

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for taking the time to be here today, and thank you to the Ottawa Area Chamber for again sponsoring this State of the City event. This is the seventh time that I have had the pleasure of delivering the State of the City message. I view this as an opportunity to step back and reflect upon the past year's accomplishments as well as our goals yet to be achieved.

I believe the overall State of the City is good. I believe there is a certain energy in the air and a sense of quiet excitement about the direction the City is moving. Many of you have shared thoughts of that nature with me, and they inspire me and I thank you for sharing them.

Much of what happens in a community is beyond our control. Mother Nature, for example, as we have seen recently in the case of hurricanes and earthquakes, can literally wipe a community off the face of the earth. Policies set in Washington and Springfield can add burdens to and limit the options of local governments. But all in all we have been blessed again with a year absent of major tragedy, and to a great extent we have been able to marshal our considerable assets and those things we can control, and move our community forward.

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

As Chamber members you have an appreciation of the importance of economic development and employment opportunities as a foundation upon which families are supported and a community is built. So let me first discuss some economic development highlights of the past year as well as those on the horizon.

Last year at this time PetsMart had just begun construction of a 1 million square foot distribution center north of I-80. I am happy to report today that PetsMart began operations at that facility a few months ago and has already hired over 330 full-time and 129 temporary employees. Justin Bellsmith, manager of the new facility, said that the only thing he regrets in coming to Ottawa is that PetsMart could not hire more of the 4,000 qualified people that applied for jobs.

PetsMart, our newest major employer, joins Pilkington, one of our oldest, in making a commitment to Ottawa. Pilkington, formerly LOF has had a presence in our community for a good part of a century. This past year Pilkington has invested over \$10 million dollars in the first phase of a large rebuilding project at its local facility, retaining over 150 local jobs. The company has agreed to annex into the City of Ottawa. Water and sewer Infrastructure improvements are underway to serve what we can soon accurately call the "Ottawa plant."

**2005 STATE OF THE CITY
Tuesday, October 25, 2005**

We believe a significant manufacturing facility will soon locate in the Ottawa Industrial Park. I am told that the company hopes to make its announcement by Thanksgiving. A second smaller manufacturer is expected to make a similar announcement in the next few weeks.

Construction of Motorcycle Tour Conversions manufacturing facility is now well underway in the Ottawa Industrial Park. That company will employ up to 25 workers.

Development in the north I-80 area has been especially active lately. Clover Technologies in north Ottawa has expanded its workforce to over 400 and remains one of the fastest growing companies in the country.

The development of a new major shopping area north of I-80, Ottawa Centre, is under construction. A Wal-Mart Supercenter will anchor that project and we hope to make an announcement soon of a second major retailer in that development.

A Thornton's gas station will locate on part of the old J. Merle Jones International Harvester trucking site in front of the old Wal-Mart and an adjoining new business should make an announcement soon.

I have been advised that a fully executed contract has been signed on the K-Mart building and we hope to hear from the new owners after that transaction closes.

**2005 STATE OF THE CITY
Tuesday, October 25, 2005**

Other new commercial ventures in the I-80 area that have opened in the past year or so include the addition of Long John Silvers within the Kentucky Fried Chicken facility, Blockbuster Video , Arby's, the Dollar Store, a UPS Store, Sherman-Williams Paints, National City mortgage, and others, an office complex at 601 East Etna Road has also recently opened.

The recently appointed North Business Improvement Committee has been meeting for the past several months and will present the Council with recommendations for enhancement of the I-80/Route 23 interchange area by the end of the year. The north I-80 TIF district was expanded slightly south of the interstate to provide funding for this enhancement project.

Ottawa's downtown remains vibrant and growing. This past year brought the Court Street Cabaret, Nickey's Salon, Burton Placement Services, Annette Barr Photography Studio, First State Bank, Robinson Engineering, Edward Jones Investments, Family Quilt Shop, The New Place (formerly Ebbey's), Big Ray's House of Ribs, Energy Yoga studio, and Adagio Dance Studio. The breath-taking expansion of Ottawa Savings Bank is almost complete.

The City also recently reached an agreement to acquire the old Medical Center building next to City Hall. The property is being exchanged for acreage in the Ottawa Industrial Park. I expect the transaction to close

**2005 STATE OF THE CITY
Tuesday, October 25, 2005**

in the next few weeks and the City will then demolish the building to provide for a landscaped parking area.

