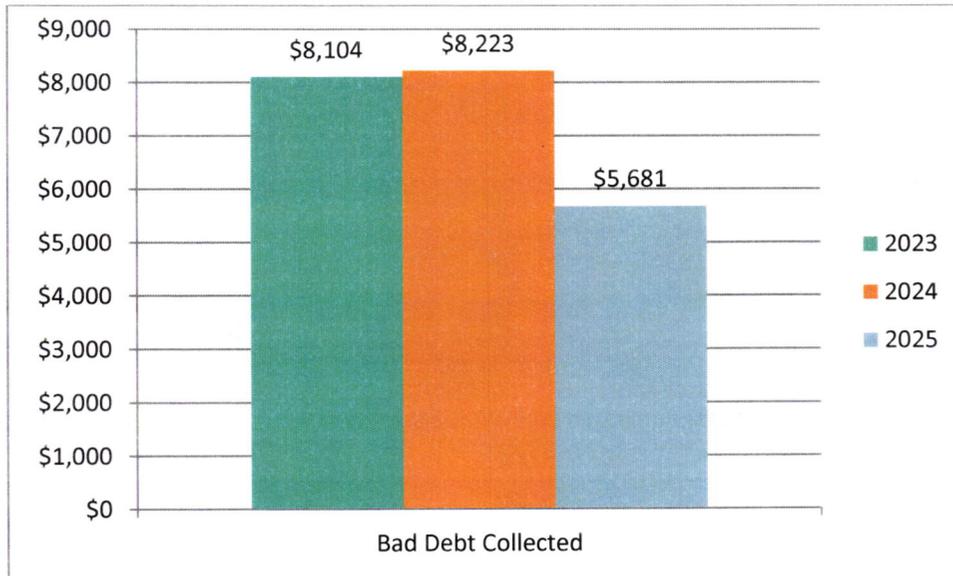
As a reminder, you can use the online bill pay service at <https://water.wardarkansas.org>. You can also sign up for notifications so that you are promptly informed via email and/or text if there is a problem or concern with the city's water or wastewater operations. Go to <https://water.wardarkansas.org/subscribe> to sign up. To date, 2,853 have signed up to be notified either by text or email or both.

From the following charts, you can see the office stays busy from processing new customers, removing disconnected account, processing payment and of course, sending out water bills.



¹⁰ We now try to use the term “continuous flow” instead of “leak” as a stuck flapper valve (for example) is not a leak.

