

Resource Management Department
2024 – 4th Quarter and Annual Report
to the
County Commission



January 9, 2025

Planning and Development Department

The Fourth quarter of 2024 brought changes to the Planning and Development Department staff. Brenna Howard took a position with CitizenServe, our permitting software vendor, which created an open position. We added Jacob Phillips as our Senior Planner. Jake brings excellent education and experience having worked in Branson and also for SMCOG assisting many local communities with comprehensive planning. We hope he will have a long career with the County. As we enter 2025, I fully believe the County Planning Department is fortunate to have perhaps its most talented and experienced team ever.



Land Use Change

The Planning and Development Department staff, working through the Planning and Zoning Commission and the County Commission presented a significant number of requests for land use change throughout 2024.

- 26 rezoning requests were recommended for approval by the Planning and Zoning Commission involving a total of 390 acres.
- 5 Conditional Use Permit requests were approved affecting 76.7 acres

Residential Development

The climate for residential development continues to be strong. This last year our office processed 98 Administrative Minor Subdivision applications and re-plats resulting in the creation of 121 new parcels which are potential residential building sites.

Five named subdivisions were approved in 2024 resulting in 40 residential lots.

Our staff continues to work with developers regarding new residential developments which will proceed through the Major Subdivision process in the coming months. We currently have two projects at various stages of the platting process. These projects contain a combined total of 35 additional residential lots. Those developments represent additional population growth occurring in Christian County near the existing city limits of Nixa and in the Clever and Billings area. If we reasonably assume that these current projects have their respective plats approved in 2025 and add a typical annual amount of administrative minor subdivision lots, the County can look forward to another year of continued growth in terms of creating new parcels and lots for residential development.

This all suggests that the County's building inspectors will continue to have a steady supply of residential inspections to perform for the foreseeable future.

Commercial Development

While our office continues to work with developers on various prospective and ongoing projects throughout the County, the lack of public sewer and water infrastructure in the unincorporated county makes it impractical or undesirable for some businesses to locate outside the urbanized core. As always, we regularly work with the Cities of Ozark and Nixa through our Urban Service Area Agreement referring potential commercial projects which could be developed utilizing municipal water and sewer.

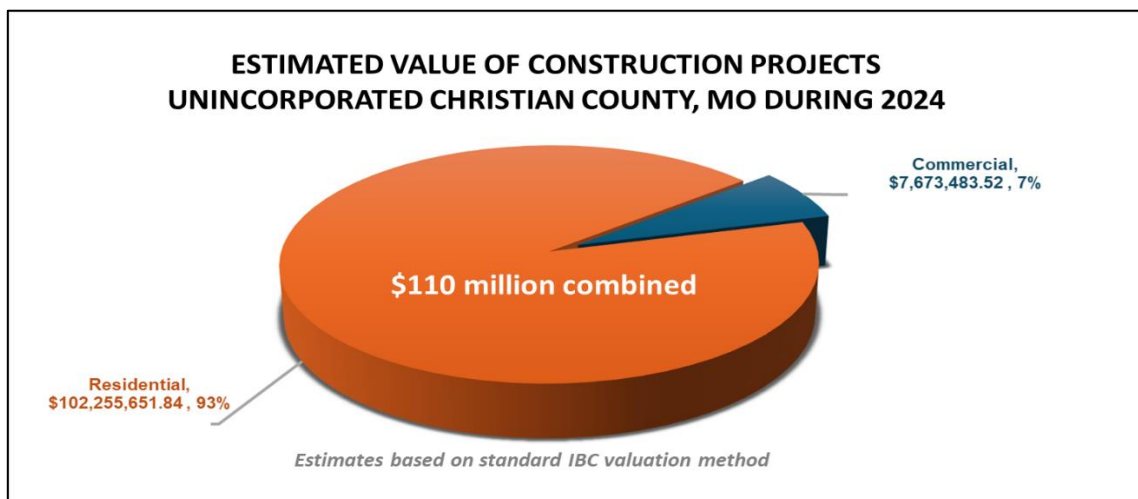
Despite this lack of desirable utility infrastructure, we have continued to work with several projects throughout the year which contribute to growth in the commercial sector.

- An O’Riley Automotive store on CC Hwy
- Fremont Hills City Hall
- Ozark Mountain Off Grid
- Schuman’s Cattle Office Building
- Remodeling at Hopedale Baptist Church
- Warehouse operation near Nixa
- Cassidy Station
- Nixa Schools project

As we closed out the fourth quarter, it was encouraging to meet with several individuals who will be starting on significant commercial projects in 2025.

