

CITY OF DOTHAN, ALABAMA

# POPULAR ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT



FISCAL YEAR ENDED

SEPTEMBER 30, 2024

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**TO THE CITIZENS OF DOTHAN!**

Understanding today’s governmental financial statements can prove to be difficult. In an effort to provide our citizens with an easy to read financial report of the City of Dothan’s finances, we are pleased to present the Popular Annual Financial Report (PAFR) for fiscal year ended September 30, 2024. This report represents Dothan’s ongoing commitment to increase our level of operational productivity and accountability. As we strive to keep citizens informed about the City’s financial position, we understand the importance of being accountable for the receipt and expenditure of public funds.

Through easier, more user-friendly financial reporting, the PAFR is another example of our commitment to improve communication with our citizens and increase public confidence in the governing body for the City of Dothan. I want to congratulate Romona Marcus, Director of Finance, and our financial reporting staff for their work in providing citizens with an understandable general overview of the City’s finances.

On behalf of the Dothan City Commission and the City Manager, I thank you for taking a moment to read our financial report. We are proud to serve the citizens of Dothan and we thank you for your support as we seek to further enhance the level of financial accountability to our taxpayers. Questions, comments and feedback on this report are welcomed and encouraged, so please feel free to contact me at (334) 615-3111.

Sincerely,  
  
 Mark Saliba  
 Mayor

**District Commissioners**

1. Kevin Dorsey	4. John Ferguson
2. Aristotle Kirkland	5. Gantt Pierce
3. Bradley Bedwell	6. David Crutchfield

**Randall S. Morris, City Manager**





## INTRODUCTION

In the 1830's, a fort existed on the Barber Plantation, ten or twelve miles east of Poplar Head, named for the poplar trees that encircled the glade where the cool water, or "head" (as springs were often called) welled from the earth. This was where the settlers from the surrounding areas could go when they felt threatened by the Indians. By 1840, the Indian wars in Alabama were over and the fort soon disappeared. By 1885, the hamlet had grown into a village. The settlers realized that if the community's growth was to be sustained, they needed a governing body and local law enforcement. On November 10, 1885, the people of Poplar Head voted to incorporate and named the town Dothan.

The City of Dothan is located in the southeastern part of the state of Alabama approximately twenty miles west of the Georgia state line and eighteen miles north of the state of Florida.

Dothan operates under a Mayor/Commission/City Manager form of government. The Mayor is elected at-large, and the six (6) Commissioners are elected from six (6) single-member districts, for concurrent terms of four (4) years. This Board of Commissioners serves part-time and is responsible for adopting all legislative ordinances and establishing policies to guide the various City departments in providing services to citizens, including the appropriation of all monies.

The Mayor, who is a member of the Board of Commissioners, is the City's chief executive officer. The City Manager is the administrative head of the City government and is responsible for directing and managing the daily activities of the City and implementing the policies of the Board of Commissioners. The City's departments include: General Administrative (Mayor, Commissioners, City Manager, City Clerk, Public Relations, & Legal), Information Technology, Judicial, Finance (Accounting, Purchasing, Business License, Utility Collections, & Utility Services), Personnel (Human Resources, Employee Health Clinic & EEO), Police, Fire, Public Works (Engineering, Street & Environmental Services), Planning & Development (Permitting, Inspections & Zoning, & Neighborhood Enhancement), Leisure Services, Performing Arts, General Services (Liability & Workers' Compensation Insurance, Facility & Fleet) and Dothan Utilities (Electric, Water & Wastewater/Sewer). There are 1,452 authorized positions (1,174 full time, 31 part time and 247 seasonal) of which 1,212 are currently filled (1,087 full time, 29 part time and 96 seasonal) and those employees staff the departments, producing high-quality and cost-effective public services.



