

Welcome to the 2013 State of the City Address. I want to thank the Chamber for hosting today's event, and Les O'Dell and his staff, and City staff members for organizing it. I also want to thank the City's snow plow crews that worked so hard to clear the streets during this past weekend's snow storm. They were working throughout the night on Thursday and Friday, and out late on Saturday and Sunday. I want to thank the majority of Carbondale's residents for their patience, and for not thinking the incident was another conspiracy or backroom deal. If we lived in Portland, Oregon the majority of us would still be waiting for their streets to be plowed.

A portion of your lunch ticket goes toward the Carbondale Scholarship fund which assists CCHS seniors attending SIU in the fall. Last year, you helped raise three \$500 scholarships. You can make additional contributions to this Fund by calling the Chamber and putting your contribution on your credit card. Or, if you make your check out to the Chamber Foundation, your contribution is tax deductible.

This year's State of the City Address will again include input from City Staff. It is important that we hear from them in order to get a better picture of the State of the City and the direction in which we are headed.

First, I want to say that it has been an interesting year for holidays in Carbondale as, we took up the torch to save the Fourth of July Fireworks Display (a torch that I quickly passed onto the Director of Carbondale Tourism, Cinnamon Smith), we brought Halloween back to life, and we will salvage the Lights Fantastic Parade by having a staging of the floats on Saturday in SIU's Communications Bldg.'s north parking lot.

During last year's Address, I proposed the development of an Entertainment District in Downtown Carbondale with the anchor of the District being a fully renovated Varsity Center for the Arts. The project was also intended to include the restoration of the Town Square Pavilion and the promotion of entertainment in the downtown.

To fund this endeavor, my original plan was to create an Entertainment Fee on event tickets. However, after meeting with the City's Finance Department staff, and with the Entertainment District Committee, we realized that: 1.) The funds that could be raised from an Entertainment Fee wouldn't raise the necessary funds, 2.) We needed to responsibly address the shortfall of our Public Safety Pension Funds, and 3.) That besides the Varsity Center for the Arts, there are other existing community facilities that need immediate attention if we are to save and/or restore them.

We have lost too much of our history in recent years including the Tuscan Lodge and Opera House buildings, and buildings that stood where the Civic Center now stands.

So, rather than spend funds on building any proposed new facilities, which would then require a constant source of funding to maintain them, we need to be prudent and restore our existing facilities and resources before Mother Nature takes back the space.

For some background on the Public Safety Pension Funds, neither Illinois voters nor any city council in Illinois decide on the rates that we pay for the pensions of our public safety employees – this right lies in the hands of the IL General Assembly. In essence, members of the General Assembly get the credit while the taxpayers get the bill.

A short time after becoming Mayor, I asked City Staff if the City had ever put out for bid our Liability and Disability Insurance. No one could remember if we ever had put it out for bid so, that process was soon started. The bid that we accepted saved the City over \$500,000 in insurance

premiums. However, a few weeks later, we received the actuary report on our public safety pension costs and, our cost had gone up about \$324,000; deleting most of what we had saved in our insurance costs.

While conferring with City Staff about an Entertainment Fee, I learned that, although Carbondale is doing better than other Illinois communities in managing their pension funds, we are still below the recommendation of being funded at 80%. We are currently funded at about 58% which means, we are about \$13.6 million short of the 80%.

Currently, a quarter of one percent of our sales tax goes towards the bonds that pay for the construction of our high school but this quarter percent is set to expire in 2016.

I have proposed that the CCHS amount be continued after 2016 to assist in funding our pension responsibilities. City Staff estimates that a quarter percent sales tax currently generates about \$800,000 annually. The second part of my proposal is to increase our sales tax rate for a five year period by a quarter of a percent. With this increase, our sales tax rate would then be the same as Marion's current sales tax rate of 8.5%; which may be going up. In comparison, Champaign's current sales tax is 8.75%.