Earlier in the year two developers took over the proposed Jordan block hotel project from Jim Clarage. In early summer the developers withdrew that project. While I am disappointed that the original Jordan block project has not come to fruition, there are many other significant, positive developments occurring in our community, partly as a result of the attention the downtown project had created. We have attracted several developers who are working out details with the City to develop large marina and second-home residential developments along the Illinois River in Ottawa, just upstream from the downtown site. These developers understand the importance of the downtown to their developments, and indeed, one of the them, Heritage Harbour of Ottawa, has committed to purchase the downtown Jordan block properties and level the buildings so that we have a clean, more attractive site that will make redevelopment more likely. In the meantime, we continue to meet with developers exploring hotel, retail and mixed use possibilities for the site.

All of these developers are convinced the Ottawa area of the Illinois and Fox Rivers will appeal to people throughout the midwest as a place for a second home. Coupled with our natural splendor and rich history, I believe our attractive turn-of-the-century downtown will play an ever larger

**2005 STATE OF THE CITY
Tuesday, October 25, 2005**

role in selling Ottawa as a second home community. Moreover, second-home communities bring to the community the substantial advantage of significant additional tax base to support our schools, without the demands on schools that typical residential development create.

More specifically, Heritage Harbour of Ottawa has announced the development of 530 second-home condominiums and a commercial marina. This \$250 million project will be annexed into the City and will include the former Four Star Marina and surrounding properties east of Ottawa.

A second developer, HRM Properties, is in the initial planning stage for development of 500 second-home condominium community. This \$200 million project will be located on the Illinois River at the former Harper's Farm property at the east edge of Ottawa.

And a third riverfront development, the Oaks of White Harbor on the other side of the river, is moving forward. The eleven acre harbor has been completed excavated and watered, and a change in the ownership of the project may occur in very near future.

In other areas of the City, Save A Lot has just completed a \$500,000 renovation, Handy Foods has completed the development of a parking area that sets the standard for meeting proposed green space requirements,

**2005 STATE OF THE CITY
Tuesday, October 25, 2005**

and the following businesses have opened in the past year: Daydreams Salon, Southside Pizza, Captain's Cove Dry Dock restaurant, Angie's Pilates Studio, Top Dog Bakery, Genie's Café at Skydive Chicago, Countrywide Home Loans, Ballyhoo Hair and The Ultimate Tan.

Community Hospital of Ottawa is in the midst of a \$5.5 million addition which also includes a parking garage.

The former Bakelite Building is soon to be annexed into the City, and placed in a TIF district to encourage renovation of this long under-used facility and promote further employment opportunities in Ottawa.

City staff and the Plan Commission are in the process of updating the Comprehensive Plan to keep up with fast-paced development.

City Staff and the Plan Commission continue a proactive approach by revising the Zoning ordinance in order to be prepared for future developments.

To better understand development options, City officials, staff and other interested parties recently toured new developments in the northwest suburban area. The trip was conducted by our planning consultant, Land Vision, and took us to such places as Elgin where some great developments are occurring in the downtown and riverfront areas. We also visited places like Glenview that is actually creating a new downtown. And I am sure they would envy much of what we have

**2005 STATE OF THE CITY
Tuesday, October 25, 2005**

downtown. We also visited places like Vernon Hills and Elgin which are experimenting with new types of residential development that are in many ways a return to traditional-type neighborhoods, partly made possible with the use of alleys.

Construction starts maintain a brisk pace. New home construction for 2005 through the end of September has an estimated value of about \$8 million, while new commercial development for that same period has an estimated value of \$7.5 million.

During 2004, our last full year of data, 153 new housing units were permitted, as compared with 71 total units in '03, an increase of about 215%. Much of this is attributed to the Turnberry Apartment development along with brisk single family housing starts.

TOURISM

Tourism also remains a vital industry in this community, last year translating into about 71,000 overnight stays at Ottawa hotels, with visitors spending over \$8.1 million in the local economy, and generating about \$215,000 in hotel tax revenues that help fund the Ottawa Visitors Center

2005 STATE OF THE CITY
Tuesday, October 25, 2005

and many of the City's special events. The Visitors Center, which is open 7 days a week, continues to explore avenues to coordinate marketing efforts on a regional level under the guidance of a hard-working board and its Executive Director Bridget O'Brien.

We have two new visitor attractions in town this year, the Sherri Lynn Riverboat and the Court Street Cabaret Theater. Both offer a unique and enjoyable experience for tourists and residents alike.