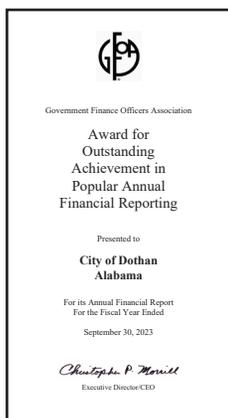
## ABOUT THIS FINANCIAL REPORT

As part of our continuous effort to keep you informed of how your tax dollars are being spent, we are pleased to present the 2024 Popular Annual Financial Report (PAFR). The PAFR is a summary of the financial activities of the City's governmental funds and is drawn from information found in the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR). The ACFR is prepared in conformance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and includes financial statements audited by McDaniel & Associates, PC.

Unlike the ACFR, the PAFR is unaudited and presented on a non-GAAP basis. The GAAP basis presentation in the ACFR includes the presentation of individual funds, as well as, full disclosure of all material events, financial and non-financial, in the notes to the financial statements. Dothan's ACFR can be viewed by the public at City Hall, at the Public Library and online at <https://www.dothan.org/DocumentCenter/View/11214/ACFR-2024>.

## AWARDS

The City received the following awards (valid for one year only) from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA):



- Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the ACFR for the year ended September 30, 2023 (forty-one consecutive years, 1983 - 2023).
- Award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting for the PAFR for the year ended September 30, 2023 (twenty consecutive years, 2004 - 2023).

## FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

- The City's combined net position (difference between assets and deferred outflows and liabilities and deferred inflows in governmental and business-type activities) at September 30, 2024, totaled \$298,069,787 as follows: \$337,538,023 in net investment in capital assets (difference between the capital assets and the outstanding

## CITY FACTS:

Square Miles

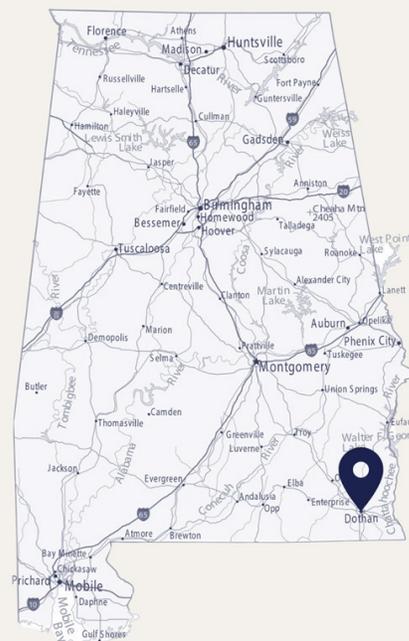
90.7

Population

71,258

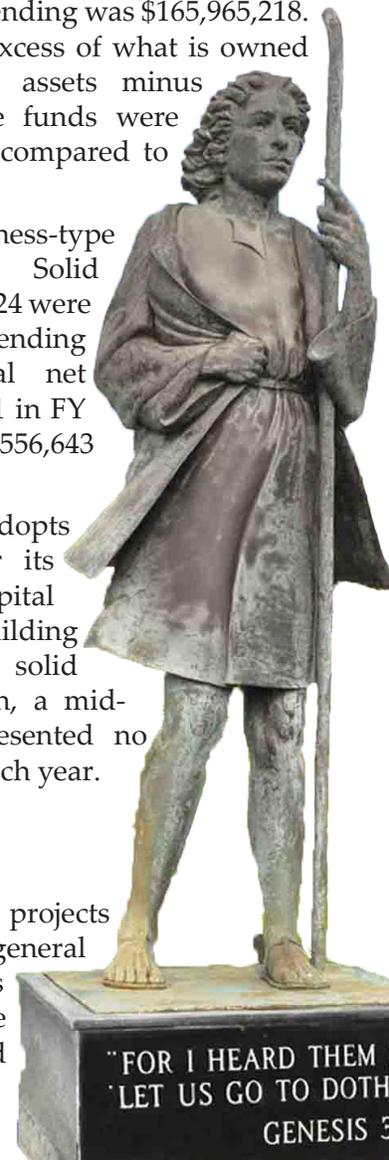
Unemployment Rate

3.4%



debt incurred to finance those capital assets), \$853,194 restricted (resources that are constrained by legislation to a particular purpose) and a deficit unrestricted net position of \$40,321,430.

