



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Watford City named 2019 City of the Year

Watford City was named 2019 City of the Year by the North Dakota League of Cities (NDLC) during the League's 2019 Annual Conference, Sept. 21, in Bismarck. Mayor Philip Riely accepted the award on behalf of the city.

In his presentation of the award to Watford City, NDLC Executive Director Blake Crosby outlined some of highlights of their nomination.

Collaboration was the key word in the nomination of Watford City for this award. Collaboration was not only the means to survival but to building for the future. The city, county and school district shed turf protection barriers and got down to business with oil and gas revenue providing the business investment.

The city has an updated Capital Improvement Plan that includes four priorities plus county projects and airport upgrades:

- immediate/essential needs;
- expected development patterns (growth to 15,000);
- planned growth; and
- a long-term plan.

These future costs are estimated at over \$240 million through 2022.

The city has annexed property and established an extraterritorial zoning authority. The local political subdivisions have begun the process of leveraging resources to invest over \$500 million in water, wastewater, transportation, three school construction projects (two of them voter approved bonding bills and one increase in mill levy ceiling), the Rough Rider Center, McKenzie County Healthcare System campus, essential workforce housing apartments, 200 children childcare center, expansion of County Court services and a combined law enforcement center.

All of these investments are designed to not only address current needs, but to build a community for the future with the amenities and structure especially desired by the millennial workforce.

City leadership understands their work continues. They are tackling the shortage of quality and affordable housing, quality and affordable childcare and growing local retail and services in this tight labor market. They not only understand but have embraced the importance of investment by leverage of city, county and school district funds.

The City of the Year Award was established in 1984 to recognize North Dakota Cities for the quality, number and progressiveness of activities undertaken in the community.

Photo L to R: Park River Mayor and NDLC President Dan Stenvold, Lt. Governor Brent Sanford, Watford City Mayor Philip Riely, NDLC Executive Director Blake Crosby

The North Dakota League of Cities provides service, advocacy, leadership, education and support to the state's 357 cities. The League's mission - Strong. Dynamic. Cities" - expresses the value of services offered by the League.

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