

# State of the City Address

*Mayor Roy D. Buol*

*Monday, March 22, 2010*



*City Council Chambers, Historic Federal Building  
350 W. 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Dubuque, Iowa*

Good evening! It is my honor to join with the League of Women Voters and the Dubuque Telegraph Herald in welcoming you to the Annual State of the City Address, being broadcast from the City Council's official chambers located in our historic Federal Building in downtown Dubuque!

Tonight's address will focus on some new ideas and strategies that will drive our common future, as well as provide a candid review of the past year--

-- A year that will be defined by history as one of collaborative spirit and innovation even in the face of the worst recession since the Great Depression; and

- A year that prominently features Dubuque in a global narrative for solutions, ideas, and partnerships.

But first, I wish to express our collective gratitude to the citizens of Dubuque.

Absolutely nothing would be possible without your continued support...your constructive ideas...and the faith and pride you demonstrate in our community every single day... and we thank you!

I am proud to now introduce the individuals responsible for our City's Vision; who share with me a relentless focus on execution and results; who are committed to transparent and ethical government; and who continue to represent Dubuque citizens with integrity and perseverance.

These are your City Council representatives: Seated to my right:

- At Large Councilperson Ric Jones
- At Large Councilperson David Resnick
- First Ward Councilperson Kevin Lynch
- Second Ward Councilperson, Karla Braig
- Third Ward Councilperson, Joyce Connors
- And, Fourth Ward Councilperson, Dirk Voetberg.

Economically strong, high quality-of-life communities don't just happen. They need focused planning and professional management.

I am privileged to introduce the persons responsible for implementing, on a daily basis, the City's Mission to deliver excellent municipal services that support urban living, and contribute to a sustainable city.

These individuals work with the Council to plan for our community's future, facilitate access to critical human services, and work to maintain a financially sound city government.

Importantly, they join with the Council in building the strategic public/private partnerships which assemble our community's resources for important services, projects and programs.

Led by City Manager Mike Van Milligen who is out of town this evening, this is your City Management Team:

Seated to my left:

- Assistant City Manager, Cindy Steinhauser
- Assistant City Manager, Teri Goodmann
- City Attorney Barry Lindahl
- And, City Clerk Jeanne Schneider.

And, I want to recognize the City's Department and Division Managers for their dedication to excellence, and for hiring and mentoring the most capable and conscientious employees who consistently take pride in delivering the City's services to our citizens.

We all know that Dubuque would not be the city it is today without its remarkable volunteer base. This includes the valuable service of volunteers who serve on the City's Boards and Commissions.

To every one of you...we truly value your commitment to community!

Adding to Dubuque's strength are the key partnerships developed at the county, state, and federal levels.

Partnerships include our Dubuque County Supervisors and all of the County's hard-working elected officials. They include our State partners in Des Moines, as well as all our area Legislators.

Significant to Dubuque's continued progress are our "champions" in Washington, D.C. – Senators Harkin and Grassley, and Congressman Braley, as well as their staff both in D.C. and here at home, all of whom remain supportive of Dubuque's vision for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

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When I first became Mayor over four years ago, I shared my belief that "the next five years would define the next 50 for Dubuque!"

Clearly, in 2006 most could not envision the magnitude of a global financial meltdown and the deep recession that developed – impacting literally every city on the face of the Earth.

So tonight, let's look at the facts:

Our community has NOT been immune to the effects of this global recession.

The layoffs...unemployment...underemployment...and foreclosures that dominated the national headlines have also made our local headlines...impacting at its peak the livelihood of approximately 3,200 area citizens through business closures, lay offs, and consolidations.

Another fact...a bright spot...the consolation...is that Dubuque did and continues to fare better than the vast majority of communities in the US.

And that's a good thing!

Today, Dubuque's unemployment rate remains far below that of the U.S. as a whole AND according to numbers released just this month about Iowa's large metros, only Dubuque and Iowa City are reversing job loss trends compared to just one year ago.

History will judge how we in Dubuque responded to the challenges of this "deep" recession.

