

Let me start off by thanking the Chamber of Commerce for hosting the annual State of the City address again this year and thank you all for taking time to participate.

What a difference a year makes. Last year on the day before this address, I had the once in a lifetime opportunity to ride in a limousine with the President of the United States. Yesterday I rode in the back of a train-car looking at the Kellar branch railroad. Oh well.... more on that later.

Although most may remember my speech from last year, how many remember my challenges near the conclusion? To refresh your memories, I wondered out loud who among you would step forward and add your name to the list of those visionaries who have made Peoria what it is today. I asked who among you is ready to become more involved in helping to set the agenda for our future, to become an integral part of something bigger than you are. Who among you would be willing to sacrifice your time, effort, financial resources or special expertise to really make a difference?

Well, a full year has passed since that challenge, and we're already almost a full month into the New Year. I'm sure most of you made New Year's resolutions. How are you doing on them? Did you make a personal commitment to make a difference in Peoria after the speech last year? Did you do anything about that commitment? If you didn't, I'm sorry to hear that.....but it's not too late folks, because in addition to a summary of last year and some thoughts on 2008, today I'm going to reinforce several topics I discussed last year and how extremely important they are to our future – YOUR future. **YOU** are the business leaders. **YOU** have made the investment in our community. The success of your business is of vital importance to me, the City Council, and the citizens of our city, and we share your aspirations to succeed.

Before I begin, there are several people that I would like to recognize in addition to the Chamber.

Please join me in thanking today's sponsor, PSA-Dewberry.

Join me now in recognizing my fellow council members who are in attendance today. I truly appreciate all of their hard work on a daily basis and their willingness to work as a team to accomplish great things for our city.

I'd also like to acknowledge the City Manager and members of our staff who are present here today. Their hard work and knowledge in their respective departments keeps the City Hall machine moving forward.

I'd also like to acknowledge all educators in the audience today.....as well as school board members & administrators. The major focus of the State of the City address this year relates to education.....the foundation of all successful communities.

As I mentioned, the focus of this year's address is going to be on Education. Let me tell you all right here and now, and for the record so there is absolutely no confusion.....

I HAVE NO INTENTION, DESIRE OR DREAM TO HAVE THE CITY COUNCIL TAKE OVER DISTRICT 150 OR ANY OF THE 4 OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS THAT ARE PART OF OUR CITY. MY SOLE OBJECTIVE IN TALKING WITH MR. VALLAS WAS AND IS TO HELP FACILITATE DIALOGUE BETWEEN HIM AND THE DISTRICT. IF THERE ARE AREAS WHERE THEY CAN TEAM UP, I AM CONFIDENT THEY WILL IDENTIFY THEM AND ACT ON THEM ACCORDINGLY. I am also confident and hopeful that the business community would encourage and support that collaboration if it does come to pass.

Dr. Gorenz and his fellow school board members have had a lot on their plate this past year and deserve our thanks for a lot of hard work. Last year they held many public discussions and had extensive deliberations at their board meetings to determine the best location for a new k-8 school in the heart of our city. After considerable dialogue, the board concluded that the best location would be at or near the current Glen Oak School. The council and I were very supportive of that decision and I would like to give special recognition to Councilman Bob Manning for his tireless effort to encourage the building of the new school in that location. It's not hard to imagine why Councilman Manning was so intent, since Glen Oak was just built in 1889, almost 120 years ago. I think Mayor Maloof was in kindergarten at the time! And there are 9 other schools that were built before 1916 including Peoria High. I think we can all agree that it's time for new schools in Peoria. A new school near Harrison Homes is also planned and we are very excited to see the positive impacts of a new school there as well. Council members Jacob, Manning, Van Auken and others are also working on enhancing the school building projects with other incentives that will help draw strong families back into our core neighborhoods through Neighborhood Improvement Zone initiatives. Building new schools in Peoria is critical to its success in retaining and adding more families and students to our base, and you will be hearing much more about these initiatives in the months ahead.

