

MAYOR BRUMMEL'S 2009 STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

Let me start by thanking our Chamber of Commerce for again hosting this event, and also thanking all of you who chose to be here today for our annual community check in.

It has been an "interesting" year, and if my conversations with many of you are any indication, not too many of us will mourn the passing of 2009. Two thousand nine: a year that has given the word "contraction" a new meaning -- even for those who have given birth. What a year. Can we, please, just have a less "interesting" 2010?

Our collective situation brings to mind an old Albert Brooks good news/bad news joke, that I believe goes something like this:

"I have some good news and some bad news. Which do you want first?"

Give me the bad news.

Okay. The bad news is that I don't have any good news.

Well then, what's the good news?

The good news is: That's the only bad news I've got!"

It is an old joke, but I think it is a fairly accurate representation how most of us feel these days. We've been so overloaded and inundated with what seems to be unremitting bad news, that even when the latest bad news is that there is no new good news, but that's the ONLY bad news, it's a relief.

So I went to the archives and found my State of the City address from last year in search of some good news. It was encouraging to see that many of the positive things in the pipeline at the beginning of 2009 actually happened. But it was also a little disconcerting to see that some of the storm clouds that were blocking the sun then, not only remain, but have, in some cases, intensified. And they don't appear to be in any big hurry to move toward the horizon. Two thousand ten will offer the community, you (our businesses), our institutions, and our families, another challenge. And, very likely, so will 2011. We appear to be stuck in a gap, a gap between good times.

But all things considered, there is much to be thankful for here in Warrenville:

- Current and former elected officials have in the past and continue today to take their responsibilities to the City seriously, and in my opinion, have made and continue to make sound decisions for the long term best interests of the community. Aldermen Aschauer, Schultz, Leonard, Weidner, Wiesbrock, Bevier, Barry and Halley -- thank you. Your ability to provide solid and clear policy, to reach consensus on important issues, to avoid acrimony, and to keep moving forward is an important asset to the community.

- To provide the context for good decisions and keep the day-to-day affairs of the community running smoothly, we continue to rely on our dedicated, hard working, loyal, and always professional staff and employees. Their talents, positive attitude, measured judgment and willingness to innovate make them second to none. The stability they provide year after year not only keeps our service levels high, but keeps us always looking ahead to prepare for challenges as well as opportunities.

I couldn't ask for a better senior staff: Administrator John Coakley; Police Chief Ray Turano; Finance Director Kevin Dahlstrand; Community Development Director Ron Mentzer; Public Works Superintendent Mike Smith; Assistant Administrator Jenn McMahon. I say it again: you're the best.

- Additionally, the City of Warrenville has great partners: Warrenville Chamber of Commerce, Warrenville Park District, Warrenville Library District, Warrenville Fire Protection District, Community Unit School District 200, DuPage Forest Preserve District, our churches, volunteer organizations and just plain folks who always seem to step up when there is a need that has to be met.

So, we have a lot going for us, and a number of concrete "good news" items to be thankful for in 2009, and anticipate in 2010. Let's take a look at progress on some of the issues I mentioned last year, as well as other highlights from 2009:

- The \$1.9 million Phase Three, and final, portion of the Warrenville Road reconstruction project was completed. As I said last year, in addition to the absolute charm and environmental advantages this project brings to the community, our position of leadership in the implementation of permeable paver bricks for use in a large scale public roadway project has brought Warrenville widespread recognition and honor.
- Hubble Middle School, right here in Warrenville, is no longer a dream. This state-of-the-art, \$58 million facility, welcomed its first students this past fall, and by all measures, is a complete success. I again offer our thanks to the leadership of District 200 for their unwavering support of this project, which will add to the quality of life in the District and in Warrenville for the foreseeable future.
- Construction of the Central DuPage Hospital/Procure Proton Therapy Treatment Facility and the CDH traditional oncology center, both being built in Cantera, continues on schedule.

A temporary Certificate of occupancy will likely be issued for the Proton facility in March. The balance of 2010 will be used to train staff and calibrate equipment, with treatment of the first patients to occur in January, 2011.

The CDH cancer treatment facility will be looking for a Certificate of Occupancy sometime in late June or early July of this year. Good news for cancer patients as well as our community.

