



State of the City Address

Dubuque Mayor Roy D. Buol

March 26, 2007
Carnegie-Stout Public Library

Good evening. I thank the League of Women Voters and the Telegraph Herald for their sponsorship of this inaugural event.

And I thank all of you for joining me this evening...elected officials, city staff, distinguished guests, and fellow citizens...here in our soon-to-be renovated Carnegie Stout Public Library, as well as those who are watching this broadcast on Dubuque's CityChannel 8 and listening to this broadcast live on KDTH.

This evening we have come together to celebrate our City...both our progress over this past year, and the opportunities in our future, as we continue to envision ways to make the City of Dubuque the best it can be...for us all. A City we are proud to call Home. A City that will compete with any in our nation!

One of the distinct reasons we are able to celebrate the City's progress is due to the dedication of my colleagues and your elected officials who serve with me as Dubuque's City Council. They are:

- At Large representatives Ann Michalski and Ric Jones;
- 1st Ward representative, Kevin Lynch;
- 2nd Ward representative, Karla Braig;
- 3rd Ward representative Patricia Cline; and
- 4th Ward representative Joyce Connors.

I want to take this opportunity to sincerely thank each one of these individuals for always putting the interests of our Dubuque citizens first!

While no public servant can promise perfection, I know you each share with me an obligation to continue the progress we have certainly made over this past year. It has been my honor to serve with you!

It also is my honor to recognize our City's good fortune in the form and substance of our City Manager Mike Van Milligen; Assistant City Manager Cindy Steinhauser; Assistant City Manager Teri Goodmann; City Clerk Jeanne Schneider; and City Attorney Barry Lindahl.

And the good fortune continues through the exemplary service of the City's Department and Division Managers, along with their hard working staff and all our City employees.

I also wish to extend our collective appreciation to the members of the City's Boards and Commissions for your volunteerism, commitment and expertise that not only allow our City to meet the expectations of our citizens on a regular basis, but to exceed them!

Elected officials and public servants have taken on a special task – the task of delivering democracy to our citizens. And, as we consider the State of our City, it is important to acknowledge our City's partnerships at the county, state, and federal levels with those who serve to advocate for our local needs.

The City of Dubuque is fortunate to have a strong partnership with our Dubuque County elected officials, including Supervisors Eric Manternach, Donna Smith, and Wayne Demmer.

We are well represented in Des Moines by State Representative and Iowa House Speaker Pat Murphy, State Representative Pam Jochum, and State Senator Mike Connolly.

We are also grateful for the service of our “champions” in Washington, DC – U.S. Congressman Bruce Braley, U.S. Senator Tom Harkin, and U.S. Senator Charles Grassley.

Each of these elected officials is a partner in our successes and we know we can count on their support as we address our challenges.

And finally, speaking of partnerships, I would like to acknowledge my wife, Deborah, along with our four adult children, their spouses and fiancé, and our amazing grandchildren...which currently number five.

Each of you contribute in ways that make my public service in this role as Mayor both possible and worthwhile.

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As you may have heard me say throughout my mayoral campaign in 2005 and during this first year as your Mayor, I believe that “the next five years will define the next fifty for Dubuque!”

That vision is taking hold in Dubuque and citizens have stepped forward to participate in leadership and community decisions to support that vision.

Volunteerism and philanthropy are influencing our quality of life and spurring state and national recognition of our City. Groups are networking, partnerships are evolving, and the buzz around the region is “*What does Dubuque have going on?!!*”

As a City Council and Staff, as individual neighborhoods, and as a community, we have undertaken several key initiatives to set in motion the path toward quality living for everyone.

And the more I have become immersed in our community, the more I am experiencing a “community of character”...a community that is indeed person-centered...where there is an awareness and appreciation developing for what makes each of us unique ... along with a growing realization that healthy, vibrant communities do not hold themselves back with a “*one size fits all*” mentality.