Investment in Christian County

The Planning and Development and Building Inspections Departments work hand in hand to help guide and facilitate investment in the physical development of Christian County. Each construction permit issued generates an estimated IBC valuation which is calculated and assigned based upon project type, use group and square footage. While these numbers are only an estimation, they do help to illustrate the value being added within the unincorporated areas of the County.



Grants & Funding Opportunities

Over the course of 2024 we were able to take advantage of two outside funding opportunities to assist the Resource Management Department.



We applied for and received State grant funding through Missouri Solid Waste Management District "O" for \$9,270.86 for the purchase of six 54 Cu. Ft. self-dumping hoppers for the recycling facility. This equipment will increase our efficiency in collecting and moving materials to our balers and work perfectly with the electric forklift acquired with grant funding in the prior year. These improvements are steps which will allow us to hit the ground running once a new facility is completed.

We also took advantage of Federal funding in the amount of \$77,850.00 through the Energy Efficiency & Conservation Community Block Grant (EECBG) program which allowed us to purchase two Ford F150 Lightning trucks for Planning and Building Inspections. The time period involved from beginning the process of applying for the funding through actual delivery of our

vehicles took about a full year but has been well worth it. When factoring in the \$10,000 received from the sale of our Jeep Compass, the two EV Trucks cost about \$7,000.



Most recently, we have submitted an application for a Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling (SWIFR) Grant through the EPA. Our request is for \$708,875.00 in funding which would be used for the construction of the planned recycling facility. There is no required local match in this program and it seems quite competitive. We do, however, believe we have a strong application and are optimistic regarding our success. Awards will not be made until near the end of 2025. A wise man once said *“You miss 100% of the shots you don’t take”*.

Code Enforcement

Our office routinely fields calls from citizens who wish to file a complaint or report a violation of one or more of our adopted regulations. After collecting information about the situation and making on-site investigations from the public right-of-way, we will find that some cases involve aspects which are addressed within the regulations while others may not.

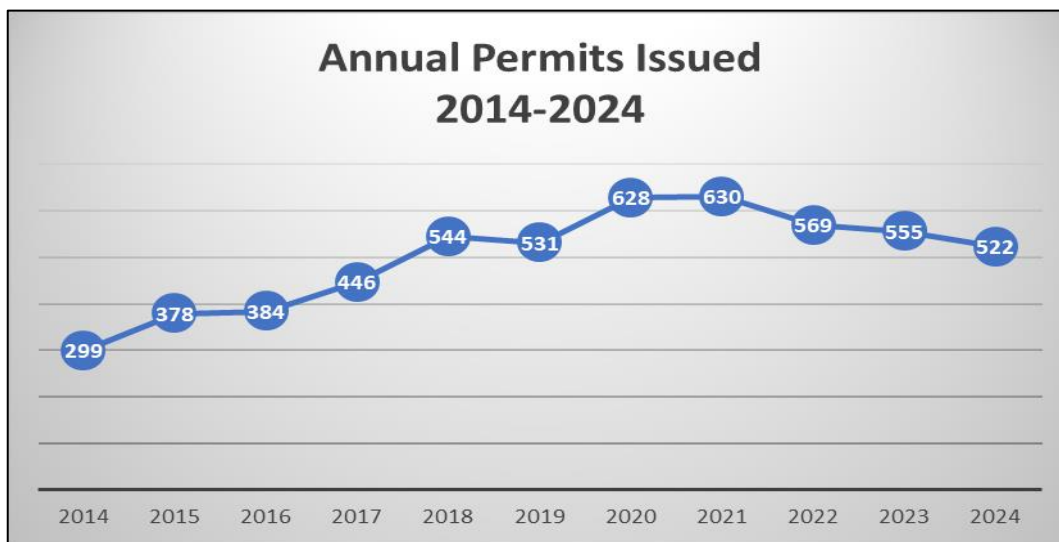
The table below summarizes the cases where we were able to take some level of action toward the simple goal of compliance.