One of the Visitors Center's most remarkable efforts is its Brush with History Mural project. The first six murals of the project have been completed, the latest being a place for children to imagine and learn with Bob McGrath, painted on Jefferson School. Bob Paglis, and John Myers have agreed to chair and co-chair the mural committee this next year.

And of course, the Lincoln-Douglas Debate plaza has made Washington Square an even more popular destination for visitors, Lincoln buffs and those who just want to enjoy a beautiful setting. Since the installation of the new billboards on Interstate 80, the plaza has seen many more visitors this year compared to previous years.

Special Events also continues to attract visitors and add to our tourism efforts. The City Special Events Committee this year offered a variety of cultural, recreational and educational events for residents and visitors, including a Music in the Park series, the City-Wide block party,

**2005 STATE OF THE CITY
Tuesday, October 25, 2005**

Riverfest, Thunder on the River, the ever-popular Cruise Night, and a Pet Expo.

FINANCE

I'd now like to talk a little about City finances. The City's finances look good. This past spring the Council adopted a budget for this fiscal year and our current revenue streams seem to be on-target with our projections, and our spending is within budget limits.

The nation's every-rising cost of health care continues to be a concern at the City, although the drastic increases we experienced in past years seem to have leveled off. This year it looks as though our costs for providing health care to our employees and retirees will increase by about 10%, which is less than the industry trend of about 15%.

The City staff is working with the City auditors to comply with GASBY 34 municipal accounting requirements.

Commissioner Whitney and I continue to monitor monthly financial reports of revenue and spending to ensure they are in line with the budget, as do all of our department heads. Currently the City's general fund balance is over \$1.9 million and the reserve in all funds is healthy at about \$8 million.

POLICE

While Economic Development is essential to the vitality of the community, most citizens identify the City primarily as a provider of services, one of the primary ones being law enforcement.

The Ottawa Police Department has had a very busy year, responding to 20,426 calls for service during the past twelve month period and making 3,887 arrests. As of the middle of this past summer, our police department has been brought back up to its full manpower standard as provided by city ordinance. In fact, these manpower standards have even increased by one officer with the addition of another school resource officer made possible by a funding agreement with Ottawa Township High School. The Ottawa Police Department's school resource officers are primarily assigned to Ottawa High School where they are assisting with security and taking an aggressive approach to substance abuse.

Last year at this event, I reported that we were experiencing increased levels of crime in our city. Although the department was being extremely successful in solving these crimes, we were still seeing unprecedented numbers of burglaries. It was not uncommon to hear of 10 or more car burglaries being committed in a night. Through interviews of the persons committing these crimes, the police were able to establish a direct connection to the deadly increased presence of heroin in the area

**2005 STATE OF THE CITY
Tuesday, October 25, 2005**

and the needs of addicts to finance their habits. Today I am happy to report that although we recognize that the battle continues, we are seeing progress.

The Ottawa Police Department continues to work very closely with the Zone 3 Drug Task Force to address the drug problem. The success of the Task Force too is very evident in the well publicized crime reports. It is the cautious opinion of our police department that, although combating the problem is recognized as a long hard road ahead, the drug issues affecting our city have peaked.

Such success can be attributed to these factors: first, the education of the public about the problem as provided by the Illinois Valley Anti-Drug Coalition; second, the efforts of City law enforcement, and the Zone 3 Drug Task Force; and third, the assistance offered by the public through information, tips and involvement in organizations such as our local neighborhood watch groups.

The Police Department continues to update its arsenal of crime-fighting tools. The department recently replaced all of its high mileage squad cars with new Police Package Chevrolet Impalas. With the replacement of these cars, the final equipment upgrades have been completed including digital in-car camera systems and new laptops allowing officers to access important offender information directly from the

**2005 STATE OF THE CITY
Tuesday, October 25, 2005**

squads.

The Police Department has also applied for and recently received two grants to assist in purchasing new equipment. The first grant of approximately \$21,000, a COPS Secure our Schools grant, was applied for in conjunction with Ottawa High School. The grant will assist the school in the purchasing of a video security system. It will also provide for a computer to be used by the department's school resource officers as well as a secure wireless connection between the school and the police department for video and reporting purposes.

The other grant, of nearly \$30,000., will allow for the purchase of a new Livescan electronic fingerprinting system for use in the department's booking area.

