

MAYOR TOM HENRY'S 2015 STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

THANK YOU, NANCY, FOR THAT WARM INTRODUCTION.

FRIENDS, ELECTED OFFICIALS, HONORED GUESTS, RESIDENTS OF FORT WAYNE, WELCOME.

I'M HONORED TO BE WITH YOU TODAY TO TALK ABOUT MY VISION TO BUILD ON THE MOMENTUM WE'RE EXPERIENCING IN THE CITY OF FORT WAYNE.

I WANT TO THANK THE GRAND WAYNE CENTER FOR HOSTING TODAY'S EVENT. IT WAS 10 YEARS AGO THAT THE RENOVATION AND EXPANSION WAS FINISHED ON THIS TREMENDOUS ASSET FOR DOWNTOWN.

THIS WORLD-CLASS FACILITY, WHICH IS ALSO CELEBRATING ITS 30TH ANNIVERSARY, IS ONE REASON WE'RE A CITY MOVING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.

THROUGH THE EFFORTS OF THE GRAND WAYNE CENTER AND VISIT FORT WAYNE, WE'VE BECOME A HOT SPOT FOR TOURISM WITH A CENTRAL LOCATION, GREAT FACILITIES, AND HOOSIER HOSPITALITY.

IN FACT, FIFTEEN NEW MEETINGS AND CONVENTIONS ARE COMING TO OUR CITY THIS YEAR.

AND, NEARLY 9,000 LOCAL JOBS ARE DIRECTLY SUPPORTED BY VISITOR SPENDING.

I'VE LIVED IN FORT WAYNE ALMOST ALL OF MY LIFE.

AND, THERE'S AN EXCITEMENT IN OUR CITY THAT I'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE, AND I SUSPECT YOU'VE SEEN IT, TOO.

PEOPLE AND BUSINESSES AROUND OUR STATE AND NATION ARE TAKING NOTICE OF FORT WAYNE.

YOU MAY HAVE SEEN THAT FORBES MAGAZINE NAMED US ONE OF AMERICA'S TOP 19 OPPORTUNITY CITIES.

AND, WE'VE BEEN RECOGNIZED AS ONE OF THE BEST CITIES FOR PEOPLE UNDER

35.

THIS POSITIVE ATTENTION WE'RE RECEIVING IS THE RESULT OF ALL OF THE HARD WORK WE'VE DONE TO POSITION US AS A DESTINATION PLACE AND A GEM OF THE MIDWEST.

WE'RE MAKING A NAME FOR OURSELVES AS A CITY THAT OTHERS LOOK TO EMULATE.

AS I MEET WITH MAYORS FROM ACROSS INDIANA AND OUR GREAT COUNTRY, I'M OFTEN ASKED, HOW ARE YOU HAVING SO MUCH SUCCESS IN FORT WAYNE?

WELL, WE HAVE A GREAT STORY TO TELL, AND EVERY CHANCE I GET, I DO JUST THAT.

WE MUST CONTINUE TO BUILD ON OUR MOMENTUM.

I'M ESPECIALLY ENCOURAGED BY THE PROGRESS WE'RE MAKING TO BECOME AN ECONOMIC LEADER IN THE MIDWEST.

FOR INSTANCE, WE'RE WORKING TOGETHER NOW MORE THAN EVER TO STRENGTHEN OUR LOCAL ECONOMY.

IN 2014, WE SAW 166 MILLION DOLLARS IN PRIVATE INVESTMENT.

MORE THAN 1,100 JOBS WERE CREATED.

WE RETAINED MORE THAN 2,600 JOBS.

17 COMPANIES EXPANDED, AND WE WELCOMED FOUR NEW BUSINESSES TO FORT WAYNE.

DANA, DEISTER MACHINE, FORT WAYNE METALS, LUTHERAN SHARED SERVICES, SWEETWATER SOUND, AND VALBRUNA STEEL ARE EXAMPLES OF JUST SOME OF THE COMPANIES WHO ARE ENHANCING THE BUSINESS CLIMATE IN FORT WAYNE.