Total Violation Notices Sent Out		Disposition of Violations	
40		Violations forwarded to Prosecutor	5
<u>Violations cited</u>		Cases dismissed by Prosecutor	1
Stationary Vehicles	7	Open cases	17
Using RV as living quarters	4	Closed Cases	19
Unlawful operation of a business	1		
Trash/Debris	11	Summary	
Overgrown Grass/Weeds	7	Notices Issued	40
Storage of Business Equipment	2	Unfounded Complaints	4
Land Disturbance w/o permit	2	Cases lacking sufficient evidence	
Parking related	6	(not yet closed)	<u>11</u>
		Total Violations investigated	55

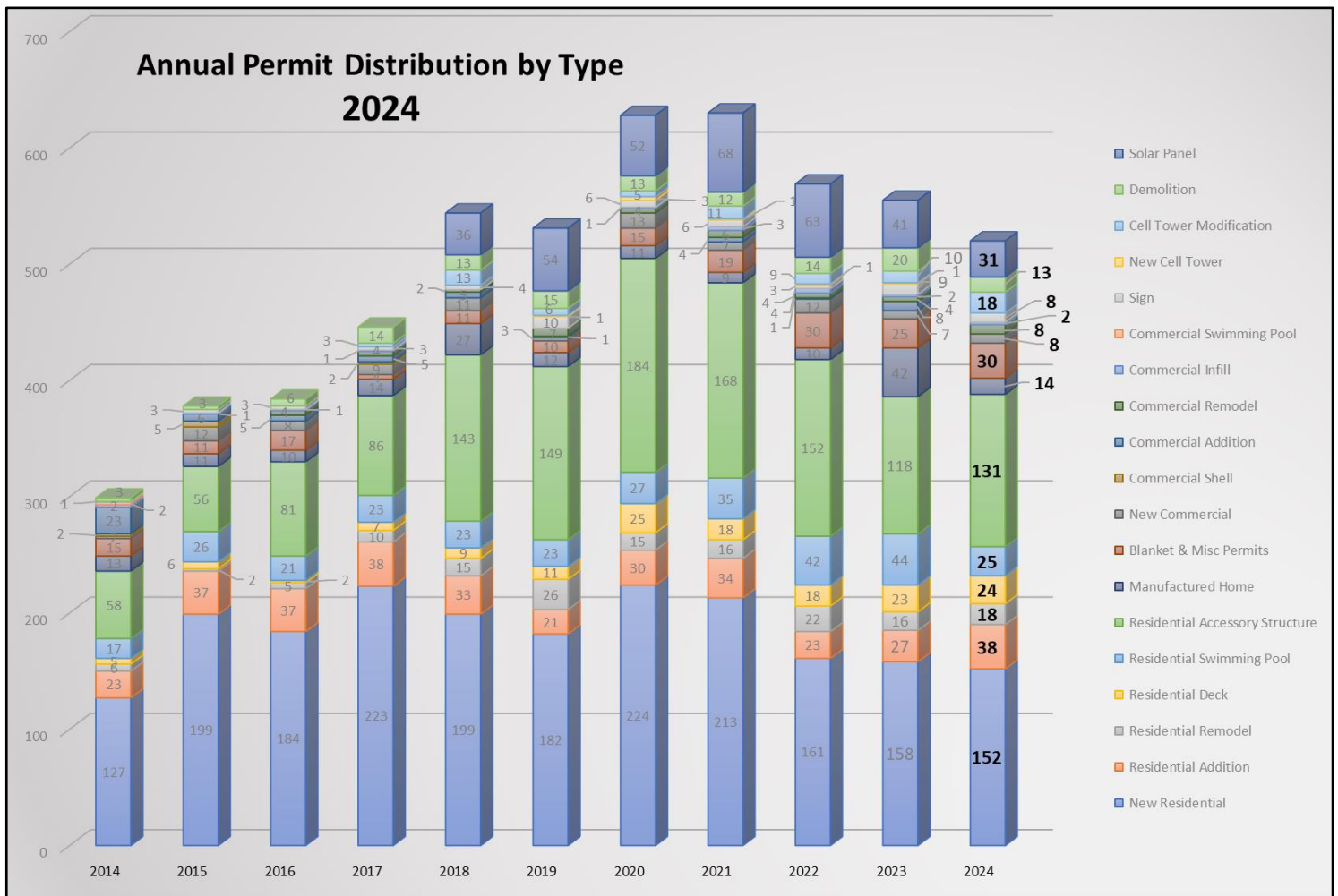
It is important to note that the numbers above do not include the numerous complaint related calls and inquiries our staff receive regularly, which are addressed or resolved without escalating to formal complaints or notices of violation being sent out.

Building Inspections

While the climate for construction in Christian County during 2024 remained strong, the Building Inspections department again experienced a slight decline in the overall number of permits issued over the course of the year. The department issued 522 permits over the course of 2024. Despite this slight decline in overall activity, the department actually issued more new residential and dwelling type permits than in 2023. The declines we saw were generally attributable to reduced numbers of swimming pools, manufactured homes, and demo permits. We are hopeful that the county has turned a corner economically, and that the change in political leadership will lead to strong numbers in the coming year.



