

City of Keo
PO Box 35
Keo, Arkansas 72083

Dear Keo Residents and Neighbors,

I wanted to share a community update on what has been accomplished over the past year, where we are headed, and what to expect moving forward. Serving as your mayor is a responsibility I take seriously, and I am grateful for the trust, patience, and involvement of this community. Keo continues to make progress because people here care deeply about this place and about one another.

Water System Improvements-Over the past year, the City of Keo completed approximately \$2.6 million in water system improvements using grant and low interest loans. These projects addressed aging infrastructure, replaced failing lines, upgraded our system to electronic meter reading, added additional fire hydrants, rehabbed the water tower, and installed an emergency generator. These improvements allow for faster leak detection, improved accuracy, and a more efficient water system overall. As a result of this work, Keo has reduced water loss considerably. This improvement earned the city a Trendsetter Award from Arkansas Business Magazine for infrastructure and water management. More importantly, it helps protect the system for the long term, reduces unnecessary costs and improves the quality of our drinking water..

Sewer System Status-The city has completed several critical sewer repairs to address collapsed lines within the system. While these repairs have improved stability, additional work remains. Sewer infrastructure is costly and complex, and the city is committed to addressing issues thoughtfully and transparently as funding opportunities allow. Planning and evaluation of the remaining system will continue so we can pursue future improvements responsibly and with clear priorities.

Streets and Paving Improvements-The City of Keo was awarded a \$300,000 paving grant through the Arkansas Department of Transportation. Through this program, the majority of city streets have been repaved, improving driving conditions, drainage, and overall safety. While the timing of street work alongside water and sewer projects was not ideal, coordination between contractors helped ensure long term results rather than short term fixes. These improvements represent a significant investment in the day to day quality of life for Keo residents.

Parks and Outdoor Recreation-Keo completed new outdoor recreation trail and park improvements paid for by a \$114,000 grant from AR Parks, Heritage & Tourism. These spaces are already being enjoyed by residents and visitors, and additional will be made with the remainder of the funds.

Community Benefits Agreement and Solar Project-An industrial scale solar project is moving forward, with approximately 300 acres located within Keo city limits and the remainder in Lonoke

County. The project was developed through agreements between landowners and the solar developer. Through negotiation, the City of Keo secured a Community Benefits Agreement with Invenergy that will bring a \$400,000 investment directly into the community. These funds will be used for projects that benefit residents and visitors alike.

Keo Commons Building-As part of the Community Benefits Agreement, the building at the edge of the park will be renovated and repurposed as the Keo Commons building, with work moving forward in 2026. Plans include relocating the lending library, creating a small technology hub with laptop access, providing a gathering space for the community, and installing secure restrooms for park users, cyclists, and community events.

Broadband Update-Broadband expansion remains a priority. Funding through the BEAD program has been approved, and BrightSpeed has been identified as the future fiber provider for Keo. Timelines and next steps are still being finalized, and additional information will be shared as it becomes available.

City Hall and Energy Improvements-The city was awarded a \$15,000 ADEQ grant to upgrade heating, cooling, and lighting systems at City Hall. These upgrades will improve efficiency, comfort, and long term operating costs. The city is also preparing to apply for a grant to convert streetlights to LED lighting to improve safety and reduce energy expenses.

Safety and Emergency Communication-Keo has upgraded its emergency communication systems, including automated alerts to residents. The tornado siren can now be activated remotely through the Cabot 911 call center, providing an added layer of safety for the community. These improvements earned the city a Trendsetter Award from Arkansas Business Magazine for safety and technology. As well, the Keo Volunteer Fire Department was able to upgrade to a newer pumper truck and has a larger capacity tank. Through the hard work and dedication of our Department, Keo's ISO rating of 5 was maintained for another cycle.

Community Volunteers and Events-In 2025, Keo was named an Arkansas Volunteer Community of the Year for the third year. This recognition reflects the many residents who volunteer their time to support events, projects, and neighbors throughout the year. The 4th Arkansas Pecan Festival was a tremendous success, bringing approximately 4,500 visitors to Keo in one day. The next festival is scheduled for Saturday, December 5, 2026.

Looking Ahead-Priorities for the coming year include continued sewer planning and repairs, coordination on broadband expansion, additional park enhancements, energy efficiency projects, and updating municipal codes related to animals and property maintenance. Later this first quarter, the city will conduct a targeted low to moderate income survey. This will be a randomized, door to door survey and will not involve every household. Information gathered helps support future planning and grant opportunities. More details will be shared as the city learns more.

Community Survey-Enclosed with this update is a QR link for a community survey. Your input helps guide decisions about priorities, quality of life, and future projects. Please consider taking a few minutes to participate. There is also a link on the city Paper copies are available upon request

Community Reminders-A community cleanup day will be held this spring, with dumpsters available. Dates will be announced closer to the date. City Council meetings are held on the fourth Monday of each month and are open to the public. Residents are encouraged to attend and participate. Alerts, updates and announcements are available by subscribing on www.keoar.com.

Water Office Hours-New water office hours are Tuesday through Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

City Council Contacts

Mayor Stephanie White
501 285 5051 or keomayor@gmail.com

City Council Members

David Lanehart 501 658 2144

David Sharp 469 401 0678

Randy Hudkins 951 377 0535

Lynda Staton 870 674 8888

Chris Collins 501 407 6543

Respectfully,

Stephanie White

Stephanie White

Mayor of Keo

Help Shape Our Community's Future! We want to hear from you. Please scan the code or visit <https://forms.gle/cu4cySsAEMHZpMK46> to take a quick survey and share your thoughts on upcoming projects and priorities. Your feedback makes a difference!