Approximately fifty percent of the proposed sales tax increase would go towards reducing the shortfall of our Public Safety Pension Funds responsibility. The remaining 50% would be used to refurbish the **Varsity Center for the Arts**, the Park District's **Greenway/ Bikeway**, the City's **Town Square Pavilion**, the **Buckminster Fuller Dome**, and the **Green Earth's Trails** between Chautauqua and Sunset, and towards a, much needed, new **Multimodal Facility to replace the current Amtrak Station**.

If you are in support of restoring our community's existing facilities and resources, please contact the members of the City Council as we'll soon be discussing these proposals when we discuss next year's budget.

One of the toughest duties of the Finance Department is making revenue projections. So far, our sales tax revenue is down about \$200,000 from the revenue projections for the City's current fiscal year's budget. The reason for this shortfall is because we had anticipated SIU's Fall Semester enrollment to be flat when making our projections but, a population decline of almost 900 students means that there is about \$11 million less being spent in the region.

Later, Kevin will address some of the concerns faced by the Finance Dept. and talk about areas where we have seen significant savings through cost-saving measures.

The main purpose for local government is to provide for the Public Health and Safety of its residents; through police & fire protection, safe drinking water, and waste water treatment. For our Police Dept., it seems that people are either complaining that they spend too much time or not enough time with traffic enforcement; I guess it depends up whether they had received a ticket or saw someone that should have received a ticket.

Besides our more visible Traffic Unit, our Police Department has a variety of divisions and programs including the Burglary Unit, a Crime Victim Services Unit, a Community Service Officer Program, a Law Enforcement Career Exploring Program, and a joint Narcotics Unit with the SIU Police Department.

To focus on one of the Police Department's units, **the Crime Victim Services Unit** provides needed assistance and referrals to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and violent crime. The Crime Victim Services Unit also provides internships for SIU's School of Social Work students who assist the Police Dept.'s Crime Victim Advocate.

With federal cutbacks for social services, the Police Department was recently notified that our **Violence Against Women Act Domestic Violence Project** grant had been renewed for an additional three year period. Over the project's 16 year life, the Police Dept. has been awarded nearly \$3.2 million. Our project has been one of the longest standing projects in the nation and our recent award was one of only 15 nationwide. This grant allows the Police Dept. to continue to focus on a coordinated community response to domestic violence with a partnership that includes the Women's Center, the Jackson County State's Attorney Office, and the Jackson County Sheriff's Office.

In 2014, we will begin our 23rd consecutive year of having an accredited Police Department. The Police Department, currently accredited through the Illinois Law Enforcement Accreditation Program (ILEAP), is one of only 54 accredited Illinois municipal law enforcement agencies, and we have the only accredited Police Department south of Champaign. The standards required by ILEAP ensure consistent, professional, and effective law enforcement, while at the same time allowing transparency, effective self-management, and fiscal competency.

As for the Fire Department, the new Fire Station #2 on the west side, north of Walgreens, will have an Open House and Ribbon Cutting sometime in early January. Designed to withstand the effects of seismic activity, the energy efficient facility will include radiant heat in the apparatus bay floor, as well as geothermal heating and cooling in the living quarters.

Our Emergency Management Services (EMS) will also move from the basement here at City Hall to the new Fire Station. The new Emergency Operations Center will include a wide range of communication capabilities and will have the ability to receive real-time information from the National Weather Service via satellite allowing for the transmission of uninterrupted watches, warnings and data in the event of internet failures.

In addition to the replacement of an existing pumper truck, the Fire Department received \$250,000 from the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program for the purchase of a new Rescue Vehicle. However, we still need to replace our 30 year old ladder truck which has a price tag of about \$900,000.

Our EMS is part of the Central U.S. Earthquake Consortium and is participating in a three-year, multi-state program with a scope of planning and preparedness activities which will conclude with a multi-state earthquake exercise in June.

Additional information about the Police and Fire Depts. can be obtained from the City Manager, or from Chief O'Guinn or Chief Michalesko.