Throughout the year, the Building Inspections staff performed very well in keeping up with the relatively strong construction environment in Christian County. We lost two of our young inspectors to other career opportunities early in the year. While searching for reinforcements, our team did a great job in finding ways to cover all inspections in a timely manner. We were fortunate to add Karl Starmer to our team over the summer as an inspector. Karl brings with him extensive experience as a residential home inspector and has transitioned well into the county government realm. He has already studied for and passed the residential certification program which confirms our department's competency to the public.

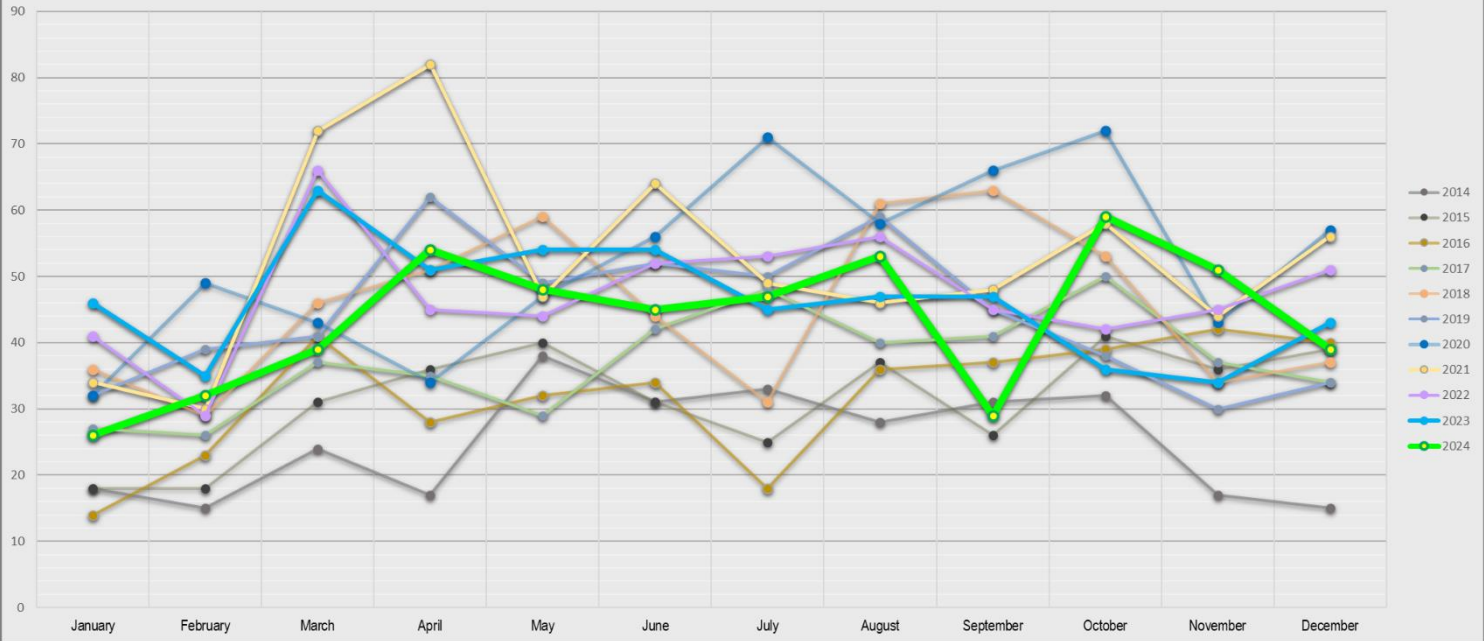


Over the course of 2024, our inspectors performed a total of 1,663 construction related inspections along with an additional 360 pre-construction site inspections.

