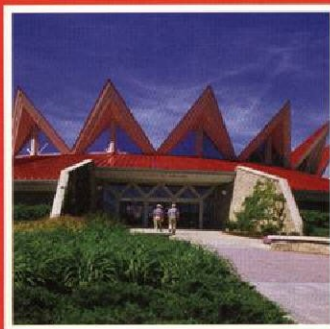
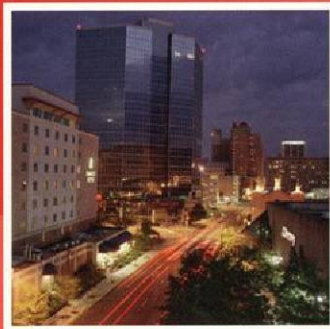


# WEST VIRGINIA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

Building Stronger Cities





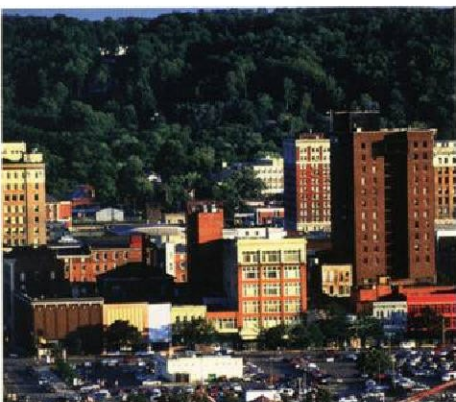
# WHAT IS A MUNICIPALITY?

**S**o, what exactly makes a city a city? The corporate status of a city dates back to early Roman law. The Athenian Oath was recited by the citizens of Athens, Greece over 2,000 years ago and in part was written: "Thus in all these ways we will transmit this City, not only not less, but greater and more beautiful than it was transmitted to us."



## FAST FACT

*West Virginia city residents' cost of living percentages are well below the national average. For example, in Morgantown, property taxes are 43% below the micropolitan median and 72% below the national average while a house in the city is 20% below the national average.*



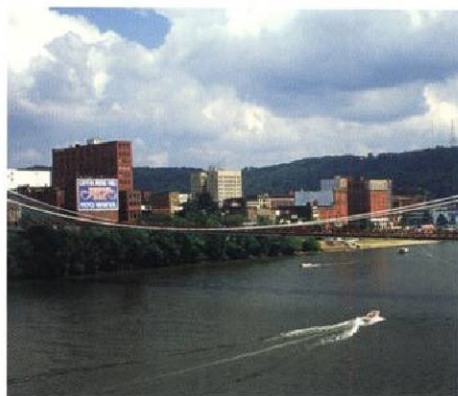
Rick Lee

**T**he State of West Virginia defines a municipality as any Class I, Class II and Class III city or any Class IV town or village. Those four classes are based on the population levels listed below:

- **Class I:**  
Population in excess of 50,000
- **Class II:**  
Population in excess of 10,000, but not in excess of 50,000
- **Class III:**  
Population in excess of 2,000, but not in excess of 10,000
- **Class IV:**  
Population of 2,000 or less

**T**he transition from one class to another occurs automatically when the requisite population qualification has been met, effective as of the date of the census.

**M**unicipalities are either statutory or charter in nature. Historically, most cities operate under a charter. A charter is written by a commission



WV Division of Tourism

whose main function is to formulate a governmental structure. In West Virginia, that structure is made up of the following plans:

- **Mayor-Council Plan**
- **Strong Mayor Plan**
- **Commission Government Plan**
- **Manager Plan**
- **Manager/Mayor Plan**

**T**he purpose of these plans is to establish basic requirements for alternative plans of structure and to organize the city's government. Of West Virginia's 234 incorporated cities, towns and villages, 108 have charters. The remainder are governed by statute, primarily found in Chapter 8 of the State Code.



# ECONOMIC IMPACT

It's no wonder that when the majority of people go looking for a job, they head to the city. Why is that? Because the vast majority of major employers in most states — West Virginia included — are within its city limits. Our cities handle a variety of functions critical to the strength of our state's economy, providing:

- Jobs of every level, including the best paying ones
- A hub for key industries providing services to both residents and non-residents
- Major cultural, medical, educational and governmental institutions
- Infrastructure and services necessary for Economic Development



## FAST FACT

***West Virginia's cities have captured most of the state's new jobs in recent years. Of the 88,600 non-farm payroll jobs added to the West Virginia economy between 1987 and 1995, over 3/4 have appeared in urban sections where the rate of job growth was 16.3%.***

Housing the majority of an entire county's assessed property valuations are another important economic function credited to cities. In urban areas, as much as 3/4 of property taxes collected in an entire county are derived from those properties that lie within the city limits.

West Virginia's natural economic hubs are established in and around its cities. These hubs create an atmosphere that attracts workers, their families and even new industry.

