



2025 Annual Report

Village of East Palestine, Ohio

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Reporting Period: January 1, 2025 – December 31, 2025

Message from the Mayor

This year marks our turning point in East Palestine, where we can accept our past, but move forward taking steps towards our future. Now is the time that we come together and support each other to make this community great.

Message from the Village Manager

The Village of East Palestine continues to demonstrate resilience, determination, and a shared commitment to progress. In 2025, our community focused on stabilizing core services, rebuilding trust, and laying the groundwork for long-term revitalization. This Annual Report is intended to provide residents, businesses, regional partners, and prospective investors with a clear and transparent overview of where we are, what we accomplished, and where we are headed. We are both cognizant and appreciative of all the work and effort that members of this community have put in to ensure that we are on our way to great success. Most of all, we want to commend you for deciding to take action and move forward, one step at a time.

Vision

A thriving community where every citizen enjoys a vibrant social and economic life, supported by well-paying local jobs and a deep sense of care for their well-being. A place where neighbors uplift one another, and the local government is a trusted partner, delivering exceptional public services that enhance the quality of life for all.

Mission

Our goal is to drive economic and social growth by becoming the most business-friendly community in Eastern Ohio. We will achieve this by implementing and upholding thoughtful, effective laws and ordinances and by investing in the strength and well-being of our local institutions. Together, we will make East Palestine a model of effective governance – a place where opportunity thrives, innovation is embraced, and progress benefits all.

Values

- Transparency and Consistency: Open, honest, and reliable communication with the community.
- Opportunity for All: Reducing barriers to success for individuals and businesses.
- Practical Governance: Policies and procedures rooted in common sense and practicality.
- Efficient Action: Delivering effective solutions with urgency and precision.
- Accessible Support: Providing easy access to resources and assistance.
- Professional Excellence: Maintaining a well-trained, skilled, and dedicated workforce.
- Attention to Detail: Excelling in even the smallest tasks to ensure overall success.
- Community Integration: Environment where the schools, municipality, businesses, and citizens work together to capitalize on opportunities and address needs and improvements.

Community Overview

Geographic & Strategic Location

East Palestine is a small rural community located in eastern Columbiana County, Ohio. The Village occupies a strategic position within the regional economic triangle formed by **Columbus, Cleveland, and Pittsburgh**, offering access to major freight corridors, interstate highways, and rail infrastructure. This location provides unique opportunities for logistics, light industrial development, small manufacturing, and regional service-based businesses.

2025 Year in Review

Finance

- Budget
 - Total Budget Expenses: \$8,548,413.56
 - Wages/Benefits \$3,393,922.31
 - Debt Payments: \$751,901.92
 - Department Expenses: \$4,402,589.33
 - Total Revenues Collected: \$7,505,185.00 (not including Norfolk Southern Settlement)
- Real Estate Taxes and Levies
 - General Fund 2.1 Mills \$174,576.61
(down \$3,122.68 from 2024)
 - Police Pension Fund .3 Mills \$24,365.90
(down \$343.95 from 2024)
 - Park Levy 2.0 Mills and 1.0 Mills \$146,064.53
(down \$2,093.14 from 2024)
 - Fire Levy 1.5 Mills \$92,023.96
(down \$1,421.63 from 2024)
 - Police Levy 2.0 Mills \$133,684.30
(down \$1,998.57 from 2024)
 - Street Levy 5.0 Mills \$334,208.63
(down \$5,050.45 from 2024)
- Cemetery:
 - Graves Sold: 7
 - Total Burials: 21
 - Vaults: 12
 - Cremations: 9
 - Foundations: 14
 - Revenue: \$21,292.80 (down \$7,409.00 from 2024)
 - Expenses: \$37,480.99 (General Fund Transfer of \$15,000 to cover expenses)
- Income Tax Split per Fund
 - General Fund 1.50%
 - General Fund .50% (at 20%)
 - Police Fund: .50% (at 40%)
 - Fire Fund .50% (at 40%)
 - Total income tax receipts were down \$37,597.66 from 2024)