- Total revenues for all governmental funds were \$179,844,481 and total spending was \$165,965,218. The fund balances (the excess of what is owned over what is owed ~ assets minus liabilities/debt) for these funds were \$118,941,356 in FY 2024 compared to \$82,521,852 in FY 2023.
- Total revenues for business-type activities (Utility and Solid Waste) at the end of FY 2024 were \$146,561,173 and total spending was \$121,518,280. Total net position was \$188,190,021 in FY 2024 as compared to \$182,556,643 in FY 2023.
- The City of Dothan adopts a biennium budget for its general, debt service, capital projects, school, public building authority, utility and solid waste funds. In addition, a mid-biennium budget is presented no later than April 15th of each year.



## GENERAL FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Most City services and projects are accounted for in a general category referred to as Governmental Funds. These concise descriptions should



provide you with a better understanding of the accounts.

### GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS

- **General Fund** - Accounts for revenues and expenditures associated with the general operations of the City that are not required to be accounted for in separate funds.
- **Special Revenue Funds** - Account for proceeds of specific revenue sources that are legally restricted for specific purposes (e.g. street paving and schools).
- **Debt Service Funds** - Account for the payment of principal, interest and related costs on general long-term debt.
- **Capital Projects Funds** - Account for the financial resources used for the construction and/or acquisition of major capital facilities.
- **Public Building Authority Fund** - Accounts for the revenues and expenditures for the purpose of providing buildings and facilities for lease to and used by a municipality.

### PROPRIETARY FUNDS

Proprietary Funds account for activities the City operates similar to private businesses. The City of Dothan has two proprietary funds: the Utility Fund (Electric, Water, Wastewater/Sewer and Combined Activities) and the Solid Waste Fund (Solid Waste Collections and Landfill Operations).

The PAFR focuses on the City’s two largest funds (General and Utility), which are of the most interest to citizens.

### GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS’ FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

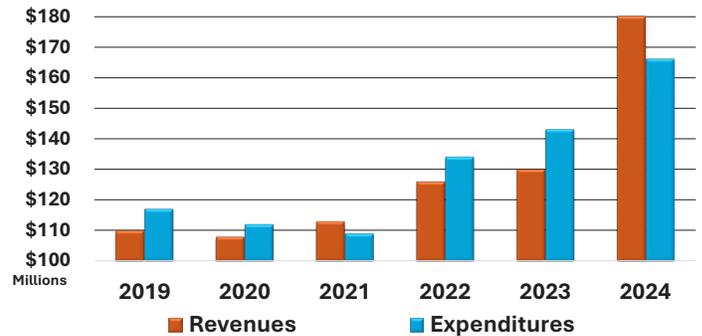
At September 30, 2024, the City’s governmental funds reflected a combined fund balance of \$118,941,356, a \$36,419,504 increase from the previous year at \$82,521,852. These financial activities comprise the major changes in governmental fund balances:

FY 2024 Governmental Fund Revenues



### GOVERNMENTAL REVENUES

Total revenues for the governmental funds (\$179,844,481) showed an increase of \$49,404,997 or 37.88% over the prior year (\$130,439,484).



Key elements in the change of net position are as follows:

- In FY 2024, sales tax collections totaled \$98,753,944 which was \$2,743,964 (2.86%) over FY 2023 amount of \$96,009,980. Dothan’s metro area services an estimated 425,000 people within a 50-mile radius and is a hub for dining, shopping, recreation, industry and medical services for surrounding towns and rural areas. Various other taxes had a net increase of \$597,738.
- Grant revenues increased \$36,687,386 (537.51%) due largely to the following: \$20,000,000 from the Alabama Department of Commerce; \$10,000,000 from Wiregrass Foundation; \$375,000 from Innovate Alabama; \$758,754 from Houston County; and \$5,516,122 from the Alabama Department of Transportation.