In addition to new schools, the most exciting thing to happen to educational opportunities in a long time will come to fruition as our Peoria Promise program begins with this year's fall class. Modeled after the highly successful Kalamazoo Promise in Michigan, our effort has made significant forward progress since it was first announced just last year. With the very generous contributions of \$100,000/yr for 3 years plus an additional \$100,000/yr community match from CATERPILLAR, \$50,000 from OSF St. Francis, \$50,000 from ELM, \$50,000 from Illinois American Water Company, \$100,000 from CEFCU, \$75,000 from RLI, \$15,000 from David Vaughn Associates, \$10,000 from Ameren and \$10,000 from Commerce Bank, we are well on our way to securing the necessary funding for this first year. In addition, the owners of the Pere Marquette have generously named Peoria Promise the beneficiary of this year's Pere Gala event which will put another \$100,000 plus in the Peoria Promise bank. You have information on your tables about this year's Gala so mark your calendars for May 2<sup>nd</sup> in this room. Michael Israel will be performing a show like Peoria has never seen. His unbelievable "Art in Concert" show will knock your socks off. We expect the event to sell out fast, so don't delay in getting your table reserved. There will be people outside today to give you more

information or sign you up. I'd like to thank Jennifer Lee for chairing this event and the unbelievable team she has put together to insure its success.

Over the last 9 months I have personally talked to the chief executives from many of the largest companies in our community. And I know I haven't gotten to you all... **yet!** Many of you have acknowledged how important the Peoria Promise is to our most precious resource....our children and their education. I've said it before and I won't stop saying it.....there are many huge capital projects in the Peoria area right now and they are all very important to our community. NOT ONE is more important than enhanced educational opportunities for our kids. NOT ONE. For those of you who have doubts about the sustainability of the program.....I encourage you to invest in the Peoria Promise endowment. For those of you that have already jumped on board with cash donations to insure we get the project started this year, I appreciate your confidence and leadership and am encouraged that you see and embrace the vision. The time is now folks. This train is picking up momentum. We don't have the time to be complacent with this program. The question you need to ask each other as leaders in our community is, "What are you doing to insure that our children have the opportunity for a college education? What are you doing to help fund Peoria Promise?" I'm not too proud to beg for our kids folks, as many of you who I've visited know. And I'll be back. I implore you, for our children, our employers and our community. Get involved. Invest in Peoria Promise and do it today.

I would like to give a heartfelt thanks to the members of the Peoria Promise Board of Directors and Advisory Board. You would not believe the hard work, long hours and extreme effort they have devoted to assuring that Peoria Promise is built on a strong foundation. Julie Hammond and the rest of the board are a gift to the city for their extreme efforts to bring the dream of Peoria Promise to reality. Thank you to our friends at Illinois Central College who have moved mountains to help us get this program started, most notably Robin Ballard. I would also like to recognize our Education Liaison Bill Collier who is with us today. His hard work has allowed us to build stronger relationships between our schools, our neighborhoods and other branches of local government. It's not an easy job, but as a career educator and one who understands the importance of education and also communication between those of us making very difficult decisions, he's doing an outstanding job. Thank you all.

Well, we all know that schools are the cornerstone of strong neighborhoods throughout the City. And our City continues to grow. Growth, both residential and non-residential, is happening all over Peoria with new construction, expansions, adaptive reuse and infill-development galore. Working together, our Economic Development Director Craig Hullinger, our Director of Planning and Growth Management Pat Landes, our Inspections Director John Kunski, and Mark Johnson from Caterpillar have identified 25 projects of more than \$2 **Billion** (with a B) dollars in new construction in the Peoria area.

The types of projects completed, in progress or in the planning stages, give you a good idea of where the Peoria economy is headed in the future for both market opportunities and employment prospects: eight of the 25 projects are in health care and six are in

transportation. This is further confirmation of Peoria's growing identity as one of the premier health care communities and growing transportation hubs in the United States. These investments form a solid base for continued economic growth in the future.

Let me talk a little bit more about the health care industry in Peoria. It is truly amazing for a city of our size. Our three hospitals together give us a regionally-recognized mental health program, a very successful chemical dependency program, a children's hospital, organ transplants, trauma and helicopter transport, and comprehensive heart, neuroscience and cancer treatment services. We are already a healthcare destination for people from more than 150 miles away. And our reputation as such will only increase in the years to come. Together, both Methodist and OSF Saint Francis are committing more than \$600 million to healthcare construction. We broke ground this summer for OSF's Milestone project, and it will be very exciting to watch that construction progress. Work will also soon begin on a new long-term acute care facility on the last remaining site in the city's "Southtown". The new campus at Methodist Medical Center will have a dramatic impact as well.