And, at the forefront of the City's ongoing efforts is this...none of us will rest until each and every one of those 3,200 citizens who were impacted by job loss during this recession...people who are our friends, family, and neighbors...once again have the dignity of work and a job that makes life better for their families!

How do we do that?

Sometimes the best place to look for ideas is in our own backyard, so to speak.

And Dubuque's backyard is loaded with smart, innovative existing businesses!

Let me put it this way....25 of the 29 businesses located in just the Dubuque Technology Park and the Dubuque Industrial Center West were the relocations and expansions of Dubuque's local businesses!

In fact, if we look back over the past three years, 22 of Dubuque's development projects were the expansions of local Dubuque businesses.

So there it is! Your city's ability to weather this recession points directly to our ability to build upon the foundation of existing businesses.

The commitment of these businesses to our community, across generations in many cases, has been critical to the success of our workforce and our community as a whole.

Taking care of existing businesses is a solid strategy whether in a “down” economy or a strong economy.

That likely explains why the business retention efforts of Greater Dubuque Development Corporation were recognized in 2009 by four different economic development organizations as the best in the United States!

Without a doubt, the recruitment of new businesses to Dubuque will always be part of the City’s planned progress...

Yet Dubuque will never lose sight of the fact that our successes have been the direct result of our existing businesses and the confidence they have shown in the City’s direction as they continued to invest in expansion and job growth.

Fortunately, it was that same confidence, along with GDDC’s impeccable service, that became important in attracting new businesses like Hormel and IBM...both of which happened during the escalating recession years of 2008 and 2009!

This brings me to my next point about the past year...

There is no doubt that one of the most significant, and nationally publicized, events of 2009 was IBM’s announcement to create its first stateside technology services delivery center in 10 years in downtown Dubuque.

After a rigorous, months-long application process working with Greater Dubuque Development Corporation, the City of Dubuque, and Dubuque Initiatives...IBM signed a 10-year lease with optional extension years for the historic Roshek Building.

Through phased hiring, IBM is on target to employ 1,300 by the end of this year and it is very encouraging to see how the influx of new IBM employees has invigorated the downtown!

IBM’s annual payroll in Dubuque will be about \$60 million. That is an additional \$1 million plus hitting the streets of Dubuque every single week....positively impacting Dubuque’s housing, retail and entertainment markets.

Important to the success of this new relationship is housing.

The City and its partners continue to address the workforce rental housing needs AND parking challenges associated with an economic enhancement of this magnitude.

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The significant transformation of our downtown area since 2006 has involved many public/private partnerships.

Leading the way has been Gronen Restoration and Dubuque Initiatives along with their many partners who worked to accomplish the rehabilitation of the historic Roshek Building, utilizing energy-efficient technology and environmentally friendly data center design.

Over the past few years, Gronen Restoration has also accomplished the transformation of six buildings in the 1000 block of Upper Main Street into 14 beautiful storefronts and 30 apartments as well as completion of the Crescent Community Health Center.

And it was great to see the former Interstate Power Building re-purposed into high quality downtown office space!

In the past three years, the downtown landscape has welcomed a variety of business, retail and entertainment venues, and was further enhanced by the impressive renovations of Cottingham & Butler; the Silver Dollar Restaurant, renamed "The Bank"; the Steele Center; and the Pfohl family's \$32 million renovation of the historic "Hotel Julien Dubuque!"

Summing up the facts, David Heiar, the City's Economic Development Director, reported last year that from 1983 to 2008 there were a grand total of 48 economic development agreements in Dubuque.

Twenty-six of those 48 occurred between 2006 and 2008, prior to landing Hormel and IBM!

And, importantly, in 2009 the confidence and investment in Downtown Dubuque did continue, despite the economic downturn.

This includes over \$1.1 million in building façade renovation and new construction;

Nearly \$28 million in public improvements;

And, nearly \$26 million in building rehabilitation that was in addition to the Roshek Building!

I believe citizens will agree that these investments are impressive in any given year, made even more so in a year of such national economic decline.

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Some critics might say that an economic recession is no time to think big...no time to invest... no time to plan for the future.