- Construction of our two newest hotels, Hyatt Place and Summerfield Suites, located in the 15-acre MaeCliff mixed use development at the northeast corner of Cantera, also continues on schedule. Both of these facilities will seek a temporary Certificate of Occupancy sometime next month. They will then be doing final decorating and training for the next 4-6 weeks with an anticipated official opening for customer business in mid to late April.
- In January of last year, the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County took possession of the 42-acre Cenacle property. Two thousand ten will see the implementation of several projects that will enhance the value of this property for our citizens. Work will commence this spring on an \$800,000 project to remove the existing buildings and redevelop and realign a multiuse trail from Rockwell Street at Batavia Road to connect to the regional trail in Blackwell, with anticipated completion in July.
- Final site plan approval for an Urban Stream Research Center to be located in Blackwell, immediately adjacent to the northern edge of the Cenacle property, is on the February 16 City Council meeting. This special facility, one of only a handful in the country, will put Warrenville on the map as a destination to learn best management and restoration practices for rivers and streams. Following anticipated approval, construction of this project will begin this spring and should be completed by November of this year. Because bids came in for substantially less than the \$2.4 million original budget, the project will now be implemented with a permeable pavement parking lot/drive system instead of asphalt.
- Just to the north of this facility, the Forest Preserve District will be constructing a new, half-million dollar archery range to accommodate amateur up to Olympic level archers. Construction should begin in early summer with anticipated completion in the fall. The range will not open to the public for another year, however, in order to allow screening and other vegetation to become established. Another regional, perhaps statewide, draw for Warrenville as a positive destination.

- Last year's flooding prompted the City to hire Strand Associates for a study to determine causes and possible corrective measures. Phase One of the study was completed, and while it was unable to offer clear conclusions as to whether or not the operation of Fawell Dam had an impact on flooding in Warrenville, some follow-up actions will benefit the community: equipment and Internet access upgrades to cameras; flood elevation gauge upgrades; repair of numerous storm sewer outfall structures whose failure contributed to the flooding at Bower School; and DuPage County authorizing funding for an update of the Watershed Plan for the West Branch of the DuPage River, which will identify factors that contribute to flooding and highlight potential corrective measures.
- With the bankruptcy filing of Tronox Corporation in 2009, the future of the thorium removal and restoration of the West Branch came into question. While the continuation of the work is not guaranteed, several options are currently being pursued to ensure the cleanup of Reach 7 (Butterfield Road to the Warrenville Grove Dam) and Reach 8 (Warrenville Grove Dam to McDowell Grove Dam) continues and is adequately funded. The goal at this time is to have all of the design and funding in place by June of this year in order to complete at least part of Reach 7 during this summer and fall, under a reduced scope of work. The balance of the work would then be done in 2011.
- Several major infrastructure repairs, upgrades and extensions were accomplished this past year: extension of water and sanitary sewer into the Landon neighborhood area; replacement of the curbs and road reconstruction of Winchester Circle; final phase of curb and sidewalk replacement in the Thornwild/Edgebrook Subdivision four-year program; additional parking provided at the VFW ball field; extension of a five foot sidewalk from Warrenville Road on Rockwell Street to the Prairie Path; installation of the iron filtration system at well #2; construction of a five foot sidewalk on Galusha Road from Winfield to Herrick; installation of sanitary sewer from Emerald Green Drive to Rte. 56 on Batavia Road; and stimulus funding for the resurfacing of Batavia Road from Rte. 59 to Rte. 56 was secured.
- The Rte. 56 expansion project vaulted to the forefront late last year when money was finally appropriated. Final engineering nears completion and the City has intensified its efforts to advocate with IDOT for changes to their template plan that would help mitigate the negative impacts of this expansion for Warrenville, and enhance our redevelopment plans. The project will most likely go to bid in June with IDOT's intention to have it open to traffic in the fall of 2011.

- Warrenville's Police Department continued in 2009 to improve an already excellent organization by providing increased training opportunities for our officers, new efficiencies in the dissemination, handling and storage of data, emergency preparedness exercises, cooperation with other departments, support of student safety going to and from and at our schools, and improved communication and efficiency internally with an administrative restructuring of the Command Staff positions.
- An agreement with Canadian National Railroad to provide \$1.2 million to the City for sound mitigation for homeowners along the former EJ&E tracks was approved in 2009 and launched January 1, 2010. The City continues to press for a quiet zone designation for the Batavia Road crossing, with some unfortunate push back by CN, who had promised cooperation on this issue. I hope to report to you next year that train horns along those tracks are part of our history.
- The City's Finance Department received its 16th consecutive Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association, for our 2008 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. Congratulations to Kevin Dahlstrand, our Finance Director. I've teased Kevin every year since he joined us, that I was keeping him on probation just one more year in order to keep him on his toes. It has occurred to me that, at some point, I'm going to have let him off this hook. So Kevin, as of today, I'm happy to tell you that ... Wait a minute. What am I doing? This has been too much fun. Sorry, Kevin, looks like one more year of probation.
- The FY 2010 budget was adopted with more than \$137,000 in staff led budget reductions. These reductions included the suspension of all out-of-state travel to conferences and training opportunities, removal of projects that staff would not be able to execute during the fiscal year, largely due to fiscal restraints, as well as the elimination of all non-union employee Cost of Living Adjustment raises, and a 50% reduction in merit, or performance based, salary increases. These voluntary wage reductions totaled approximately \$100,000 in savings to the City. Thank you Staff, for helping us get through this downturn with this example of personal sacrifice.
- An additional \$143,000 was saved by the 18 month delay in the hiring of a Senior Civil Engineer, with the position filled in November. Welcome aboard to our new Senior Civil Engineer Phil Kuchler. It is now anticipated that having our own engineer in house may pay for itself going forward by minimizing the need to hire outside engineer consultants.