AS A MATTER OF FACT, FORT WAYNE IS NOW RANKED AS THE 16TH BEST PLACE IN THE COUNTRY TO SEEK EMPLOYMENT.

THE HEART OF OUR CITY IS SEEING UNPRECEDENTED GROWTH AND PRIVATE INVESTMENT.

POSITIVE PROGRESS CONTINUES TO BE MADE ON THE 100 MILLION DOLLAR SKYLINE PROJECT.

THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT TIM ASH'S COMMITMENT TO BUILD HIS NATIONAL CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS AS PART OF THE PROJECT WITH HUNDREDS OF JOBS IS A TESTAMENT TO HIS BELIEF IN FORT WAYNE.

AND, THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE SKYLINE GARAGE IS WELL UNDERWAY.

ADDITIONALLY, THREE HIGHLY QUALIFIED AND EXPERIENCED DEVELOPERS ARE FINALISTS TO DEVELOP THE SKYLINE RESIDENTIAL TOWER TO COMPLEMENT THE ASH BROKERAGE BUILDING.

I WILL HAVE AN ANNOUNCEMENT IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS THAT IS WORTHY OF OUR CITY AND REFLECTS THE PROGRESS THAT WE'VE MADE.

THE HIGH DEMAND FOR DOWNTOWN HOUSING CONTINUES IN OUR CITY.

THE APARTMENTS AT THE HARRISON, AND THE RANDALL LOFTS ARE COMPLETELY FULL, AND THE ANTHONY WAYNE CONDOMINIUMS ARE ALMOST THERE.

AND, CONSTRUCTION ON THE SUPERIOR LOFTS WILL BEGIN THIS YEAR.

THIS SPRING, WORK WILL BEGIN ON CITYSCAPE FLATS.

THE 27 MILLION DOLLAR INVESTMENT ACROSS FROM PARKVIEW FIELD WILL FEATURE 167 APARTMENTS, EIGHT ROW HOUSES, AND A PARKING GARAGE.

OUR PARTNERS FROM DOMO DEVELOPMENT ARE HERE TODAY.

SCOTT SORENSEN, WOULD YOU PLEASE STAND TO BE RECOGNIZED.

THANK YOU FOR CHOOSING FORT WAYNE.

AND THERE'S MORE.

IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS, WE'LL BEGIN THE PROCESS TO SELECT A PARTNER TO REDEVELOP THE LANDING.

THIS MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE WITH RETAIL, ENTERTAINMENT, AND HOUSING WILL PROVIDE ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY TO LIVE, WORK, AND PLAY IN OUR DOWNTOWN.

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF GREATER FORT WAYNE FOR PARTNERING WITH THE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT TRUST. THIS HAS LED TO THE PURCHASE OF PROPERTIES THAT WILL MAKE THIS PROJECT A REALITY.

OUR DOWNTOWN MAY BE THE HEART OF THE CITY, BUT WE KNOW THAT NEIGHBORHOODS ARE THE BACKBONE OF FORT WAYNE, AND I CAN'T THANK OUR NEIGHBORHOOD LEADERS ENOUGH FOR THE PASSION AND DEDICATION THEY SHOW EACH DAY.

A NUMBER OF THEM ARE WITH US TODAY.

CAROLYN DEVOE, THE SOUTHWEST AREA PARTNERSHIP CHAIR;
TONY RIDLEY WITH RENAISSANCE POINTE;
DENNY ZIMMERMAN WITH NORTHWEST LIMA WOODS;
AND DAVID KOHLI WITH MAPLEWOOD TERRACE AND DOWNS. WOULD YOU PLEASE STAND TO BE RECOGNIZED.

THE WORK THEY DO IN THE NEIGHBORHOODS AND AREA PARTNERSHIPS KEEPS OUR NEIGHBORHOODS STRONG AND VIBRANT.

I ENCOURAGE ALL OF YOU TO GET INVOLVED IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES.

WE'RE A STRONGER AND BETTER COMMUNITY WHEN WE COME TOGETHER TO SOLVE PROBLEMS, CELEBRATE SUCCESSES, AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

CERTAINLY, AS A COMMUNITY WE'VE ESTABLISHED THAT REINVESTING IN OUR NEIGHBORHOODS HAS TO REMAIN A TOP PRIORITY.