But we have proven them wrong before and it's time to do so again. It is time to expect more of ourselves and each other.

The truth is, we learn a lot about people when they are in a crisis — and we learn even more about communities.

Difficult financial times call for us to pull together to advance our City and remain committed to our vision for a sustainable Dubuque.

Like members of a crew team on the Mississippi River, sometimes rowing with the current, sometimes against it, when everyone is in sync, our efforts are multiplied and we make steady progress – even through choppy waters!

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According to the National League of Cities of which Dubuque is a member...over 80 percent of U.S. cities continue to face financial difficulties – this is the highest percentage in the history of their surveys, which date back to 1985.

And, it is precisely in times of crisis, that government -- national, state, and local -- need the renewed civic engagement of its citizens.

Earlier this month, US Commerce Secretary Gary Locke spoke at a national conference about ways that government, academia, business and non-profits can better collaborate and can take steps to make our country's innovation "ecosystem" more focused and efficient.

He explained that when innovative communities come together or "cluster,"... and pull toward similar goals, good things can happen.

Silicon Valley is a striking example of an innovation cluster done right, he said.

Innovation clusters create eco-systems where universities, venture capital, entrepreneurs, and skilled workers are all amplifying each others' talents!

The US Commerce Secretary added "innovation hotbeds are not confined to any one part of the country.

They're located in Rochester, New York AND DUBUQUE, IOWA! That's right!

During a national conference in D.C., the U. S. Commerce Secretary shared with participants what the City and its partners have learned --- innovation builds on a community's competitive advantages, and it leverages private investment.

Across the country, every region needs to leverage its strengths to accomplish a common goal. That goal is to create well-paying, sustainable jobs, because...at the end of every day, it is job growth that is most important to us all.

And another fact is this...in the past 25 years, Dubuque has created 8.3 percent of all Iowa jobs! Based on Dubuque's population, one could assume we would carry our City's weight of about 3 percent or so...yet Dubuque created almost three times that!

Even so, we in Dubuque do not kid ourselves. Like all cities, whether in Iowa or beyond, Dubuque has had challenges. Always has. Always will.

But what is important is that Dubuque's future is not about perfection...it's about direction!

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When we moved into 2010, Dubuque's CEOs shared that they are noticeably more comfortable with the direction of the economy than just one year ago. Based on 211 meetings held by Greater Dubuque Development Corporation with local business owners, CEOs, and top managers...they learned that Dubuque businesses are moving into 2010 and beyond with a distinct, increased level of confidence!

Here are the facts that support that statement:

First, approximately 43 percent of Dubuque area businesses intend to expand in one way or another, including new jobs, new construction, and new capabilities.

This approach is consistent with what the national economic experts report when they say that communities and businesses that take an innovative approach during these tough times will have the edge as our nation moves out of this recession.

Next, even with lower sales levels in 2009 versus the previous year, approximately 53 percent of businesses ARE gaining market share against competitors.

Dubuque area CEOs believe this will fuel potential job growth and capital needs.

Importantly, Dubuque area manufacturing companies, which represented an estimated two-thirds of Dubuque's job loss during the past year, are slowly recalling workers, adding hours to the work week, and ramping up production.

There is a positive, overwhelming perception about the strength of Dubuque's economy versus other locations in the region and across the nation. Business, education and industry leaders alike have reported strong approval of the City's leadership and Dubuque's public-private sector cooperation and collaboration.

And even in tough economic times, it is remarkable that the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque raised over 5 million dollars last year, for the third consecutive year!

In summary, Dubuque businesses are moving into 2010 with a distinct, increased level of confidence... And...so should you!



With all that has worked in our City's favor these past several years, Dubuque has not been immune to safety and social realities. Yet as our history shows, we've been there before...and just like before, we are facing these challenges and will overcome them.

Following incidents of violence last year which resulted in the deaths of two community members, the City Council convened a community forum on public safety. Subsequent to that meeting, the council formed a 25-member Safe Community Task Force.

