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INTRODUCTION

Thank you for taking the time to be here today. It is always a pleasure to talk about a city I care very much about, and it pleases me to see so many other people who share those feelings. Thank you to the Ottawa Area Chamber for again sponsoring this State of the City event.

This is the 9th time I've had the pleasure of delivering the State of the City message. Last year was my 8th and I wasn't sure I would be back for another run, but here we go.

One of my favorite things to do on Saturday afternoons is to listen to the Garrison Keillor's radio show called the Prairie Home Companion. If you have never heard it, each week Keillor talks about a mythical small town in Minnesota called Lake Wobegone. It's a town filled with funny and quirky characters, but not a lot goes on there. Each monologue begins with the words, "Well it's been a quiet week in Lake Wobegone." I've often thought how I would like to start off this address by saying "well it's been a quiet year in Ottawa." But the circumstances never support that declaration.

It's actually been quite an exciting year in Ottawa and I would like to talk to you about some of those recent exciting developments. As usual, a good portion of my comments deal with the economic development activities occurring in the City, but we always need to remember the importance of our existing businesses, a good portion being represented by the Chamber membership here in this room today. Your role in maintaining the economic vitality of this community forms

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the foundation for creating opportunities for others to thrive as well. And there are probably many good things occurring in your businesses that I am not aware of, and won't address today, just as there are many more people who are making wonderful things happen in Ottawa who won't be mentioned. I apologize but such a task would keep us here all day.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Last year (2006) the City grew by, 1,684 acres, or about 2.6 square miles. The largest annexations occurred in the north Dayton TIF and the Canal TIF at our east edge. Whitetail Crossing at the south edge of the City and Pilkington on the west side of Ottawa were also major annexations.

(A) New Projects

On the Economic Development front, Farm Credit Services opened its new \$2 million dollar facility this year. Community Hospital of Ottawa opened its dialysis clinic, and its MRI facility and heliport pad is under construction. Next to CHO construction has begun on the Fox River Cancer Center, a \$3.75 million project which will allow citizens to take advantage of the myriad of diagnostic and cancer treatments right here in Ottawa.

In the Ottawa Industrial Park on east Route 6, a new roadway, Titanium Drive was recently completed and new rail spurs are in the process of being built to serve two new industries. ITP (International Titanium Powder) is a project we have been talking about for several years and finally construction has begun. ITP will manufacture titanium powder and is the first facility of its kind in the nation.

Next to Titanium, a Swiss company named Sika has also started construction on a facility to produce concrete additives. Both of these facilities will take advantage of the rail access that is unique to the

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Ottawa Industrial Park, and together will create approximately 80 good paying manufacturing jobs.

I believe the past few weeks have seen more new construction starts for new businesses than any similar span since I've been Mayor. Dirt is now being moved not only at the ITP and the Sika sites in the Ottawa Industrial Park, but also at the site of the new distribution center off Dayton Road. This 400,000 square foot facility and \$50 million investment will provide job opportunities for approximately 150 people. It appears we will also receive a \$750,000 infrastructure grant from the State of Illinois for this project.

Also, on the north side Fairmount Minerals is in the process of making a \$2.5 million investment in the former Illinois Laundry facility on Fremont Street and will create 5 manufacturing jobs at that site.

On the northern edge of the city, the new Starbucks facility is close to completion and additional stores have opened in Ottawa Center mall across from Super WalMart. This year the Menards company closed on land in Ottawa Center and will begin construction of a Menards store in 2008. Asbestos abatement is underway at the former Ottawa Inn and demolition is scheduled to begin soon with plans for the construction of a new suites hotel.

And finally, the Walsh Automotive Group and the Toyota Corporation have chosen Ottawa as the site of its new regional Toyota dealership.

(B) Heritage Harbor Ottawa

The largest development now underway in the City, in fact by far the largest in City's history, is Heritage Harbor Ottawa, the resort marina community on the Illinois River at the City's eastern edge. It's hard to appreciate the magnitude of this project until one actually sees it. Nearly one million cubic yards of fill is being moved to create a 32 acre harbor, the project's focal point. The harbor should be finished by the end of the year and open to boaters next summer.

Next year construction of streets, utilities, vacation homes and the first condominium building will begin. The project will include up to 900 residences, over 400 boat slips, a Harbor Town with a hotel and conference facility and shops, and a full-service marina.

When the entire project is built out, Heritage Harbor could comprise about 1/3 of Ottawa's assessed valuation, in the long-term making the project an important generator of real estate tax revenues to support our schools and other governmental services. Heritage Harbor Ottawa should have a very positive impact on the local economy, enhancing property values in general, and spurring further redevelopment in our downtown in particular.

