

2007 State of the City

Let me begin this year's State of the City message by saying thank you to the voting residents of Kettering who helped us pass a critical income tax levy in May of 2006. We came to you with a sincere need and you listened openly to our message and responded with a genuine desire to see this City succeed far into the future.

Kettering is a unique community – we offer a very high quality of life to residents of every age. It is our full range of services that creates that quality of life factor – services and programs that might not be important to one resident, are very important to another. I'm pleased that we are capable of displaying such a variety – it is what makes us who we are.

In our campaign message of Protecting Safety and Preserving Stability, we indicated that safety and stability were of the utmost importance to us as Council and Administration. I'd like to tell you a little bit about the measures we've taken on both accounts.

First of all, since May of last year we have filled three vacancies in the police department, placing more men and women on the street to serve the residents of this community. In addition, we just recently made the decision to spend over six hundred thousand dollars on upgrading the department to the county's 800 MHz system, thereby improving our communications capacity.

Our Police Department has much to be proud of and we are proud of them. Not only was the KPD re-accredited in 2006 but they were designated as a Flagship Agency – an agency that other departments around the county can and should emulate.

In 2006, the department established a party hotline so that citizens can report information on underage drinking. Several members of the Detective Section continued their work with “skill builders” at JFK elementary school – a program that partners officers with students who are having difficulty in school. And the Cops & Kids Camp was held again at Indian Riffle Park – this year with record enrollment. These are just a few of the many youth initiatives of our Police Department.

And after years of exhaustive work by the Detective Section, the first conviction was handed down in the Erica Baker case – a bitter sweet victory in a tragic story for this community.

No one in this room will dispute the fact that we have Ohio’s Finest Police force patrolling our neighborhoods, working in our schools, participating on county wide task forces and keeping our community safe.

In 2006 we commissioned an independent study of our Fire Department. Many of you might wonder why we would examine a department that consistently performs above average and receives the highest marks in our citizen survey. As good as our Fire

Department is, we know it can be better. Utilizing a combination department of volunteers and career personnel, we offer the most comprehensive array of services possible to this community. We look forward to the completion of the study in March and I have no doubt that we will be able to implement positive initiatives that will further establish our department as the best in the region.

The City's Capital Improvement Program received a one million dollar boost in 2006 as a result of the passage of the levy. Some of the major projects that took place in 2006:

- Dorothy Lane and South Dixie Reconstruction – Phase 1
- Resurfacing of Woodman Drive from Wilmington to Danube
- A lane addition at East Dorothy Lane and Stroop Road, and
- The Resurfacing of David and Marshall

Additional funding for the Capital Improvement Program also allowed us to expand our Asphalt Overlay Program and our Concrete Repair Program – efforts that helped us to stay on track with our regular roadway maintenance schedule.

The City's GIS and mapping system continues to develop – this technology can help us to do everything from analyzing the efficiency of leaf and snow programs to helping the Fire Department in responding to emergencies.

The other part of our campaign message was that of Preserving Stability. It's a fact that passage of the income tax levy helped us to eradicate four million dollars worth of deficit spending. It's also a fact that inconsistencies with the economy are keeping us on our toes financially. Even with the passage of the levy, we have to be cautious and conservative with your tax dollars, or passage of the levy will have been futile. Delphi continues to be an unknown financial factor and there are other large companies in the City that are making substantial cutbacks in workforce. Those factors directly impact our bottom line, and the bottom line of many of our families in this community. Therefore it is imperative that we be as responsible as possible with the tax dollars we receive. That is one of the reasons that we are looking at the feasibility of Regional Dispatch. Regional Dispatch makes sense in many communities across the country and we are simply investigating whether it makes sense here. We will not sacrifice service for the bottom line – that is a firm promise. But we would be irresponsible not to look into a system that could result in such a substantial cost savings.

Economic Development continues to be an avenue for preserving stability for the future. In 2006, GE Money, formerly GE Consumer Finance, moved approximately 600 jobs to their Kettering Business Park location and Mead Westvaco announced they are moving 230 jobs into the vacant MCSi building on Hempstead Station Drive. In addition, Tech

Center Four at Miami Valley Research Park includes 52,000 square feet of space to be occupied by the expansion of existing tenants.

Residents are beginning to see redevelopment efforts at the former Van Buren Shopping Center and former H&H Manufacturing site. Van Buren Shopping Center is being transformed into a mixed use residential and retail development that will include about 35 new patio style homes by Inverness, as well as 10 retail locations on Smithville that include Cardinal Fitness and Subway. The redevelopment includes the relocation of the Laundromat and an upgrade of the Post Office Façade, as well as the opening of a new bank, Oak Hills bank. This development, known as Kettering Pointe is well underway and meeting all of our expectations.

Kettering Crossing is currently under construction on the former PayDays lot and H&H manufacturing site. LaRosa's, Frisch's, an additional 4200 square feet of retail space and three, 4-family condominium units are slated for this site. The first condominium unit will begin this spring. LaRosa's is now finished and open for business.

It's a little unusual to be talking about so many new housing developments in Kettering, but 2006 saw yet another housing development begin to take shape and that development is called Madison's Grant. Located on Swigert Road, this Ryan Home development will include 150 new homes beginning in the \$200,000 price range.

A 56 unit condominium development on Devon Avenue also began construction in 2006. Johnstown Woods offers condos beginning in the \$190,000 price range – this development is being built by the same company that built David's Retreat at the corner of Grayson and David Road.

Three projects that began in 2006 that you'll want to keep an eye out for this year, are Groby's, Golden Nugget and Town & Country.