Growth in healthcare is not limited to the hospitals. The Heartland Community Health Clinic opened a new site on Wisconsin Avenue for the underserved in our community. Just last month we had an announcement from the PeoriaNEXT Innovation Center and their first newly-founded firm, InforMed. Their invention, the pac-2, has great promise in helping hospitals avoid medication errors. And we can't forget the role of the U of I College of medicine and their multi-million dollar faculty building on their campus in Renaissance Park. Dr. Jasti Rao's cancer research program and the development of a new Cancer Center Building all show that our healthcare services touch people's lives and bring the future of healthcare to our city. Dr. Rao's presence in Peoria has gained our community world-wide attention and his research is bringing millions of dollars to our community for his cutting-edge research. We are so lucky & proud to have Dr. Rao and his team here and I would like to thank him publicly for all his hard work and for establishing his research base right here in Peoria.

We are also grateful for the pool of highly trained, professional and qualified skilled laborers we have in the area. On the heels of the I-74 project, these new construction jobs will keep this very important sector of our community very busy for the foreseeable future. Hats off and a thank you to the hard working men and women of our skilled labor community.

It seems there are many opinions that emerge when discussing the growth of our city and whether our growth is paying for itself. Let me assure you that without a doubt, **it IS**. The city's equalized assessed valuation has nearly *tripled* from 1989 through 2006. We also have empirical research that further proves the point. In 2004, two professors of Economics at Bradley University, Dr. Robert Scott and Dr. Kevin O'Brien, completed a study of the city's Growth Management Policy. Their report drew data, in part, from a nationally published study that reviewed various cities in Michigan. The Michigan study found that cities that did not grow had a higher per capita tax rate. Those cities able to capture new growth and increase the city's tax base, helped to reduce the per capita tax

rates for the entire city. The study found that Peoria's Growth Management Policy has been successful in increasing our share of the region's growth. New development in and around Peoria's growth cells have worked to offset the per capita tax burden for all Peorians by maintaining the population and growing our tax base. Our property tax rate is less than half of what it was 20 years ago. In short, Peoria is growing and continually working to retain the tax base and improve Peoria's economic health.

Our growth areas are, in fact, fueling the City. The study validates the success of our growth strategy and I would like to acknowledge Dr. Bob Scott who is with us here today. Dr. Scott can surely testify that our policies are paying dividends. Much of this growth is and has occurred in the 5<sup>th</sup> District and would not have been possible without the hard work provided by Councilman Patrick Nichting. Thank you for all your work out there Patrick.

I am very excited to announce today that one of the results of this growth is the preliminary finding from the Census Bureau's recent Special Census of the City in October. The results were higher than expected and showed an additional 1,453 dwelling units and additional 3,256 citizens in select areas of the City. Added to our last special census in 2004, that brings the total additional citizens since the 2000 census up to 8,455 and dwelling units up to 3,653. These two special census projects are generating more than \$4 million dollars between 2005 and 2010 just from state shared revenue funding alone. *THIS IS GREAT NEWS!* Peoria has certainly bucked the national trends with continued growth and low unemployment, yet the Council is mindful of the slowing economy in some sectors. We are and will continue to be very sensitive to the potential impact a deflated economy will have on our projected revenue streams and will monitor them closely as the year progresses.

Part of **building** a better community is **planning** for a better community. The City of Peoria is currently in the middle of a complete rewrite of our Comprehensive Plan-- the master plan for the development of Peoria over the next 15-20 years. I ask that all of you, your neighbors, friends, co-workers, and families participate in this process. This week, the Comprehensive Plan web site was launched. The web address is

[www.planpeoria.com](http://www.planpeoria.com). Again, that's [www.planpeoria.com](http://www.planpeoria.com). Look at the suggestions and data collected so far, and most importantly, complete the online survey so that we can better understand what is important to you. Also plan to attend the public meetings that will begin in late February. Remember, if you're not part of the solution, you could very well be part of the problem. We hope you will participate in our future and help us Plan Peoria.

This is a perfect time to thank all of you who volunteer on different commissions and committees in an effort to share your time and experience to keep Peoria moving forward. I would like to encourage anyone interested in participating in one of our commissions to contact our Public Information Director Alma Brown for more information. There are so many outstanding organizations in our community that I couldn't begin to name them all here today. But you surely shouldn't have a problem getting involved in a good organization to give back to the community if you aren't already. One group I've been hearing quite a bit about of late is the YPOGP... Young

Professionals Organization of Greater Peoria. According to Rebecca Ryan in her article entitled "Live First, Work Second", "young professionals are a valuable part of any community. They are working, living, playing and supporting the local community, instead of seeking opportunities elsewhere. Communities are three times more likely to retain young talent in the community if they feel their voices are heard and valued. Communities that embrace their Young Professional networks and leaders stand to gain big rewards in their quest to attract and retain the world's young talent. I encourage anyone interested to join the local YPO that recently became a program under the Chamber of Commerce umbrella.