C) Overview

I think it is appropriate to ask ourselves why the City is experiencing the type of development we have seen in the past several

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years, in particularly in the last several months. I think there are three basic reasons:

1. First, it is the natural and built environment that we are blessed with, whether it be our beautiful river valleys and recreational assets, or our navigable waterways and strategic location on and near major interstate highways and rail lines. It is also the existence of what is still generally viewed as a quality workforce.
2. The second factor, I believe, is that we have put into place the policies, infrastructure and mechanisms necessary to attract quality development. Several years ago the City purchased its first farm in the Ottawa Industrial Park on East Route 6, and now owns or has owned over 150 acres in that park. It is the only industrial park in the area that has rail service, and already three companies, MiniGrip ZipPak, Titanium and Sika are taking advantage of that rail service. Creation of the Ottawa Industrial Park assures us that improved land is always available to new quality employers - land that can be obtained at affordable prices and can be readily developed.

It's also not coincidental that all of the major developments that we have talked about today are located within TIF districts. I am convinced that without the TIFs these developments would not have occurred. The environment for siting new facilities is very competitive, and through the City's efforts in this regard Ottawa is at a competitive edge. I am of course aware of different opinions

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- about TIFs, and for new industries we have generally limited our new redevelopment agreements to 10 years. We also have or are negotiating intergovernmental agreements with other taxing bodies to share in the TIF revenues. But in the long run, there is no question that the existence of these new developments will provide a reliable, long-term source of revenue for our schools and our other local government entities.
3. The third factor that I believe has helped in our success at economic development is a qualified and dedicated staff. City Engineer Dave Noble heads our Department of Community Development and is directly responsible for all of the City's economic development activities. Dave and Boyd Palmer from the Chamber have a good working relationship and work closely in searching out leads for potential new developments. When we have a prospect, Dave initiates contacts, negotiates incentives, works with property owners on acquisitions and adjacent property owners on easements, reviews concept plans, seeks out grants for road and utility easements, and reviews construction drawings. Working closely with our City Attorney and Counsel, Pool, Leigh and Kopko, the terms of annexation agreements and TIF redevelopment agreements are carefully worked out. This team has been incredibly effective in balancing a myriad of needs and desires of developers and property owners while protecting the interest of the City and its taxpayers and citizens.

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Through changes in our fee structures, the services of the community development department are paid in large part by developers and do not drain funds for other essential services we provide our citizens.

The Community Development department continues to strive to update and improve our City's zoning and subdivision ordinances and streamline our permitting process. We are developing enhanced design review for commercial projects and enhanced building inspections. City planner Tami Huftel and our new building official Mike Sutfin are instrumental in these projects. Our plumbing and electrical inspectors, Mike Allen and Ed Strehl round out this team. Our ordinance enforcement officer Bill Boettcher keeps on top of the hundreds of nuisance violations that occur every year and Bill also provides invaluable assistance in inspecting road projects and other City construction projects.

GIS Coordinator Mary Kazmarek helps us continue to update and upgrade our maps and information systems as our City grows.

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TOURISM

Tourism remains a vital industry in this community, last year translating into approximately 75,000 overnight stays at local hotels, with visitors spending over \$8.4 million in the local economy, and generating about \$252,000 in hotel tax revenues that help fund the Ottawa Visitors Center and many of the City's special events. The Visitors Center continues to explore avenues to coordinate marketing efforts on a regional level under the guidance of the Visitors Center board and executive director Bridget O'Brien. With its new location in the Caretaker Cottage on the Reddick Mansion grounds, approximately 7,000 individuals visit or otherwise contact the Center annually.

The Center has drawn on the wonderful, rich history of Ottawa in its new bi-annual publication, the Experience Ottawa magazine. Over 40,000 magazines were distributed throughout Illinois and the Midwest last year.

Together the City and the Visitors Center have worked closely with the Illinois Department of Transportation for permission to erect 24 way finding signs throughout the City. Once these signs are installed they will enhance a visitor's ability to better navigate throughout the City.

One of the Visitors Center's most remarkable efforts is its ongoing Brush with History Mural project. This year the mural committee added the seventh mural to its collection. Titled "The Day of the Great Debate," the mural highlights one of the most important events to take place in Ottawa, the first Lincoln Douglas Debate of 1858.

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Next year marks the 150th anniversary of that debate. The Visitors Center is working with Nancy Stisser and the City's Special Events Committee and other organizations on a year-long series of events commemorating this important anniversary. Events on the tentative agenda include concerts, Victorian house walks and garden walks, youth activities, symposiums and an Abe and Steve Reunion Tour.