JUST LAST WEEK, FORT WAYNE WAS NAMED A TOP 10 MOST AFFORDABLE PLACE TO LIVE.

AND, WE'VE RECEIVED NEARLY EIGHT MILLION DOLLARS TO REDUCE BLIGHT IN OUR NEIGHBORHOODS.

WE'RE RESTORING PRIDE AND INCREASING PROPERTY VALUES.

WE'RE WORKING COLLECTIVELY TO BUILD ON THE MOMENTUM WE'RE SEEING IN NEIGHBORHOODS THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE CITY.

THAT'S WHY LAST YEAR WE SAW RECORD INVESTMENTS OF OVER 20 MILLION DOLLARS IN MORE THAN 140 NEIGHBORHOODS FOR STREETS, ROADS, AND SIDEWALKS.

AND, WE'RE GOING TO INVEST ANOTHER 20 MILLION DOLLARS THIS YEAR.

WE MUST CONTINUE TO MAKE THESE NEEDED IMPROVEMENTS TO HELP OUR NEIGHBORHOODS SUCCEED.

UNQUESTIONABLY, THIS ADMINISTRATION'S COMMITMENT TO ALL INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS MAKES A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE.

OUR EFFORTS TO ENHANCE TRAFFIC PATTERNS THROUGHOUT OUR CITY UNDOUBTEDLY INCREASES ECONOMIC AND QUALITY OF LIFE OPPORTUNITIES.

THAT'S WHY WE'VE CONSTRUCTED A NEW ROUNDABOUT AT FAIRFIELD, SUPERIOR, WELLS, AND EWING.

I CAN SHARE WITH YOU TODAY THAT IT WILL NOW BE KNOWN AS SUPERIOR CIRCLE AND WILL BE FORMALLY DEDICATED THIS SPRING.

WE CAN ALSO LOOK FORWARD TO ADDITIONAL STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS IN THIS AREA, AS WELL AS A MODERN SCULPTURE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROUNDABOUT. AND, ALTHOUGH MY MOTHER REQUESTED IT, NO, IT WON'T BE A SCULPTURE OF ME.

MY TEAM STRIVES EVERY DAY TO MEET YOUR NEEDS.

THEY CONTINUE TO KEEP STREETS PLOWED AND SALTED FOR YOUR SAFETY AND ARE FILLING POTHOLES IN RECORD TIMES.

THEY'RE INCREASING EFFICIENCIES IN GARBAGE AND RECYCLING COLLECTION

AND MAKING LEAF PICKUP MORE CONVENIENT FOR YOU.

IT'S ALL ABOUT PERFECTING THE BASIC SERVICES THAT MAKE US SUCCESSFUL.

TO BE A GREAT CITY, IT'S CRITICAL THAT IN FORT WAYNE WE WORK EACH DAY TO BE THE SAFEST CITY POSSIBLE.

AND, WE'RE DOING JUST THAT BY THE TEAMWORK AND DEDICATION THAT'S BEING DISPLAYED BY THE FORT WAYNE POLICE DEPARTMENT.

INDEED, THEIR EMPHASIS ON TRUST AND COMMUNICATION RESULTED IN A SUCCESSFUL 2014.

THERE WAS A 63 PERCENT DROP IN HOMICIDES. BURGLARIES WERE DOWN 26 PERCENT. ROBBERIES DECLINED BY 22 PERCENT. AND, OVERALL CRIME WAS DOWN NEARLY 15 PERCENT.

THE WORK OF THE NEW GANG AND VIOLENT CRIMES UNIT IS A KEY FACTOR IN OUR COLLECTIVE SUCCESS.

SEVERAL OF THE MEMBERS OF THE UNIT ARE WITH US TODAY. WOULD YOU PLEASE STAND AS WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE AND FOR BEING OUR GUARDIANS.

UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF POLICE CHIEF GARRY HAMILTON, I HAVE THE UTMOST CONFIDENCE IN OUR OFFICERS AND THE WORK THAT THEY'RE DOING EVERY DAY.

