

# Marysville on the move

City undergoes renaissance  
that boosts economic development,  
quality of life & tourism



Dan Damman  
Marysville Mayor



Randy Fernandez  
Marysville City Manager



Tom Konik  
Marysville Public Safety



Ed Quain  
Marysville Realtor



One of the best indicators of a successful community is the fast pace at which residential homes are moving on and off the market.

With that indicator in mind, Marysville realtor Ed Quain can tell you that Marysville is definitely on the move and is finding itself in the middle of a modern-day renaissance, complete with strong surges in economic development, an exceptionally low crime rate, a school district that consistently rates among the top in the county and in the state, an increase in recreational development and a progressive city council and city administration that is determined to bring the city into the forefront of the 21st century while many of its counterparts across the county and the state are struggling to provide citizens with even basic municipal services.

As a result, Marysville is developing a reputation at the local, state and national levels as a municipality that not only provides essential services, but has had the vision to look toward the future and not just imagine what kind of community it would like to be, but to assertively take the steps necessary to make those “dreams” become a reality for the community.

“Marysville sells itself,” realtor Quain said. “Our marketing is our schools, our city services and our public safety. The community is growing, but we still have that small town atmosphere and feel. We’re surrounded by good people. People want to raise a family here.”

Barry Kreiner is one of those people who moved to Marysville specifically to raise a family. Kreiner, the director of public works for the city of Marysville and a member of the Board of Education for the Marysville Public Schools, was raised in the city, then left as a young adult. When it came time to raise a family, Kreiner and his wife knew they wanted to return to Marysville to provide their children with the same safe and friendly community they experienced growing up.

“As soon as we had kids, we were back here,” he said. “We wanted them in the schools here. We knew their education would be exceptional.”

The Kreiners are just one example of the many families that are locating in Marysville due to the high quality of life offered there.

And it isn’t just families that are interested in Marysville. The renaissance in the community has had numerous big payoffs:

**Economic development.** “Marysville has always had a strong industrial base,” said Tom Konik, director of public safety. “That is attractive to business developers and employees because they can then live and work in the same community.”

The SMR plant and the ZF plants, both located in Marysville, are good examples of this kind of industrial economic development. Both are automotive suppliers and both have expanded their Marysville locations in recent years. By the end of 2016, SMR will employ close to 1,000 people. Additionally, Intertape Polymer Group, a longtime Marysville manufacturer, has also recently expanded its operations in the community.

When DTE announced several years ago that it was decommissioning its large, waterfront power plant in Marysville, the city council and administration, in partnership with other municipalities and private developers, jumped on the opportunity to work with DTE to help formulate a multi-use plan for the waterfront that will help Marysville become a destination. Current plans for the property include development of a marina, a hotel, restaurant and a shopping district, among other potential uses.

“One of the first things I did when I became mayor was to start the Marysville Business Council and the goal was to strengthen the relationship with all businesses in the community, from the larger manufacturers to the smaller retail stores,” said Marysville Mayor Dan Damman. “The business council, chaired by Council Member Rita Hendricks, has really initiated a breakthrough in communication between the business sector and the city. We have broken down the barriers to communication and we are now working with neighboring cities and the state to assist with our economic growth.”

In the past two years Marysville has already experienced a surge in development with the addition of several new retail outlets including the soon-to-open Tractor Supply Co. A new microbrewery, Harsens Island Brewery, is slated to open in August.



Why are so many new business ventures interested in locating in Marysville? “We view everything as a true partnership,” said City Manager Randy Fernandez. “Instead of throwing up road blocks, we cut through the red tape and are willing to work with these companies and help them with their business development and expansion.”

**Grant dollars.** So how can a relatively small community like Marysville accomplish so much with what would appear to be so little? “We aggressively pursue all grant opportunities,” said Fernandez. The result? Upward of \$10 million dollars in grant monies have paid for a wide variety of municipal projects that otherwise the city might not have been able to afford.

“We’ve received about \$6 million for our waterfront development over the past few years,” said Fernandez. Projects paid for by grant dollars include improvements at the Marysville Golf Course, a Cuttle Creek project, restoration of St. Clair River frontage to replace a failing seawall, and numerous improvements at Chrysler Beach and the Marysville City Park. These projects are improving recreational opportunities for fishing, swimming, boating and picnicking in the city.

“We haven’t had to spend a lot of cash to make use of these grants,” said Kreiner of the city’s Department of Public Works. “We have an extremely talented DPW staff and when we are able to use their labor for in-kind services, that has helped us secure grants. We have been able to convince the state that our DPW staff is capable of carrying out the labor if we can obtain the funds to pay for the bulk of the project.”

Most recently, the city has obtained grants to extend its bicycling paths and make additional improvements to Chrysler Beach. To further supplement community needs, a Marysville Community Endowment Fund has been established at the Community Foundation of St. Clair County.

Much of the city’s success can be attributed to its team approach, starting with the vision of the city council and citizens who elect them, to the can-do attitude of city employees who believe in public and private partnerships.

“I am extraordinarily pleased with the direction the city has taken,” said Damman. “This really is a partnership. The city council sets the direction and then Randy and the employees at the city are really carrying that out. The progressive thinking of our city council and the can-do attitude of our city employees and Randy Fernandez is making it happen.”

Fernandez noted it is a team effort, not just within city hall, but community-wide.

“We’ve got good government, and we’ve got good schools and we’re in a win-win situation,” said Fernandez. “We are on the move.”