Over the past year through the efforts of the Visitors Center the City became a *Looking for Lincoln* community. If you have ever visited Springfield or other participating Lincoln communities you have probably seen some of the very impressive interpretive signage and plaques describing the various Lincoln sites. As a *Looking for Lincoln* community we will be able to use those same plaques in our downtown area drawing attention to our various Lincoln sites including Washington Square, where Lincoln debated, the County courthouse site where Lincoln practiced law in a previous building, the site of Lincoln's mustering out of the service at the end of the Blackhawk war, and the site of Mayor Glover's home where Lincoln stayed overnight at the time of the Great Debate.

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DOWNTOWN

The long-awaited acquisition and demolition of the Jordan block occurred last fall and the property is now an attractive open space that houses the temporary sales center of Heritage Harbor Ottawa. The Jimmy John's business will be moving up Columbus Street, and that building will also soon be demolished completing clearing of the block. The owner of the property and the City continue to explore future development of the site.

The City this year authorized Robinson Engineering to prepare a feasibility study for the re-routing of Route 23 off LaSalle Street in downtown Ottawa. The City needs to get a handle on the cost of the re-route so that a decision can be made at some point whether or not to proceed with that project. I believe that increased congestion on LaSalle Street in coming years makes this reroute important to develop downtown as a destination.

The downtown TIF is beginning to generate revenues that allows us to begin some other projects in the downtown area. I would like to establish a façade improvement program where matching funds can be made available to property owners for sensitive façade restorations.

In a cooperative partnership, the City, the Chamber, the Visitors Center and Heritage Harbor Ottawa have retained the services of the firm Destination Development to market downtown Ottawa. Last week representatives from the company met with community leaders, downtown merchants, property owners and other stake holders in the

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research/reconnaissance phase of this project. The goal is to develop a branding for downtown and a marketing plan, and to explore marketing implementation strategies and funding opportunities.

Another project we need to explore within the next few years is expanding the ornamental street lighting program that we have on LaSalle Street into other areas of the downtown as well as enhanced streetscapes throughout the downtown. An upstairs/downtown program to develop second stories for residential use also should be explored.

This past year the City also completed paving and landscaping of the new City Hall parking lot where the former Medical Center building once stood. The parking lot, in combination with the ramp and elevator that were part of the earlier City Hall renovation project, now makes City Hall completely accessible.

Washington Square continues to be the jewel of our downtown, looking better every year with the help of our volunteers. This year we finished replacing all benches in the Square with our new commemorative benches, all paid for by donors. Our volunteers also completed landscaping of the recently refurbished and expanded Civil War Soldiers Monument and plaza.

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FINANCE

I would like to talk a little bit now about the City's finances, which I believe are in good condition. The Council again adopted a balanced budget for this fiscal year and our current revenue streams seem to be on target with our projections, and spending is within budget limits. The ever-rising cost of health care continues to be a concern at the City. This year with ever increasing medical prescription claims increasing it is anticipated there will be an increase of 10% to 15% in the premium equivalents, which we should be able to accommodate. We are currently proposing an optional plan to our retirees who are enrolled in Medicare which would result in savings to the retirees and the City.

The most recent City audit is for the fiscal year ended April 30, 2006. One of the things that our audits do is to analyze the City's fixed assets – its buildings, equipment, vehicles, water and wastewater treatment plants, distribution systems and so forth. This is part of the GASB 34 accounting initiative which we, and other municipalities, have been using over the past couple of years – and it is intended to give a truer, more business-like picture of a municipality's overall financial condition.

Our latest audit shows these infrastructure assets in excess of \$42.5 million, an increase of nearly \$4 million over the previous year. At the same time, total liabilities increased by approximately \$1.6 million. We are now beginning to see the fully implemented effect of the ½% retail sales tax increase that was passed by referendum upon the City

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council's initiative and recommendation. Sales and Use Tax revenues increased by nearly half a million dollars in the last fiscal year, thereby easing pressures on property taxes. To local citizenry, the advantage to a sales tax is that it is paid by both residents and non-residents, as opposed to property taxes paid by residents only. Along with disciplined expense control and revenues generated by economic growth, the City in the last few years has seen improvement in its financial condition over prior years.

City Clerk Shelly Munks and newly hired Chief Deputy Clerk Alaina Rivers coordinate the daily financial activities of the City and generate departmental financial reports. On a monthly basis, Commissioner of Finance Dan Aussem and City Treasurer Don Harris, and I monitor financial reports to ensure that revenues and expenses are in line with the budget. Our department heads all keep a close watch on this as well. Currently the general fund balance is approximately \$2.1 million, and the balances in all funds combined are approximately \$9.3 million.