A boost to the Clarksburg economy came from the construction of the FBI Criminal Justice and Information Services/Fingerprint Identification Division Complex. Employment at the facility is near 3,000, not including support industries that continue to emerge around the area.

# INFRASTRUCTURE

A city's well being relies heavily on maintaining things that are often taken for granted by its citizens. Imagine having to treat your family's or business's drinking water to remove fecal coliform every day. Would you dare drive on an icy road that hadn't been salted or plowed? And what would you do with all of your trash if no one picked it up for you? These services are but a few things that cities provide as a part of effective municipal government.

From waste management and street repair to police, fire and emergency services, a city's infrastructure provides all those things necessary for a comfortable, safe and aesthetically pleasing lifestyle. But out of all the infrastructure-related services offered



## FAST FACT

***Residents inside a city's limits served by municipal police and fire departments enjoy a significant reduction in their fire/liability insurance over their more rural counterparts.***

by our cities, none plays a more important role than safe drinking water. In West Virginia:

- Over one million citizens receive water and/or sanitary sewer service from cities
- 68% of West Virginians receive sanitary sewer services from cities
- Almost half of those receiving water get it from a municipal water operation

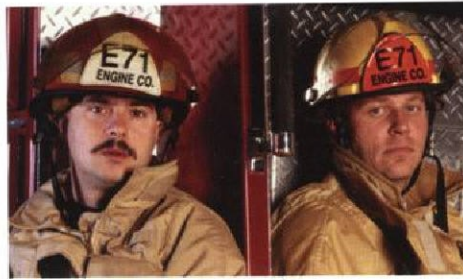
To provide for greater economic development for the state, West Virginia cities also provide services to non-municipal residents. More than 100,000 of those receiving municipal water or sewer services reside outside city limits.



# SAFETY & PUBLIC SECURITY

There is no municipal service more important or more basic than that of public security. Municipal citizens across the country enjoy the peace of mind in knowing they have 24-hours of police, firefighter and other emergency services. Public security also involves the services of humane officers, health departments and building inspectors. Keeping its citizens safe and sound is a major role that West Virginia's cities take very seriously.

In the City of Charleston, for example, workers and visitors swell the population to over 250,000 — four times its residential population — on any given day of the week. Municipal police and firefighters are always on the job offering protection to both residents and the traveling public.



## FAST FACT

*Because of the close proximity of major hospitals, city emergency personnel can offer a quicker response time to and from municipal medical centers.*

Municipal departments offer mutual aid to areas surrounding the cities. If a crime is committed within city limits, victims are served regardless of their residence. Municipal public safety officers guard lives and property all over West Virginia, making our cities, towns and villages safer for everyone. Consider the following:

- There are 1,621 trained municipal police officers in West Virginia
- In comparison, there are 633 state troopers and 958 deputies
- Firefighters respond to fires, as well as medical calls, bomb scares, highway accidents and more
- Police officers and firefighters help everyone in their jurisdiction
- West Virginia cities' rate of violent crimes is less than 25% of the national average

# QUALITY OF LIFE

Sure, it's a broad topic, but "quality of life" needs to be dynamic in order to represent the many attributes that define a city. From health care and housing possibilities to entertainment and educational opportunities, West Virginia's cities offer all those things necessary to live a rewarding life.

Cities in West Virginia provide housing arrangements that are unavailable in the more rural areas of the state. Our municipalities offer zoning protections that allow businesses and residences to co-exist and prosper while protecting property values for them both.

When it comes to higher education, West Virginia is home to 27 public colleges and universities. All but three of those institutions are located