While I'm mentioning organizations doing outstanding work, how about the United Way? In case you haven't heard it yet, last week President Michael Stephan and United Way Campaign Chairs Bill & Margie Springer announced that this year's campaign raised almost \$9.4 million dollars!! WOW. Communities are identified in one of ten categories based on the amount of money they raise. The smallest is Metro 10 and the largest is Metro 1. A Metro 1 United Way raises \$9 million or more. I believe that Peoria is the smallest community in population to achieve Metro 1 status. This demonstrates that we are not only a very generous and compassionate community, but also a community that provides a multitude of programs and services that improve the quality of life right here in Central Illinois. Congratulations to all involved in putting Peoria on the map for leadership again through the United Way.

While we're talking about giving back to our community, the discussion in Peoria starts and ends with world-renowned Caterpillar. Under the leadership of Chairman and CEO Jim Owens, Caterpillar continues to grow its footprint around the world. Caterpillars' strength in the world market is the driving force behind Peoria's economic strength right now. Mr. Owens and his leadership team have always been huge supporters of Peoria and I can't imagine what this city would be without their presence and active participation. In addition to their pledge to Peoria Promise, which I mentioned earlier, I'd like to give special recognition to Caterpillar's support for the Cancer Research Project at the U of I School of Medicine and their support for the downtown museum project. Peoria Promise and the Cancer Research project are just the tip of the iceberg of their donations back to our community. And who knows it better than all of you in this audience? I'd be willing to bet there isn't an organization here today that hasn't been the beneficiary of CATERPILLAR'S generosity in some form. I know that a round of applause is deserved at this time to show our appreciation for all CAT does for this community.

In addition to education and job growth and development, one of my major focal points over the years has been crime. Three years ago I made the decision that we should stop putting our heads in the sand and acknowledge that we had crime issues to deal with....and that together we could take our community back from the drug-dealers and gang-bangers who had taken over some of our neighborhoods. I am here today to tell you that our efforts are beginning to pay off. With our Police Chief Steve Settingsgaard and Sheriff Mike McCoy, a group of leaders in different branches of law and law enforcement along with Councilman Turner and I, combined resources to identify areas

we need to focus on and come up with possible solutions to reduce crime in the city. Also instrumental in the information gathering portion of these efforts was a study done by Professor Tom Higgins at ICC and a group of his students who were aided by Judge Stephen Kouri. The results of their study clearly shows the revolving door of our local justice system and the need to identify repeat offenders early on and rehabilitate them accordingly before their third, fourth, fifth or more offense. By that time, they are most certainly lost and enter the felony world and many times land in prison or worse. We need to have further discussions with our legislators and prosecutors to change the way we're dispensing punishment.

Let me say that while we are not satisfied with the amount of crime in Peoria, we are definitely heading in the right direction. Over the full year of 2007 the City of Peoria experienced a reduction in violent crime by 7% and a reduction in property crime by 20%. Even greater news, though, is that the last six months of the year showed strong signs that crime reduction was accelerating: All crime categories are down for the second half of the year and all except robbery are down in double digits. The murder rate for the latter half of 2007 dropped by 60 %, going from 10 in that timeframe in 2006 to 4 in 2007. Violent crimes in total fell by 10% and property crimes fell by 20%. The Police Department implemented a variety of new strategies last year, such as quality of life enforcement and increased saturation patrols, and they also added some new technologies and weapons to the fight against crime, such as tasers, additional digital security cameras and digital in-car videos,. Chief Settingsgard plans further initiatives this year including a Crimeview Crime Mapping system that will enable police to better identify and target high-crime areas and devote the necessary resources to address them. The Council was also able to give him a few new officers to put on the street this year too.

We should be proud to say that we're having an impact on crime and becoming a stronger community because of our efforts. Friends, we can't judge the impact we're having on crime only by the homicide rate. While we won't rest until we reduce our homicides to zero, our efforts are working. I have to acknowledge our faith based community and how much their contributions to these efforts have made a difference. Their willingness to step forward and be the focal point in their neighborhoods and churches is really making a difference.