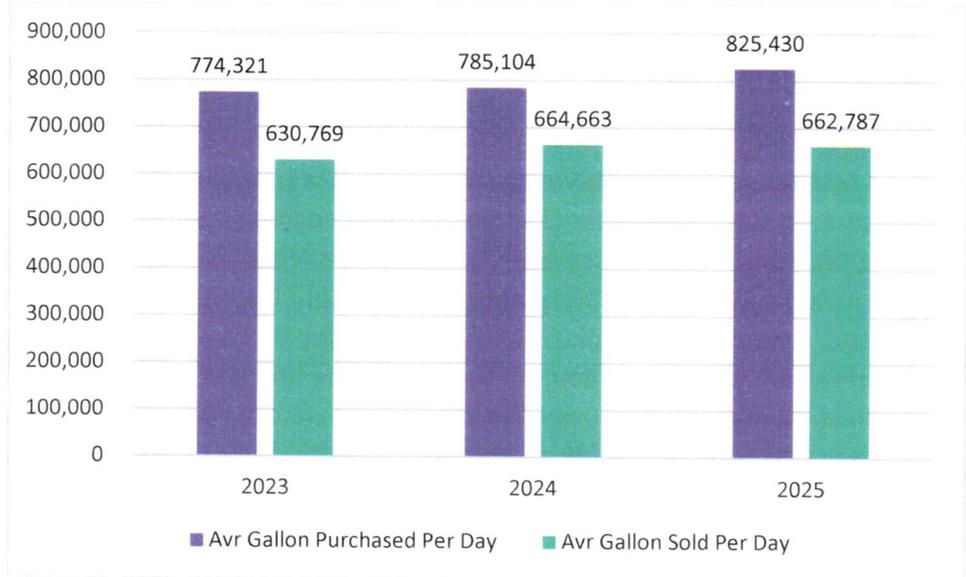
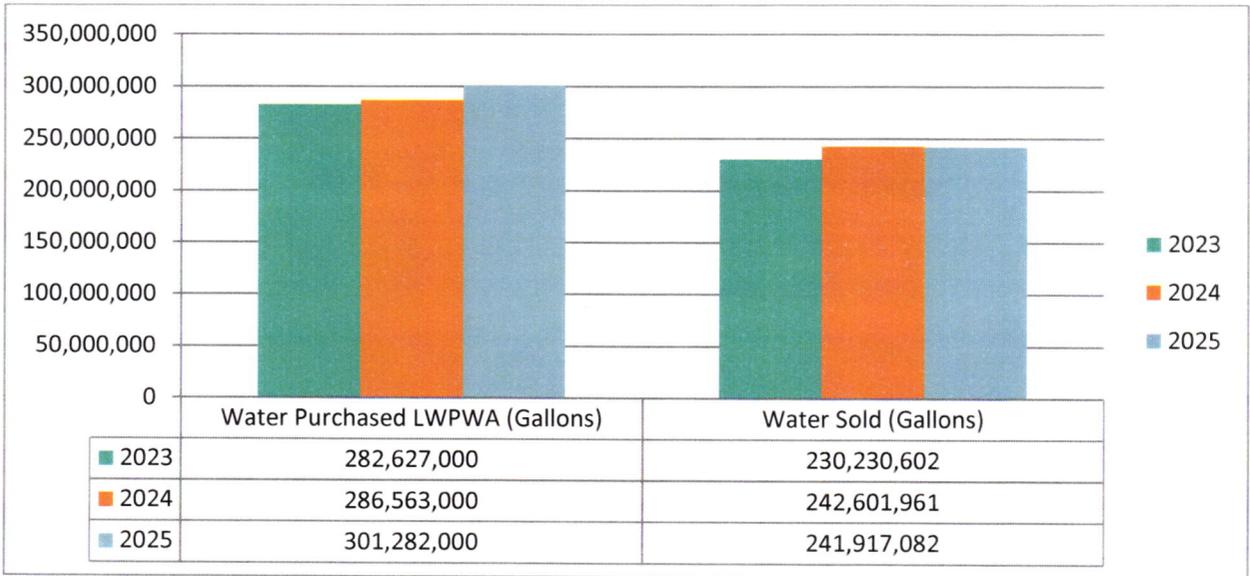