The Development Services Department has been busy especially when you consider that they replaced two planners and one inspector this past year. In addition to fielding questions from council members and the public, they completed the revisions to the Carbondale Zoning Code; inspected approximately 2,500 rental properties; wrote and received a \$168,000 grant from the Illinois Housing Development Authority to rehabilitate four homes; and issued building permits for almost \$32 million worth of new construction, and remodeling or additions to existing

structures. For additional info about Development Services, contact either the City Manager or the Director of Development Services, Chris Wallace.

Our Public Works Dept. has also been busy with multiple projects, which will be described in more detail by Sean Henry. These projects include: a new three-million gallon, above ground water tank; the construction of the new Fire Station; Several water and sewer line replacement projects; the ongoing Schwartz St. Reconstruction; and Re-instating a regular street sweeping program. For additional info about the Public Works, contact either the City Manager or the Public Works Director, Sean Henry.

Well, I've said enough for now and it is time to hear from our professional staff. It is my pleasure to now introduce our City Manager, Mr. Kevin Baity.

Thank you Mayor Fritzler. Good Afternoon and welcome. This is the third year in which the State of the City address has taken the form of presentations from both Mayor Joel Fritzler and City staff. I feel this format provides you with an opportunity to hear directly from the department heads concerning items of significance within their specific areas.

Often times the State of the City address is where you the public hear about a new major announcement of a new retailer coming to town or a new program being implemented. This year we do not have a major retail announcement to make as the state of the retail world is still rebounding from the 2008-2009 recession and we the consumers are still hesitant about spending our hard earned dollars and pledging our confidence in the economy. This being the case, we will focus today on how the City is investing in its infrastructure and making internal changes to increase efficiencies. As Mayor Fritzler noted our sales tax revenues are down again this year compared to our budget forecasts and compared to last year. In an effort to reduce long terms costs while working within the confines of the current budget, city staff have reviewed their operations and made changes which will yield immediate savings as well as long term savings.

One such change that was rolled out in early 2013 and is almost fully implemented is a procurement card purchasing system. This system is intended to streamline purchases at the point of sale, allow for improved tracking of purchases and decrease the amount of paperwork necessary to process and pay our bills, thereby increasing our staff efficiencies in time management.

Another area where we are looking for saving is in the purchase of hybrid vehicles. Before the end of this year the City will purchase its first hybrid vehicle to go with its numerous flex-fuel vehicles. With these purchases we are confident the City will begin see long term-savings in fuel usage and repair costs. The City employs three professional mechanics who are ASE certified and with their recommendations and guidance we are beginning to transform our existing fleet of cars and trucks into a more energy efficient fleet. These individuals are tasked with keeping our diverse and large fleet of vehicles, including fire trucks, garbage trucks, backhoes, dump trucks, police cars and others, on the road and they are not often recognized for the great service they provide to our community.

Over the last two years, we have installed new heating/cooling controls in this building. These changes allow the offices to be independently heated/cooled thereby reducing the need to condition the air in all parts of the building when not in use. An overall reduction in the total energy usage has proven these changes successful.

At this time, I would like to introduce Sean Henry, our Public Works Director. He will give you an overview of the many construction and infrastructure projects we are currently working on. Sean...

State of Public Works Address December 10, 2013

Introduction:

Good Afternoon, as Mr. Baity mentioned I am Sean Henry, the Public Works Director and City Engineer for the City of Carbondale. For those of you who don't know me personally, I am a Carbondale native. After graduating from CCHS, I earned a BS in Civil Engineering from the University of Missouri at Rolla (now called Missouri University of Science and Technology). While I was in college I worked for as a summer engineering technician for the City in 1992 and 1993. After graduating I began my engineering career with the City of Carbondale in January 1994. In the fall of 1996 I took a job at a local consulting firm and served as their Director of Civil Engineering for nearly 10 years; whereupon in the summer of 2006 I went back to the City of Carbondale and spent nearly 5 years as the City's Maintenance and Environmental Services Manager in the Public Works Department. Since the spring of 2011 I have been privileged to serve as the Carbondale's Public Works Director and City Engineer.