City of Dothan Sales & Use Tax



### GOVERNMENTAL EXPENDITURES

Total governmental expenditures increased by \$22,505,137 (15.69%) in FY 2024 (\$165,965,218) from FY 2023 (\$143,460,081). The major contributing factors that resulted in this net increase include:

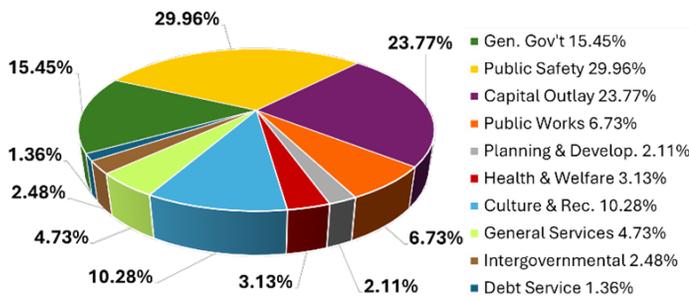
- City departments experienced a \$8,912,642 net increase as follows: (General Admin) economic development, downtown improvements and computer software upgrades; (Public Safety) uniforms and equipment; (Public Works) resurfacing and storm drainage; (Planning & Development) neighborhood clean-up and Community Development Block Grant distribution; (Culture and Recreation)



maintenance supplies, chemicals and items for resale; and city-wide increase in fuel, insurance premiums and salaries and benefits from cost of living and performance adjustments.

- Health and Welfare increased \$301,822 which was a result of change of appropriations to various agencies.
- Intergovernmental increased by \$132,635 due to an increase in salaries for school protection officers for Dothan City Schools and printing of tobacco stamps.
- Capital outlay increased by \$14,737,843 due to the increase in construction for Wiregrass Innovation Center, Opera House Renovations, Porter Park & Events Plaza; public safety technology and equipment, and construction of two fire stations, which was offset by a decrease in parks and recreation improvements.
- Principal retirement, interest and fiscal charges on long-term debt decreased \$1,579,805.

**FY 2024 Governmental Fund Expenditures**



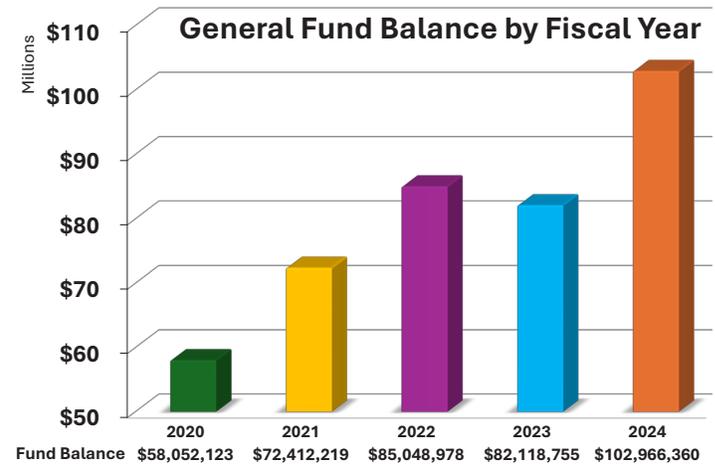
utility borrowing) the City may issue to 20% of the total assessed value of all taxable property within the City's corporate limits. The City's current debt limit is \$236,292,413. The amount of debt outstanding applicable to this limit is \$14,706,167.