As a community of character, we are motivated to do what is right for each other. We are able to visualize and make the best decisions in life, for ourselves and sometimes for those who cannot.

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During our time together this evening, I will share with you highlights from this past year that help to define the State of our City as we moved through 2006 into 2007.

And, as with any such report, you will hear of accomplishments as well as challenges that serve to present opportunities to take our City to the next level of performance.

Generally speaking, your City government is providing for the basic health, safety and welfare of our citizens. We are providing public services that are necessary such as safe drinking water; superior fire and police protection; an open and inviting library; enhanced arts, entertainment and education opportunities, and more.

These are the areas of immense value to our citizens, and they are being provided in a fiscally responsible manner.

Our City budget is being balanced and our City Council priorities are being addressed. We have clear and quantifiable goals. And, we continue to make responsible choices based on citizen input.

The City has partnered with organizations such as Greater Dubuque Development Corporation and the Dubuque Area Chamber of Commerce to help provide opportunities for existing businesses to grow and expand as well as recruit new ones to our midst.

Economic development is critical for the vitality of our community and 2006 was a record-setting year for Dubuque's economy.

We are successful in Dubuque because we see ourselves as a community that has and will continue to prosper. From the small "mom and pop" stores to the Fortune 500 companies that employ our neighbors, friends, and families ... everyone is an important piece of Dubuque's economic puzzle.

And an important component of our economic success is happening in the "heart" of our City, so let's begin our economic development update in Downtown Dubuque.

But first, we need to remember how far we have come, from a place where twenty years ago we were hearing, "Would the last person to leave Dubuque please turn out the lights?" to truly becoming the "Key City" in the State of Iowa.

How did that happen?

A vision, supported by solid city and community leadership, partnerships, resources, good old-fashioned hard work, and yes....faith.... happened.

And today, our historic downtown area, anchored by Bluff and Main Streets, and the Port of Dubuque, are full of new investments in housing, building restoration and renovation, new office space, new retail space, new commercial, educational, and entertainment space.

A great example of the new vibrancy in downtown Dubuque is the 1000 block of Upper Main Street. This project by Gronen Restoration has transformed six buildings into 14 beautiful storefronts and 30 amazing apartments, providing 125,000 square-feet of renovated space for downtown businesses and residents.

Research shows that people are moving toward a lifestyle that allows them to live within walking distance of the amenities that enrich their lives and livelihoods. Dubuque is listening and responding in downtown Dubuque.

Adjacent to and overlooking downtown Dubuque, and another response to our changing society, will be the River Pointe Development Project, a significant multi-phased residential project featuring 240 condominium units.

Another important benefit for downtown Dubuque came out of the community-wide effort known as Envision 2010. Sponsored by our Chamber of Commerce and the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque...and funded by the Dubuque Racing Association, Envision 2010 generated 3,000 citizen ideas over a several month process that ultimately resulted in the top ten projects announced in January of 2006.

One of those projects was community-wide wireless internet access which lowers the barriers to broadband Internet access.

Thanks to Mediacom and a number of corporate sponsors, wi-fi hotspots are now operational in downtown Dubuque, helping to create the type of environment where our young professionals and downtown residents can use their laptops to conduct the business they need to do while enjoying what our community has to offer in that area.

Our recent history shows the synergy that spurred downtown redevelopment was a direct correlation to America's River Phase One. This \$188 million project in the Port of Dubuque demonstrated our community's ability to develop lasting partnerships between our City, County, the State of Iowa and many Federal Partners, side by side with our citizens.

America's River created jobs and gave a new face and image to Dubuque AND to the State of Iowa. Now, less than five years later, the Port of Dubuque is again a busy "construction zone" thanks to a nearly \$200 million vision that incorporates...America's River Phase Two, the McGraw-Hill Higher Education project; the Diamond Jo Expansion; renovation of the Dubuque Star Brewery; a large capacity City parking ramp, and the Briggs Mixed-Use Development Project and Durrant Group renovation of the former Adams Company Building.