Housing & Zoning

Key Activities:

- Focused on removal of Junk Vehicles and Junk/Blight
 - To remove unwanted or uncared for debris, vehicles, and other assorted items from the community to ensure that the homes are visibly appealing, free from items that harbor rodents and insect infestation, and otherwise present safety or access concerns.
- Began Exterior Home Inspections Process
 - To ensure that homes, whether owner or renter occupied, meet our residential housing codes which ensure that the home is safe, and free from deterioration
- Encourage and Enforce Contractor Registration Process
 - To protect residents from contractors who are not properly insured, bonded, or otherwise qualified

Notable Outcomes:

- Established and Certified the East Palestine Building Department
- Secured two homes for renovation through the Welcome Home Ohio program
- Coordinated and Supported 448 East Taggart remediation project to remove pollution and remediate an old filling station

Plans for 2026:

- Continue the focus on compliance and enforcement with the Residential Housing Code, to ensure that the housing stock in East Palestine is in good condition, and that homes meet standard health and safety requirements
- Work more closely with organizations like the Ohio EPA, and Columbiana County Landbank to address vacant and dilapidated buildings in the community and perform strategic demolitions
- Identify land suitable for new home construction and work to increase housing stock

Police Department

Key Activities:

- Call Volume
 - Police Dept Calls 5,428
 - Police Dept Reports 1,507
 - Dispatch Calls Answered 23,402
 - Public Records Requests 145
 - Zoning Complaints 40
 - Pre-employment Background Checks 93
 - Welfare Checks 57
- Staffing
 - Cpl. Jake Koehler continues to lead the department's training program for new recruits as a certified Field Training Officer and is the FTO Supervisor. Ptl. Anthony Monteleone recently completed his training to serve as an additional certified Field Training Officer. Employees once again participated in "No Shave November" and raised \$2,583.00 for our sixth attempt at "Shop with a Cop". Lt. Johnson, Sgt. Moore, and Cpl. Koehler organized the purchase and delivery of \$2,387.00 worth of Christmas gifts for families in need during the Holiday season. We would like to thank all those who donated, as a result of their contributions 13 children received gifts this Holiday Season.
 - The Village of East Palestine continues to staff its own Detective, Dan Hauter, who leads all investigative items at the Department, in addition to Leading our Human Trafficking efforts in conjunction with the Human Trafficking Task Force. Attorney General David Yost considers the Mahoning Valley Human Trafficking Task Force as the "Gold Standard" for their operations and this is in no short effort due to Detective Hauters Work.
- Community policing initiatives
 - Downtown foot patrol was reintroduced this year and was well received by the community. We will continue to expand upon our community policing efforts in 2026.
 - Sgt. Moore Continues to instruct D.A.R.E. for 6th grade students
 - Mike Bringisi continues to serve as the EP School Resource Officer inside the East Palestine City School District
 - Officers provided traffic control and security for numerous events including Trick-or-Treat, Turkey Trot, Christmas Parades, Homecoming, Prom, 150 Celebration, etc.
 - Officers participated in the annual Prom Promise and Mock Crash event
 - Officers Participated in the Trunk or Treat Event

- Provided security for High School Commencement, Cross Country, Track Meets, Football Games, Basket Ball Games, Wrestling Tournaments
- K-9
 - Ptl Cierra Coontz has assumed K9 handler responsibilities for the Department and K9 Fran received annual certification through the North American Police Working Dog Association for Narcotics, Tracking, and Article Search as well as Certification through the National Association of Professional Canine Handlers.
 - Lt. Johnson has assumed a leadership role in managing and overseeing the k9 program.
 - We remain certified through the Ohio Collaborative for our Use of Force policy and our Recruitment and Hiring policy. We also remain certified under President Trump's Executive Order on Safe Policing for Safe Communities, Community Engagement, Body Worn Cameras, Telecommunicator Training, and Vehicular Pursuit policies. We have submitted our Bias Free Policing policy for certification and will continue our efforts in the certification of additional policies throughout 2026.
 - East Palestine Police Department hosted a Taser Instructor Certification attended by officers from Beaver Township, Salem, and Perry Township.