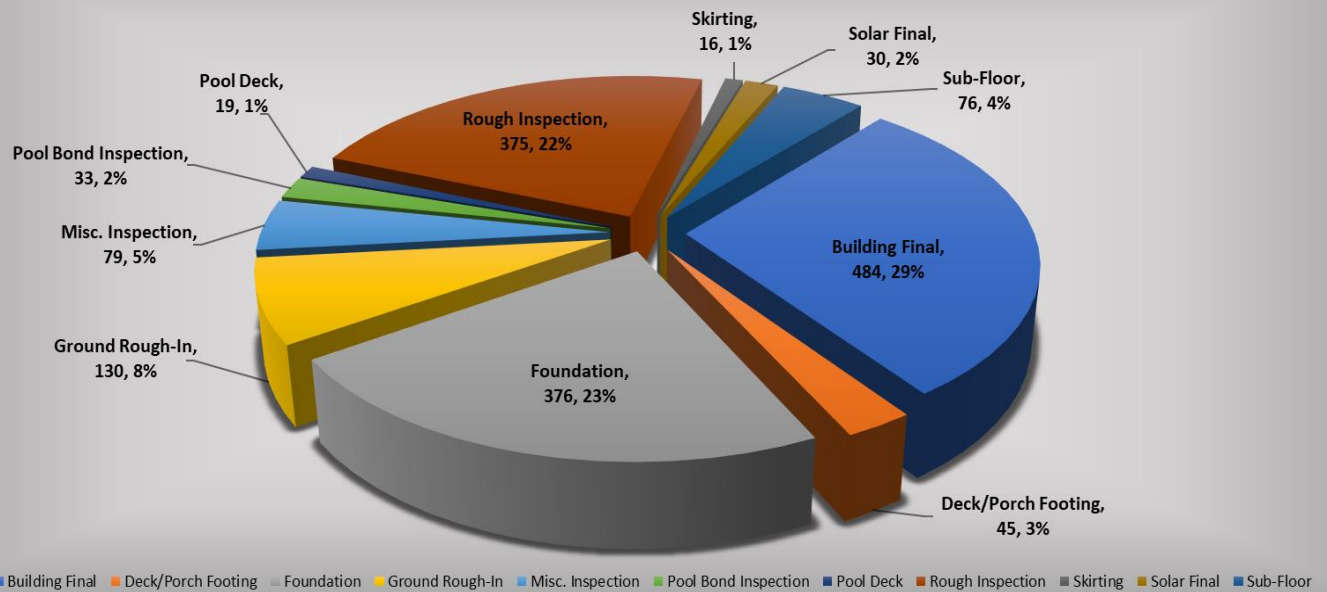
Collectively our Inspectors logged 40,867 miles while performing nearly 2,000 inspections. These numbers help to provide some sense of the amount of time and expense required to provide inspection services for a jurisdiction spread across the 560 square miles within the County borders.

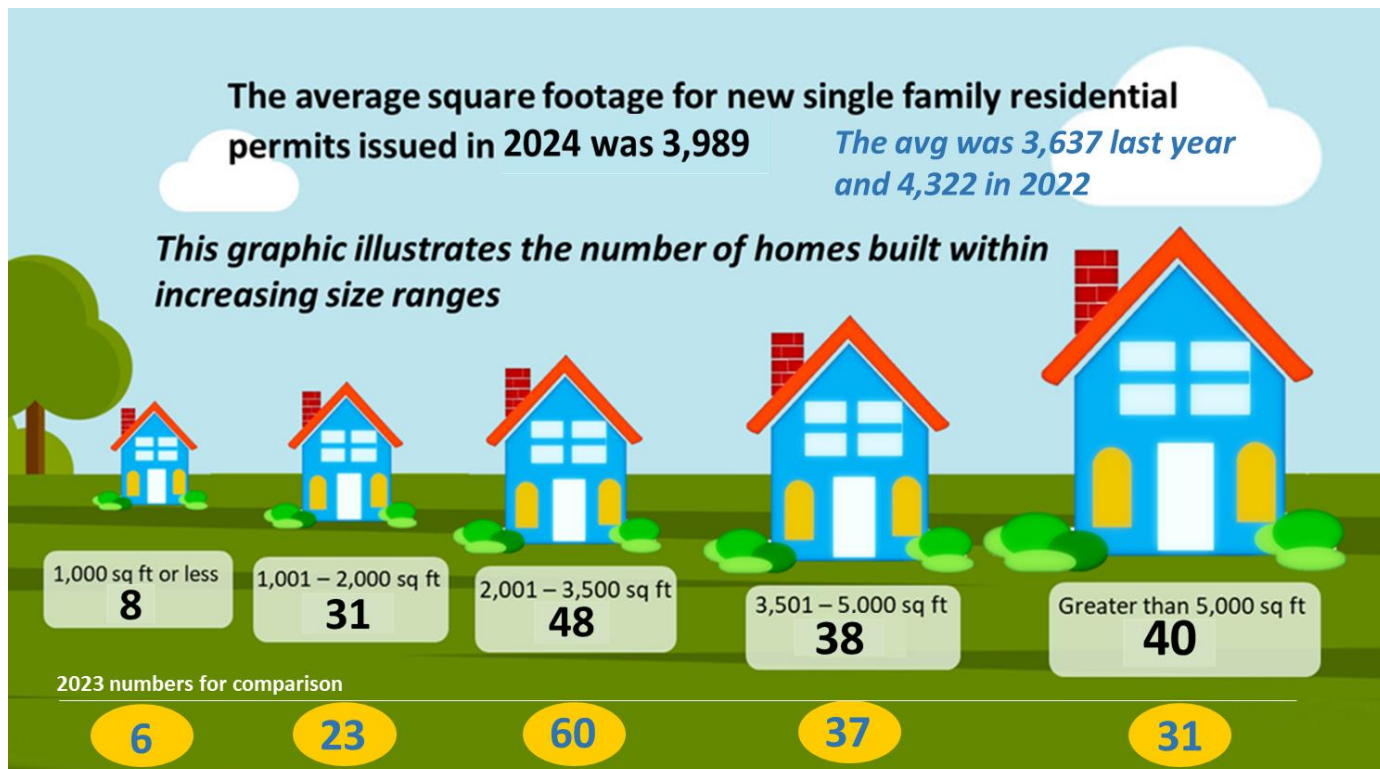
The charts contained within this section give a comparison of overall construction activity over the past ten years and also illustrate the dispersion of projects for which permits were issued by our Building Inspections Department as well as the type of inspections performed.