Beyond downtown Dubuque, the economy has been bolstered by the expansion of several local businesses in our Industrial Park West as well as new businesses recruited to Dubuque's Technology Park.

In fact, it has been a record year for economic development with fourteen agreements resulting in over one hundred thirty million dollars in development, the creation of over three hundred jobs, and the retention of approximately one thousand jobs. And our West End development, including housing, retail, business and entertainment has continued our economic surge.

As we enjoyed this growth and expansion, we also faced the loss of a long-time employer, Regency Thermographers, along with its 137 jobs, as well as employee reductions at another longtime employer, Flexsteel Industries.

The City remains committed to working with our economic development partners and area business partners to help replace these losses with meaningful employment opportunities.

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Considering the natural ebb and flow of our economy, Dubuque continues to rank number one among Iowa's metro centers for job growth on both a one-year and three-year basis.

From November 2005 through November 2006, Dubuque created one out of every 10 jobs in the entire state of Iowa.

Moreover, during the past three years, with only three percent of Iowa's population, Dubuque created nearly seven percent of all jobs in the State of Iowa.

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Also integral to our community's success and attractiveness to families, visitors, and our business community is our Dubuque Regional Airport.

At this juncture, our airport is the third-busiest in the State of Iowa, with a 14 percent increase in enplanements over 2005.

The existing terminal building is significantly undersized to meet future passenger needs and security requirements. A new terminal building is on the airport's horizon, along with new parking lots and entry roads as well as ancillary taxiways and aircraft ramp space.

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Bolstering our economy during 2006 was new construction, both commercial and residential. Dubuque is averaging almost one million square-feet of non-residential construction and 625,000 square-feet of residential construction per year!

This supports the fact that 2006 was the fifth consecutive year of record residential and commercial real estate sales in Dubuque!

It's no surprise that Dubuque was recently ranked number six among the top 10 affordable job powerhouses for MSN Real Estate -- places where the cost of living and unemployment are low and the number of jobs is growing steadily.

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Clearly, the economic impact of tourism in Dubuque County is foundational to our continuing economic progress and the momentum is building, due in large part to the efforts of our

Chamber's Convention and Visitors Bureau and the existence of the beautiful Grand River Center.

It has been my pleasure to welcome a significant number and variety of conference and convention groups to Dubuque during 2006, and the pace and contribution to our economy will continue to increase in 2007.

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Dubuque's geographic location and direct access to major transportation networks have made the City a centralized hub for a variety of industries including manufacturing, insurance and finance, retail, and health care.

Even so, our City remains focused on working closely with our state and federal partners to identify funding sources for Dubuque's number one transportation priority, completion of the Southwest Arterial.

This approximate \$112 million dollar project is critical to keeping our goods and services moving, and keeping our City competitive in attracting new business and industry to our midst.

As we look to our economic future, we must maintain our momentum as a community and retain and attract the skilled and educated workforce required by current and potential business and industry. This issue looms large on the City's horizon.

A perfect storm is brewing on this issue with the impending retirement of baby boomers, the need for growth in our City's population, and the tremendous amount of job growth that is occurring locally.

A strategic, creative, and coordinated effort to address this challenge is critical to sustaining our progress on all other fronts.

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Enhancing our overall quality of life in Dubuque, and key to retaining and attracting families is our educational system. It is no secret that test scores for our elementary and high school students consistently rank above national and state averages.

Our Dubuque Community School Board, Superintendent John Burgart, and our dedicated teachers continue to provide our young people with opportunity for an excellent education.

In fact, the Dubuque Community School District was ranked seventh out of 2,200 districts nationwide by Expansion Management magazine and in 2006, the Dubuque metro area was named a Five-Star Public Metro by the same publication.

Enrollment has increased 11 percent over the past six years and the district is working to accommodate that growth with renovations at the high schools and the construction of new elementary and middle schools.

