EAST CHICAGO life

YOUR LOCAL SOURCE FOR EAST CHICAGO NEWS AND EVENTS

State of the City 2023

THE SERIES

This is the first of two newsletters featuring the State of the City.

ISSUE #1

A special report on all the exciting projects East Chicago accomplished in 2022 and the new developments in your neighborhood.

ISSUE #2

Coming next:
A special report on what East Chicago is working on in 2023.

HARD WORK, GRIT, DETERMINATION CONTINUE TO BUILD A STRONGER CITY

We began 2022 as we do each year, remodeling our vision for the future of East Chicago. We cast a wide net, reflecting on the accomplishments of the year before, envisioning next steps. We fine-tuned. Throughout the process, departments weighed in with suggestions and offers of how they could help make it work. We made a list. Then, we checked with our financial experts – and the budget – to see what we could afford.

Our team – and that thought process – helped make 2022 a year to remember.

The city celebrated the grand opening of Block Stadium with a robust crowd that was just as excited to see a baseball game just blocks from their homes as the original crowd that packed the stadium 80 years ago.

This project was – and is – a testament to grit and determination. It took us four years and five phases to revitalize this incredible community asset. Fixing what was wrong and updating what is one of the few remaining community baseball fields was expensive. The value it brings to new generations of children who are able to get excited about going to a game with their families is beyond measure.

Block Stadium was just the beginning.

East Chicago reduced crime and call volumes when Police, Code Enforcement and the Building Department teamed up to identify the most problematic rental properties and enforce our city ordinances. That's what happens when we work together.



Please read inside to see what all our departments have accomplished in 2022 and look out for the next State of the City issue, which highlights what we're working on in 2023.

ANTHONY COPELAND
Mayor City of East Chicago

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GROWTH

[BUILDING DEPARTMENT]

Building Commissioner James Portalatin said his department is as valuable for what it takes down as it is for what it assists in putting in its place. The city demolished 32 structures last year and facilitated construction that is bringing new jobs to the city.

1. **Lake Shore Manor Senior Housing:** The start of construction was a highlight for 2022. Completion of the $42 million project is set for later this year.
2. **4400 Homerlee:** A partnership with Missner Group, this $20 million logistics hub is ready for tenants.
3. **Prairie Crossing:** Demolition of 2001 Franklin St. clears the way for the Prairie Crossing development.
4. **BP Gas Station:** Assisted in two additions to the building – at 819 E. Chicago Ave. – on the north and south side for a total cost of $406,000.
5. **Wynstar Trucking:** Worked with owners to facilitate a $2.6 million construction project at 2000 Gary Ave., which will be their new headquarters.

[SANITARY DISTRICT]

The Sanitary District installed tech upgrades – including interface terminals and software – to monitor and control operations at the Wastewater Treatment Plant and lift station. As part of the Combined Sewer Overflow Phase II improvements, the district:

- **Completed cleaning and relining of Roxana sewers, expanding capacity in the system while reducing the amount of groundwater that enters the sanitary system.**
- **Installed emergency generators at the Roxana Lift Station providing power to move sanitary waste during electrical outages, which often coincide with storms.**
- **Cleaned 1.6 miles of Alder Combined Sewer from Broadway to the Alder Lift Station.**



[REDEVELOPMENT]

As East Chicago emerged from the pandemic, the Redevelopment Department proceeded full throttle on a host of projects. What began as a focused urban revitalization in North Harbor is being replicated in other neighborhoods with new housing that meets the needs of today's families while melding seamlessly with neighborhoods that have been there for decades. Redevelopment Director Frank Rivera said there are bright days ahead. "We have taken the template for North Harbor and tweaked it to suit the needs of Marktown and West Calumet."

1. **Marktown:** A century after this planned worker community was built, a vision to spruce up facades (above) in Historic Marktown was conceived.
2. **Levin Building:** Renovation of the Levin Griffin Building at 138th and Main is underway. Once a furniture store, this century-old gem has a future as condominiums and a banquet center.
3. **Sunnyside:** The city's popular exterior renovation program continued in Sunnyside bringing the total number of homes improved to 86 and an investment of nearly $2 million in federal funds.
4. **West Calumet:** A series of meetings is helping create a program to guide the redevelopment of West Calumet in Zones 2 and 3.
5. **Prairie Crossing:** Utilities were installed and roads constructed for the new Prairie Crossing development. Lots will be up for sale soon.
6. **Wendy's:** National chain breaks ground on new restaurant, located on Columbus Drive, bringing new jobs to the area.