Our staff of telecommunicators continue to be the vital link between citizens in need and the appropriate emergency responder. These men and women, through their abilities and ongoing training in areas such as MABAS, LEADS and 911, continue to provide a viable lifeline between the public, and our police officers and firefighters, 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

Finally, Chief of Police, Brian Zeilmann, is unable to be here today because he is currently attending the FBI National Academy at the FBI training facility and US Marine Corp base in Quantico, Virginia. This very

**2005 STATE OF THE CITY
Tuesday, October 25, 2005**

specialized training is by invitation only, and attended by upper level police administrators from all over the world. Chief Zeilmann reports that this current class of 250 police administrators come from all over the United States, as well as Canada, Spain, England, Germany, Egypt, Korea, Japan, Australia, Italy, Thailand and Madagascar.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Under the watch of Commissioner Dale Baxter and Fire Chief Rick Scott, the Ottawa Fire Department has responded to 2,537 calls (406 Fire and over 2,131 Ambulance) in the last twelve months. The call volume for the Ottawa Fire Department is up 11% over the last four years.

Recently, Firefighters Andy Borkowski and Wayne Christensen, and Fire Chief Rick Scott deployed to Louisiana for 14 days to assist with Hurricane Katrina Emergency as part of a MABAS Deployment which included 586 firefighters and 107 pieces of Fire Fighting Equipment from throughout Illinois.

Firefighters Borkowski and Christensen have specialized training in Rescue Operations and Chief Scott is part of the Illinois Level III All Hazards Incident Management Team.

**2005 STATE OF THE CITY
Tuesday, October 25, 2005**

Skills and preparedness training is ongoing for all firefighters. Ottawa Firefighters accomplished approximately 4,000 hours of Fire and Emergency Medical Training this year.

The Ottawa Fire Department has four (4) Team Members on the Countywide Hazardous Materials Team and five (5) Team Members on the Countywide Technical Rescue Team. Both of these Teams have been funded by Homeland Security Grants for training and Equipment.

The Fire Department has placed a new ambulance (Medic 7) in service as of March, 2005.

Homeland Security Issues continue to be a priority in 2005. Ottawa Fire Department Personnel have been certified in NIMS (National Incident Management System) and have trained and worked with City of Ottawa personnel, area schools and the local health care system to help all residents remain safe in the event of a Natural Disaster or WMD.

Our Fire Prevention and Education Program accomplished approximately 1,000 contact hours to approximately 4,000 children and adults on Fire Education and Home and Workplace safety.

We continue to work with and train local industry and businesses on Fire Safety issues. The department reviews Community Development Plans, including Engineering and Architectural Plans, for Fire Safety Issues that may arise during planning and construction of new developments in our

City. The Pet Smart project is a prime example of the Ottawa Fire Department partnering in new development projects to insure that state-of-the-art fire extinguishment and alerting systems are in place to protect workers and firefighters.

The Ottawa Fire Department remains a strong presence in the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System, at both the local Division 25 and the State levels.

On a bittersweet note, Chief Rick Scott will retire next month after 28 years of service with the Ottawa Fire Department. On behalf of the entire City Council and Ottawa residents I would like to thank Rick for his dedicated years of service to our community and his commitment to professionalism, and we wish him well in his retirement.

Former Captain, and now Deputy Chief, Jim Duback, a 21-year veteran with the Fire Department will assume the role of Fire Chief upon Rick's retirement.

WATER DEPARTMENT

Under the supervision of Commissioner Wayne Eichelkraut and Water Superintendent Bob Rick, the water treatment plant continues to serve the City's needs. Our two new water treatment plants pump approximately 2.6 million gallons of water daily to area residents and businesses.

**2005 STATE OF THE CITY
Tuesday, October 25, 2005**

The infrastructure project to provide water service to the Pilkington plant renovation is near completion. Water service has been run to the property and service on the property is expected to be completed by the end of November.

The purchase of a hydro-excavator was approved last week by the City Council. This equipment vacuums debris such as leaves, mud, etc. and enables the water department to detect other utilities such as gas, electric, phone, cable, etc. prior to excavation and therefore eliminating possible lapse in service due to lines being cut inadvertently.

2.84 miles of water main was installed this year to serve the residential developments of Autumnwood Phase 2, Pembroke Phase 2 and Briarcrest and the commercial developments of Petsmart, Pilkington and Super WalMart.

The water department continually reviews methods to enhance service to residents and businesses.

WASTEWATER TREATMENT

Commissioner Eichelkraut and Wastewater Superintendent Bob Shull are currently overseeing the construction of the \$1.6 million new headworks project, which is the first phase of a \$6 to 7 million upgrade of the wastewater treatment plant. The engineering of the second phase will

**2005 STATE OF THE CITY
Tuesday, October 25, 2005**

begin next month, and when complete the plant should serve our needs for decades to come.