As you might guess, I genuinely care about our City; I also take extreme pride in the hard work and accomplishments of the City's Public Works Team. The men and women of Public Works have once again shown that Teamwork, Excellence, and Dedication are what it takes to get the job done. Although much of what we do goes unnoticed, as we spend most of our time quietly working in the background to help improve the quality of life for Carbondale citizens and visitors. Our Public Works team is divided up into 18 separate operating divisions including: Cedar Lake, Central Laboratory, Water Treatment Plant, Water Distribution and Sewer Collection, Meter Services, two (2) Waste Water Treatment Plants, Equipment Maintenance, Building and Property Maintenance, Street Maintenance, Forestry, Cemeteries and Refuse and Recycling Collection, and Engineering and Administration.

The Public Works Department has approximately 80 full time and 20 part time employees and a total FY2014 operating budget of \$12.76 million, which is approximately 1/3 (30.4%) of the City's overall operating budget. In addition to the operating budget the Engineering Division of Public Works is also responsible for the design, construction, and oversight of the City's Community Investment Program which includes an additional \$10.5 million for the design and construction of various projects in and around the City.

Recent Construction Projects:

State of Public Works Address December 10, 2013

During the past year staff has worked on numerous projects including:

- Our annual sidewalk repair and replacement program
 - a. Repaired and replaced or constructed over 11,000 square feet of sidewalks
 - b. Construction cost of approximately \$80,000 plus engineering and design.

- Constructed a new 3 million gallon above ground water storage tank on Park street
 - a. This new tank and pump station will replace the existing underground tanks located at the old water treatment plant property on Wall Street.
 - b. Will allow for the possible redevelopment of land at the corner of Wall and Grand.
 - c. Total project cost is about \$3.8 million.
 - d. Primary funding is through a low interest loan with the Illinois EPA.

- Construction of the new Fire Station #2 at 401 North Glenview Drive
 - a. The new building includes a 5,800 sq. ft. apparatus bay, 2,700 sq. ft. of office space, and 3,000 sq. ft. of living space for the fire fighters.
 - b. Building features include geothermal heating and air conditioning, radiant floor slab heating in the apparatus bay, high efficiency lighting, an emergency generator, and the new building will also house the City's Emergency Operations Center which will be relocated from the basement of City Hall.
 - c. This new station will replace the 53 year old station at the corner of Walnut and Poplar
 - d. Will also allow for the potential redevelopment of property at this corner.
 - e. Total project cost is approximately \$3.9 million.

- Sycamore Street Waterline Replacement
 - a. Consists of approximately 1,600 feet of new water main from Oakland Ave. to Poplar St.
 - b. Replaced dilapidated cast iron water mains.
 - c. Total project cost of about \$340,000

- Continued work on the City Wide Sanitary Sewer Inflow and Infiltration Study
 - a. Have now completed inspection of approx. 83,500 feet of sewer line and 700 manholes.
 - b. FY2014 project cost of \$210,000

- Schwartz Street Waterline Replacement
 - a. Consists of approximately 900 feet of new water main from Oakland Ave. to Eason Dr.
 - b. Replaced dilapidated cast iron water mains.
 - c. Total project cost of about \$170,000

- Renovation of the Bicentennial Industrial Park Water Storage Tank
 - a. Repairs to the tank steel, installation of new vents and man-ways, painting of the tank interior and exterior, and the installation of a solar mixing system.
 - b. Total project cost of \$195,400

State of Public Works Address December 10, 2013

- Various Improvements at the NWWWTP
 - a. Trickling Filter Repairs - \$45,000
 - b. Concrete Structure Lining - \$67,100

In the Works:

Projects currently under design or nearly ready for construction include:

- Brook Lane Footbridge Replacement
- Schwartz Street Reconstruction from Oakland to Eason
- Replacement of waterlines on West Mill Street
- Continued work on the Sanitary Sewer Inflow and Infiltration Study
- Sanitary sewer rehabilitations as identified by the Inflow and Infiltration Study
- Phase I of the downtown pedestrian/bicycle path (from Mill Street to Main Street)
 - a. Primary funding is an ITEP Grant of \$330,000
- Continued replacement of waterlines in the former Crab Orchard Water District areas.
- Feeder water main replacements throughout the City (10" and larger).
- Electrical renovations for the Raw Water Pump station at Cedar Lake.
 - a. Partially funded by a DCEO grant of \$350,000
- Backup generators for the sanitary sewer lift stations.
 - a. Partially funded by a DCEO grant of \$220,000
- New waste lagoons at the water treatment plant.
- Replacement of the Haake-Jenkins Lift Station with gravity sewer.
- Reconstruction of the New Era Road Lift Station.