While economic development and good fiscal management is essential to the vitality of the community, most citizens identify the City primarily as a provider of services, and in many ways it is the City's primary charge. Indeed, we are judged on the appearance and safety of our town, as well as the services and cultural and entertainment opportunities available to our residents. Those things don't just happen, and I would like to touch briefly on what is happening in the various departments that serve our citizens.

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OTTAWA POLICE DEPARTMENT

Before I talk about the police department I'd like to say a few words about Maribeth Radtke who passed away on Sunday. Just last June Maribeth completed 34 years as a City dispatcher, her last few years as Police Communications Office Manager. She only got to enjoy about 3 months of retirement.

Although I went to high school with Maribeth I really didn't get to know her until I became Mayor. She was always positive and always smiling. She took pride in her job and always expressed concern and care for the people she worked with. Her stay with us was way too short and we will miss her. Our condolences to her husband, Jeff and her family.

During the past year, the Chief Brian Zeilmann together with Captains Paul Pitstick and Mike Kessinger continued to advance strategies to provide law enforcement services to the City of Ottawa.

The department's partnership with the Illinois Valley Anti-Drug Coalition remains strong in the campaign to address local substance issue. While the problem is long from disappearing, remarkable strides have been made in addressing the problem through the combined effort of education and enforcement. The progress is clear and measurable in the reduced number of drug-related deaths and the results of surveys administered by the Coalition.

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Regardless of the signs of progress, the Ottawa Police Department remains vigilant in the fight against the illegal drug trade. The combined efforts of everyone within the Department from the narcotics officer to the patrol officers have resulted in numerous drug related arrests. The arrests made by the Ottawa Police Department over the past year have also resulted in the seizure and forfeiture of nearly \$17,000 in cash and 4 automobiles. Forfeitures hit the drug dealers where it hurts most and help to reimburse the city for the hundreds of man-hours spent in developing these cases. Forfeited vehicles sometimes are used to replace higher mileage unmarked detective's vehicles or used as undercover surveillance vehicles during future covert narcotics operations.

The Ottawa Police Department continues to work to obtain grant moneys when possible for special enforcement projects. Three such grants received through the Illinois Department of Transportation this summer allowed for additional seat belt enforcement, several roadside safety checks and special speed enforcement details that resulted in the issuance of 553 tickets. One of these grants has already been approved again for 2008.

The Department is taking advantage of newer technologies in doing its work. Specifically, with the use of new surveillance cameras purchased by the City to be placed in specific problem areas, our officers will have a better chance to bring those responsible for open air drug sales, thefts and vandalism to prosecution. Additionally, the Police

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Department is in the process of obtaining a speed-monitoring trailer that can be placed in areas where speeding is problem.

This year the department created the position of civilian evidence clerk. With the growing inventory of evidence retained by the Ottawa Police Department, and the time necessary to manage it, placing a civilian into this position allowed for patrol officers to remain out on the street to address citizen calls for service rather than being tied up for several hours at a time in the evidence room. Additionally, since this position was filled by a current city employee many hours of officer overtime and compensatory time will no longer be needed resulting in a significant savings to the city.

The Ottawa Police Department continues to be one of the best-trained and most respected law enforcement agencies in this area. Along with the continuous in-service training received by our officers, our telecommunicators continue their ongoing training for MABAS, LEADS and 911 in order to ensure accuracy, efficiency and compliance with current regulations and procedures.

Our telecommunicators, now working with Police Communications Office Manager Diana Aussem, remain a vital link between the citizens in need and the appropriate emergency responder, be it police, fire, or ambulance, in addition to handling a host of less urgent concerns. During the past year, our telecommunicators have logged nearly 23,000 calls for the Police Department alone, a figure up by more than 1500 calls from the previous 12-month period.

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But while calls are up, our crime rate has actually decreased. As reported earlier this year, FBI statistics indicated that crime in Ottawa, as measured within eight broad crime categories covering everything from simple theft to murder, had dropped more than 9% from 2005 to 2006. Furthermore, due of the unpredictability of crime trends, the Chief cautiously, yet happily reports that, in comparing statistics covering January through September of this year to the same period of 2006, crime rates are remaining equal to or lower than that of last year.

Finally, the police department continues to move forward in its coordination of special community service programs such as the Peer Jury, which is used to address younger offenders. The Department has also remained committed to our school children through the retention of the DARE and Gang Resistance Education And Training programs, which are being taught to Ottawa's impressionable young students.

On the horizon Chief Zeilmann is in the process of developing the City's first Citizens' Police Academy. The program is being modeled after similar successful programs used across the nation. It will consist of a free twelve-week course, one night per week, during which concerned citizens will be instructed in topics such as patrol operations, drug investigations, the importance of evidence, K-9 procedures and the laws and court decisions that effect the successes of law enforcement in general. This course will end with a graduation and dinner and is designed to established new understandings and relationships between the Department and the community. The Chief hopes to begin accepting

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citizen applications for the Spring 2008 session shortly after the start of the new year.