## GENERAL FUND

### FUND BALANCE

A key measure of the City's overall financial health is fund balance. Fund balance is the difference between assets and liabilities. The General Fund reported a fund balance at September 30, 2024, of \$102,966,360, an increase of \$20,847,605 (25.39%) in comparison with the prior year which totaled \$82,118,755. Governmental Funds' combined ending fund balances were \$118,941,356 compared to 2023 at \$82,521,852 producing a \$36,419,504 (44.13%) increase. Of this fund balance, \$17,625,905 constitutes the unassigned fund balance, which is available for spending at the government's discretion (referred to as unassigned fund balance). Funds equal to 11.7% of budgeted expenditures in the General Fund and Utility Fund have been reserved to be utilized in the event of a natural disaster or unexpected economic decline. The total amount reserved for General Fund, Utility Fund, and Solid Waste Fund as of September 30, 2024, was \$28,792,235.

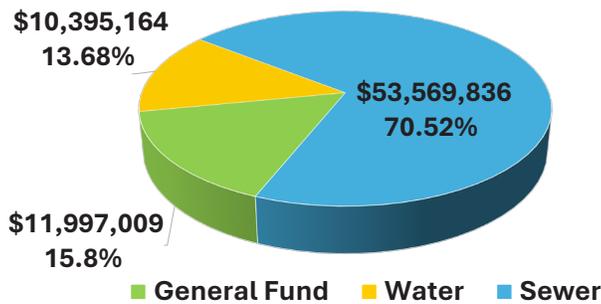
The chart below provides fund balance comparisons:



## LONG-TERM DEBT

As of the fiscal year end, the City had \$75,962,009 in general obligation long-term debt outstanding compared to \$83,901,960 in 2023 (\$7,939,951 or 9.46%).

**Outstanding Debt**



Principal payment on debt will (a) reduce current assets and reduce long-term debt and (b) reduce unrestricted net assets and increase net investment in capital assets.

## GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES

General Fund expenditures totaling \$153,425,975 increased \$17,888,450 (13.2%) from 2023 at \$135,537,525. The City made a conscious effort to monitor the cost of goods and supplies due to inflation and the budget was closely monitored. The City was able to begin the downtown improvements, purchase essential vehicles and address the most pressing building or facility maintenance/repair needs. Filling of vacated staff positions was still approved on a case-by-case basis.

State statutes limit the amount of general obligation (exclusive of education and



Increases or decreases for major functions are as follows:

Major Functions	Amount	Percent of Total	Increase (Decrease) over 2023
General Gov	\$ 25,643,798	16.71%	\$2,562,896
Public Safety	49,721,061	32.41%	2,783,606
Public Works	11,168,175	7.28%	(175,220)
Planning & Dev	3,496,710	2.28%	(244,700)
Health & Welfare	5,195,913	3.38%	301,822
Culture & Rec	17,061,121	11.12%	1,602,185
General Services	7,850,258	5.12%	2,490,925
Capital Outlay	33,288,939	21.70%	8,566,936
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$153,425,975</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>\$17,888,450</b>

### UTILITY FUND

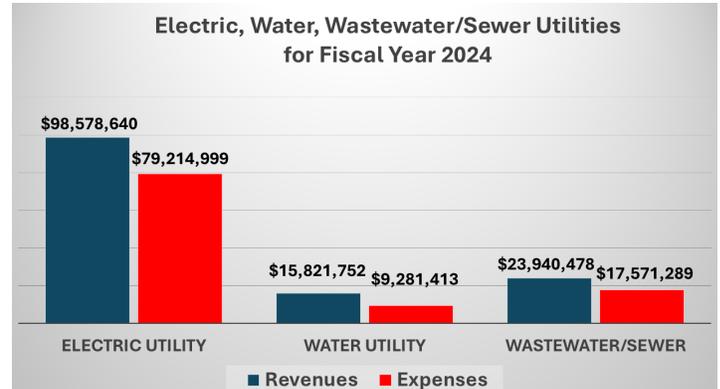
The City’s Utility Fund has a customer base of approximately 40,052 electric, water, and wastewater/ sewer customers. The largest utility revenue source comes from electric power sales. The gross income on electric sales for FY 2024 totaled \$29,917,104 compared to last year’s amount of \$30,781,458. FY 2024’s net income from electric sales totaled \$19,363,641 (excludes capital outlay). Electric rates have remained constant since the last rate increase effective January 2016.