Due to the comprehensive nature of the work to be performed, four sub-committees were established, with efforts focused on Neighborhood Engagement, Enforcement, Management of the Physical Environment, and Research and Facts.

On February 1<sup>st</sup>, the Council received the first report from the Task Force. They recommended several measures including:

- the reduction of time between rental inspections for problem properties;
- disallowing property owners to receive city, state, or federal funds unless their properties are in compliance or the owner is actively pursuing compliance;
- conducting an expanded crime study that will provide comparisons with like communities;
- comparing the actual crime profile in Dubuque with public perception and conveying crime stats to the general public;
- assessing the effectiveness of current and new efforts to curtail criminal activity;
- installing surveillance cameras in the high problem areas and installing 911 emergency kiosks.

On March 1<sup>st</sup>, a second report to the Council tied together a multi-faceted approach to long term community security.

First, it is important for citizens to know that the City's commitment to public safety represents almost 24 percent of the City's general fund budget.

Our Dubuque Police Department is currently in the fourth year of a five year plan to add an additional fifteen sworn police officers. At the conclusion of this plan, there will be a total of 109 officers in the Department, and Dubuque's continued investment in technology is allowing these police officers to solve crimes more quickly, more effectively, and more comprehensively.

We remain immensely grateful for the outstanding work of the Dubuque Police Department to identify and arrest perpetrators, and provide the compelling evidence needed for prosecution.

During the March 1<sup>st</sup> report, many City Departments reported on projects that are helping to create a safe community AND enhance community relations; projects that involve housing inspections to prevent vacant and/or abandoned buildings from becoming a blight on a neighborhood;

Ongoing modifications to the assisted housing program that will terminate access to those exhibiting inappropriate behaviors; limit access to lowa-only residents; and restrict applicants from applying if they are already a member of a household receiving assistance. National statistics PROVE that if neighborhoods become run-down, they invite a criminal element.

The City, working in partnership with Dubuque Bank and Trust, has developed a home ownership purchase and rehabilitation program which has resulted in thirty new owner families in the Washington Neighborhood.

Much of the neighborhood rehab work is completed by the HEART program, a Four Mounds Foundation program in partnership with the Dubuque Community School District, Four Oaks and the City of Dubuque.

The HEART program provides vocational training for at-risk youth and the program has been expanded in the Washington Neighborhood.

The Upper Central Corridor which is Central Avenue between 14<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Streets is the target area for assistance to small business owners and operators.

A revolving loan fund will be established to assist with façade improvements, small business start up assistance, and to provide lease subsidies for incubator-type businesses.

Again, it is important for citizens to clearly understand that neighborhoods and the improvement of neighborhoods, are the long-term solution to ensuring citizen safety because statistics prove that crime exists in neighborhoods of neglect.

We are also aware of the significant flooding suffered by homeowners living in the North End of Dubuque over the years, which encouraged a lack of investment in those properties, sometimes leading to blighted conditions.

The City's Bee Branch Project will ultimately replace over 60 houses in that area with a linear park, and natural landscaping which will add value, and safety, to the remaining neighborhoods that surround it.

The bottom line is, neighborhood pride matters. Improving our neighborhoods encourages relationships.

Statistics also prove that when we get to know our neighbors, we feel safer because of those relationships. And we become more actively engaged in making our streets safer.

Dr. Martin Luther King wrote a book called “The Strength of Love”... and in it he also spoke to fear...both normal and abnormal. He said, “Normal fear motivates us to improve our individual and collective welfare. But...abnormal fear constantly poisons and distorts our inner lives.”

In some ways, our community is dealing with abnormal fear. Fear of a crime spree that doesn't exist. Fear that our community is racist when only a few make it so.

With the assistance of experienced facilitators who began working with our Safe Community Task Force the evening of March 11<sup>th</sup>, citizens can expect measures and strategies that will help us reach our public safety goals and strengthen our community.

I speak on behalf of the City Council when I say we are immensely grateful for the work of our Safe Community Task Force. Its members are our friends and neighbors, non profit leaders, business associates, and educators who are engaged on behalf of us all.