Other items of note in Public Works during the past year include:

- Collecting 3,200 tons of refuse and 550 tons of recycling from residents.
- Reading over 101,000 water meters and repairing approximately 85 water main breaks.
- Emptying over 4,500 public trash cans along Illinois Avenue.
- Receiving the Tree City USA designation for the 32nd consecutive year.
- And graduating our 4th and 5th staff members from the Illinois Public Service Institute (IPSI), which is a 120+ hour comprehensive supervisory and management training class.

Closing:

In closing, Public Works has been busy. Busy keeping the water flowing to and from your homes and businesses, cleaning up and maintaining streets, trimming trees, collecting refuse and recycling, repairing and maintaining equipment and buildings, reading and maintaining water meters, making clean drinking water and waste water, and designing and building infrastructure throughout the City.

I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to give you an update on the City's Public Works Department. The teamwork, expertise, and dedication, that public works employees provide to our City often go un-noticed; these

**State of Public Works Address
December 10, 2013**

men and women perform their jobs without complaint and for the greater good of you, our business people, citizens, and visitors. Public Works never sleeps; we're on the job 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. If you don't mind take a minute to think about what these tireless individuals do for our community... each and every person on the Public Works Team performs important jobs, none of them more or less important than the other. If you have the chance, take the time to let one of our team know you appreciate and care about the work they do.

With that I'd like to welcome Mr. Baity back to the podium. Thank You.

Thank you Sean for that update.

In keeping with the theme of infrastructure improvements, as Sean stated, the City received a \$336,000 grant from the Illinois Department of Transportation to begin construction of the Downtown pedestrian & bicycle path. The first phase will include construction of the path from Mill Street to Main Street along the east side of the Canadian National Railroad tracks. The plan includes landscaping, benches, and lights where necessary. The City has already applied for a second grant for phase two of the project. This section stretches from Mill Street south and connects to the north pedestrian overpass on the SIU campus. Portions of both phases are only possible through the collaborative efforts with SIU and a grant from the Student Green Fees. We anticipate construction to begin during the summer of 2014.

And speaking about bike paths, I want to thank the Illinois Department of Transportation for making last minute changes to the Main Street resurfacing project to allow for the inclusion of a dedicated bike lane from Marion Street to Poplar Street. Unfortunately, the segments of Main Street between Wall Street and Marion Street and Poplar Street and Bleyer Drive were determined to be too narrow to allow for a dedicated bike lane there.

The City has been working with IDOT on two other bike / pedestrian paths. The first will run along the south side of East Main Street from Lewis Lane to the US Post Office in front of the University Mall. It will include an at-grade crossing of Main Street between the Post Office and Barnes and Noble Bookstore. This project is being paid for by a Safety Grant from IDOT and should be constructed in the spring / summer of 2014. We are pleased to announce we will receive a second Safety Grant that will allow the construction of a companion path that will run along the north side of West Main Street from Sycamore Street to New Era Road. This project will allow the residents of the Southern Illinois Center for Independent Living to travel safely to the Murdale Shopping Center and West Park Plaza areas. This project is still being designed and construction will likely occur in late 2014 or early 2015.