Thank you also to all of those in our community and the surrounding communities led by Mayors Dave Mingus of East Peoria, Dave Tebben of Pekin, Norm Durflinger of Morton and Gary Manier of Washington who have embraced and fortified our communities' 40 days of Prayer Initiative. Our communities have been brought together by this act of faith and acknowledgement that Prayer works and we will be stronger because of this effort. Thank you to all the area ministers who have worked so hard on this project and special thanks to First United Methodist Church for hosting the entire 40 day event right here in downtown Peoria.

When we talk about the positive impact we're having on crime and the influence that our faith-based community is having on crime, a closely related topic for discussion is racial relations in our city. I don't think anyone that is active in our community would say that

race relationships are acceptable in Peoria right now. So in that regard, I have asked Dr. Amir Al-Khafaji from Bradley University to chair a group that will determine ways that we can improve interactions across all racial, social, ethnic and religious lines in Peoria and come together as one united community to make Peoria a world-class city. More details of this group will be announced in the coming weeks.

Let me make one point very clear—I don't want this group to issue a report that just sits on a shelf and collects dust. In fact, I'm not looking for a report. My goal is that this group produces action items that we can, as a community, begin to address. I plan to use my role as mayor in the bully pulpit to begin a much needed dialogue on race relations in Peoria. Last year Dr. Al-Khafaji worked with our Equal Opportunity office to establish a formal partnership between the City of Peoria, Bradley University, and local industry to execute small business capacity building programs. The main focus of this partnership is on the development of an appropriate framework to help grow capacity and to enhance the quality of minority and women owned businesses in Peoria. The Small Business Competition Enhancement training program was recently funded by the City Council. As of now, a total of 28 leaders representing our community have agreed to serve on a new Industry Institute to help successfully implement the new program whose goals are to dramatically increase the number, magnitude and success rate of minority and women owned businesses in Peoria, to dramatically increase contracting and procurement dollars spent with minority and women owned businesses in Peoria and to facilitate greater involvement of minority and women owned businesses in construction services. I'd like to thank Dr. Al-Khafaji for providing leadership on these projects for me.

You know when we talk about cleaning up our city we're not just talking about crime. Would you please join me in a well-deserved round of applause and thanks to our Litter Czar Steve Pierz and the litter committee who are having a profound impact on trash in our city? This group has mobilized hundreds of people who share our desire to make Peoria the cleanest city in the country. Their motto that "Pride in Peoria is picking up" is not only making our city cleaner, but bringing people from across the city together to help each other keep their neighborhoods clean.

Well it wasn't too long ago that the names Maui Jim, eServe, Petersen Companies, Junction Ventures, Firefly, GLOBE Energy and ELM weren't well recognized around the area. Thanks to some very hard working people at those places and many more of you right here in this room, the word is getting out about those companies and many new ones almost every day. And speaking of new companies, you know as parents, one of our biggest concerns is our children's safety as they cruise the Internet. We've all heard and read about the online predators and the potential dangers they pose to our kids. On your tables you'll see a pamphlet for Portcard. Portcard is an internet security program that identifies the person behind a username. Registration in Portcard provides an authenticated identity which will dramatically reduce or eliminate the likelihood of predators registering at Portcard. This innovation provides a safer environment for our children using the internet. So why do I mention Portcard today? Because one of the major principals in the company is our own Lee Graves. Again, hard-working, home grown Peorians are coming up with innovative new ways of doing business right here in



Peoria. And Portcard has partnered to make the Boys and Girls Clubs a beneficiary of its success with a donation for everyone that joins the Portcard program. This program is not just a local project either. Portcard is already moving across the country as we speak. Please take the pamphlet with you, especially if you have young kids who use the internet and investigate this cutting-edge program to keep your kids safe.

Well what do we have to look forward to in 2008? I feel very strongly that momentum has reached the point where we see positive movement in the Rail/Trail issue. Mayor Allen from the Heights and I have appointed 7 people to determine the feasibility of a shared rail/trail. This committee will be chaired by Councilman Bill Spears who has been on the council for many years and is very knowledgeable of the issues surrounding this important discussion. We'll let the group do their work, but I'm sure that most of you will agree with me that it's high time we establish the entire trail through the city and give our citizens a first class linear park. I will continue my discussions with Congressman LaHood and Senator Durbin to help us in this effort.