I also want to take this opportunity to publicly welcome former Criminal Investigations Division Captain Mark Dalsing to the important role as Dubuque's Chief of Police!

And let us all remember this...Dubuque is a great Midwestern city that has already proven that we can do great things in spite of a crisis — and sometimes because of one!

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I am pleased to report that in 2009, our Dubuque Area Chamber of Commerce, representing over 1,300 members, received the coveted five Star Accreditation – the highest, most prestigious industry designation.

Dubuque's Chamber is the only one in the State of Iowa to do so, and out of 7,000 Chambers nationwide, only 59 carry this five Star designation.

In 2009, the Chamber reports that tourism remained strong with over 1.7 million visitors to the Dubuque area.

Dubuque also hosted over 60,000 convention delegates and 3,700 visitors who were part of group tours.

The Dubuque Regional Sports Commission brought 13 events to our area, producing an economic impact of \$11.6 million.

Exciting news for 2010 includes that the Chamber was able to secure the popular Dock Dogs National Championship, and also, in partnership with the City, the Chamber secured Dubuque as the last stop for RAGBRAI 2010, the first reappearance in our community in 17 years!

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A few years ago, the City Council adopted the program known as “Sustainable Dubuque” and one of our newest community partners is already taking a leadership role!

Just last month Hormel hosted community leaders and their neighbors at the Dubuque Industrial Center West as they showcased their long-standing commitment to innovation and energy conservation in their brand new facility.

Using the LEED rating system which means Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, Hormel is educating its employees and other interested parties about the conservation of resources and the company’s sustainability efforts.

The City’s commitment to sustainability was likewise important to IBM as they considered Dubuque for their first stateside investment in ten years, and again later, in their invitation for Dubuque to participate in a collaborative initiative to become the first “smarter” sustainable city in the US!

The goal of the City’s collaborative project with IBM is to develop and pilot a systematic mechanism that will give consumers and businesses the information they need to make informed decisions about how they consume resources like water, electricity, natural gas and oil.

IBM Research is working with the City and local and regional private businesses, non-profit organizations, and several federal agencies to help deliver vital services that will save businesses and residents money.

This collaborative effort will create an international brand for Dubuque that will help us to retain and recruit businesses and workforce, serve as a major recruitment tool for area colleges, and help to accelerate local business growth.

IBM has shown its respect for Dubuque, and in turn, we respect the opportunity that IBM provides, long-term, for our college graduates, our citizens, and what Dubuque can become in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The City’s initial investment, in addition to the personnel and technology investment provided by IBM’s Research Department, is \$850,000 provided through the City’s water fund. Future phases of the project are anticipated to be funded by external grant sources.

These partnerships and others have led to the City receiving more than \$10 million in federal and state grants in the last year and more than \$16 million to the community.

As part of the Smarter City project, we are working with a small test group of citizens to provide input to IBM. This input will pave the way for a global, yes global, approach to Smarter Cities.

In 2010, it is the citizens of Dubuque who are helping to shape sustainability around the world.

To those citizens we say thank you for helping us to better manage our resources, both natural and financial, and for helping to make Dubuque a leader in Sustainability!

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The City Council remains proud of the strong financial position that Dubuque has maintained, and for which it has been acknowledged nationally, under the long-term leadership of City Manager Mike Van Milligen.

The planning for each fiscal year budget begins in September following the City Council goal setting sessions in August, entailing many months of planning, review, and assessment and the process concludes in March of the next year.

The City both televises its February and March budget hearings and maintains a link to the hearings on the City's website.

At the hearings, the Council and interested citizens are provided with the details that underlie the planning for all the essential services and programs that make Dubuque the city it is today.

The City Council listens to each department manager as they review the steps taken to refine the fiscal year budget in order to maximize services and minimize costs.

Throughout each department hearing, the council is able consider the recommendations to ensure we are establishing fiscal priorities that will keep Dubuque competitive, allowing us not only to survive, but to thrive.

The City Manager and Department Heads work for many months behind the scenes to provide continuous improvement in the services citizens receive for their tax dollars. They look for added efficiencies; and seek to consolidate when it makes sense.