BUILDING PERMITS ISSUED (by month) 2014 - 2024



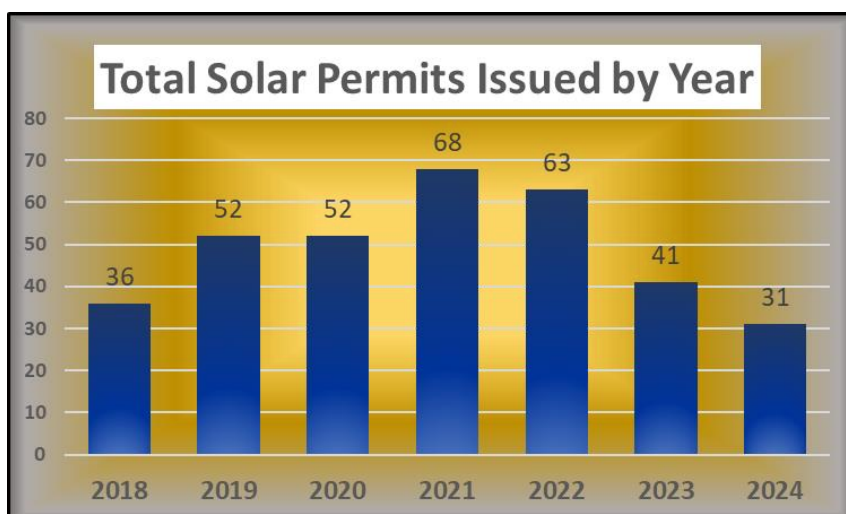
2024 INSPECTIONS by TYPE





The graphic above gives some insight into the new residential construction taking place in the County. While in 2023 we saw a shift downward in the average square footage of new residences, 2024 brought with it a trend back toward larger homes. While the overall number of new residences is comparable, on average the dwellings are 350 square feet larger.

We are continuing to track the growth in the number of permits issued for solar panel installation. In 2024, 31 solar panel permits were issued. This represents a continued decline in the number of this type of permit for the third year. Despite the ever-increasing cost of electricity and available rebates and incentives, Christian County residents are only embracing this technology at a very modest rate. This is, however, somewhat consistent with Missouri as a whole in that our state is generally considered as being below the median in terms of overall residential solar adoption rates as compared to other states. In short, we are clearly not the highest – but other states are far below.



Recycling Center

Lee and Bobby at the recycling center continued to do a great job every day operating and maintaining this facility. These men are also tasked with transporting collected materials from our remote drop off sites in Sparta and Billings as well as making smaller pickups from County buildings and other various local businesses with significant amounts of materials.