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FIRE DEPARTMENT

Since the new Council took office in May, Ed Whitney has served as Commissioner of Public Health and Safety and oversees the Ottawa Fire Department. He and Fire Chief Jim Duback report that the Fire Department responded to 2,598 calls (408 Fire and 2,190 Ambulance) in the last twelve months. The call volume for the Ottawa Fire Department continues to increase year after year.

Skills and preparedness training is ongoing for all firefighters. Last year Ottawa Firefighters logged approximately 1,000 hours of training, including live fire training with the cooperation of NICOR and the Heritage Harbor group. Fire fighters also continued fulfilling their Emergency Medical Training for the year. Currently, 1 new firefighter is completing the 6-week fire academy in Champaign and will join the ranks soon.

The Fire Department continues to work with and train local industry and businesses on fire safety matters. The Department reviews Community Development plans including engineering and architectural plans, for fire safety Issues. Recently the Fire Chief, Bob Shull, Superintendent of Waste Water Treatment along with the State Fire Marshal and the Illinois EPA tracked and assured mitigation of a significant fuel leak that was entering our sewer mains from an underground gasoline tank at a local gas station. This was done without any injury to the public or the environment, requiring months of interagency cooperation at the Federal, State, and municipal levels.

The Ottawa Fire Department also maintains a strong presence in

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the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System, at both the local Division 25 and State levels. The Department has four team members on the Countywide Hazardous Materials Team and five team members on the Countywide Technical Rescue Team. Both of these Teams have been funded by Homeland Security Grants for training and equipment.

Last year our Fire Prevention and Education Program logged approximately 1,000 contact hours reaching about 4,000 children and adults teaching home and workplace safety. Prevention Officer Lt. Andy Borkowski just completed several weeks of visits to our schools teaching fire safety and prevention education, and coordinated fire drills at all elementary schools and our high schools.

The Fire Department has recently completed a comprehensive evaluation and assessment of its operations, organization, management and staffing by Resource Management Associates, Inc. It is our hope that this evaluation will lead to the future enhancement of services to the residents of the City of Ottawa including additional staffing or building needs as we grow. The Fire Chief recently submitted a federal SAFER (Staffing for Fire and Emergency Response) grant to help begin this process. City officials are currently reviewing the study, which makes 51 recommendations prioritized for immediate, mid range and long term implementation.

Chief Duback serves as the President of the Ottawa 9-1-1 Board and with the Board helped coordinate the \$130,000 expansion and upgrade of the Communications Center located at the Central Fire and

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Police Station. This upgrade includes state of the art interfaced equipment, digital communications, a DVR security camera system throughout the Central Police and Fire Station and a digital voice recorder that will hold 7 years of calls.

Both Chief Duback and Deputy Chief Jeff Newbury are reviewing and updating departmental policies and operational needs in order to establish more efficient ways to do business and assist with compliance with codes.

As the city grows, so do the challenges to the Ottawa Fire Department. With the recent upgrades and reorganization it is our belief that the Ottawa Fire Department will continue to serve the citizens with the quality of service they have come to expect.

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STREETS

The City is now in the process of finalizing the curb replacement and repavement program for this year. This year the program included

- < over 4,400 lineal feet of curb replacement and
- < 64 blocks of resurfacing

After the spring election, Commissioner Dale Baxter became our Street Commissioner. Dale has revived a crack seal program which we last did 6 or 7 years ago. The idea is to provide an additional level of maintenance to streets before they become too bad to repair, thus extending the overall lifespan of a street surface by several years.

Another program initiated this year was a complete brick street rebuild of a section of Grafton Street. This was probably one of the worst brick streets in the City. All of the bricks were removed, a new base was installed and the original bricks were relaid. If things go as anticipated, that 100 year old brick street could provide another 100 years of service. We hope to use the experience gained here and do more brick street improvements next year. In most cases this will not require the removal and relaying of entire sections of a street.

Large projects that are expected to begin in earnest next spring include the complete reconstruction of the Poplar Street hill. We had hoped to start on that this year, but engineering for the project is in progress. Also, we hope to begin construction on the installation of curb, gutter and sidewalks along sections of Adams Street.

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Street Superintendent Gary Erickson oversees the departments daily activities, including the yard waste drop-offs and the leaf vacuum program. This past year I believe we had a record number of yard waste drop off Saturdays and our leaf vacuuming program is scheduled to begin a little bit earlier this year, and hopefully be completed before the first snowfall. We encourage all residents to take advantage of these free services and also remind them that mulching is an easy and inexpensive way to address autumn leaves right at home, requiring little raking. It is environmentally friendly and it is good for your lawn.