Notable Outcomes:

- Appointed Mr. Chris Weingart to the role of Chief of Police following Former Chief Jim Brown's retirement
- Lieutenant Don Johnson named Crisis Intervention Team Officer of the Year, focused on direct support for individuals in crisis, focusing on those struggling with mental illness and substance abuse
- Grant - OCJS Wages Grant was submitted and awarded
- Grant - D.A.R.E Grant was submitted and awarded
- Grant - OCJS DART Grant (Drug Abuse Response Team)
 - t. Johnson serves as the CIT (Crisis Intervention Team) Supervisor and both he and Ptl. Monteleone continue to work with the county Mobile Response Unit per the DART grant to assist those who are dealing with drug dependency and related mental health issues.
- Grant - The department also applied for the OCJS Body Worn Camera grant and is awaiting approval.

Plans for 2026:

- Increase the level of Community Policing, as well as focus on connections with business owners and local community organizations

Fire Department and EMS

Key Activities: Call Volumes

Month	Total Calls	Village	Unity	Mutual Aid	Manhours	Fire Only	EMS only	Fire & EMS
January	105	58	29	17	-	6	84	14
February	111	62	19	30	482.25	4	90	17
March	124	74	18	32	539	18	93	13
April	107	60	15	32	398	10	89	8
May	95	60	16	22	295	6	82	7
June	115	71	20	24	369	11	98	6
July	122	75	29	18	497.5	6	103	13
August	136	97	12	27	473	10	118	8
September	138	95	15	38	501	6	122	10
October	142	90	11	41	461	12	123	7
November	105	65	10	30	432	8	82	12
December	135	90	9	35	481	20	104	11
Totals	1435	897	203	346	4928.75	117	1188	126

Notable Outcomes:

- Celebrated 150 Years of the East Palestine Fire Department

Plans for 2026:

- Updated Training and Certification Program
- Collaborate on Construction of the Youngstown State First Responders Training Center

Streets & Stormwater

Key Activities:

- Paving and Patching Municipal Roads
- Installation and Repair of Stormwater System including catch basins, pipe, culverts, and ditchlines
- Plowing Operations throughout Winter Months
- Implemented Proactive Catch Basin Cleaning Program

Notable Outcomes:

- Completed 75% of the Safer Streets for All Grant Program aimed at roadway and alternative transportation method improvements
- Completed a Large Culvert Repair on Marion Ave
- Replaced dozens of worn or damaged and faded Stop Signs
- Reclaimed over 1,100 linear feet of sidewalk that had been overgrown and hidden
- Paved East Clark Street, Adams Street, Sebring Avenue, North Benton Alley (approximately 11,823 Square Yards of Roadways)
- Cleared and removed overgrowth from 3 large culvert areas and multiple sidewalk areas

Plans in 2026:

- Continue the Leaf Pick Up and Stick Pick Up Program
- Continue Progress on the Road Paving Program, where we are repaving streets strategically, and to ensure catch up on any deferred maintenance
- Plan for a Potential Culvert Replacement on West Martin Street

Water & Sanitary Sewer

Key Activities:

- This department is responsible for the Day to Day operations of the Water Treatment and distribution system in the Village as well as the Sanitary Collection and Treatment system
- Completed all Tests and Sampling on-time and with satisfactory results
- Worked with MS Consultants to complete a Rate Study to ensure long-term sustainability of the Village's Infrastructure
- Finalized a preliminary Feasibility Study, funded by JobsOhio, for a potential Water and Wastewater utility extension to Route 14

Notable Outcomes:

- Water Department highlights:
 - 118.1 million gallons of water treated through East Palestine Water Treatment Plan
 - Replaced 7 out of service fire hydrants. In the last five years 26 fire hydrants have been replaced. At the conclusion of 2026 we will be able to replace fire hydrants proactively based on age and not inoperability
 - 16 total excavations related to water leaks. (mainline leaks or service lines)
 - Exercised 66 mainline water valves and 272 fire hydrants in the Spring and fFall
 - Lead Service Line investigating and "Pot-Holing" took place in cooperation with RCAP to identify existing lead service lines. Replacement of such lines will be a priority in 2026 with initial focus on Alice Street
 - Water Loss (historical issue) has improved to 23%. This can be attributed to the watermain replacement project that was finished in 2024.
- Wastewater Department highlights:
 - 224.9 million gallons of wastewater treated
 - Zero sanitary sewer overflows in 2025. Attributed to the 1.2 million gallon Equalization Basin at the Wastewater Treatment Facility
 - 367 tons of dry sludge processed and sent to landfill
- Graeme O'Leary passed his Water Reclamation 2 Certification. He will be considered an Operator in Training until January 2027.

- Teams Jetted 88 sewer systems around town. Over 2 miles of sewer jetting as part of maintenance or problems in the private lateral or the main sewer line.
- Yearly DMR-QA testing was performed and passed. This is USEPA's quality assurance testing program for any in-house lab testing.

Plans for 2026:

- Continue pot-holing program to identify and replace lead service lines throughout the community
- Finalize Design for the Water Treatment Plant upgrades and maintenance

Cemetery Department

Key Activities:

- Mowing, Weeding, and Cleaning
- Cremations, Burials, and Site Prep for Ceremonies
- Cutting back brush and clearing perimeter for 2026 projects

Notable Outcomes:

- Began the process of GIS Mapping the Glenview Cemetery
- Began work Repointing all Facing Joints on the Glenview Cemetery Mausoleum and installed new front doors
- Replaced flooring and repainted exterior of Glenview Cemetery Chapel
- Cleaned and Repointed the Glenview Cemetery Entryway and installed new Signage

Plans for 2026:

- Complete the Mausoleum Repointing Project
- Complete a Steeple Rebuild Project to replace the existing Steeple
- Replace Fencing along the existing maintenance garage
- Implement alternative maintenance plan to reduce weather-related undermining on stones

Parks & Recreation

Key Activities:

- Park and Walking Trail Maintenance
- Spent considerable time working with contractors onsite for construction of new pool and pool building
- Held Kids Design Group where youth were brought together to help design the new East Palestine Park Playground

Notable Outcomes:

- Park Project Phase 1 - Completed
- Park Project Phase 2 - On Time and Expected to Finish Spring 2026
- Park Project Phase 3 - Design Completed and Construction to begin Spring of 2026
- Regraded the South Part of the Walking Trail headed towards Negley
- Secured ODNR Partnership to Stock Fish in City Lake and the Park Duck Pond

Plans in 2026:

- Install Fishing Signage per ODNR and permit/host community fishing events
- Leverage improved disc golf course to begin marketing our park's course regionally
- Oversee and ensure completion of Phase 2 (Park Pool and Pool Building) and the beginning of Phase 3 (Playground and Site Work)
- Improve Walking Trail Maintenance and Expand Walking trail to connect other residential areas of the community

East Palestine Community Improvement Corporation

Key Activities:

- Preparing Properties for Sale
- Securing and Negotiating Tenant Leases for Train Depot and CIC Plaza
- Fundraising through the Brighten our Future Campaign

Notable Outcomes:

- Completed Design on the Historic Train Depot Site
 - Selective Demolition and Site Work Completed
 - New Construction to Start in Spring 2026
- Completed Design on CIC Plaza (Former PNC Drive-Through)
 - Demolition of Existing Structure Completed
 - New Construction to Start in Spring of 2026
- Took Possession of 3 Industrial Properties (Old JASAR Property)
 - Properties are Listed and For Sale and the CIC is working on attracting commercial clients to purchase these facilities
- Secured an exclusive Option Contract on a potential Business Park Property along Route 14
- Received 2 downtown properties through donation from Shirley Smith
 - 90 North Market - Requires substantial structural repair, which is ongoing
 - 94 North Market - Current open for Rent

Plans in 2026:

- Complete Train Depot Construction Project
- Complete CIC Plaza Construction Project
- Place at least 2 Companies within the former JASAR Property
- Gain Funding Traction on the East Palestine Business Park location
- Complete necessary Renovations on 90 North Market Street

Community & Regional Integration – 2025

East Palestine strengthened partnerships with regional and community organizations to expand capacity and opportunity.