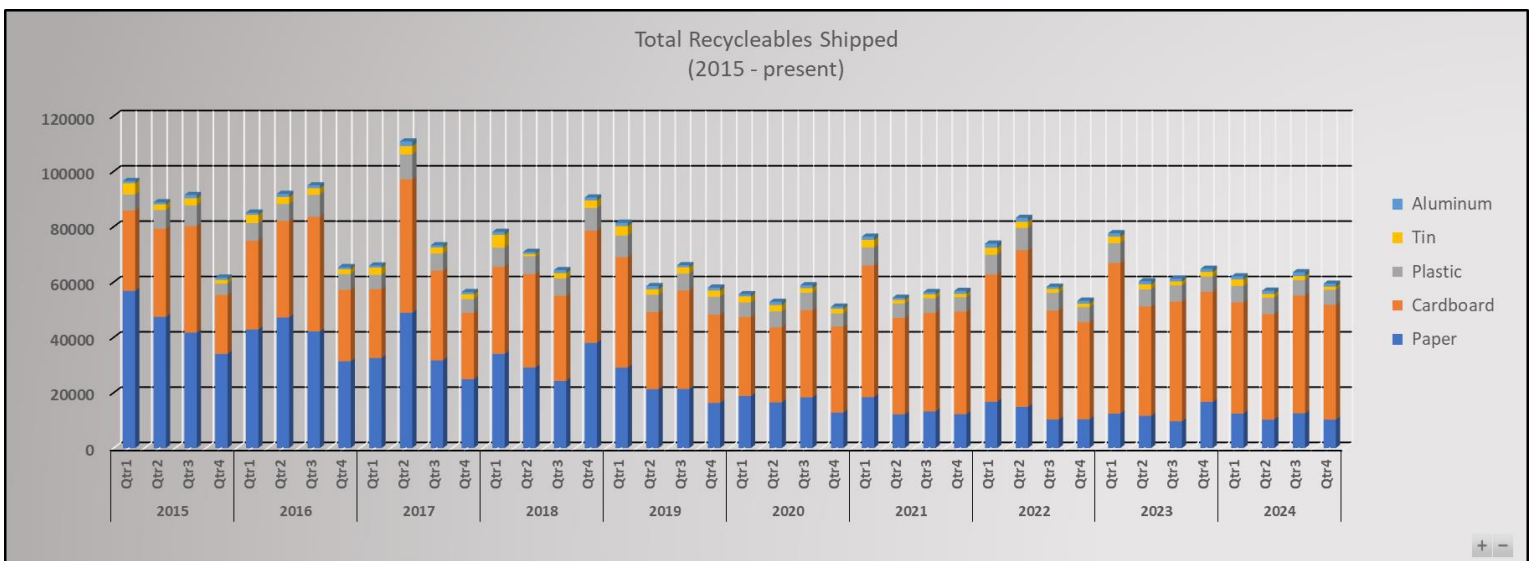


In addition to serving as a place where materials are diverted from landfills for re-use, our Recycling Center also provides opportunities for citizens to fulfill their Court mandated community service requirements. Over the course of 2024, 56 individuals were able to have their time working at the Recycling Center verified and reported to the Court.

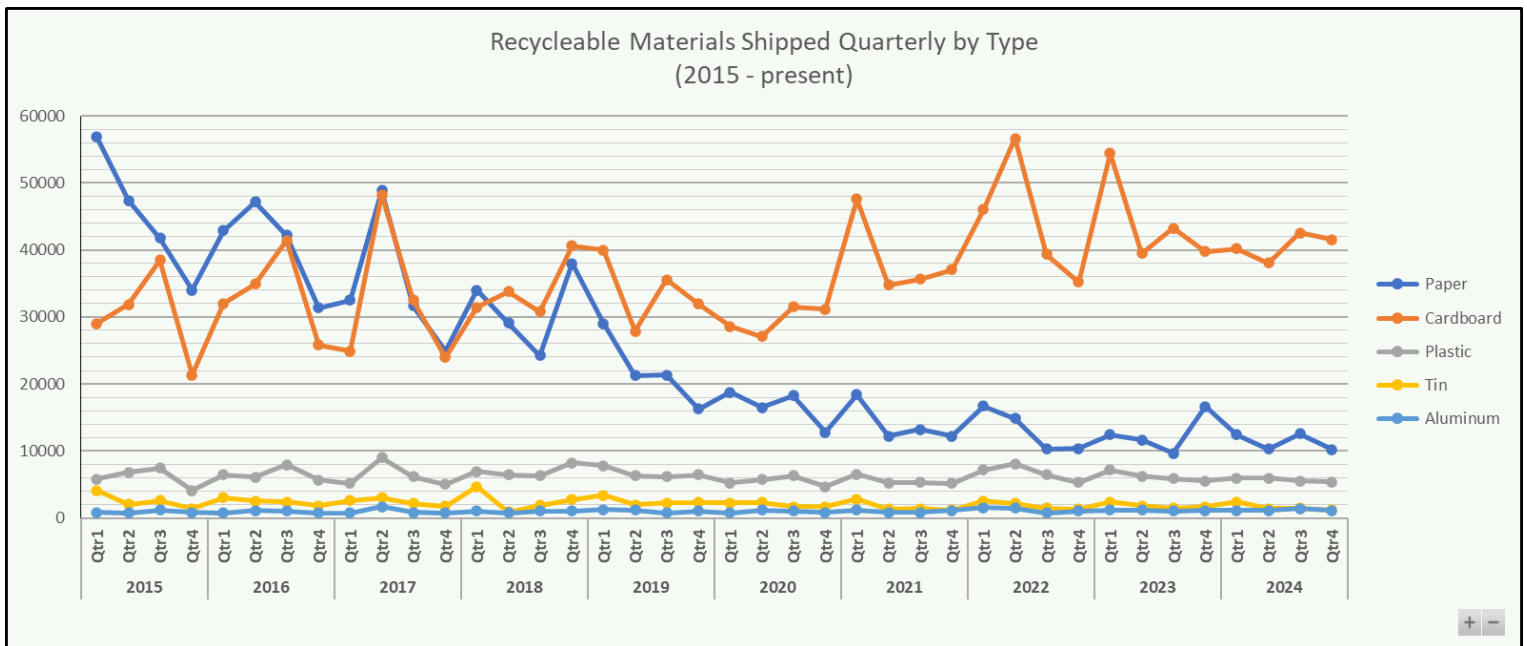
The recycling facility is equipped with an older oil burning furnace which utilizes used motor oil to heat the uninsulated building. Throughout the fall, Lee has continued to battle with this piece of equipment to keep it working. It has reached a point where he is losing more than winning. I am anticipating a need, over the winter, to find a new way to provide heat to that facility. My initial plan would be to purchase one of the gas fired heaters we have planned for the future recycling facility to be used temporarily in the current facility and then moved to the new location after it is constructed.