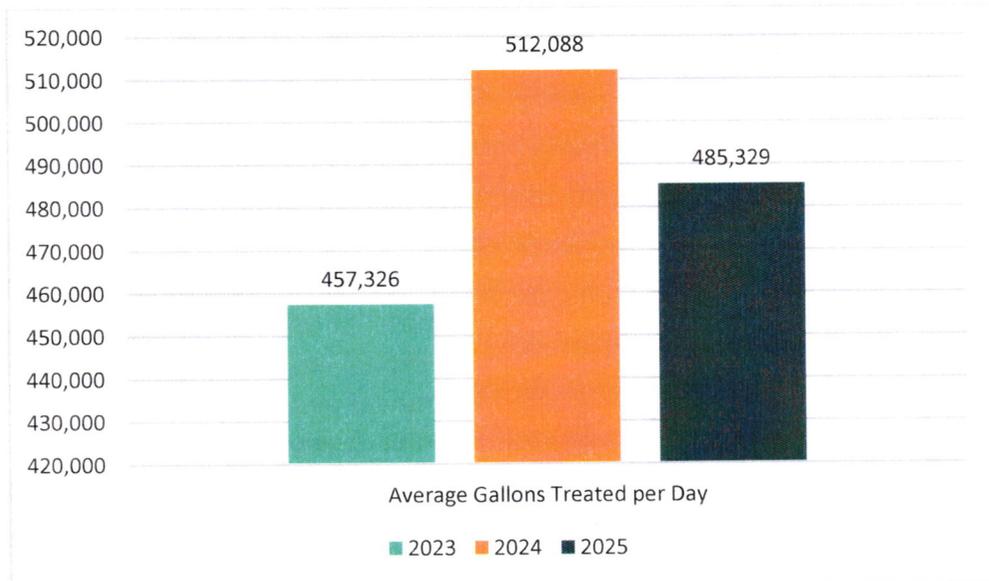
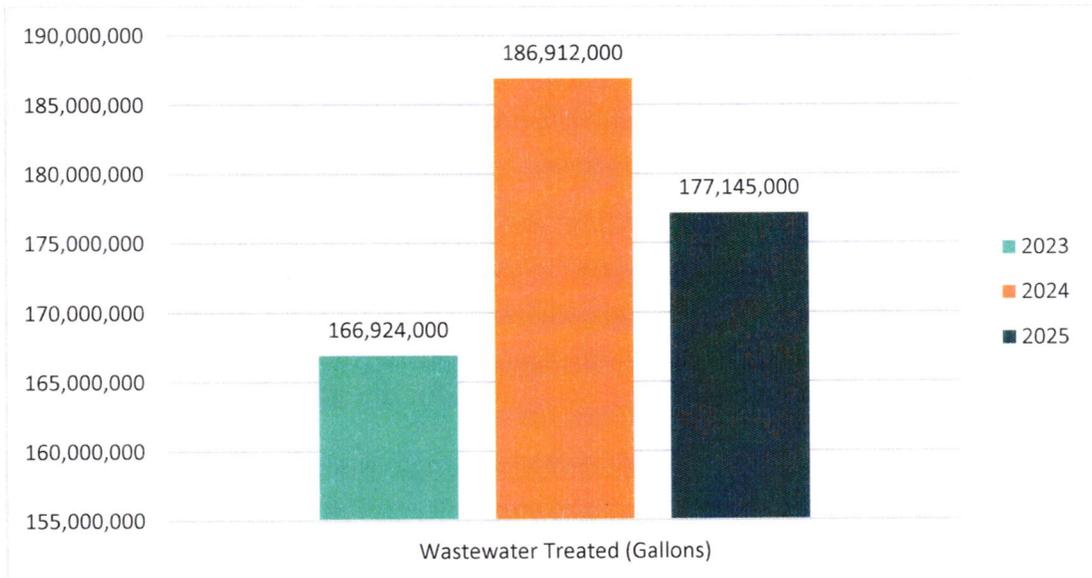
Water Operations: The water operators work daily to ensure fresh clean water flows from Lonoke-White Public Water Authority (LWPWA)¹¹ to our homes and businesses. As we receive 100% of our water from LWPWA, the city does not add any chemicals or additives to the water. It is simply passed through our meters to your home or business. On occasion, leaks do occur which require us to shut down a portion of the service area to repair the leak. Sometimes these leaks are just caused by ground shifting and/or old supply lines that fail. Other times, people and/or contractors fail to call “One-Call” (by dialing 811) before digging and they break a line. Depending on the size of the line and other factors, we sometimes have to place a “boil-order” in effect until we can repair the break and ensure the water is safe to drink afterwards. These boil-orders are initiated following Arkansas Department of Health rules.