WATER DEPARTMENT

In the water department, completion of standby power generators last November proved to be timely. During the demolition of buildings behind Thornton's Gas Station a contractor mishap caused a power outage for a few hours. This had no effect on the water supplied to the area because of the backup generator.

We all remember the August storm which dumped over 6" of rain in a short period of time, causing power outages from 4 to 24 hours on the north side. Water superintendent Bob Rick advises me that the generator has logged over 48 hours of service in that outage and other power outages preventing substantial lost revenue for business on the North Side and inconvenience to residential customers.

This past year the water department has focused on water storage, starting with the clearing and painting, inside and out, of the 500,000 gallon elevated storage tank at McKinley Road and Rt.23 at a cost of about for \$300,000. The tower had last been painted 20 years ago. Brackets were welded on the top to support the containment curtain (the beige thing covering the legs of the tank) used during the sandblasting and removal of the old paint, and during the installation of the new paint job. The water department saw it as a great learning experience to know the flexibility of the water system with water towers out of service.

Additionally, the new one million gallon north side water tower will be placed in service in the next few weeks. This \$1.5 million project was made possible through TIF financing. Due to the positive response the

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painting scheme on the south tower received, the same design is being used on the new north side tower. The new tower will improve fire protection, stabilize water pressures in that area and provide capacity for future growth.

In the spring the water department completed an assessment of infrastructure and equipment in the water department and recorded 87 miles of various sized water mains, 975 valves, 803 fire hydrants, over 7950 water meters. With expansion these numbers obviously will continue to increase so the City hired an additional employee bringing the total number of operators to six, together with a billing clerk and superintendent. These people pump, treat, distribute, meter, bill and collect while maintaining a state-of-the-art treatment system with an aging distribution system.

According to Commissioner Eichelkraut the upcoming year will see much needed maintenance on the North standpipe near Meadow Lane which, because of water demand and lack of water storage, has not been cleaned and painted for over 30 years. Finally, plans are near completion for an additional water storage tower for the far west end of the city and the newly annexed Pilkington property.

WASTEWATER TREATMENT

Like the water department, the wastewater treatment department is in the midst of many large infrastructure projects. Under the direction of Commissioner Eichelkraut and Wastewater superintendent Bob Shull and working closely with Assistant City Engineer Arnie Bandstra the construction of the Allen Park interceptor has started. This new line to the plant will eliminate one of our major lift stations. We are also expecting it to eliminate one of our CSO's (combined sewer overflows). A CSO is an event that occurs when heavy rains cause some of our combined storm and sewer services to overflow into the river.

The combined sewer overflow problem is one that the City has addressed incrementally over the years. The Illinois EPA is now requiring more detailed planning to abate CSO's and the City has hired Crawford, Murphy and Tilly, the same company that designed the ongoing reconstruction of the wastewater treatment plant, for that project. Speaking of the work at the wastewater treatment plant, the City this past year received a \$200,000 grant due to the energy savings the project will produce.

For many administrations, there has been talk about extending the sanitary sewer up Champlain Street. I am happy to announce that the contract for that project has now been awarded and work has started. It will run from Cherry Lane south along Champlain Street, and will provide additional capacity for the far north side of Ottawa as well as for certain residents in Retz Addition who have agreed to annex into the City. At

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some point it also will be able to serve all of Retz Addition should that annexation ever occur.

The Etna Road Sanitary Sewer project will be let out for bid this fall. That project will eliminate another problem lift station and will alleviate some flow now going to the Bellevue Avenue lift station.

The projects I've talked about so far eliminate two lift stations. Lift stations are pump facilities that require expensive operations and maintenance and can be eliminated when systems can be redesigned so that gravity does the work of the pumps. Each time we eliminate a lift station, we save potentially \$10,000 in yearly expenses.

This year the work on a portion of the south side interceptor along Fosse Road was put in place. This is picture of a boring showing part of that interceptor going under Route 23 and Fosse Road. Once this phase is complete, this interceptor will take flow on the south side to the existing Pembroke lift station. When development increases and the second phase of the interceptor is completed, the sewage will run directly to the wastewater treatment plant and eliminate four lift stations in all.

The City also has recently let bids for a new sewer main to serve the Heritage Harbor Ottawa project. This portion of the project is a gravity system and is being paid for by a contribution from the developer. A couple years down the road the final phase will be completed which will involve a new force-main under the Illinois River all the way to the wastewater treatment plant. This will provide capacity not only for

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Heritage Harbor, but for the Ottawa Industrial Park and all of the lands along Route 71 up to the I-80 interchange.