In early 2013, the City of Carbondale decided to join a group of other local municipalities to form a consortium for the purpose of aggregating electric supply purchasing for residential and small business customers. In January the City signed a consulting contract with Select Energy Partners and in March after completing a formal bid process, the Carbondale City Council elected to accept the 100% green energy option from Homefield Energy. Electric supply rates were locked in for a 24-month period at \$0.0435 per kWh for non-space heat and \$0.04285 per kWh for space heat. To date we have a 93% participation rate with only 7% exercising the Opt-Out

option. In the first three months, May - July 2013, the consortium netted a \$370,000 savings. This averages out to \$5.64 per month per residential customer. When spread across an entire 12 month period, this equates to almost \$68.00 in savings or the equivalent of one entire months usage. Although the City itself was not eligible to participate in the aggregation program because of its total kilowatt usage, the City did utilize the services of an energy broker and saved an estimated \$30,000 .

Although we did not have a big retail announcement for you today, I would like to point out several smaller, locally owned and managed businesses that have opened, relocated or expanded this year. Starting on the west side we have Asian Accupuncture on North Glenview, Sabens Martial Arts Academy, The Candy Factory and Pita Alley on West Main. On the east side we have Tower Loan and Thalman Chiropractic on East Walnut, AAA Missouri Travel, Delish Bakery, McAlister's Deli and Qin Guan Restaurant all on East Main Street; Shawnee Dental Clinic on South Lewis Lane, Boondocks on Reed Station Road, and SI Paint and Supply on Sweets Drive. In the weeks following Christmas, TJs Fine Jewelry will be relocating to East Main Street adjacent to Vic Koenig Chevrolet. Speaking of Koenig Chevrolet, they and Auffenburg GMC have both made significant investments in renovations to their sales facilities. I would be remiss if I didn't mention University Mall and the retail openings which have occurred there. They include Justice, Kids Play Zone, Look Great Eyebrow Threading, Ulta Beauty Salon, Lane Bryant and Things Remembered.

A little less than a year ago, the City created two new Tax Increment Financing Districts, commonly referred to as TIF districts. The Illinois - University Avenue TIF is already seeing success as the City has partnered with five property owners for the redevelopment/rehabilitation of their properties. These owners will receive an annual rebate on their investments through the increased valuation of their property. Other downtown redevelopments include the re-opening of Melange, Screaming Owl Records, T's Hair Salon, The Shop, Main Street Plaza, Locally Owned Important Produce Store, Game Fusion, LaFogata Restaurant, Curbside Restaurant, Bandanas BBQ and a new Wendy's.

In November, I proposed the creation of a new Downtown Masterplan to guide the redevelopment within the Illinois - University TIF. Following discussion and input from the City Council, staff and I are looking at the various components contained in a plan and alternative methods for the creation of a plan. If you have recently traveled to Normal, Illinois (home of Illinois State University) or Kent, Ohio (home of Kent State University) you should have

witnessed what a successful downtown redevelopment looks like. Both these examples utilized the collaborative work of a town and gown relationship that can easily be reproduced here with the assistance of SIU. Chancellor Rita Cheng and I have been meeting regularly and developing ideas and plans of how to utilize the nationally recognized School of Architecture and the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute to remake our downtown. We will be bringing our recommendations back to the City Council early next year.

As I mentioned earlier, the City's revenues are a little off pace from our budget projections and last year's actual receipts. Home Rule sales tax is down 2.7% below last year and the regular Sales tax is down 2.2%. Although revenues in the first seven months were weak, we are seeing a narrowing of the gap. Home Rule sales tax has improved to less than 2% and the regular Sales tax is actually up over the last 2 months. Early reports from the national retail markets indicate that sales from the extended Black Friday weekend, which began on Thursday this year, are up 2.5%. The City will have to wait until February, March and April to see what the actual local sales in November and December will bring. This is due to a three month delay in the time when the actual sales occurs to the time the City receives the sales tax from the State.

What I hope you take away from today's State of the City address is that we are taking the necessary steps in increasing our financial efficiencies and in reinvesting in our infrastructure. This is being done to better position the City for a major future turnaround in the economy. To close out my portion of the State of the City Address, I would like to remind you, the citizens that we are here to serve you. Every day, your City employees work hard to provide you with a safe and healthy living environment while continuously looking at ways to reduce costs and increase efficiencies. I am continually amazed at the ideas and suggestions our staff develops to do more with less.