If you ever wondered how many boil-orders are issued in the state, click: https://health.arkansas.gov/wa_engTraining/boilwaterorder.aspx

¹¹ The City of Ward is a Charter Member of LWPWA and is represented by the Mayor on the LWPWA Board

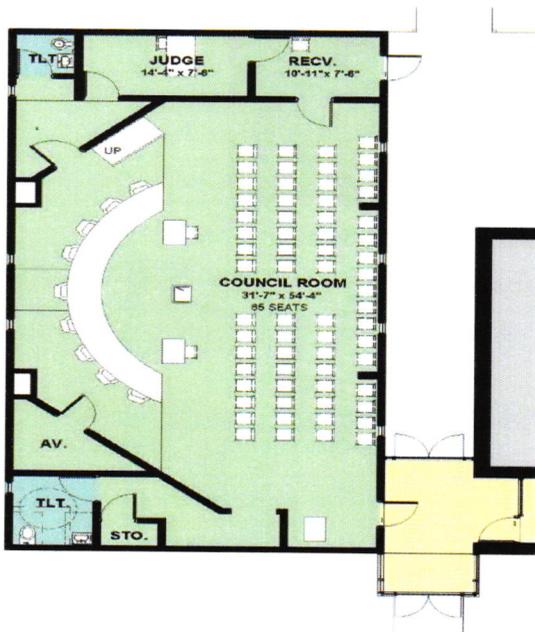


Wastewater Operations: Our wastewater crews work hard each day ensuring wastewater is flowing properly from your home to the treatment plant. With 25 lift stations and approximately 290,000 feet of wastewater pipe, ensuring the flow runs smoothly is a never-ending process.



Current and Planned Major Projects

1. **(OPEN) SRTS IV:** Approved in April 2022, Phase IV will extend a portion of the Phase II project down Wilson Loop to the north-end of Gold Meadow Loop. Phase IV also extends a portion of Phase III from midway down Chantileer Ln. to Castleton Dr., and then down Castleton Dr. to the Green Apple Phase III portion. This will create the first complete sidewalk loop in any existing subdivision in Ward. The total cost for this Phase is estimated to be \$345,127 with the city paying \$44,000. This project started late last year and will be completed in March 2026.
2. **(OPEN) SRTS V:** Approved in March 2023, Phase V was to extend the Phase III sidewalk from the intersection of Moon Rd Ext and Peyton St down Brewer St to Markham St. However, because of FEMA Floodplain issues on Brewer, the project has been scaled back to terminate at Wilson Loop and the cost will be reevaluated. Determining needed right-of-ways is undergoing. There is no start date for this project.
3. **(OPEN) Vacuum System Rehab:** In August 2023, the Arkansas Economic Development Council (AEDC) awarded a \$500,000 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to the City or Ward Water and Sewer System to remove the remaining homes off the antiquated vacuum system and to put each home either on a grinder-pump system or utilize gravity lines. In October 2023, an application was submitted to Arkansas Department of Natural Resources (ADNR) for \$791,000 in grants and/or low-interest loans to complete funding for the project. In July 2024, ADNR approved a \$791,000 low-interest loan; however, because using the loan would require yet another water rate increase, we are working to ensure we can pay for the project from existing reserves and not take out a loan. As of this publication, our engineering firm is reviewing bids for the project



4. **(CLOSED) Remodel City Council/Court Room:** In February 2025, City Council approved a capital improvement project to completely remodel and renovate the city's Council/Court room. If you have not seen the improvements, you really need to check it out. Additionally, in 2025, we had new floor covering installed in the hallway of City Hall. This new floor really brightened up the hallway and brought a new sense of pride to the building.

5. **(PENDING) 2026 City Hall ADA Improvements:** Currently under development, our plan is to renovate the main entrance to City Hall, the entrance to the Court/Council Room and the restrooms to be ADA compliant and to modernize the area. After that, maybe in 2027 we are going to plan to renovate/remodel the Dining Hall to make it more inviting and usable for all,
 6. **(PENDING) 2026 SRTS Phase VI Sidewalk Project:** This project is so new...we haven't even decided where the next set of sidewalks that would be attached to existing sidewalks going to the school. More to come.
 7. **(PENDING) 20xx Curb and Gutter/Widening of Moon Road from Wilson Loop to the County Line:** Our 2025 application to Metroplan to provide \$335,000 for the engineering services (the first step) was turned down. However, there will be another opportunity and we will try again. More to come.
 8. **(PENDING) Highway 38/319 Intersection Improvement:** Early this year, ARDoT determined that this intersection warrants a traffic light. With this determination, ARDoT is responsible for determining the scope of the project and projected costs. More to come.
 9. **(ON-HOLD) Regional Pedestrian/Bike Pathway:** The Ward to Austin segment of this long-term project is on hold for the foreseeable future due to issue with obtaining proper rights-of-way. The Austin to Cabot and beyond is on-going. The full map of the project can be viewed at <https://www.centralarkgreenways.com/plan-map>.
- **Partners:** We are also blessed to partner with several other cities and organizations to make Ward, and the surrounding communities better, for all of us.