With the recent approval of the Warehouse and Eagle View TIFs, I believe you will begin to see the long-awaited growth of mixed use development in the warehouse district and new job opportunities in the Eagle View. Councilman Sandberg is working very hard to ensure the infrastructure in the downtown is addressed as well as the flow of traffic in and through downtown and Councilmen Jacob and Gulley have been instrumental in moving the Eagle View TIF along.

We also look forward to see more stimulating projects in the heart of the city. Councilwoman Van Auken's Sheridan Road triangle project is funded and will show the people in our core neighborhoods that we have not forgotten about them, their neighborhoods and business opportunities in them. Our newest councilmembers, Councilmen Spain and Montelongo have also jumped right in and contributed significantly in their first year on the council.

Another potential project in the core of the city that will reinforce the council's commitment to keeping the nucleus of our city strong is Councilman Spears' vision of a cutting edge development at Exposition Gardens. Councilman Spears brought his vision to our attention during this year's budget discussions and I have asked him to continue to explore the possibilities of a facility that could house ball-diamonds, soccer fields, linear parks and maybe even a library. Our kids deserve a first class place to play sports. Families deserve a first class location to recreate and relax, and I applaud Councilman Spears' desire to pursue this vision. We need and deserve more family-friendly choices to recreate, play and learn in Peoria. The council has pledged to help him research and consider opportunities at this location vital to our city's core.

Now some other people and programs that are worthy of mention:

I want you to know that IDOT will be starting the feasibility study I requested for Amtrak in Peoria very soon. We're the second largest metropolitan area outside Chicago and I am confident that the results will be affirmative to expand passenger rail service to Peoria.

I'd like to tell Mayor Maloof to keep on truckin'. I joked earlier about his age and the age of our schools, but he's 85 years young and still going strong. We're lucky to have him here and still working hard **in** our community, **for** our community.

I'd like to thank Pastor John King and Andy King and their soldiers for all they're doing in the heart and soul of downtown Peoria at the Dream Factory. They are making a real difference at the grass-roots level.

I'd like to acknowledge the many years of service to our inner city kids at the Carver Center by Percy Baker.

I'd like to recognize the many years of local service in law enforcement in the city and county, service in the State Senate and also at the Boys and Girls Club by Senator Shadid.

I'd like to welcome President Joanne Glasser to Bradley University to Peoria and congratulate Jim DeRose and the Bradley Soccer team for an outstanding season.

I'd like to thank Congressman Ray LaHood for his service and leadership not just in the 18<sup>th</sup> District, but for showing those in Washington DC what it means to be civil and serve with integrity.

Thank you too, to County Board Chairman Bill Prather and the County Board members who are working together with the Council to offer the best City and County governments we can provide. It has been a pleasure to work with Chairman Prather.

Please join me also in recognizing our City Manager Randy Oliver and his wife Valorie who will be leaving us soon. We appreciate your hard work here over the years and wish you the best of luck in your future endeavors.

I'd also like to thank my wife and family for allowing me the time to do this job. In the same regard, thank you to my employers at ELM, Lee Graves and Jim Bourazak who provide me the flexibility to do the Mayor's job. The same thanks goes to the employers of other council members who couldn't do this job without considerable levels of flexibility and support.

I'd like to acknowledge the strong role played by our Chamber of Commerce in support of our business community and providing outstanding educational and learning opportunities in their Community Leadership School, Political Leadership School and Leadership Recognition Programs. Expanding dialogue with the City Council and school board has also proven very beneficial to enhanced communications with all groups.

So much to say, so little time to say it all. I need to draw this year's speech to a close. We're making progress folks. The glass is more than half full. Together we can continue

to make a difference in this place we call home. I'm very proud of what this city has done and where we're going.

We've got a lot on our plate. Together we can move mountains. The legendary coach of the Green Bay Packers, Vince Lombardi said,

"The price of success is hard work, dedication to the job at hand, and the determination that whether we win or lose, we have applied the best of ourselves to the task at hand."

The task at hand is everyone taking an **ACTIVE** role in making Peoria a better, stronger community. Are you applying the best of yourself to the task at hand? If you are, thank you. If you're not, we need your help.

I sincerely request that you would please make your commitment to Peoria Promise today. There are folks in the lobby to help you get started. Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your Mayor. I love this City. Have an outstanding afternoon.