- TIF #1 (Cantera) ended on December 31, 2009. It is estimated that TIF #1 will be closed out at a final EAV of over \$170 million. This represents an increase in EAV of 64 times the value of the former Elmhurst/Chicago Stone Quarry, which was transformed over the past 23 years into the award-winning Cantera mixed use development. The present and future viability of Warrenville is greatly enhanced by this successful development.
- Budget discussions for FY 2011 are about to begin. We anticipate tapping into reserves for approximately \$690,000 to finish out FY 2010, and are projecting a need to use approximately \$1.3 million to cover shortfalls in FY 2011, in order to maintain present staffing and service levels. However, unlike the situation of many of our neighbors, I would not characterize our situation as a crisis. For one thing, even after using \$690,000 of reserves for FY 2010, the ending fund balance for the general fund for 2010 will be \$7.2 million. Prudent management has provided ample reserves. For another, unlike many other municipalities, Warrenville has no debt against the general fund, and therefore no debt service payments.

We continue to conduct our business on a cash, pay-as-you-go basis. Additionally, we have a reasonably diversified revenue stream that, while diminished, is not vulnerable to the devastating loss of a single-source generator, such as a car dealership. Finally, for FY 2012, we will benefit from an estimated \$2 million revenue bump as tax money that for 23 years was allocated to the TIF #1 account reverts to our general fund due to the conclusion of TIF #1 at the end of 2009.

All of our other taxing bodies, the Park District, Library District, Fire Protection District and School Districts 200 and 203 will also finally benefit from the impressive success of our Cantera TIF. Our community owes a huge debt of gratitude to those whose foresight and planning and diligence made Cantera a reality, especially former Mayor Vivian Lund, former City attorney Barry Moss, former City Administrator James Connors, and consulting engineer Kenneth Carmignani. What a lasting gift they have given Warrenville.

- November, 2009, saw a new and very successful event: Art Works '09, the inaugural event for the newly formed Warrenville Arts Council. Congratulations to the Steering Committee composed of Jim Guter, George Safford, Janis Guter, Jayne Baldwin and Linda Spicer, and all those who helped to insure an impressive start for a much-needed community initiative and organization. Thanks to the successful application for a TAC grant, a rich calendar of events presented by the WAC awaits us beginning in August of this year and going to April of 2011.
- Sometimes there is reason to celebrate something that didn't happen. Last year the Diocese of Joliet announced a study that recommended the closing of St. Irene School, as part of a cost cutting and consolidation plan. Fortunately, many good people in the St.

Irene faith community, as well as in the wider community, determined that a Warrenville without St. Irene School would be a much diminished home.

Bishop Sartain was petitioned, and ultimately was convinced, that the best interests of St. Irene Parish, the community of Warrenville, as well as the Diocese, would be served by keeping St. Irene School open for the foreseeable future, a decision we can all applaud.

Perhaps some of you are aware that I graduated from St. Irene School in 1960. With distinction, if memory serves. The distinction, as I recall, was that on the department side of my report cards, next to the “practices self control” issue, in the “needs improvement” column, I managed nearly an uninterrupted series of check marks.

I’m still working on that.

I would be remiss today if I didn’t say a few words about llamas. There are a lot of mayors out there, and sometimes it’s difficult to stand out from the crowd. I, however, can claim a couple of distinctions. For one, I’m reasonably certain that I am the only mayor with a purple hair extension. This I proudly wear in solidarity with the Art Bovio family. The other mayors don’t know my motivation when they see this, of course. They probably just think I’m a couple of houses short of a subdivision.

Another thing that sets me apart is that in my town, if your dream is to have a pair of pet llamas, it’s possible. Warrenville has at least one such person with that dream. She went through a long and rigorous process that successfully concluded in zoning requirements, and some restrictions, that make the keeping of pet llamas possible.

I think this says much about us, and helps explain why a lot of folks would not trade Warrenville for any other town. It says that if your dream happens to diverge a little from the mainstream suburban stereotype, this community just might embrace you and your dream.

We remember that we were once a small, rural community where animal husbandry was a proud tradition and, for some, a way of life. Many of us are reluctant to let that way of life pass completely. It is where we came from, our early identity, our roots. It is a source of strength that helps us bridge this gap that we seem mired in, the gap between good times.

So, let me wrap this up with some good news and some bad news.

The bad news first: “We’re in the gap.”

The good news last: “When Jenny gets her llamas this summer, she’d be delighted if you’d put aside your cares for a little while, and stop over on Haylett Street, and welcome them to their new home.”