City of Austin, Mayor Chamberlin	City of Cabot, Mayor Kincade
Lonoke County, Judge Erwin	Lonoke County Sheriff, Sheriff Staley
Bank of the Ozarks	Arkansas Municipal League (ARML)
Cabot Public School System	Cabot Chamber of Commerce
Central Arkansas Planning and Development District (CAPDD)	Centennial Bank
Central Arkansas Regional Solid Waste Management District	Central Arkansas Development Council (CADC)
First Arkansas Bank and Trust	First Security Bank
Lonoke White Public Water Authority (LWPWA)	Mid-Arkansas Water Alliance (MAWA)
Metroplan	Local Churches
Local Boy and Girl Scout Troops	Southern Paramedic Service (SPS)
Ward Chamber of Commerce	Circle K Stores, Inc
Lonoke County Safe Haven	

Closing Thoughts

As we look ahead to the rest of 2026 and beyond, I am reminded of what truly defines Ward: our resilience, our unity, and our shared belief that progress is something we build together. Every achievement we celebrate and every challenge we overcome is made possible because our residents, our businesses, our civic partners, and our city team remain committed to the common good.

The work before us is important, and the opportunities are real. With steady leadership, thoughtful planning, and your continued engagement, we will keep strengthening our infrastructure, enhancing public safety, supporting responsible growth, and protecting the quality of life that makes Ward a community we are proud to call home.

I am grateful for the trust you place in me and honored to have served as your mayor. Together, we will continue shaping a future that reflects the best of who we are—strong, prepared, and united in purpose.

Thank you, and may we move forward with confidence and determination.



As always, I urge you to get involved in your city government and community! If you have ideas, concerns, want to volunteer, want to learn more about the city and government so you can maybe one day run for a position, want to get involved in planning events, etc., we want to hear from you! City Council meetings are held every 3rd Tuesday of the month at 6:30 pm in the Court/Council room adjacent to City Hall. You are invited to attend in person or watch via our YouTube Channel¹². If attending in person and you wish to speak about anything, we provide time at the end of the meeting for public comment. Planning Commission meets every 4th Monday at 6:30 pm. The Water Advisory Committee meets at least annually or as called by the Chairperson. All are invited to attend.

If you have any questions or concerns about your city's government, please feel free to stop by my office, call or text me at (501)-743-2501 (c), or send me an email at mayor@cityofward.com. I am here for you.

Respectfully Submitted,



Charles Gastineau
Mayor

Attachments:

- 2025 General Fund Financial Statement
- 2025 Street Department Financial Statement
- 2025 Water/Wastewater Financial Statement

¹² <https://www.youtube.com/@cityofwardarkansas>

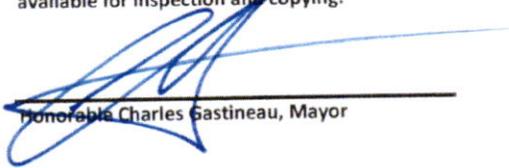
City of Ward, Arkansas General Fund
Financial Statement January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025