Their focus is first on core services and initiatives that are beneficial for our community going forward.

Decisions are then made about investments in infrastructure and facilities and in opportunities to grow our economy.

Some of Iowa's cities have made position cuts; and they have moved to out-source or privatize those services. Most of our cities are facing structural challenges. And even as expenditures are controlled, the reality of aging infrastructure puts pressure on scarce budget dollars.

Our City's budget includes investments that contribute to our quality of life and that help to keep Dubuque a community of choice, in addition to creating a \$1.5 million "rainy day" fund. That, I believe, is good fiscal management.

The big picture encompasses a need to support private investment in our community that will grow our assessed valuation and expand our employment base.

We must fully consider opportunities presented to us and work together as public/private partners to provide the good jobs that will sustain future generations.

On March 9th, following a public hearing where citizens were invited to provide input to any of the departmental budget recommendations, the City Council adopted the fiscal year 2011 budget. In this budget, the City's portion of the property tax rate, despite an increase, remained the lowest of the 10 major metro areas in Iowa!

In fact, the City's portion of the property tax payment for the average homeowner has increased just one dollar and seventy seven cents a year since 1987 when the local option sales tax was passed by a citizen referendum.

Of the 10 largest cities in the State of Iowa, Dubuque continues to have the lowest refuse and water rate, and the third lowest sewer rate.

And, there are 41 fewer full-time City employees than on the payroll in 1981.

In 2009, and in spite of the economy, your City made significant progress!

And our history proves that we have come through a much worse economy and not only survived, but thrived.

So yes, we are all in agreement that times are tough right now...but we have proven that we are too.

Over the past several decades, this community has pulled together to remake itself and has now become an economically diverse center for business, manufacturing, and technology...for insurance and finance...for arts and entertainment...and for education and healthcare.

And in 2010, we are not stepping away from our challenges, but instead are laying the groundwork for an even more diversified, innovative economy---one that will enable us to come out on the other side of a deep recession, even stronger.

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In 2009, several national studies and publications highlighted what Dubuque has worked so hard to achieve – to be one of the most affordable places to live in the country, providing a quality of life that is unparalleled for its price!

There are many ways to be a champion and Dubuque continues to make its case through Sustainability Initiatives.

On March 9<sup>th</sup>, Dubuque's third annual "Growing Sustainable Communities" conference was held at the Grand River Center in the Port of Dubuque and its theme was "Sustainability: A Tool for Community and Economic Development."

This popular forum has expanded to an all day event with workshops featuring speakers from across the region on the topics of sustainability related to regional economies, green buildings, community knowledge, and local food.

Through education and example, we are tackling projects that are good for the environment, good for economic development, and good for life quality -- projects that reduce energy usage and costs, that beautify our city, and that produce environments where the richness of talents can be experienced.

Global challenges can bring out the best in citizen creativity, especially when the public and private sectors join together to find solutions.

And Dubuque's public/private sectors have made great progress towards a cleaner, greener, healthier Dubuque.

We are finding new ways to tackle old problems. And as we succeed, others are taking note.

By incorporating green building practices, inclusionary affordable housing, the highest quality architecture and an emphasis on improved public transportation, our redevelopments showcase the great potential of Dubuque's competitive strengths.

At the end of the day, our City is recognized for what it does best, "Innovation and Partnerships" ---for we have learned well what they produce for citizens and community.

And in our daily work, your elected leaders and city staff remain focused on ensuring a safe community...fiscal discipline...expanding the job base...improving educational opportunities, and, always, always looking for innovation.

The City remains committed to working with businesses, educational institutions, and citizens to make sure that Dubuque becomes a leader in our nation's economic recovery.

Significant to that recovery, and to our stability as a nation, is a reality that begs our attention.

As shared by Harvard educated experts, it is pretty clear where our nation has gone wrong.

What has fundamentally changed since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is our nation's "under-appreciation" for what made us great in the first place...education and innovation!

History shows that in generation after generation, children in the US had finished about two more years of schooling than did their parents.

