



# STATE OF THE CITY

## Mayor Roy D. Buol

Winter 2021-22

As my term as Mayor comes to a close on Dec. 31, I offer my final State of the City message.

It seems like yesterday when I took my seat on Dubuque's Long Range Planning Commission in 1995 and next was elected as a City Council member in 1996! A short 10 years later, I was honored to be elected to serve as your mayor. Well, yes, 26 years is a long time, but as the saying goes... "Work at something you love and it will never seem like work" and that has always been true for me.

It has truly been an honor to serve the citizens of this great city. From the beginning, it was about engaging with residents, addressing challenges, and ensuring a better future for our children and grandchildren.

What separates Dubuque from many other cities is the way our local businesses and non-profits have been the backbone throughout the good times and importantly when, starting in 2008, we faced the greatest recession since the Great Depression. City government cannot solve all our issues, and public/private partnerships have been key to Dubuque's progress.

In case you are unaware, elected officials in small cities only get things done with the significant expertise from City staff. This is about staff planning, attending, and working at events, public crews hustling during storms, and department heads demonstrating their love in what they do for our city. Our City staff, from the City Manager to all he has hired, have my enduring respect and gratitude.

Through strategic investment of your tax dollars and with significant support from federal and state grants - written and applied for by City staff - major infrastructure and programmatic improvements have been focused on improving quality of life in Dubuque.

Over the last 16 years we have witnessed the culmination of the Bee Branch Watershed Flood Mitigation Project... the Southwest Arterial...the revitalization of the Historic Millwork District...the opening of the Crescent Community Health Center...the acquisition and renovation of our Historic Federal Building...operational upgrades and efficiencies to the Water and Resource Recovery Center...the creation and

expansion of the Multicultural Family Center...enhanced public transportation and parking improvements, and critical expansion of our industrial parks and more.

Additionally, the City has supported partners to give residents in need a hand up through programs like Healthy Homes, Getting Ahead, Opportunity Dubuque, Project HOPE, the DREAM Center, and the Fountain of Youth.

Personally, I am most proud of Dubuque's focus on improving our community's sustainability and resiliency and sharing our model that balances economic prosperity with environmental integrity and social and cultural vibrancy. And, as we look to the future, we have plans in place that will help to turn the challenges created by the pandemic over 18 months into opportunities -- opportunities to transform our city into a model of equity and inclusion that will be sustainable for years and even decades to come.

It is no secret that there is a fundamental lack of equity for far too many. The question we must ask ourselves is not when we will economically recover from this pandemic...it is about how we will prioritize those hit hardest...women, low-income earners, people of color. We need to keep looking out for one another. Our children absorb the stress and the consequences for them can be life-altering.

When I first ran for mayor, I said, "The next five years will define the next 50 years for Dubuque." I believe that prediction is holding true, and I see a brighter future for us all. Hopefully my involvement has made a positive difference. I know full well I did nothing alone, but rather as a part of a team. Strategic investment is being "budget conscious" and I have been privileged to serve with dedicated and forward thinking elected officials and City staff.

Allow me to express a closing sentiment. There is no issue important enough to pit neighbors against one another. There is no idea not worth a civil debate...or any challenge that cannot be addressed through mutual understanding and consideration.

Please take care of yourselves and above all, let us model how to be KIND. Our youth deserve nothing less. Thank you! §