Additional sanitary sewer projects are ongoing to serve unsewered areas within the City. Sections of the following streets - Evans, Marquette, Armstrong, Glover, Brickton and Forest Park - will all be completed this year.

Design has also begun on a south side sanitary sewer interceptor, which is basically a new major sewer main that will eliminate four current lift stations and provide additional capacity for new development at the City's south edge.

A new TV van was delivered this month which will help evaluate sewers to prioritize maintenance and collect data for our geographic information system (GIS). With the first use of this equipment our crew discovered and resolved one problem sewer where a telephone pole had been placed in the sewer main.

We continue to reduce the level of sludge in our lagoon, this year land applying 1,500 dry tons of biosolids.

The design and pilot testing of a different approach to biosolids handling will soon be underway that will potentially save the City \$100,000 annually.

STREETS

Commissioner Bill Walsh reports that the 2005 Street Maintenance program is almost complete. This year's program included

- 52 blocks (3.5 miles) of resurfacing
- 2,600 lineal feet of curb replacement, including the entire block of Kendall Street and the 500 block of Marcy Street
- ½ mile of resurfacing of E. 18th Road north of I-80 bridge (east of Petsmart)
- Several miscellaneous street repairs and drainage improvements
- Road improvement of West Stevenson Road for Super WalMart

After receiving the bids for the 2005 street maintenance program of \$60,000 less than anticipated, additional resurfacing was included in the program.

Street superintendent Gary Erickson oversees the Street department and the spring and fall leaf/yard waste drop-off program – currently underway – and also the leaf vacuuming program that will begin in mid November.

WEB SITE

I am happy to announce that the City's new web page is now on-line at www.cityofottawa.org. The web site provides web surfers finger-tip access to all sorts of information, including:

- All ordinances, including the subdivision and zoning ordinances
- Proposed revisions to the Zoning Ordinance
- Design review guidelines
- Park information, including pictures and amenities offered at each park
- Mini bus schedules and information about taxi services
- All City permit applications and forms which can be downloaded
- Agendas and minutes of City Council meetings and Plan Commission meetings
- City Boards and Commissions and the duties assigned to each designated by ordinance
- Information on each City department, as well as direct links to the Police and Fire department web pages
- Direct links to associated sites such as the Ottawa Chamber, Reddick Library, the City Rec Board, schools and the Visitors Center
- Information on area utilities, i.e. contact information for gas, electric, water, trash removal

2005 STATE OF THE CITY
Tuesday, October 25, 2005

- You can even view previous State of the City addresses, including the power point presentation from the 2004 address. This address, as well as the power point presentation, will be available on-line in the next month or so.

I encourage you to surf the City web site and contact City Hall with any comments and suggestions you might have.

REDDICK LIBRARY

Reddick Library continues to provide top quality services to Ottawa and area residents. The library is open 68 hour each week, and last year there were over 122,000 visits to the library.

The library's collection now exceeds 77,000 items and continues to grow, with almost 147,000 items loaned out last year. At last count over 9,700 city residents hold library cards, more than 50% of the city's population! The library has 15 computers for public use and logs an average of 1200 sessions a month. Reddick Library continues to provide youth reading programs and features film nights, poetry nights, writer's workshops and an annual "Celebrate your right to read" event.

The library has received a demonstration grant to offer free library services through September of 2006 to residents outside of the city but

within the Ottawa Twp. High School District taxing district who do not currently receive library services. In November, 2006 eligible voters will determine if a library district will be formed.

PARKS

Under the supervision of Commissioner Wayne Eichelkraut, the Parks Department is kept very busy. In addition to performing routine maintenance and upkeep of the City's 115 ± acres of parkland, Park Superintendent Russ Mammen and staff are devoting a large portion of their work week to the redevelopment of Walsh Park. Walsh Park was dedicated to the City of Ottawa by lifelong resident Henry J. Walsh, Sr. in 1983. Mr. Walsh resided on this site for many years, which once was home to a natural spring and fishing pond. It was the wish of Mr. Walsh that this site be developed as a public park for the enjoyment of his neighbors and area residents.