WE BELIEVE WE'RE DOING THINGS THE RIGHT WAY.

LAST YEAR, WE ADDED 15 NEW OFFICERS TO THE FORCE, AND THIS YEAR, AN ADDITIONAL 23 OFFICERS STARTED THEIR RECRUIT CLASS.

WE'LL ALSO CONTINUE MY ROUNDTABLES ON PUBLIC SAFETY, WHERE MORE THAN A DOZEN COMMUNITY LEADERS HAVE COME TOGETHER WITH US TO SAY THEY WANT TO BE PART OF THE SOLUTION.

WE'RE A MODEL COMMUNITY FOR BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER AND SHOWING OUR SUPPORT FOR THE OFFICERS WHO PROTECT US EACH DAY.

THE FORT WAYNE FIRE DEPARTMENT CELEBRATED ITS 175TH ANNIVERSARY IN 2014 WITH A CONTINUED COMMITMENT TO BEING THE BEST.

22 NEW FIREFIGHTERS GRADUATED FROM THE FIRE ACADEMY LAST YEAR.

AND, OUR CREWS RESPONDED TO 19,000 CALLS FOR SERVICE.

UNDER THE DIRECTION OF FIRE CHIEF ERIC LAHEY, OUR FIRE DEPARTMENT IS LOOKING TO THE FUTURE BY INVESTING IN NEW EQUIPMENT TO ENHANCE THE CARE THEY PROVIDE TO YOU.

TO BE A CITY WHERE PEOPLE WANT TO LIVE AND BUSINESSES WANT TO GROW; WE MUST HAVE A WATER AND SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE THAT'S BUILT FOR THE FUTURE.

FOR INSTANCE, SINCE BECOMING MAYOR, MY TEAM AND I WORKED TIRELESSLY TO BRING CITY WATER TO RESIDENTS IN SOUTHWEST FORT WAYNE.

WE LISTENED AND CARED AS WE HEARD REPEATED CONCERNS ABOUT PRICE, QUALITY, AND DEPENDABILITY.

AND, JUST A FEW MONTHS AGO, I HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF JOINING A NUMBER OF OUR RESIDENTS TO CELEBRATE THE PURCHASE OF AQUA INDIANA'S SOUTHWEST WATER UTILITY.

TODAY, NEARLY 4,500 NEW CUSTOMERS IN ABOITE TOWNSHIP ARE CONNECTED TO CITY WATER.

DOESN'T OUR CITY WATER TASTE GREAT?

IN ALL, MORE THAN 13,000 CUSTOMERS WILL GET CITY WATER IN THEIR FAUCETS THIS YEAR.

AND, ALL SOUTHWEST CUSTOMERS ARE ALREADY ENJOYING A REDUCTION IN THEIR WATER BILLS BECAUSE OF THE LOWER RATES OF CITY UTILITIES.

IN ADDITION TO PROVIDING AWARD-WINNING WATER SERVICES, WE'RE MEETING DEADLINES ON THE FEDERAL MANDATE TO REDUCE SEWER OVERFLOWS AND PROTECT OUR RIVERS.

TODAY, I CAN REPORT THAT LATER THIS YEAR, WE'LL MEET THE REQUIREMENT TO REDUCE OVERFLOWS ON THE ST. JOE RIVER TO ON AVERAGE JUST ONE PER YEAR. THAT'S FOUR YEARS AHEAD OF SCHEDULE!

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE, IN 2017, WORK WILL BEGIN ON THE TUNNEL PROJECT.

IT WILL BE THE LARGEST CONSTRUCTION PROJECT IN THE HISTORY OF OUR CITY. ALL TO MAKE OUR RIVERS CLEANER.

IT'S NOT JUST THE WATER QUALITY OF OUR RIVERS THAT WE'RE WORKING ON.

MY VISION AND EXCITEMENT EXTENDS TO DEVELOPING OUR RIVERFRONT AS WELL.

THE FIRST-EVER RIVERFRONT DEVELOPMENT STUDY WAS JUST COMPLETED AND RELEASED TO ALL OF YOU LAST WEEK.