Key Partners and Connections Include:

- East Palestine City School District
- Lake to River
- Youngstown Warren Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Ohio Mid-Eastern Governments Association (OMEGA)
- Columbiana County Port Authority
- Columbiana County Land Bank
- East Palestine Community Improvement Corporation
- East Palestine Community Foundation
- EP ACT Group
- Towncenter Associates
- EP GO
- The Way Station

Collaborative Outcomes:

- Student Workforce Exposure
 - In 2025, the Village began working with a coalition of partners on integrating workforce development into our daily operations. Part of this effort includes working with the East Palestine School District to facilitate hands-on learning for students in the community. Examples of this work include:
 - Environmental Sciences Class Field Trip to the Wastewater Treatment Facility
 - Construction Site Visits by the Carpentry Apprenticeship Class at Leslie Run Development
 - Implementation of a Student Representative of Council at City Council Meetings
- Learn to Teach, Teach to Learn Events - Councilwoman Barb Herriot has been highly involved in the Learn to Teach, Teach to Learn events which involves teaching students useful and engaging skills so that they can then teach an identical class to adult attendees

- Good Morning East Palestine - an event held by the Youngstown Warren Chamber of Commerce which spotlights East Palestine, and gives our Businesses an opportunity to network with others from the area
- Towncenter Associates - Members of Council and the Village Staff attended events put on by the Columbiana County Port Authority focused on Downtown Revitalization and Vibrancy

Plans for 2026:

- Continue to host and support more community events, as opportunities to keep people in East Palestine, and bring the community together.
- Increase the collaboration with the East Palestine City School District to provide workforce and academic opportunities to students in the community.
- Work with Developers to support the expansion of housing stock including workforce housing focus as well as larger single-family homes
- Work more closely with the East Palestine Chamber of Commerce and local partners, to provide networking and learning opportunities for the companies in East Palestine and strengthen the tax-base

Looking Ahead: 2026 Work Plan

The following section serves as a **forward-looking and working plan** for Village staff, elected officials, community partners, and regional collaborators. The intention here is clear, we want the entire community to know what we are working on and why we are working. The goals and objectives here represent clear, tangible steps towards progress that will move East Palestine into a position of Financial Stability, Community Cohesion, and on a better path for the future.

Ongoing Large Project Plans - 2026

- Government Services Center - the combined police, fire, and administrative building is finalizing design, with final design expected to be completed in May of 2026. These documents will later be put out for public bidding and construction. Construction work to begin towards the end of 2026.
- Youngstown State and Village of East Palestine First Responders Training Center - Discussions on scope and design have begun for the planned Youngstown State and Village of East Palestine First Responders Training Location. At this time, a final location is still being planned and further updates will be released when available.
- Planning for potential Water Treatment Plant upgrades has begun which will include updating existing pumps, plumbing, and additional electrical improvements at the plant.
- Planning for potential Wastewater Collection system upgrades and new lines around either West Basin or East Basin
- Leverage Safer Streets for All project list and implement roadway and alternative methods improvements
- Transition Village IT System to Office 365 Framework
- Large Focus on improving community health outcomes, across the board, with implementation of both Village-led and Partner-led initiatives

Closing Statement

East Palestine is at an inflection point. While the challenges are real, so too is the opportunity. With continued collaboration, disciplined planning, and strategic investment, the Village is positioning itself to emerge stronger, more resilient, and more competitive in the regional economy.