At the wastewater treatment plant continuing education and safety training are high priorities. Lab technicians determine what kind of organisms are present in the current activated sludge process and the process control is then determined from these results.

But, sometimes the latest technology just isn't good enough to get this done and personnel must still do it themselves.

PARKS

Under the continued watch of Commissioner Wayne Eichelkraut and new Park Superintendent Perry Owens the Parks Department maintains the City's 120 acres of parkland, in addition to working on special projects. Last year a \$249,000 OSLAD matching grant was obtained through the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to enhance Fox River Park. Improvements will include additional boat docking, additional soft surface parking, playground equipment, fishing pier and shelter, with construction to start in the spring of 2008.

A separate \$170,000 matching grant was obtained for a new boat launch at the east end of Main Street . That project will include two boat ramps, a parking lot for vehicles and boat trailers, and 3 floating courtesy docks. This project is scheduled to start next year and should take some of the pressure off of the Allen Park launch and parking areas.

The Riverwalk remains a popular amenity, with new signage and plantings on the hillside below the Ottawa Boat Club providing beautiful and inviting setting for boaters visiting Ottawa as well as users of the Riverwalk.

Other park improvements include new sidewalk at Peck Park, new curbing at Kiwanis Park, and the completion of the installation of the new play equipment at Kiwanis and Turnberry parks.

PLAYGROUND AND RECREATION

This past year the City of Ottawa Playground and Recreation Board oversaw a typically active program of quality recreation opportunities. Winter recreation offerings included the Tea Dance, adult men's basketball, and winter recreation activities at Marquette High School. This past summer, the Rec Board again offered over 40 programs for children and adults with more than 3,200 children and adults participating in the popular and affordable summer activities. Recreation summer and fall adult softball gave almost 2,400 players the opportunity to compete in the largest recreational softball league in the area.

The Playground and Rec Board also continued its active cooperation to develop and enhance our parks. The board oversaw the planning stages of improvements to Fox River Park and helped oversee improvements to the Turnberry Park playground. Additionally, the board is providing crucial input regarding recreational opportunities as the City works with developers.

As the City and its recreational needs grow, the Playgrounds and Recreation Board intends to insure that quality recreational programs and facilities remain a part of our community.

SPECIAL EVENTS

The Special Events Committee continues to support and, in some cases, helps organize our community's favorite annual events, including: Cruise Night, the city-wide block party, our Music in the Park Big Band series, the Pet Expo and the Festival of Lights Parade.

The Committee was happy to be a part of the return of the Scarecrow Festival this year. A big thank you is extended to the downtown merchants who helped organize and participate in it's return with a special acknowledgment of Mary Wakely for her tireless effort and great organizational skills in making the event one of the best ever. A chili-cook-off was added to the events this year, and the crowd was one of the finest.

Due to the efforts of Riverfest Coordinator Heidi Eisert along with a host of volunteers, Riverfest again was a successful event. Thousands of people per night visited the festival area. This year's big band featured the Gin Blossoms and food and beverage and carnival ticket sales totaled about \$200,000.

This year will mark the 20th anniversary of the Festival of Lights Parade. Don and Betty Gillette have created a tradition for Ottawa that compares to none other in the state. With the support of the Special Events Committee they have kept alive this non-commercial parade designed especially for our children to enjoy.

The Committee has already met with organizers of several new events planned for 2008 and are looking forward to supporting them as

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well as continuing the established ones. The Committee hopes to offer more Saturday night events this next year, and is inviting suggestions and ideas anyone may have.

REDDICK LIBRARY

Reddick Library has been a cultural icon in the City of Ottawa since its founding in 1888. Originally housed in the Reddick Mansion, the City library moved to its current location in 1975. Under the guidance of its Board and able executive director, Vicky Trupiano, the library has grown the services it provides and the number of people it serves. The library now offers wireless internet access, downloadable audio books, and variety of programs in a facility open weekends and four nights until 9:00 p.m. Over 125,000 people walk through its doors each year, and library circulation topped over 160,000 items last year.

The library applies regularly for grants and has just received a grant to fund a community relations coordinator position. Kathy Clair will forge partnerships with the library and schools, communities and agencies to develop and sustain innovative outreach programs.