I want to welcome back to the podium, Mayor Joel Fritzler.

I would like to thank Kevin and Sean for their presentations and for bringing us up to date on the State of **their** City. Sometimes people and council members forget that most of the city staff are also residents and taxpayers just like them, and that they want Carbondale to succeed and be the best that it can be.

Although I see myself as a realist, some people view me as a pessimist so, I'm not sure what those people will think when I give the State of the City a B+.

For the last year, the talk around town has been about a redevelopment project for the Downtown's south-end. A project for which many residents have been waiting 25 years or more to see. The proposed \$20 to 24-million project generated tons of rumors plus a councilperson's postcard implying their usual false accusations and misinformation.

Unfortunately, due to a number of issues, including the negative efforts of some people, the project's developers have walked away; perhaps taking their \$24 million project to another college town.

Some people were concerned about having residents living on the first floor of a downtown building. "Did I think the design of the project was picture perfect or the most ideal?" No, but then it wasn't my \$24 million.

The project would have brought up to 400 residents into a new building where the current 710 Bookstore and parking lot exist. That would have meant 400 customers living in close proximity to downtown businesses.

Some people claimed that we have more than enough student housing but, since then, some of the people making those claims have purchased additional student rental property. Those people need to decide whether they are for the betterment of Carbondale or just themselves.

Probably due to the balanced approach that the City takes with business and community relations -- on one hand, I've heard it said by the business community that the City is too Community Friendly and not Business Friendly enough, and on the other hand, I've heard it said by some residents that the City is too Business Friendly and not Community Friendly. For Carbondale to be successful, both the City and the business community need to be "business and community friendly."

During last year's State of the City Address, I said that a key reason why the City was doing so well was due to the relationships that exist with various agencies and institutions; and this is still the case.

The City continues to partner with Carbondale Tourism with marketing Carbondale and the region, SIU with a Downtown Master Plan and other projects, the Park District's Splash Park project, and with the Chamber's business visitation program.

The city manager and I continue to meet on a monthly basis with Chancellor Cheng and the Chamber's President and Director to discuss issues affecting us individually and/or as a whole. And, Kevin and I also meet monthly with representatives of the school, park, and library districts, and the airport authority to keep each other up to date.

When I first arrived here 17 years ago, I would describe Carbondale and Southern Illinois to my friends and family with the phrase, "There is a lot of potential here." Over the last few years, and

even last week, I've heard that phrase time and again from newcomers to Carbondale and the Region. It's time for us to move past just "having potential" and to create an even better Carbondale.

Change is going to happen but, "Will it be positive or negative change?" That will depend upon on us all. If I have my way, the City of Carbondale will continue to move forward but, it won't happen without the support of the business community.

As a community, one of the bigger projects that we'll be working on next year is a Downtown Master Plan with the assistance of SIU's School of Architecture, Masters of Public Administration Program, and the College of Business; Carbondale Main Street; the Chamber of Commerce; the City's Development Services and our Economic Development Coordinator; and public input via community forums. Details will be coming in the next few months but in the meantime, I invite you to walk across the street to visit the Downtown Design Center in the old train depot.

In addition to the partnerships that exist, the quality of the State of the City is also due to the high level of volunteerism that exists in Carbondale.

Whether it is through fraternal organizations like the Kiwanis, Lions, Elks, or Rotary; the various churches throughout town; C'dale Community Arts; the Chamber's Saluki Pride and Ambassadors Committee's; Carbondale Main Street; George Sheffer's Saluki Paw Print Painters; or one of the City's 16 boards and commissions, such as the Liquor Advisory Board, Sustainability Commission, Preservation Commission, Commission, and Human Relations Commission; **Volunteerism is what keeps Carbondale moving.**

In closing, I would again like to thank the Chamber for hosting this event and, I want to thank you all for taking the time to attend.

If nothing else, remember this about Carbondale,

"There's no place quite like this place."

Thank you and have a great day.