Each October the water rates increase 2.85%. This additional revenue over the years has allowed the City to pay the debt on wells, as well as fund upgrades on transmission lines and maintenance on the existing wells. FY 2024’s net income from water sales totaled \$6,540,339 (excludes capital outlay).

In September 2009, a sewer rate increase was implemented, and rates were adjusted \$.75 per thousand gallons of metered water for five years and 2.85% thereafter. However, the additional funds from this rate increase were not sufficient to offset the cost of the debt service on required sewer improvements; therefore, in December 2015, the Commission approved a revised annual rate increase of \$.25, \$.50, \$.30, \$.35 and \$.30 for years 2016-2019 and then increase by 2.85% each October thereafter. FY 2024’s net income from sewer sales totaled \$6,369,189 (excludes capital outlay).



Electric, water, and wastewater/sewer operations, excluding capital outlay, for FY 2024 are reflected as follows:



### BOND RATING

The City of Dothan maintains the following ratings for general obligation debt which reflects excellent financial security:

- S&P Global Ratings ~ “AA”
- Moody’s Investors Service ~ “Aa2”

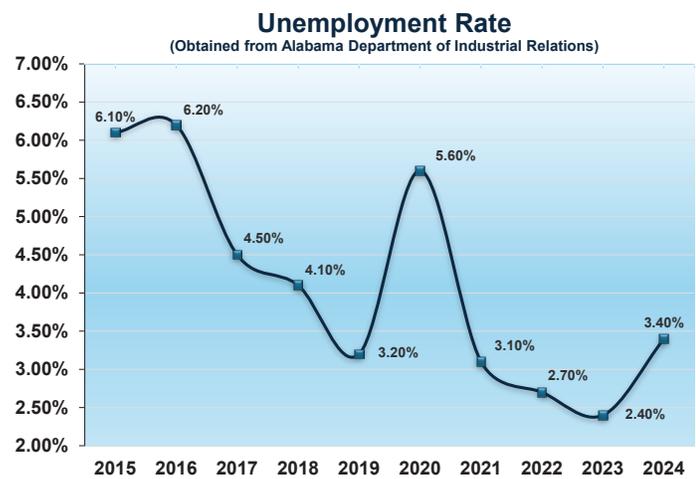
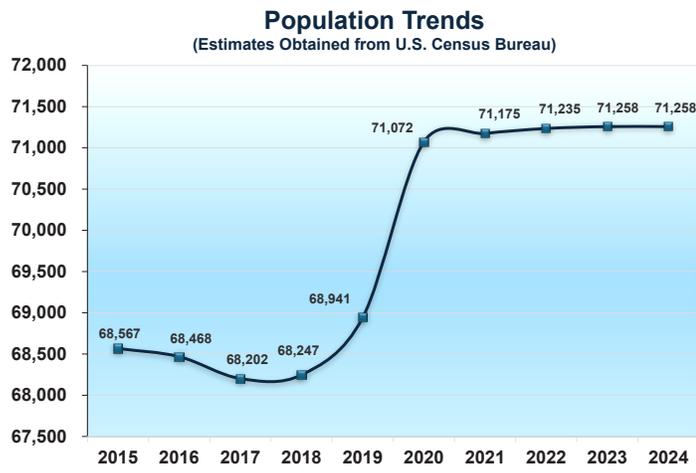
In November 2022, Moody’s Investors Service affirmed the Issuer Rating of Aa2 for the City of Dothan and in June 2014, Standard and Poor’s Global Ratings Services upgraded the City of Dothan’s bond rating from AA- to AA. The increase was based on the rating agency’s view of the “city’s historically very strong budgetary flexibility and liquidity.” The bond rating can affect the cost of borrowing funds in the future.