In August 2006, Prescott Elementary was reopened as a Magnate Art School, open to children from the entire Dubuque area.

Included in the design of this beautiful facility is a City-funded neighborhood resource center, just one example of how the City of Dubuque partners with the Dubuque Community School District.

Through the City's purchase of new gym and playground equipment for schools, the schools will keep the playgrounds open as neighborhood parks in order to provide athletic and educational programs for children who have few options after school.

Dubuque's Holy Family Schools Board of Directors, Chief Administrator Steven Cornelius, and their committed teachers continue Dubuque's long tradition of faith-centered education. The completion of Mazzuchelli Catholic Middle School and the renovations underway at Wahlert Catholic High School are evidence of the system's progress and commitment to the future.

As a higher education nucleus, Dubuque's area colleges, universities, seminaries, and technical schools not only provide diverse fields of study and expertise to incoming students, but also serve as a resource to businesses for continuing education and professional development.

Within a 20-mile radius of our City, we have no less than eight such institutions of higher learning which makes continued collaboration with these institutions absolutely vital to solving our impending workforce challenge.

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As we all realize, quality of living begins in our homes and in our neighborhoods. We are fortunate that Dubuque is a wonderful community in which to live, work, and recreate.

Dubuque has a unique social fabric made up of rich heritage and strong traditions that are slowly, but fortunately, being enhanced by new customs and increasing diversity.

Dubuque is blessed with beautiful neighborhoods, historic and new. But perhaps an even greater attribute is the number of organized neighborhood associations – ten and counting – that have formed to help make a difference everyday in their neighborhood and community.

They exemplify the spirit of volunteerism that is so common in Dubuque.

One of the neighborhoods about which I will speak tonight is our Washington Neighborhood, a 55 square-block area bounded by 11th and 22nd Streets on the south and north; and by White and Elm Streets on the west and east, respectively.

Since the revitalization effort in the Washington Neighborhood began not quite two years ago, more than one million dollars has been invested in home-ownership and housing renovation,

succeeding in its goal to provide homeownership opportunities to some of the city's lowest-income families.

The Washington Neighborhood Association has been a key partner in this revitalization. This group of neighborhood leaders is very active and has sponsored two annual clean-ups, beautification projects, and family support activities. These efforts were recognized in January when the Washington Neighborhood Association was presented with the 2007 Community Award for Diversity Initiatives by Dubuque's *Faces and Voices* organization.

Washington Neighborhood also is home to the rehabilitated Washington Court Building, formerly the Dubuque Casket Company, as well as the Crescent Community Health Center. And, located just across the street from the health center is Orange Park, the City's latest addition to our park system.

An Envision 2010 project, the Crescent Community Health Center exists to improve and maintain the health and well-being of our community by providing affordable, client-friendly, comprehensive and high-quality healthcare services in collaboration with other community organizations and resources.

The City of Dubuque is just one of many partners involved in the creation of the Crescent Community Health Center. Specifically, the City's support of the project included the funding for capital build-out, construction of the parking lot as well as the involvement of Dubuque Public Health Specialist Mary Rose Corrigan, Housing and Community Development Director David Harris, and many other city staff.

This project was bolstered by a one point three million dollar donation from the Schmid family of Crescent Electric and financial support from the Iowa State Legislature.

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Foundational to our quality living in Dubuque is how safe we feel in our homes and neighborhoods. Our police officers are reaching out within our neighborhoods as friends as well as safekeepers of our community.

Our Community Oriented Policing program strives to improve the safety of our neighborhoods through enhanced communications among neighbors and our police officers.

The Territory Accountability Design program is a new crime-fighting strategy which enables police, through computer-aided crime analysis, to identify trouble spots, distinguish emerging crime patterns, and target resources to fight crime in a comprehensive manner.