## FAST FACT

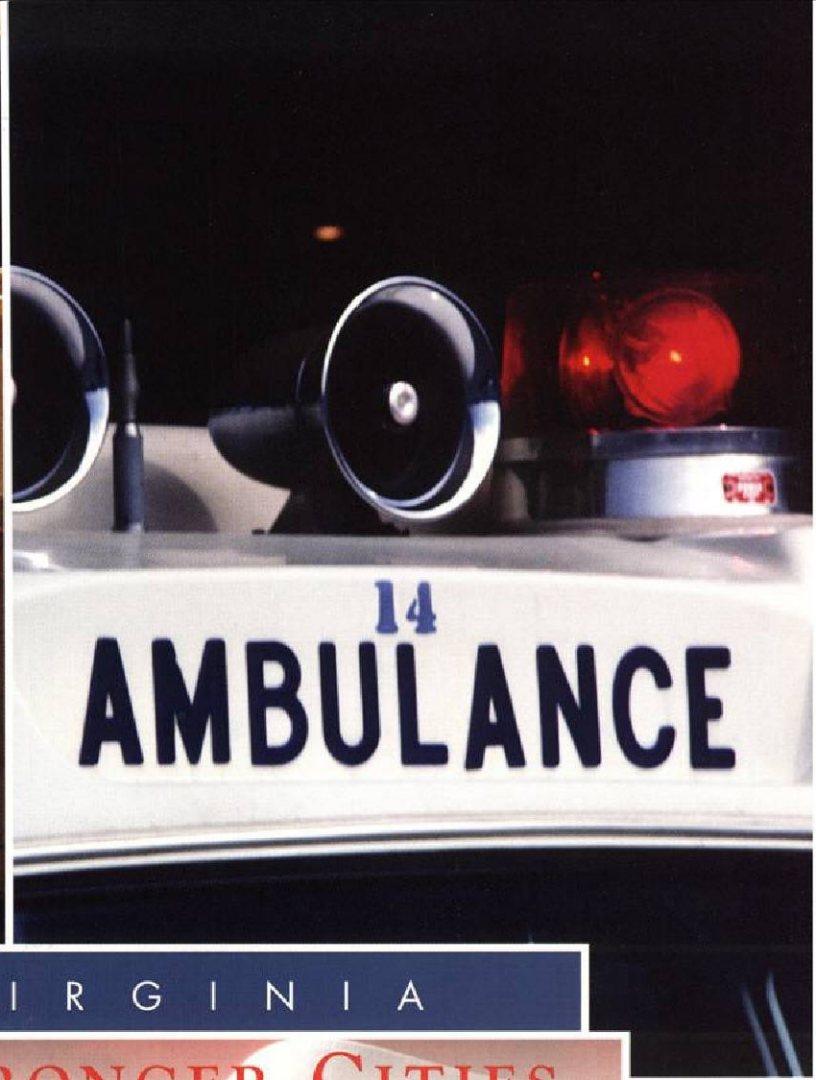
*Access to health care is key for a high quality of life. Of the 64 licensed, critical access, rehabilitation and psychiatric hospitals across the state of West Virginia, 63 are housed inside cities.*

in incorporated cities. West Virginia's two major universities, Marshall University and West Virginia University, have established their campuses in the cities of Huntington and Morgantown, respectively. Their presence helps attract new people and new businesses into the state.

Quality of life is also heightened by access to cultural events, shopping and recreational outlets, such as:

- The Clay Center for the Arts & Sciences in Charleston
- Wheeling Symphony Orchestra
- Tamarack Arts & Crafts Center in Beckley
- Whitewater Rafting in Fayetteville
- Wharf District in Morgantown
- The Arts Centre in Martinsburg