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HEALTH

Since opening its doors nearly a century ago, St. Catherine Hospital has been a regional healthcare leader, investing in life-changing technology and recruiting talented physicians, nurses and technicians skilled in using it.

Less than a decade after welcoming its first patient, St. Catherine became one of the first hospitals in the region to offer radiation treatment for cancer. That was followed by life-saving treatment for burns and industrial accidents.

In the 1970s, St. Catherine pioneered the region's first open-heart surgery center.

[INVESTING IN EAST CHICAGO]

In just six years, St. Catherine Hospital has invested more than $33.8 million in capital improvements, including a new infusion center, reimagined 36-bed Intermediate Care Unit and the Harbor Cafe to serve patient families.

"These investments are important to the well-being of our patients, growth of the local economy and the future of this hospital," CEO Leo Correa said. "These improvements point to our commitment to the residents of East Chicago — now, and in the future."

[GROWTH CONTINUES AT ST. CATHERINE HOSPITAL]

As treatments evolve, leaders at St. Catherine Hospital continue to invest in therapies that provide the greatest benefit to patients close to home. Today, the hospital leads with advances, such as:

1. **CyberKnife57** combines robotic precision that targets tumors while sparing healthy tissue.
2. **Sozo** allows for the early identification of secondary lymphedema that augments the hospital's lymphedema treatment program.
3. **SuperDimension Navigation System™** combines a catheter-based system using a patient's airways to reach lesions deep within the lungs.

The quality of care at St. Catherine is consistently recognized for excellence by state and federal agencies, including: Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Indiana Hospital Association (IHA) and Joint Commission:

1. Five-stars from CMS, St. Catherine is one of 12 hospitals in Indiana to receive the designation.
2. INspire award for the hospital's commitment to infant and maternal health from IHA.
3. Gold Seal of Approval for Chest Pain Certification from the Joint Commission.

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SAFETY

East Chicago's First Responders – police officers, firefighters, emergency medical technicians and paramedics – answer the public's call for help more than 82 times every day.

Over the course of the year, the departments responded to 29,960 emergencies.

For some, it was a call to police when residents heard gunshots.

For others, it was a 911 call from a concerned neighbor who saw smoke pouring out of the house across the street.

[FIRE DEPARTMENT]

The Fire Department invested in new equipment, such as Mobile Data Terminals to connect instantly with Lake County EMS, new fans that introduce cleaner air into hazardous atmosphere, new bunker gear, and a device that makes forcible entry easier during fire calls.

At the same time, firefighters received training in working with individuals with autism as part of the Ben's Blue Bags program, upgraded the reporting system, created the Cardinal Leadership Group for Student Athletes and bumped up school visits to interact with kids and advise those interested in career potential as firefighters.

[EAST CHICAGO POLICE DEPARTMENT]

Chief Jose Rivera said the city's crime rate continues to drop thanks to crime-fighting technology and highly trained officers. In 2022, new resources include:

1. **Intelligence Center:** This comprehensive system combines technology and on-the-ground data gathering to assist law enforcement.
2. **License Plate Readers:** Recognition technology quickly compares plates suspected of crime involvement with tags on hotlists nationwide.
3. **New Gun Range:** A new facility provides officers with the tools they need to maintain their skills.
4. **Exercise Options:** Officers stay fit at a remodeled weight room outfitted in new equipment or at a gym with a regulation-size basketball court.
5. **Cameras:** Body cams have been added, including 800 citywide fixed pole-mounted, portable trailer and portable pole cameras.
6. **ShotSpotter:** This crime-fighting tool triangulates the source of gunfire and relays details to officers.
7. **Additional Tools:** Body scanners for special events, report-writing app that reduces the time officers spend on paperwork and four police K-9s.