The City is proud of the community's confidence in the exceptional services and care provided by our Fire Department and Paramedic Service. Our firefighters and EMTs, with support from our emergency communications dispatchers, not only provide life-saving assistance in times of personal emergency, but they also plan and train to make sure our community is prepared to respond to various types of disasters. As Dubuque continues to grow, we must insure our

emergency responder resources are distributed appropriately throughout our community to enable prompt response and high-quality service.

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If we were to describe Dubuque today, I believe we would say we are a community that cares...cares that our children have safe neighborhoods to play in, go to school in, to live in.

Our City cares that our children live in homes free from lead paint...that our most fragile citizens, young and senior alike, have an opportunity for affordable health care from a physician they can call their own, rather than being forced to use the emergency room for every illness, big or small, because they are uninsured or underinsured.

Our city cares about providing shelter for our homeless or those suffering from abusive situations who need a helping hand as they strive to improve their lives.

And, we care that our citizens can earn a livable wage that allows them to experience ownership in this community they are helping to create.

We are a city that recognizes all citizens deserve respect. That is why the City has embarked upon a three-year initiative to raise the level of intercultural competency among our city employees so that we can become an even more welcoming community for all citizens.

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Over the past year, and as a result of our community's foresight and involvement in caring for and about others on many levels, Dubuque has received several state and national recognitions. Allow me to share just a few:

In October 2006, the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs named Dubuque one of its Iowa Great Places! The program partners state agencies and resources with local assets to help selected communities become even greater places where people want to live, work and raise a family. Dubuque's Great Places application featured the top ten ideas identified through Envision 2010.

Just this past January, Dubuque received national media attention on "Good Morning America!" when selected as one of the "100 Best Communities for Young People" in the nation! **In the nation!**

That is a pretty remarkable achievement and a well-deserved accolade to Jane Steele and the Mississippi Valley Promise along with all our organizations and agencies with their many staff and volunteers who care about keeping America's Promise to our youth...a promise that our young people will be given the opportunity to become educated, to learn how to make good life choices, to realize their goals and to contribute to society.

And, just recently, the Dubuque Community Schools' first-ever television series enterprise, now in its second season and called “Kids in the Kitchen”, won the highest award for public affairs programming in the nation...**in the nation!...**

In competition for the Beacon Award from the Cable Broadcasters Association, “Kids in the Kitchen” was compared to eight other media companies in the television series category including the National Geographic Channel; Time Warner; Cox Cable; C-Span; and Comcast. The wonderful message of this program is its intentional statement about the ability to curb childhood obesity through healthy practices.

Through this program, our school age children are being taught how to shop, select and prepare food products in both an educational and entertaining way. Kudos to Creator/Producer Gary Olsen, all the students involved, Chef Jim Terry, Dietician Megan Dalsing, Hy-Vee and Mediacom for this national recognition!

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One of the most significant changes we have experienced in our community over this past year has been its cultural renaissance.

Michelangelo once said... “I saw an angel in the stone and I carved it out to set it free!” I believe that Dubuque has begun to carve its stone.

In the recent past, the City began providing budget support for arts and cultural programming in Dubuque to the broad and enthusiastic reception of community members of all ages. Since that time, Dubuque has been selected as one of the first Cultural Corridor districts recognized by the State of Iowa.

Also during this past year, a new outdoor arts program was offered, known as “Art on the River,” which afforded citizens and tourists alike the opportunity to enjoy the amazing talents of sculptors whose works were installed for display and purchase in the Port of Dubuque.

The number of arts and cultural events, public and private, continues to increase and there is a new awareness and appreciation for the way in which the arts teach us about ourselves and others.

The depth and breadth of talent we have right here in Dubuque including our artists, sculptors, musicians, actors, dancers, singers, poets and authors all serve to enhance our community’s image and vitality.

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Maintaining this culturally thriving environment is one of the key pieces to the economic puzzle as we work to address our workforce development challenge.