I SHARE YOUR ENTHUSIASM AS WE LOOK AHEAD TO SEE HOW WE CAN FORM PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS THAT WILL EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES THAT FOCUS ON NATURE, RECREATION, AND DEVELOPMENT.

WE RECOGNIZE THAT DEVELOPING OUR RIVERS WILL TAKE TIME AND THAT POTENTIAL PROJECTS WILL BE DONE IN PHASES OVER A PERIOD OF SEVERAL YEARS.

BUT, TODAY, I'M ANNOUNCING THAT WE'RE TAKING THE INITIAL STEPS TO SHOW OUR COMMITMENT TO ALL OF YOU THAT WE'RE MOVING FORWARD WITH THIS INITIATIVE.

FIRST, I'M CHALLENGING THE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT TRUST TO BEGIN THE PROCESS OF PROPERTY ACQUISITION TO ALLOW FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT.

SECOND, I'M REQUESTING THAT CITY COUNCIL PARTNER WITH US AS WE EXPLORE THE FIRST MAINTENANCE PROJECTS ALONG THE RIVERBANK THAT WILL NEED TO OCCUR.

FINALLY, I'M ALSO CALLING ON THE DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT AND GREATER FORT WAYNE INC. TO CREATE ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES ALONG THE RIVERS.

AND TO LEAD THESE EFFORTS, I'M ASKING DEPUTY MAYOR KARL BANDEMER TO FORM AN IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE TO COORDINATE THIS RIVERFRONT PLAN.

WE NEED TO CONTINUE TO THINK BIG AS WE COLLABORATE TO MAKE OUR RIVERFRONT A TRUE LEGACY.

SPEAKING OF LEGACY, HOW MANY COMMUNITIES CAN SAY THEY HAVE PUT ASIDE SIGNIFICANT CAPITAL FOR FINANCIAL GROWTH AND STABILITY, MONEY TO HELP TRANSFORM THEIR CITY INTO ALL THAT IT CAN BE.

IT TOOK STRONG LEADERSHIP TO CREATE OUR LEGACY FUND.

BUT, IT DEMONSTRATES HOW WE'RE BUILDING ON OUR MOMENTUM AND MOVING IN RIGHT DIRECTION.

ONE OF OUR LEGACY FUND SUCCESS STORIES IS THE MCMILLEN PARK COMMUNITY CENTER.

IT'S A GREAT RESOURCE THAT'S HAVING A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE LIVES OF ADULTS AND CHILDREN ALIKE.

PROJECTS LIKE THE MCMILLEN COMMUNITY CENTER DEMONSTRATE MY COMMITMENT TO ENSURE THAT WE MAKE WISE INVESTMENTS AND CONTINUE TO PROTECT LEGACY FUNDS.

IT'S A COMMUNITY ASSET THAT'S HERE FOR US NOW, AND IT'S GOING TO BE HERE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

BEING A CITY ON THE MOVE ALSO REQUIRES FISCAL DISCIPLINE.

THROUGH LEADERSHIP AND A BIPARTISAN APPROACH TO ACHIEVING RESULTS, OUR CITY'S FINANCES ARE STRONG.

BALANCED BUDGETS, KEEPING TAXES LOW, AND A COMMITMENT TO PROVIDING EXCELLENT CITY SERVICES SETS US APART FROM THE REST.

BY WORKING TOGETHER WITH CITY COUNCIL AND THE FISCAL POLICY GROUP, WE HAVE A FINANCIAL PLAN FOR THE FUTURE TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY.

SPEAKING OF WORKING TOGETHER, I WANT TO RECOGNIZE CITY CLERK SANDY KENNEDY.

SANDY IS RETIRING AT THE END OF THIS YEAR AFTER SERVING AS YOUR CITY CLERK SINCE 1983.

SANDY, PLEASE STAND SO WE CAN THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE AND LOVE FOR THE RESIDENTS OF FORT WAYNE. WE APPRECIATE YOU.

OUR WORLD-CLASS PARKS SYSTEM ALSO MAKES US UNIQUE.