RECREATION

[BLOCK STADIUM]

Four years after the rehabilitation began, Block Stadium became a beacon for possibilities when it opened to an enthusiastic crowd of next-generation baseball lovers in the summer of 2022. Mayor Anthony Copeland's vision for the stadium – originally opened in 1942 for employees of Inland Steel – is to provide a top-notch home field for families to enjoy America's favorite past-time. "The promise of the reimagined Block Stadium will unfold in the lives of children growing up in its shadow." Check out what you can expect:

1. **Stands:** Covered stands with all-new roomy seats for 3,500, protect spectators from the elements, taking advantage of lake breezes for cooling.
2. **Museum:** A baseball museum will be located on ground level adjacent to stadium seating along with an indoor concession stand and restrooms.
3. **Press Box:** An elevated press box is a dream to listen to play-by-play while a gleaming electronic scoreboard keeps track inning by inning.
4. **Field:** Players have the advantage of a world-class field equipped with a state-of-the-art irrigation system, dugouts, bullpens and batting cages.

[MARINA & BEACH]

For Marina Director Natalie Adams, 2022 marked a pivotal turn as the city emerged from COVID-19 restrictions, which prevented large gatherings at the beachfront for the prior two years.

"We were thrilled when we learned of Mayor Copeland's plan to reopen the beachfront and that FusicFest was a go," Adams said. "We had spectacular weather and a great turnout. It was a great first step as we look ahead to our second COVID-free summer at the lakefront."



[PARKS & RECREATION]

With more than two dozen facilities – green spaces, linear trails, neighborhood parks, shelters, recreation centers, a working greenhouse, golf course and Lake Michigan Beachfront – there is always something happening at East Chicago Parks and Recreation. Last year was no exception. The city invested $340,500 to update, repair, beautify and expand the city park system. Work in 2022 was part of a comprehensive plan to invest each year in park improvements:

1. **Riley Park Hall:** Installed new flooring, painted interior, added vanities in restrooms and a new stove in the kitchen, replaced tables and chairs.
2. **MacArthur Golf Course:** Built a new entrance for visitors to the golf course.
3. **Nunez Park Trail:** The city began the process of creating a walking path through Nunez Park.
4. **Summer Programs:** Conducted eight-week programs including basketball, volleyball as well as visual and performing arts.
5. **Recreation Centers:** Added computer gaming systems and interactive displays at Heritage Hall and Unity Center.
6. **Basketball Courts:** Washington and Nunez basketball courts were sealed to protect them from the weather.
7. **New Park Signs:** Installed new signs at parks as part of a comprehensive improvement.
8. **Playground Maintenance:** Replaced a variety of playground equipment throughout the parks that has outlived its useful life.

SPRING CLEANUP

This year's citywide cleanup continues from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. through May 12. Please see the schedule below for your district's dates.

DISTRICT SCHEDULE

District 4: April 24-28

District 5: May 1-5

District 3: May 8-12

Please note: District 1 had its cleanup April 3-7, District 6 was April 10-14 and District 2 was April 17-21.

TEAM UP & CLEAN UP

- Place large items in the alley for collection or curbside where alleys do not exist.
- Secure all items that may be blown away by the wind.
- Bag yard-waste materials and place at the curb.

All abandoned vehicles – as well as those with expired plates or parked in a "No Parking" zone – will be towed at the owner's expense.

Info: For more information or questions, please call (219) 391-8463 or (219) 391-8464.

CAMP REGISTRATION

The East Chicago Parks and Recreation Department kicks off registration for this year's Stars Summer Camp. Space is limited, so be sure to register your child right away!

When: 4:30-6:30 p.m. May 19

Where: Riley Park, located at the corner of Chicago and Grasselli avenues.

Info: Please call the East Chicago Parks and Recreation office at (219) 391-8474.

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Arbor Day

10 AM - 2 PM | FRIDAY | APRIL 28

Please join East Chicago Mayor Anthony Copeland, the Student Conservation Association, CommuniTree, Faith in Place as well as East Chicago Parks and Recreation in planting native trees at Smith Park - **in honor of David Lane** - for his dedication to the students and athletes at EC Central.

SMITH PARK | 4001 ALEXANDER AVENUE



@eastchicagoindiana

East Chicago is proud to be a Tree City, helping to keep our environment clean and our green spaces abundant.