As our young people graduate from high school and college, they are looking for a community that provides BOTH diverse employment opportunities AND diverse cultural and entertainment choices. They want the opportunity to enjoy the arts as spectators AND participants and they expect there will be such opportunities for their CHILDREN TOO, both in and after school.

We are working hard to help Dubuque be their community of choice.

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Quality living also means clean air, and a healthy environment, something the world's scientists have said we can no longer take for granted. And, to bequest our quality of life to our young people means we have to make some changes in the way we conserve energy.

In June of 2006, I attended my first U.S. Conference of Mayors meeting, joining mayors from all fifty states. During that time I signed on to the Mayors Climate Protection Agreement.

Because of the inaction at the federal level, this nonpartisan organization of mayors collectively agreed on the importance of taking the issue to the grassroots level to help educate citizens and influence national policy.

Two months later, during the August City Council Goal Setting session, I asked for and received my colleagues' support for a "Green City Designation" as one of the City's top priorities. Assistant City Manager Cindy Steinhauser has begun to conduct an assessment of our City's environmental practices.

The City of Dubuque, through Dubuque Planning Services Manager Laura Carstens working with Kevin Eipperle of the Durrant Group, submitted a grant application to the American Institute of Architects requesting assistance toward our goal of becoming a sustainable community.

Just last month, the City was notified we were selected as one of five cities in the nation, **in the nation**, to receive this assistance. So, what will this mean to our citizens and community?

A team comprised of architects and other professionals assembled from across the country will come to our community to assess our environmental standards, and provide us with a "roadmap," so to speak, on what we are doing well, and changes we can make to maintain our quality of life, without impeding life for Dubuque families in the future. Dubuque will be presented with the opportunity to be among the nation's leaders in "conserving our way forward."

As the new Congress was setting its policy agenda in January, I joined with more than 250 of the nation's mayors to deliver a ten-point legislative plan in Washington, D.C. entitled "**Strong Cities, Strong Families for a Strong America.**"

One of these points spoke to the importance of an **Energy and Environment Block Grant**. This would provide direct funding to cities for programs that improve energy efficiency and implement strategies to reduce carbon emissions, transportation energy conservation programs

and more. This IS our generation's challenge and we need to intentionally focus resources to help solve it.

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Over the past several weeks, your City Council has heard budget presentations by each of the City's departments that provide the quality services our citizens want, need, and continue to receive at a much higher level, yet lower cost, than comparably-sized cities in the State of Iowa.

My Council colleagues and I recently approved the Fiscal Year 2008 operating budget and five-year capital improvement plan for the City of Dubuque.

While there are never enough funds to approve all the requests we receive, we approved a very solid budget that will allow the City to pursue a number of improvement projects while continuing to offer excellent City services and programs.

The budget features a number of major projects, including the Bee Branch Creek Restoration stormwater project near the former Dubuque Pack site, renovations at Carnegie-Stout Public Library, improvements to the Dubuque Regional Airport, and efforts to make ADA compliance in Dubuque a reality.

The 2008 fiscal year is the thirteenth consecutive year of no increase to the City's portion of Dubuque resident's property tax for the average homeowner. In six of those years, the average homeowner saw a property tax decrease.

While we approved minor increases to some City rates and fees, Dubuque's rates are still some of the lowest among Iowa's major cities. In fact, the City's rates for property tax, water, sewer, and refuse remain the lowest or second lowest among those ten major Iowa cities.

We continue to work closely with our State legislators to keep them abreast of issues of significance to our City's stability including our need to have a system that allows the flexibility and authority for cities to meet the challenges of governing and providing citizens with services, while protecting them from liability or other financial risk and restrictions on local control.

In 2007, your City Council has adopted State legislative priorities which include a request for the restoration of revenues to cities that were cut in 2003 and 2004 in an effort to make cities whole and to help reduce the burden on property tax payers.

We asked for legislation that exempts local government from providing any new service or engaging in any new activities mandated by the state if the state does not provide full funding.

We requested an increase to the cap on the historic preservation tax incentives to promote investment in our historic resources.