RATING CATEGORIES		
SECURE RANGE:		
Moody’s	S&P	
Aaa	AAA	PRIME: Superior financial security. Highest safety.
Aa1	AA+	HIGH GRADE: Excellent financial security. Highly safe.
Aa2	AA	
Aa3	AA-	
A1	A+	UPPER MEDIUM GRADE: Good financial security. More susceptible to economic changes than highly-rated companies.
A2	A	
A3	A-	
Baa1	BBB+	LOWER MEDIUM GRADE: Adequate financial security. More vulnerable to economic changes than highly-rated companies.
Baa2	BBB	
Baa3	BBB-	
VULNERABLE RANGE:		
Ba1	BB+	NON INVESTMENT GRADE: Speculative. Capacity to meet long-term policies is vulnerable.
Ba2	BB	
Ba3	BB-	
B1	B+	HIGHLY SPECULATIVE: Vulnerable financial security.
B2	B	
B3	B-	

Any rating below a “B” rating is extremely vulnerable and possibly in default status with little prospect for recovery and questionable ability to meet obligations.



## TREND DATA



## ECONOMIC GROWTH

The City relies on taxes (sales, property, gasoline, etc.), fees (license and permits), and fines (public safety) for their governmental activities. In the business-type and certain governmental activities (electric, water, sewer, garbage, recreational programs, etc.), the user pays a related fee/charge associated with the service. Revenue sources have a direct bearing on the City's ability to improve and expand city services, which encourages development (office, retail, residential and industrial) to choose to be located in the jurisdiction. The City's sales tax continues to show significant growth over the previous fiscal years and the local economy continues to improve with unemployment for Dothan currently at 3.4%.

The City places significant emphasis on both economic development/recruitment and job growth. During fiscal year 2024, the Dothan area saw continued increases in investment and expansion of its manufacturing, restaurant, retail, healthcare, commercial services, and finance/insurance sectors. According to the Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce annual report, there were 75 new or expanding investments in the area.

Principal employers are as follows:

PRINCIPAL EMPLOYERS	
1. Southeast Health	6. Southern Nuclear (Farley)
2. Dothan (City) & Houston County Schools	7. AAA Cooper Transportation
3. City of Dothan	8. Michelin North America, Inc
4. Flowers Hospital	9. McLane
5. Wayne Farms	10. DSI Security Service

The Dothan City Commission and its partners are continuing their efforts to revitalize downtown. The "City Center" is a revitalization plan that reimagines the heart of downtown Dothan into a vibrant, mixed-use destination where residents and visitors can enjoy the arts and entertainment. After years of planning and conceptualization, the City of Dothan is well underway on Phase I of the City Center Project. Phase I includes an addition and enhancements to the historic Dothan Opera House as well as the new Porter Park and Events Plaza with construction expected to be completed by the end of Summer 2025. Construction of the Wiregrass Innovation Center is also underway with an estimated completion of February 2026. This phase of the project will begin the process of revitalizing the city's core with hopes of further revitalization efforts from both public and private developers.

The City continues to monitor available revenue and has addressed the most pressing needs. In addition to the City Center projects, other major design/construction projects in 2024 included the following: Pickleball Court Complex Design; Forever Wild Dog Park Design; Traffic Signal Installations and Upgrades; Fire Station(s) Construction; City Hall & Annex Design; Sanitary Sewer Improvements; and Water Main Replacements.

In recent years, the City's staff has done an exceptional job of controlling costs. Additionally, the City Commission continues to work diligently to set priorities for major programs undertaken by the City while revisiting the Strategic Plan each year. This Strategic Plan provides a sense of unity, direction, and vision for the City's future.

Direct any questions about this financial report to:  
**Romona Marcus, Finance Director - Treasurer**  
 rlmarcus@dothan.org  
 P.O. Box 2128 • Dothan, AL 36302  
 Phone: (334) 615-3140

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 Instagram - @cityofdothan  
 Youtube - @cityofdothanalabama