Collections

Total collections during 2024 were slightly lower than the preceding year. The Recycling Center reported shipping a total of 241,861 lbs of materials this year. The obvious difference this year was the missing cardboard spike we typically see in the first quarter. For whatever reason the normal cardboard collection was lower over the first quarter.



This chart shows the continued increase in cardboard collections versus the ongoing decline in paper. For the most part, collection levels were fairly consistent throughout the year.



Environmental



Work continued throughout 2024 on the countywide stormwater improvements project. This use of ARPA funding approved by the County Commission resulted in the award of construction contracts for seven significant projects which will result in long term impacts to water quality and also the quality of life for residents in the areas where projects are located. Our Highway Administrator did a great job of taking a “what if” idea and delivering a truly impactful result.

The Missouri Department of Natural Resources has spent several years attempting to re-vamp the MS4 stormwater permit program. As a result, Josh Bird and Scott Hayes spent many hours attempting to adapt our relevant policies, practices and programs to become compliant with the new and in some cases arbitrary and vague standards now being set upon the County.

We have managed to generally attain compliance with almost all of the new standards and requirements but there are still certain issues where it may be impossible or impractical for the County to comply. We will continue to work through these issues in 2025.

Our Facility at 1106 W. Jackson

Throughout 2024 we hosted a variety of groups using the large room for meetings. Examples of functions held in our large meeting room include:

- Benefits enrollment meetings
 - Wellness screenings
 - HR Sexual harassment training
 - Political party committee meetings
 - Election Judge training
 - CERT training events
 - SMCC Board meeting Multiple training events for Sheriff's office
 - Regular P&Z and BOA hearings
 - EMA DART training
- Public meetings for road and bridge projects

County Government Plaza Project

2024 was a full year of notable progress at the property located at 2701 W. Jackson St. A summary of all that has happened includes the following highlights:

During the first and second quarters, our contractor, K&B Equipment completed all installation of water and sewer line infrastructure throughout the property.

Over the summer months, we solicited bids for the overall site grading, stormwater and road improvements as well as bids for construction of the initial County owned structure to be built. After some modifications to the scale of those projects, we were able to award bids respectively to Emery Sapp & Sons and DeWitt.



In this same time period, our contracted real estate agent began marketing the commercial out lots along Hwy 14 and 25th Street for sale. Interest continues to grow.

Over the third and fourth quarters, ESS transformed the terrain at the site to its current condition which includes creating multiple shovel ready pad sites, installation of stormwater sewerage pipes and detention basins. The remaining work to be done in the winter and spring includes completion of the terraced side wall in one of the basins, reconstruction and completion of the internal road and placement of gravel base for the public walking trail.



In the fourth quarter, DeWitt began construction on our operations building which will be home to the County's on-site health clinic. Despite some delays due to the presence of bedrock in the foundation area, construction has moved steadily to the point where you can see the metal skeleton of the building rising from the ground. This project will continue through the winter months with a hopeful completion anticipated for late July.

Todd M Wiesehan
Director, Resource Management Department