Through the efforts of the City Council and Playground and Recreation Board a 50% funding grant was received from the State's Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development program. When completed, amenities available at Walsh Park will include a fitness trail, a sand volleyball court, a basketball court, a soccer/football field, additional picnic

**2005 STATE OF THE CITY
Tuesday, October 25, 2005**

shelters, state-of-the-art play equipment, an interpretive trail and horseshoe courts.

This enhancement project, which is also being funded with assistance from the Lions Club, is expected to be complete in 2006.

This past summer the City officially re-dedicated Rigden Park on the City's west side. Rigden Park underwent a renovation over the past few years, including the installation of new play equipment, a new basketball court, a new shelter and beautiful landscaping and flower beds.

This year we also completed the connector ramp between the I & M Canal and the riverwalk. This project, funded by a 50% State match includes an access parking lot, restrooms, observation deck and a portion of the riverwalk in the vicinity of the Fox River aqueduct. Finally, just a reminder, that living memorials continue to be made to the City to enhance our recreation areas. This year another \$10,000 contribution was contributed to the Riverwalk endowment fund started last year by Bill and Marge Strong with a donation from Marmont Foundation. Hundreds of contributions have also been made to the City tree fund, and about a dozen memorial benches have been donated and placed in parks throughout the City.

PLAYGROUND AND RECREATION

The City of Ottawa Playground and Recreation Board oversaw an increasingly active program of quality recreation offerings and park development. In the past year, under the leadership of Maribeth Manigold, the Board increased its offerings to over 40 different programs for children and adults. A winter recreation program was available for the first time in cooperation with Marquette High School. The Senior Network offers senior citizen programs through the fall, winter and spring. Over 2,600 children and adults participated in the very affordable summer recreation programs. Adult summer and fall softball is more popular than ever with a record number of 134 teams participating this year.

The Recreation Board and the City paid tribute to adult softball icons June Gross and Roy Sanders upon their retirement this year after decades of developing and overseeing the adult softball program.

In cooperation with Commissioner Eichelkraut and the Parks Department the Recreation Board continues to help finance park enhancements throughout the City. This past year the adults softball diamonds were rebuilt and following the installation of a flag pole, Rigden Park was officially rededicated. The Rec Board also helped fund the completion of the Walsh Park renovation I mentioned earlier.

**2005 STATE OF THE CITY
Tuesday, October 25, 2005**

Because the recreational needs of the City continues to expand, the Playground and Recreation Board is developing a long-range plan to ensure that quality recreational programs and facilities remain an integral part of our community.

VOLUNTEERS

I continue to be amazed by the volunteer efforts in the City. Every year seems to bring more volunteers, in more capacities than before. All of the breathtaking flower beds in parks and right-of-ways are maintained by volunteers, who give their respective City beds the same painstaking care they give their own gardens.

There are over 300 men and women that serve on a host of boards and commissions – dealing with personnel issues (Civil Service and Fire & Police Commission), community development issues (Plan Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals), our urban forest, tourism, the riverwalk, historic preservation, special events, senior activities and many more.

This coming year we hope to take further advantage of these services by creating a volunteer coordinator at City Hall. I have asked City employee Heidy Eisert to take on this task, to organize our volunteer efforts by identifying projects and coordinating volunteers and supplies for each project.

2005 STATE OF THE CITY
Tuesday, October 25, 2005

These volunteers add to the “hometown” atmosphere that makes Ottawa a great place to live. I have mentioned no names of volunteers because there are so many, but the council did recently honor all of our volunteers at a volunteer appreciation picnic, and provided a small token of thanks, mugs imprinted with the words of Margaret Meade:

*Never doubt that a small group of
thoughtful committed citizens can change the world.*

- Indeed it's the only thing that ever has.

I also wanted to share these few special photographs of McKinley School third-graders who recently visited City Hall. We have occasion to give tours to classes from time to time, and I am ever mindful that these students may be future volunteers, City employees, or elected officials. You can see that some of the students want a chance to sit in the Mayor's chair. Nancy Stisser has perfected her school tour of City Hall and we usually try to conduct a mock City Council session. I remind these young citizens that City Hall belongs to all of them, and I hope they leave with a little bit of an idea of what self government is all about. I find third graders to be easily impressed, and they certainly make my day.

CONCLUSION

Before concluding I would also like to express my appreciation for the 120 some men and women who work for the City of Ottawa. It is wonderful to work with competent, caring people who work together to make this thing we call a City work for all of the people of Ottawa. And, as always, I would especially like to thank my assistant Kim Czyz and City Planner Tami Donahue for helping me prepare these comments and putting together the photographs and PowerPoint presentation.