This is the last time I will refer to our City library in my State of the City Address. The reason for this is that we no longer have a City library. One of the most significant events to occur in the library's history happened in last falls election, when, by referendum, the people chose to create the Reddick Public Library District. The District became effective this past June and now serves not only Ottawa, but Naplate and surround townships. The Library continues to seamlessly serve Ottawa citizens, and with its new broader tax base allows the library to offer to even more people learning for a lifetime. My congratulations goes out to

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the library board and Vicky Trupiano for their work in promoting the library district referendum.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

In late 2005 the City was designated as a Certified Local Government by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. We were able to obtain this designation by virtue of the fact that the City has an Historic Preservation Commission and an historic preservation ordinance. The Commission in the past has concentrated its efforts on two major Washington Square projects, the creation of the Lincoln-Douglas Debate Memorial Plaza and the restoration of the Civil War Soldiers Monument.

The Commission in the coming year is working to obtain a small grant for education purposes, available only to Certified Local Governments. The Commission would also like to begin designating local historic landmark buildings and districts. This is generally done on a voluntary basis and allows property owners who receive the designation to take advantage of certain federal tax benefits when renovating their properties. These designations also raise the level of awareness in the community of the existence and importance of our architectural heritage.

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VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers continue to play a major role in the operation of city government and in the beautiful appearance of the City.

There are over 300 men and women that serve on a host of boards and commissions – dealing with personnel issues, community development issues, our urban forest, tourism, the riverwalk, historic preservation, special events, the Scouting Museum, the Reddick Mansion, senior activities and many more.

I can't name or thank them all, but the City will be honoring them at an appreciation dinner held at the Knights of Columbus Hall next month.

That being said, last year at this time I spot lighted the work of the Historic Preservation Commission and the restoration of the LaSalle County Civil War Soldiers Monument. This year I would like to put the spot light on four individuals who have contributed an incredible amount of talent and back-breaking hours in planting and maintaining Washington Square, the Reddick Mansion grounds, the plantings throughout the downtown area, including the riverwalk. Our hats go off to Anna and Don Mattes, Twila Yednock and Al Howarter for the breathtaking flower beds, including some that I can only describe as over the top, that we find in those areas downtown. I can't tell you how many people have complemented me on your work.

GREEN CITY INITIATIVE

Across the country and the world people are becoming more aware of the potentially catastrophic effects of man-made climate change. In awarding this years' Nobel Peace Prize to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and to Al Gore, the Norwegian Nobel Committee noted: "Indications of changes in the earth's future climate must be treated with the utmost seriousness, and with the precautionary principle uppermost in our minds. Extensive climate changes may alter and threaten the living conditions of much mankind. They may induce large-scale migration and lead to greater competition for the earth's resources. Such changes will place particularly heavy burdens on the world's most vulnerable countries. There may be increased danger of violent conflicts and wars, within and between states."

In part, due to the lack of leadership at the Federal level, states are beginning to establish policies to address their own carbon footprints, including Illinois. The Governor's advisory group recently established 24 recommendations to serve as a guide. This generation needs to work on solving the problems of climate change at all levels, from the international to the local level.

I believe the City of Ottawa needs to implement an environmental impact policy that should include the implementation of energy efficient practices and other strategies to reduce our carbon footprint in city government, and encourage the same among our residents. One of the

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programs that local governments are implementing across the country is the Cool Cities Program, an option I believe we should explore.

Measures such as the Cool Cities initiative do not need to adversely impact the economic vitality of a community or nation. In fact, better environmental practices can reduce energy costs, and actually create jobs. The Governor's advisory group recognized this and I believe the Ottawa Area Chamber recognizes this in that it has adopted as its 2008 theme "Go Green Today for a Greater Tomorrow."

Developing a new level of consciousness throughout the city will require the efforts of us all and I invite citizens interested in this important issue to join in a City advisory committee on this topic.

And for those who can attend, on Saturday, November 3 there will be a public meeting at noon in Washington Square. Step It Up 2007 LaSalle County, a new group, is organizing this meeting as part of hundreds of such meetings across the United States and Canada. Katie Troccoli and Edwin McCullough, are co-chairs. At 3:00 p.m. Step It Up will present a free slide show on Global Warming at the Reddick Library.

CONCLUSION

Before concluding, I would like to express my appreciation to the Chamber, its members and staff, for the great working relationship we have shared over the years. I believe the City-Chamber partnership, has allowed us to better serve your members and our citizens, and to seize opportunities that otherwise would have been missed.

I would also like acknowledge and to sincerely thank the 120 some men and women who work for the City of Ottawa. I said it last year and I'll say it again, it is wonderful to work with competent people who care about their jobs and city, and take pride in their service to the people of Ottawa. Thanks also to my assistant Kim Czyz and Planner Tami Huftel who helped me prepare these comments and put together the photographs and power point presentation.

So, it has not been a quiet year in Ottawa. We are not Lake Wobegone with its funny and quirky people, we are Ottawa with our own funny and quirky people, but that's another speech for another time.