



State of the City Address 2026

This past year may not have brought dramatic headlines, but it has been a year defined by steady, meaningful progress. Often, it is this kind of thoughtful, foundational work that positions a city for long-term success and resilience. In Charleston, we are building wisely, investing strategically, and preparing intentionally for the future.

Steady Growth & Continued Investment

Growth throughout our community has remained strong and consistent. This year, we issued:

- 1 commercial building permit
- 9 residential building permits
- 8 residential remodel and improvement permits

Each permit represents more than construction activity. It reflects families choosing Charleston as home, businesses believing in our potential, and neighbors investing in the future of our community. Every improvement strengthens our neighborhoods and adds to the vibrancy of our city.

Strengthening Infrastructure & Ensuring Reliability

Reliable infrastructure remains a cornerstone of quality municipal service, and this year we made several important improvements to strengthen our systems.

Through a **State Hazard Mitigation Grant**, we installed a stationary generator at our Vine Street lift station. This investment ensures uninterrupted operation during severe weather and power outages—protecting public health and reinforcing our commitment to preparedness.

We also completed several critical infrastructure upgrades:

- Replaced **400 linear feet of undersized sewer main**, eliminating overflow risk
- Procured **420 digital water meters** to complete our system-wide metering upgrade, improving accuracy and operational efficiency
- Initiated a **sewer capacity study** with our engineering consultants to evaluate current wastewater flows and plan for future development

These projects may not always be visible, but they are essential to supporting responsible growth and maintaining the high level of service our residents expect.

Public Safety: A Continued Priority

Public safety continues to be one of our highest priorities. In 2025, our officers remained active and engaged throughout the year, responding to and managing:

- 616 total reports
- 50 accidents
- 27 domestic calls
- 220 traffic citations
- 869 traffic warnings
- 20 criminal citations
- 11 juvenile citations
- 50 warrants served
- 45 arrests
- 27 city ordinance citations

These numbers reflect a department that is proactive, responsive, and dedicated to maintaining safety and order in our community.

Shop with a Cop

One of the most heartwarming initiatives of the year was the continuation of the **Shop with a Cop program**, now in its fifth year. Thanks to successful fundraising efforts—including support from the Franklin County Sheriff's Office—25 children were able to go Christmas shopping, each receiving \$200 to spend.

Programs like this strengthen trust, build relationships, and demonstrate that public safety is about service, compassion, and community connection.

Enhancing Community Spaces

This year, we made meaningful investments that enhance the spaces where our community gathers, plays, and connects.

Through an **Energy Efficiency Block Grant** from the Arkansas Department of Energy, we began retrofitting all lighting at our **ball field complex** with **new energy-efficient LED fixtures**. This project reduces our environmental footprint and long-term operating costs while ensuring our athletes and families continue to enjoy a safe, well-lit facility. Work began in January and is expected to be completed in early spring. It is a strong example of how smart planning today creates lasting benefits for tomorrow.

We also expanded recreational opportunities with the completion of new **pickleball courts** at our city park. Already buzzing with activity, these courts provide a welcoming space for residents of all ages to stay active and spend time together. Completed with modest expenditures and the hard work of our city staff, this project reflects our commitment to practical, community-centered improvements that strengthen quality of life in Charleston.

Together, these efforts demonstrate that when we invest thoughtfully in our public spaces, we invest in the health, connection, and future of our community.

Committed to Excellence

At the City of Charleston, our greatest strength has always been our people.

This year, three team members earned advanced water and wastewater licensing credentials—enhancing our technical expertise and ensuring operational continuity for the future. A skilled, knowledgeable workforce is essential to quality service delivery, and we remain committed to investing in the professional development of our team.

That commitment to excellence was recognized statewide when Charleston received the **4 Star Municipality Award** at the Arkansas Municipal League Conference. This award honors excellence in loss control across multiple areas, including:

- Employee safety
- Wellness programs
- Vehicle safety
- Prevention of legal liability

This recognition belongs to every member of our team who has embraced a culture of safety, accountability, and continuous improvement.

Looking Ahead with Confidence

As I look ahead, I see a city that is building wisely and moving forward with purpose.

Progress is not always flashy. It does not always make headlines—but it happens every day through steady effort, responsible planning, and shared commitment. Every grant secured, every infrastructure improvement completed, every investment in public safety, recreation, and our workforce strengthens the foundation of Charleston's future.

Together, we are creating a community that is safer, more sustainable, more resilient, and full of opportunity. Thank you for your trust, your support, and your commitment to Charleston. It is an honor to serve as your mayor, and I look forward to all we will accomplish together.