In an effort to respond to current trends and tenant desire's, Town and Country has announced a comprehensive redevelopment of the center that will include more parking, an updated façade and retail outlot buildings on Stroop Road. News of this redevelopment has already resulted in a flurry of interested retailers calling the mall for more information.

Groby's is slated for a mixed use retail and office development and will undoubtedly be a project to watch in the coming year.

And Golden Nugget is set to open within the next month. We wish them much success and prosperity as they re-open after a devastating fire destroyed their building. We also offer our heartfelt condolences to the family as they mourn the loss of their sister. I'm sure it will be a bittersweet grand reopening for them.

Another project to keep an eye on is Kettering Medical Center Network, who began work on their 10 year Master Plan development project in 2006 by completing the Boonshoft College of Medical Arts and Nelson Conference Center.

Quality of Life was another major message in our Levy Campaign – as I stated before, it is the fact that we can offer so many diverse opportunities to so many people that makes us the kind of community in which people want to live. We simply have an outstanding array of services and programs for our residents and for those who work in Kettering. Not **only** that, but the services we do provide are award winning.

Take, for example, the Partners for Healthy Youth program – a program that was designed to help the youth of our community grow, thrive and succeed. This program was given the first place award by the National Recreation and Park Association, recognizing the collaborative effort the city has created to address youth initiatives.

Additionally, the Rob Dyrdek/DC Shoes Skate Plaza won the OPRA Park Area Development Award for innovative park design.

In 2006 the Dayton Business Journal ranked Rosewood Arts Centre as the third highest attended arts facility in the Greater Dayton area, preceded only by the Springfield Museum of Art and the Dayton Art Institute.

A new program this past summer brought residents into neighborhood parks through the Picnic in the Park events. This program afforded residents the opportunity to connect with one another, as well as with city staff.

A relationship with the Dorwood Optimists, with financial assistance from the Community Foundation for Kettering, helped us to fund the construction of an observation deck at Pondview Park. Pondview Park is a favorite environmental learning lab for Kettering schools due to the variety of living habitats at the Park. The observation deck is a true testament to the commitment the Dorwood Optimists have for the youth of the community as they have worked diligently for years to make this happen.

Overall our Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts Department was given the highest level of praise through a third Accreditation of the department. Our department is one of only 10 nationwide to have been accredited three times.

Our Senior services are another example of this community's commitment to each and every resident. On more than one occasion we have heard from other communities and professionals in civil service that it's remarkable how much is available to senior's in this

community. Just as we provide an enormous amount of opportunity for youth in Kettering, so do we for seniors.

In 2006, staff and council worked to make procedural changes to the Senior Transportation Program. Whereas users of the transportation program used to have to be members of the Charles I. Lathrem Center, today any senior resident of Kettering 60 years or older can utilize the service. The program now utilizes volunteer drivers. Staff, Council and MVRPC continue to monitor this program to ensure that it is serving the largest population of Kettering's senior residents as need it.

In 2006 we moved closer to re-establishing the Care Call program for seniors – a well check program that calls seniors twice a week. It's been 5 years since we've operated this program and now we have the funding and technology available to offer an even better service to homebound, frail and/or disabled seniors. For adult children who live away from their elderly parents, this program is a Godsend.

Yet another way that the City works to Preserve the Future is through utilizing more than 1200 volunteers in a variety of cost saving ways. In 2006 our volunteers contributed almost 50,000 hours of service valued at more than \$860,000. Mayor's awards went to Opal Leo and Ralph Andrews for their countless hours of service to the Parks, Recreation

and Cultural Arts Department. And the Mayor's Youth Award recipients were Amber Mitchell and the entire Alter High School Key Club.

The volunteer department graduated the third Leadership Academy Class – this program has encouraged community participation in everything from city boards and commissions to non-profit boards and PTA's. The 2005-2006 class completed a marketing dvd for the city called Live, Work, Play and it is a true gift to the City.

Another Preservation-type program is our Community Development Block Grant program. Through this division, the City offers a diverse array of services that help homeowners to make updates, modernizations or much needed repairs.

- In 2006, nine projects were completed through the Housing Rehabilitation program. This program will be partially funded through 2008 thanks to a consortium we've entered with the City of Dayton.
- Eighteen properties throughout the Wiles Creek neighborhood were demolished – several lots not in the floodway will be redeveloped, while lots in the floodway will remain vacant for greenspace. Additionally,
- The CDBG division continued with the \$1.5 million FEMA grant to purchase properties located in the floodway in this neighborhood. To date we have

purchased 17 homes on a voluntary basis. These properties will be kept for open space purposes.

- The Home Enhancement Loan program provided interest buy downs on 5 home improvement loans, which totaled \$155,000 in 2006. The program enabled homeowners to update kitchens and bathrooms; build room additions and dormers and expand existing living space by rearranging interior walls and windows.

Finally, In June of 2006, Council made the decision to appoint Mark Schwieterman as our City Manager. Mark brings stability to the City through his years of experience here and his strength of leadership. Mark is respected by his peers and his employees and he operates the city in a thoughtful and capable manner.

As you can see, Kettering has a lot to offer its residents and businesses. I am proud of the work we do here to provide the highest possible quality of life, and I am proud of the thoughtful manner with which we do business. Kettering has achieved a reputation for proactive government, and that's something for which we can and should be proud.

I want to thank my fellow council members for the cooperative and respectful manner in which we work toward progress here in Kettering. I want to thank the staff of the City of Kettering for their dedication to this City. And I want to thank residents and businesses

who proudly call Kettering home. With your support we will move forward with the work of preserving the stability of this fine city for many years to come.

Thank you all and God bless.