In the 60s, our nation had the top graduation rate in the world! By the year 2000, we were 19<sup>th</sup> and our college graduation rates had fallen to 12<sup>th</sup> place.

To rally...to have "Made in America" jobs...we must be the best, again, at educating our youth!

And as much as we can control what we teach and how our students learn in the classroom, we need also to join forces and make a commitment to nurturing kids outside of the classroom.

Tonight, I invite the collective spirit and energy of parents, grandparents, private citizens and community partners to merge on behalf of our children.

The fact is, with so many parents working outside the home, many children are returning to an empty home after school.

Official studies show that the after-school hours are the time when juvenile crime hits its peak; those studies also point out that quality after-school programs can protect our children.

In communities where comprehensive programs exist, children are less likely to commit crimes or to be victimized, and are less likely to engage in risky behavior such as drug, alcohol and tobacco use.

Not only will after-school programming keep our children safe, but for many children their academic performance improves because the programs allow them to focus attention on areas in which they are having difficulties.

And many of these programs connect learning to more relaxed and enriching activities, and improve academic performance as well.



Nationally, both teachers and parents have reported that children who participate in an after-school program are able to develop better social skills and learn to handle conflicts in more socially acceptable ways.

Recently, I was able to lend my support for one such program for which the Dubuque Community School District is seeking grant funding.

It is an after-school program that would target third, fourth, and fifth graders at Audubon, Fulton, Lincoln, Prescott and Marshall Schools.

The program would provide certified teachers an enrichment program developed by arts experts; it would provide a safe environment for students and offer them the opportunity to become more engaged and goal oriented by using their artistic abilities.

As we are learning, most after-school programs depend on and draw upon grandparents and community volunteers because volunteers can reduce the price of a program and the staff-to-child ratio. So this is our challenge.

If citizens will make themselves available to our public and private schools as well as the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque which manages our Every Child, Every Promise initiative...we can help after-school programming become an affordable priority for Dubuque youth!

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As we look forward in 2010, let us remind ourselves of FDR's words as this nation was coming out of the Great Depression. He said, "In order to succeed, our desire for success must be greater than our fear of failure."

Dubuque is blessed with community leadership from all sectors. That leadership and collective point of view is reflected in the vision, the passion and the skills being put forth to make our city an amazing place to live, to work and to visit.

Yet the fact is, in today's environment, all our cities are challenging each other for talent, business and resources.

That is why we continue working to define our appeal, promote our distinctive characteristics, and position ourselves in an increasingly international market place. Because let's face it...today's successful companies and young professionals can choose where to locate.

As City Council, City staff, and community partners, we believe in the innovative spirit of this city. That spirit of innovation is the very foundation on which this community has celebrated good times and faced down our challenges.

And we know what the great truth is ... it is the attitude and perseverance of the people of Dubuque who have always ensured that this City will continue to grow and prosper against enormous odds.

Together we are showing how one dedicated city employee, one innovative city agency, one passionate citizen... leading to one unified city can make all the difference in the world.

Innovation is the process of making changes, of making new things - and making things new.

With strategic investment in economic development and the opportunities presented by our Smarter City initiative, we are engaged in the creative process of change...of retooling Dubuque's economy.

Today, as our country struggles to restart its economy, Dubuque can be a place that ignites a new economy through creativity and discovery.

But this new reality will not be handed to us. We must be continually working to make difficult decisions to achieve our potential.

Decisions about the allocation of resources...about the amount of resources needed to invest in economic development, public safety, and neighborhoods... decisions that continue to shape Dubuque in the 21st Century.

From the perspective of your City Council and City Staff, our City's path is clear. We will think and act to make our way from these troubled times to the promised potential that lies ahead.

As your Mayor, and on behalf of your City Council and City Staff, I am privileged to report that the State of our City remains keenly focused, and that during 2009, the fourth of the next five years, the "collective and innovative spirit" of our community continued to prevail, and that has served to better define the next 50 years for Dubuque!

May God continue to bless the Citizens of Dubuque and the State of our City. Good night!