

2025 State of the County Address by Commissioner President Dan Guard

Hello fellow residents of Montgomery County.

This is Dan Guard, President of the Board of Commissioners. It is a privilege to stand before you today and reflect on the work we've accomplished in 2024, as well as to look ahead to the bright future we are building together. We've made great strides in moving our county forward, and I am excited to share some of the key highlights from the past year.

Investing in Infrastructure and Economic Development

One of the most significant steps we took this year was securing state funding for a vital infrastructure project—the overpass on Nucor Road over U.S. 136. This overpass will not only improve safety for all travelers but will also facilitate even more economic growth in this critical area. We are grateful to the State for covering 80% of the construction costs, with the county funding the remainder. Construction will begin next year, and we expect it to be a game-changer for both safety and the future of business in our county.

Alongside this, we've seen major projects like the Nucor Coatings and Nucor Towers developments continue to progress. These projects are set to create hundreds of good-paying jobs, and I am thrilled that Montgomery County will be a key player in supporting these major employers as they grow in our community.

Revitalizing Our Courthouse and Investing in Our Future

In 2024, we also took an important step in preserving our history and ensuring that our county's facilities meet the needs of today's residents. We opened bids for the renovation of our 150-year-old courthouse and I'm pleased to announce that this project will not require an increase in the tax rate. The work will be completed this year, ensuring our courthouse continues to be a symbol of pride and service to our county for generations to come.

Collaboration with the City of Crawfordsville

The past year has also been marked by remarkable collaboration with the City of Crawfordsville. Together, we have been able to achieve meaningful progress in areas of mutual interest, including the extension of Purple Heart Parkway from U.S. 231 to Ladoga Road. This extension, which we celebrated with a ribbon-cutting in November, will open up almost a thousand acres for development, creating new opportunities for both residential and business growth.

Additionally, we are collaborating on a corridor study on the south side near Purple Heart Parkway to assess the future of the area's road network. This study is crucial for understanding the growth potential of this region, and it will inform decisions on future road extensions and infrastructure improvements to accommodate the continued development we expect in this area. We are committed to ensuring that our infrastructure grows along with the community.

We have also been working alongside the City to attract more housing to the area. This is vital for the continued growth of our community, and we look forward to continuing these efforts into 2025 and beyond.

Beyond housing, our collaboration with the City has extended to other areas, such as jointly managing our dispatch center and exploring new economic development opportunities. When local government works together, it strengthens our community and ensures we can achieve even more for the people we serve.

Investing in Our Roads

Our highway department continues to work tirelessly to maintain and improve our roads, which are vital for travel and economic development. In 2024, we utilized a state grant to continue paving roads, including Nucor Road and several neighborhood roads that had not been paved in many years. We recognize that our roads are an essential asset, and we continue to explore every avenue to secure more funding to maintain and improve them.

Public Safety and the Sheriff's Office

Public safety remains one of our highest priorities. We have worked closely with our Sheriff to ensure that he has the resources and personnel necessary to keep our community safe. This partnership is essential for the well-being of all residents, and we remain committed to supporting the efforts of our local law enforcement.

Supporting Families and Childcare

Another important project we are proud to be part of is the collaboration with the Montgomery County Community Foundation, the City of Crawfordsville, and several private employers to construct an early learning center at the former County building on South Boulevard. This partnership shows how our community can come together to meet a critical need for childcare in our county. As we work to attract new residents and businesses, providing quality childcare is essential. We appreciate the leadership of the Community Foundation on this important project and look forward to seeing this project completed and benefiting families across Montgomery County.

Adopting a New Comprehensive Plan

We've also taken important steps to guide our growth and protect our rural heritage. In 2024, we adopted a new Comprehensive Plan that will help shape the future of Montgomery County. This plan will guide future development in a way that preserves our county's character while also accommodating responsible growth. Many members of our community participated in the process, and we appreciate the public being involved with this important update of our vision for the future.

Exciting New Events and Opportunities

2024 also brought an exciting announcement for our county—Montgomery County will host the Motocross of Nations motorcycle race at Ironman Raceway in 2025. This prestigious event will bring tens of thousands of race fans from all over the world to our community. A local organizing committee is already hard at work, and we are excited about the economic and promotional opportunities this event will provide for our county.

Supporting Economic Development at Nucor

As part of our efforts to support growth in the Nucor area, we funded the construction of a water line along Nucor Road from Tempur Sealy to Ladoga Road and the new Nucor Towers facility. This infrastructure investment will help accommodate future growth in this key area, ensuring that we are ready to meet the demands of expanding businesses.

Maintaining and Improving County Facilities

Maintaining our county's facilities is just as important as investing in new infrastructure. That's why we've approved a bid to improve handicapped accessibility at our probation building. This project will begin later this year and ensure that our county offices remain accessible to all residents.

Recognizing Leadership and Welcoming New Faces

Before I close, I want to take a moment to recognize the leadership of former Commissioner John Frey, who chose not to seek re-election at the end of his second term. John has been instrumental in attracting Tempur Sealy, Nucor Coatings, and Nucor Towers to our county. He also led the efforts to establish zoning in Montgomery County, which has helped protect property values and guide our growth responsibly. We thank John for his dedication to our community.

At the same time, we welcome our new Commissioner, Jake Bohlander, who replaced John. Jake has served on the County Council, and we look forward to working with him to continue moving our county forward. We also welcome Mike Warren to the County Council and look forward to the fresh perspectives he will bring. Finally, we welcome Sondra Sixberry as our new Clerk. As part of the courthouse renovation, Sondra's office will be relocated to the first floor to ensure better accessibility for all residents.

Looking Ahead

As we look to 2025 and beyond, the future of Montgomery County is bright. The Board of Commissioners, along with all our elected officials and dedicated employees, remain committed to providing cost-effective services to residents and businesses. We are focused on creating opportunities for economic growth, maintaining a business-friendly environment, and preserving the quality of life that makes Montgomery County a great place to live, work, and raise a family.

If you would like to learn more about our department's successes in 2024, I encourage you to visit our website and review the 2024 annual report. It includes highlights and data from each department and provides more details on the work we've done.

Thank you for listening to the 2025 State of the County. May God bless our county, state, and country.