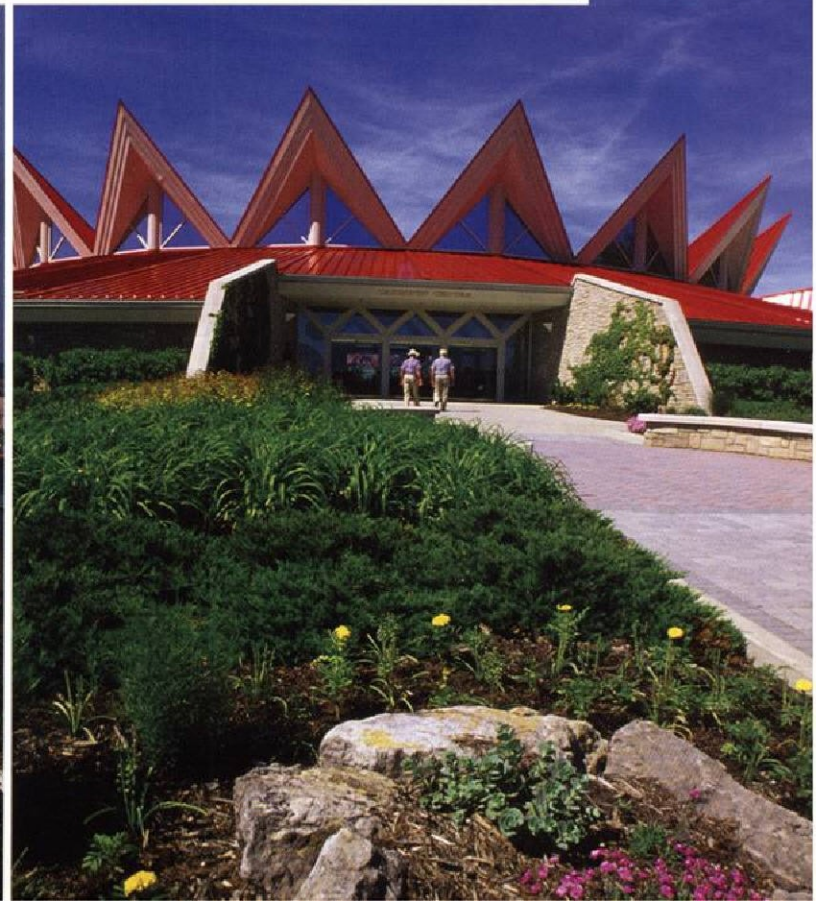
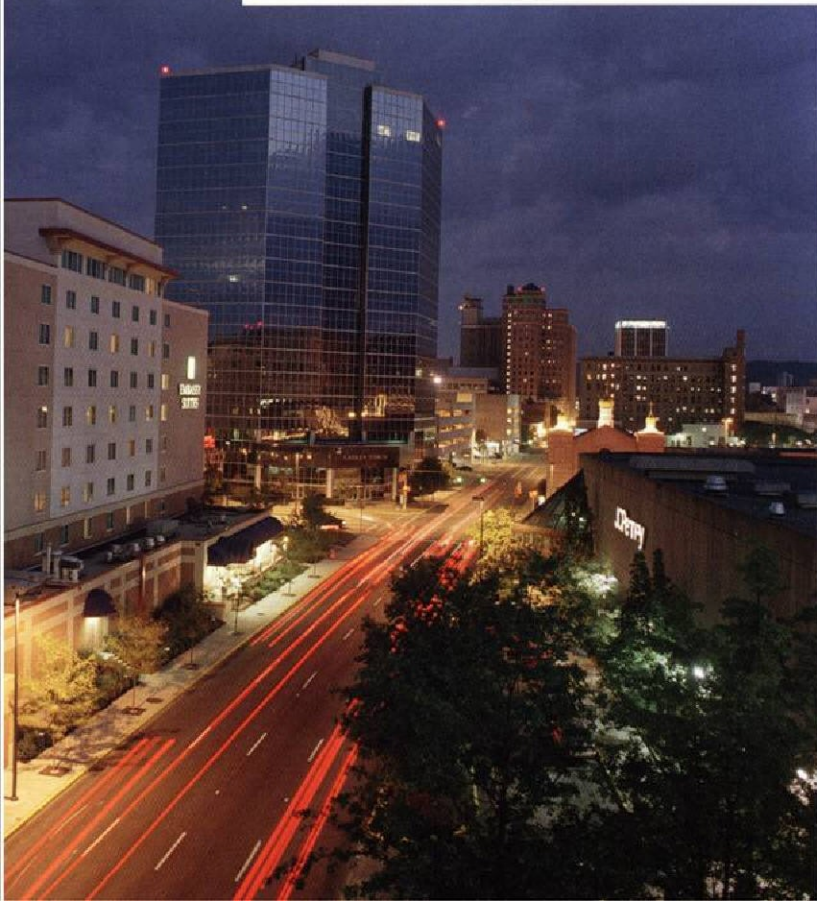




W E S T V I R G I N I A

**BUILDING STRONGER CITIES**

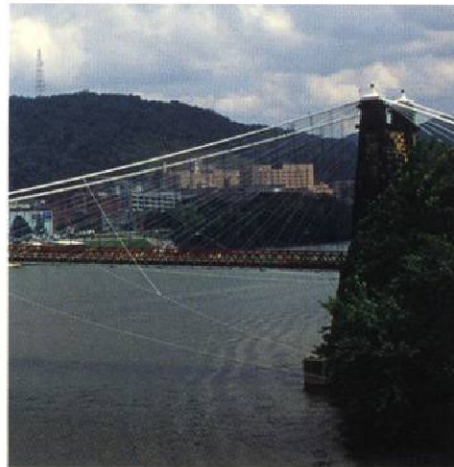
M U N I C I P A L L E A G U E





# STRONG CITIES MAKE WEST VIRGINIA STRONGER

Over a million people  
reside, work and play in  
West Virginia's cities.  
Housing a majority of  
the state's jobs and easy  
access to education,



WV Division of Tourism

health care and  
numerous other benefits,  
the strength of our cities  
makes our state a more  
vibrant place to  
call home.

## OUR MISSION

*The West Virginia Municipal League  
is a statewide, nonprofit, nonpartisan  
association of cities, towns and villages  
first established in 1933 and  
incorporated in 1968 to assist local  
governments and advance the interests  
of the citizens who reside within.  
The League achieves this directive  
through legislative advocacy, research,  
education and other services for  
municipal elected officials.*



## OTHER FAST FACTS

***The first brick pavement in the  
United States was laid in  
Charleston in 1870.***



***A total of 42 West Virginia cities  
are older than the state itself,  
incorporated in 1863.***



***The first concrete street in the  
world was laid in the town of  
Webster Springs (Addison)  
in 1903.***



***St. Andrews Methodist Church in  
Grafton was the site of the first  
Mother's Day celebration in 1908.***



***Weirton is the only city in the  
United States that extends from  
one state border to another.***