IT'S ANOTHER REASON WHY OUR QUALITY OF LIFE CONTINUES TO IMPRESS EVERYONE.

THIS YEAR, OUR PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT IS CELEBRATING ITS 110TH ANNIVERSARY.

AS A WAY TO CELEBRATE, I CAN SHARE WITH YOU TODAY THAT WE'LL BE HOSTING A SPECIAL COMMUNITYWIDE EVENT THIS SUMMER.

IN ADDITION, THE FOELLINGER THEATRE CONCERT SERIES CONTINUES TO BE A LOCAL AND REGIONAL ATTRACTION.

AND THIS YEAR, WE'LL BE EXPANDING THE FACILITY TO MEET ANTICIPATED GROWTH NEEDS.

I'M ALSO PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THAT WE'LL WELCOME THE DOOBIE BROTHERS TO TOWN ON JULY 1ST AS THEY'LL PERFORM AT THE FOELLINGER.

WITH NUMEROUS STATE AND NATIONAL AWARDS, IT CONFIRMS THAT OUR PARKS DEPARTMENT IS A JEWEL FOR ALL OF US TO TREASURE.

YOU MAY HAVE SEEN THAT WE'RE ALSO CONSTRUCTING A NEW PARK ON SAINT MARY'S AVENUE.

THE INSTALLATION OF A SPLASH PAD AND GREEN SPACE THERE IS SCHEDULED TO BEGIN YET THIS YEAR.

WE CONTINUE TO WORK TOGETHER WITH OUR NEIGHBORHOODS TO BUILD

STRONG COMMUNITY ASSETS.

HOW WE WORK TOGETHER TO INCREASE THE AMENITIES WE OFFER ALSO SPEAKS VOLUMES ABOUT FORT WAYNE AS A COMMUNITY.

JUST LOOK AT OUR TRAILS.

SINCE I TOOK OFFICE, OUR REGIONAL TRAIL NETWORK HAS GROWN FROM 38 MILES TO 85 MILES, MORE THAN DOUBLE.

THIS YEAR, TRAIL CONSTRUCTION WILL CONTINUE ON OXFORD STREET.

AND, WE'LL BEGIN WORK ON MAPLECREST AND ILLINOIS ROADS, MCKINNIE AVENUE, AND HANNA STREET.

FORT WAYNE IS AN AWARD-WINNING CITY.

THERE'S NOT ENOUGH TIME TO LIST ALL OF OUR AWARDS, BUT HERE ARE A FEW.

THE 311 CALL CENTER IS A TOP 50 CALL CENTER IN THE COUNTRY WITH A 92 PERCENT APPROVAL RATING FROM CITIZENS.

THE PUBLIC IS USING OUR 311 SERVICE AND IT SHOWS.

WE TOOK NEARLY 200,000 CALLS IN 2014. THAT'S 26,000 MORE CALLS THAN THE PREVIOUS YEAR.

WE'RE ALSO AN INDIANA GREEN COMMUNITY OF THE YEAR FOR PROACTIVE EFFORTS TO PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT.

WE HAVE ONE OF THE TOP VEHICLE FLEET PROGRAMS IN THE COUNTRY.

WE'RE A NATIONAL LEADER IN THE LET'S MOVE INITIATIVE TO INCREASE HEALTH AND FITNESS.

AND, WE CONTINUE TO BE RECOGNIZED FOR OUR WATER, SEWER, AND RECYCLING PROGRAMS.

WE'RE FORTUNATE TO LIVE IN A COMMUNITY THAT VALUES OUR FREEDOM.

OUR DEPLOYED SERVICE MEMBERS ARE CLOSE TO OUR HEARTS.

WITH THE NEW BLUE STAR BANNER PROGRAM, WE'RE ABLE TO THANK AND CELEBRATE THE BRAVE MEN AND WOMEN WHO DEVOTE THEIR LIVES TO PROTECTING US.

THE BLUE STAR BANNERS SHOW WE CARE AND APPRECIATE WHAT WE HAVE.

I LOOK FORWARD TO WHEN THE BANNERS GO BACK UP ON JEFFERSON BOULEVARD THIS SPRING.