Balance January 1, 2025		\$ 3,479,295
County Sales Tax		1,083,366
City Sales Tax		1,089,397
State Turnbacks		89,931
Property Tax		367,657
Franchise Tax		347,515
Rent Income		14,320
Building Permits & Inspection Fees		113,656
Privilege Tax		2,580
Court Fines		131,284
Grants Received		75,000
Special Events		2,042
Alcoholic Beverage Tax		6,900
Screeton Act		42,033
Act 833 Turnbacks		29,953
Fire Membership Fees		3,779
Parks and Recreation		24,043
Interest Income		86,642
Other Income		93,697
Total General Fund Available		<u>\$ 7,083,090</u>

Expenditures	<u>Admin/Codes</u>	<u>Police/Animal Control</u>	<u>Fire</u>	<u>Courts</u>	<u>Parks</u>	<u>Total</u>
Salaries Wages and Benefits	\$ 371,944	\$ 1,210,995	\$ 144,597	\$ 235,348	\$ 119,821	\$ 2,082,705
Repairs Maintenance & Supplies	63,079	103,627	85,015	5,162	-	256,883
General and Administrative	147,663	99,101	50,442	7,740	15,091	320,037
Other Expenditures	36,891	-	-	-	21,589	58,480
Capital Outlay	420,219	202,400	106,110	-	-	728,729
Transfers Out to Street Fund	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Expenditures	<u>\$ 1,039,796</u>	<u>\$ 1,616,123</u>	<u>\$ 386,164</u>	<u>\$ 248,250</u>	<u>\$ 156,501</u>	<u>\$ 3,446,834</u>
Balance General Fund December 31, 2025						<u>\$ 3,636,256</u>

<u>Bonded Indebtedness</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Date of Last Payment</u>
None	\$ -	N/A

**** All financial records of the City of Ward, Arkansas are public records and are open for inspection during regular business hours in the Ward City Hall, Ward Arkansas. If the record is active use or in storage and, therefore, not available at the time a citizen asks to examine it, the custodian shall certify this fact in writing to the applicant and set a date and hour within three (3) days at which time the record will be available for inspection and copying.**

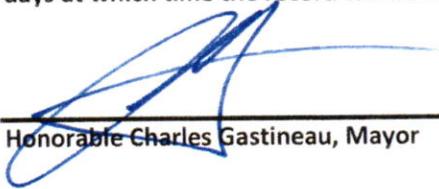


 Honorable Charles Gastineau, Mayor

City of Ward, Arkansas Street Fund
Financial Statement January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025

Balance January 1, 2025	\$ 956,539
State Aid	511,394
Road Tax	69,224
Vehicle Maintenance & Service	23,294
Transfer from General Fund	-
Interest Income	21,614
Other Income	-
Total General Fund Available	<u>\$ 1,582,065</u>
 Expenditures	
Salaries Wages and Benefits	\$ 168,651
Repairs Maintenance & Supplies	74,635
General and Administrative	23,066
Street Lights	74,075
Street Work	111,718
Capital Outlay	-
Total Expenditures	<u>\$ 452,145</u>
Balance General Fund December 31, 2025	<u><u>\$ 1,129,920</u></u>

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Honorable Charles Gastineau, Mayor

City of Ward, Arkansas Water and Sewer System
Financial Statement January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025

Income

Water Revenue	\$ 3,216,888
Sewer Revenue	1,170,972
Meter Installation	68,846
Connection Fees	121,985
Delinquent Fees	87,617
Lonoke White Fees collected	284,220
Interest income	170,335
Other Income	161,354

Total Income \$ 5,282,217

Expenses

Salaries Wages and Benefits	\$ 1,170,756
Repairs Maintenance & Supplies	403,733
Utilities and Telephone	224,762
Other Operating Expense	584,302
Purchased Water	376,603
Franchise Fees	108,176
Lonoke White Fees	286,910
Depreciation	530,617
Interest Expense	219,583

Total Expenses \$ 3,905,442

Net Income \$ 1,376,775

<u>Bonded Indebtedness</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Date Last Payment</u>
City of Ward, Arkansas Water and Sewer System Water and Sewer Revenue Bonds	\$ 9,643,775	12/28/2056

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 Honorable Charles Gastineau, Mayor