And, the Dubuque City Council, Dubuque County Board of Supervisors, the Dubuque Metropolitan Planning Organization, the Greater Dubuque Development Corporation, and the

Dubuque Area Chamber of Commerce joined together to emphasize the completion of Southwest Arterial as the number one surface transportation priority in the Dubuque area.

While there are others, these highlight the attention and focus for the coming year. Frequent communication with our State legislators about the importance of fiscal support for local government ... in addition to the key role Dubuque is playing as an economic engine for the State... is of primary importance.

At the federal level, we continue to work closely with Senator Grassley, Senator Harkin, Congressman Braley and their staffs on the City Council adopted legislative priorities for 2007 which encompass funding for major transportation projects including the new airport terminal, the Southwest arterial, an intermodal facility in the Port of Dubuque, as well as our Bee Branch Watershed Flood Mitigation project.

As our 2008 City budget process has recently concluded, it is appropriate for me, on behalf of the City Council, to draw attention to the fiscally responsible management of citizen resources which can be directly attributed to our invaluable City Manager and the team he has assembled.

Comments my council colleagues and I have received over the past decade from our counterparts across the country have reaffirmed what we in Dubuque already know...that in a Council-Manager form of government, a strong, capable City Manager is absolutely essential, and Dubuque has much for which to be thankful!

It is true that our City's economy is something in which we can all take pride. And in building upon our past successes, we need to focus on helping our new Dubuque be inspirational on a regional and national level as a community that is interesting, exciting, character-driven, rich with opportunity...or in other words...Sustainable!

A sustainable city is one in which leaders and citizens hold as fundamentally important the provision of clean air and water, the protection and conservation of natural resources, and the enhancement of human capital.

In the words of John Muir, "When we tug on a single thing in nature, we find it connected to everything else."

And if we regard our standard of living as something we are incredibly fortunate to experience, then we are also called upon to admit to the responsibilities that continue with this distinction ... including the fact that purchasing our Dubuque-made products make jobs for Dubuque citizens!

With our young people in mind, we are working today to create a legacy. We are holding our City in trust for them, and by our example, they will be prepared to address the challenges of their future.

As we embrace 2007, with its known and unknown challenges and opportunities, let us always as a community choose action over inaction; bold ideas over the more safe, static ones. And while we embrace our small town warmth, let us never think "small."

We are remaking ourselves to become the destination community for the region.

We must, therefore, continue to focus on creating and sustaining a community environment that has vitality...that allows for adequate employment and earning...that promotes recreation and self-improvement through life-long learning opportunities...and finally, that provides for our feet to be firmly planted on Dubuque soil with our vision creating the future.

In his book, “Good to Great” author Jim Collins says, “No matter how much you have achieved, you will always be merely good relative to what you can become. Greatness is an inherently dynamic process, not an end point. The moment you think of yourself as great, your slide toward mediocrity will have already begun.”

He is right in that assessment, and that is why your City Council and Staff, your community leaders, agencies and organizations, will not rest on past successes.

By asking the tough questions and honestly confronting the challenges...by looking for opportunities to volunteer and get involved...by treating one another the way we want to be treated and...by sharing our time, talents and resources with others...we are carving Dubuque’s “stone” and collectively contributing to a City known as Dubuque, *The Masterpiece on the Mississippi!*

Friends, this time with you has provided a snapshot of where your city and its government are headed. Next year, I look forward to delivering the State of the City in the new City Council Chambers in the Federal building located adjacent to Washington Park in Downtown Dubuque.

On behalf of your City Council, City Staff, and all our organizations, agencies and volunteers who love their City...who are personally and professionally vested in its success ... I am pleased to report that... the State of our City is well positioned to address the challenges in our future ... our opportunities are endless ... **AND the first of the next five years ... has INDEED served to better define the next fifty years for Dubuque!**

May God continue to bless our citizens AND the State of our City. Good night.