YOU KNOW, FORT WAYNE IS ALSO A CHAMPIONSHIP CITY.

THE TINCAPS ARE THE MINOR LEAGUE TEAM OF THE YEAR FOR ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE.

PARKVIEW FIELD IS MINOR LEAGUE BASEBALL'S NUMBER ONE BALLPARK EXPERIENCE, AND A TOP TEN STADIUM EXPERIENCE IN ALL OF SPORTS.

THE MAD ANTS ARE THE N-B-A DEVELOPMENT LEAGUE CHAMPIONS.

THE KOMETS ARE CONTINUING A RICH TRADITION OF CHAMPIONSHIPS AND EXCELLENCE.

WE WELCOMED HOME DAMARCUS BEASLEY AS THE FIRST AMERICAN TO PLAY IN FOUR WORLD CUP SOCCER EVENTS.

AND, THE SAINT FRANCIS WOMEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM IS THE N-A-I-A DIVISION TWO NATIONAL CHAMPIONS.

AS WE CELEBRATE ALL THAT IS GREAT ABOUT FORT WAYNE, WE KNOW THERE ARE CHALLENGES THAT WE NEED TO CONFRONT.

ALTHOUGH UNEMPLOYMENT IS DOWN TO AROUND FIVE PERCENT, THERE ARE PEOPLE IN OUR COMMUNITY WHO EITHER DON'T HAVE A JOB... OR WHO ARE UNDEREMPLOYED... AND HAVING A DIFFICULT TIME MAKING ENDS MEET.

IT'S A CHALLENGE WE MUST BE WILLING TO TACKLE TO ENSURE THAT ALL OF OUR RESIDENTS ARE GIVEN THE CHANCE TO SUCCEED AND LIVE OUT THEIR

HOPES AND DREAMS.

I BELIEVE PARTNERSHIPS WITH OUR LOCAL COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES AND EMPLOYERS CAN IMPROVE FORT WAYNE RESIDENTS' LIVES AND WELL-BEING.

THAT'S WHY LATER THIS YEAR, I'LL BE CONVENING AN EDUCATION-EMPLOYER FORUM.

WE'LL BRING EDUCATORS, EMPLOYERS, AND THOSE SEEKING EMPLOYMENT TOGETHER TO CONNECT AND DISCUSS JOB AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES.

WE'RE ALSO A CITY THAT CARES ABOUT ONE ANOTHER.

AS A COMMUNITY, WE INVEST HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS EACH YEAR TO ASSIST THOSE IN NEED OF HELP.

AND, WE'LL CONTINUE OUR PROACTIVE EFFORTS AND PARTNERSHIPS WITH LOCAL SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES TO HELP THE HOMELESS POPULATION.

I'M ALSO ENCOURAGED BY THE FACT THAT FORT WAYNE WAS RECENTLY SELECTED BY THE STATE OF INDIANA TO PARTICIPATE IN A PILOT PROGRAM TO REACH CHRONICALLY HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS.

WE HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO THOSE WHO ARE LESS FORTUNATE, QUITE OFTEN THROUGH NO FAULT OF THEIR OWN.

COLLECTIVELY, WE CAN MAKE FORT WAYNE AN EVEN BETTER PLACE TO CALL HOME FOR EVERYONE.

I LOVE THIS CITY.

I BELIEVE IN FORT WAYNE, AND I KNOW YOU DO, TOO.

THE VISION, EXCITEMENT, AND MOMENTUM ARE IN PLACE.

JOIN ME AS WE CONTINUE TO BUILD ON THE MOMENTUM WE'RE EXPERIENCING IN OUR WONDERFUL CITY.

NOW IS NOT THE TIME TO STOP AND BE PASSED BY.

WE MUST CONTINUE TO MOVE FORWARD; ALWAYS THINKING AND PLANNING
FOR A BETTER TOMORROW.

AS WE STRIVE FOR GREATNESS, WE MUST COME TOGETHER TO MAKE A
MEANINGFUL DIFFERENCE.

GOD BLESS YOU AND GOD BLESS THE CITY OF FORT WAYNE.

THANK YOU