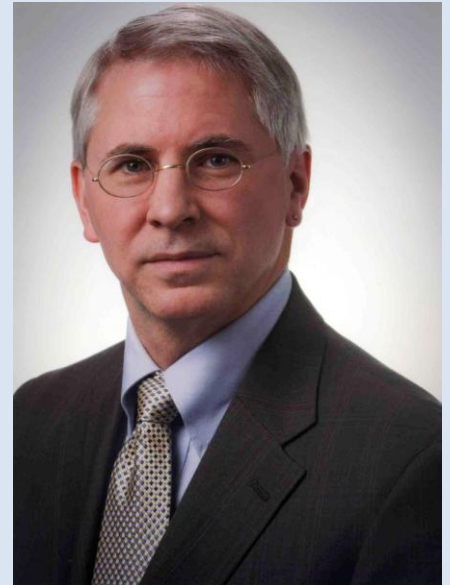


**Mayor Gary Leitzell**  
**State of the City Address**

April 21, 2011

Salvation Army Kroc Center, Dayton



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Good evening and thank you for coming.

I want you all to know that this speech has been posted on my blog page at [www.daytonmayor.org](http://www.daytonmayor.org), so it is

available as I speak to any interested party.

First, let's all thank Major Tom Duperee and his staff of the Salvation Army Kroc Center for hosting us here this evening.

This \$40 million facility opened last May and has quickly established itself as one of the Dayton region's crown jewels, offering recreation to area youth and comfort to the troubled.

Last year, in only seven months, the

Dayton Kroc Center served nearly 135,000 meals to local citizens. And that's not even a full year's worth of service. Let's give a round of applause to Major Tom and his staff for improving the lives of so many Daytonians in need.

We're here this evening because the Kroc Center provides a perfect example of what is still possible in Dayton. Critics and cynics are quick to point to the many challenges facing us. But I think a world class facility like

the Kroc Center proves that many great things are still happening in the Gem City.

But I didn't invite you here tonight to hit you with the usual political rah-rah rhetoric. Most State of the City speeches follow a tried-and-true formula – over hyping the good and oversimplifying the bad. Well, tonight we're going to examine the true State of Our City. No politics, just economic reality and harsh facts. Five facts, to be exact.

**Fact #1:** Dayton is on its own.

It's true. The State is cutting funding to most Ohio municipalities, including Dayton. Most of the Obama administration's stimulus dollars have been dispersed. NCR and GM are gone and they're not coming back. We can no longer expect government to bail us out or to lead us to the promised land. Nor can we put our faith in two or three giant companies and pray they stick around.

It's a new economic world out there, folks. What worked in the past will no longer sustain us. So, we're on our own. Winston Churchill said it best. "Gentlemen, we are out of money. Now we have to think."

But this situation in which we find ourselves should be empowering – and not disheartening. The recent slashing of the State's Local Government Fund is the State's way of forcing municipalities to modernize their

approach to governing. This new economic world requires us to be faster, sharper, leaner. More creative. Whether or not we agree on Governor Kasich's proposed \$6.5 million dollar cuts to our Local Government Fund is irrelevant – we have to hold the cards we've been dealt.

**Fact #2:** Dayton must reinvent itself to survive and thrive.

You don't need me to tell you this. This is something that everyone in this room already knows. Dayton has a rich and wonderful history of being one of America's key manufacturing centers and we still have many strong production companies within the city. But it's our ability to innovate and create that is going to bring about this new Dayton that we must build together.

Some of America's most creative and enterprising minds have hailed from

Dayton, Ohio – the Wright Brothers and Charles Kettering are among those best remembered.

But today, there is a new generation of innovators at work in Dayton -- innovators who may well put our city on the map in a new way.

Like the Wright brothers and Charles Kettering, these new innovators work in laboratories and workshops, but with high-tech tools and resources not imagined just a few years ago.

Take, for example, the entrepreneurs at the RFID Convergence Center, the only RFID-based commercial incubator in the world, just a few blocks south of here at Tech Town.

These innovators are finding commercial applications for the next generation of this fantastic data management technology. Their work, and the efforts of many others in other technology fields, holds great

promise for industry and for Dayton's future.

So today that Dayton Originals spirit of ingenuity is alive and well, and we have everything we need to turn things around in Dayton. And slowly but steadily, we are succeeding.

**Fact #3:** If we're going to get anything done, we need to work together

If we're going to move Dayton forward, we need to cut the political party b.s. of yore and find compromise. We cannot have R's and D's being critical without offering solutions.

Thankfully, I serve on the Dayton City Commission with a wonderful group of people who truly love this city, care about its citizens, and DO offer solutions to our problems.

Commissioner Nan Whaley, who is leading the charge in making Dayton one of the most bikeable and walkable cities in Ohio. Commissioner Joey

Williams, who is constantly helping improve our youth and recreation options and programs. Commissioner Matt Joseph, who ensures the City maintains a close working relationship with Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. Commissioner Dean Lovelace, who tirelessly works to ensure the human rights of Dayton citizens are upheld. Commissioners, will you please stand and be recognized? Thank you for all you do for this city.

To move Dayton in a forward direction we cannot point fingers at two parties and dwell on the past. We can't change what once was, but we can change what will be. In the past people on both sides of the political fence were critical, but in Dayton it should be that you can no longer be critical unless you offer solutions. Ben Franklin said that "Any fool can criticize condemn, and complain and most fools do." If you have a complaint, offer a solution. It gives the other side a basis from which to

consider an alternative. And be certain to have all your facts straight. I know there are always three sides to a story: yours, mine, and the truth. This is the basic foundation that we must all work by if we are to resolve conflict and resolve things in a fair manner.

As Mayor, I have spent my first year in office not focusing on politics as usual, but strategizing ways to empower our entrepreneurs and business owners, who have the power to lead our

economic recovery and be trail blazers on the path to Dayton's prosperous future.

After taking office last year, I set about researching and identifying who the real key players are in Dayton.

Who are the men and women who can create jobs and build a rock-solid 21<sup>st</sup> century economy? In the last year, I had 116 appointments related to local businesses and quickly discovered that Dayton is truly blessed to have so many visionaries in its midst. People

like Sandy Mendelson, who is currently redeveloping the long-dormant former Delco building. Jeff Samuelson, who has overseen several major development projects in Dayton, and has several more that will be breaking ground this year.

I met with nearly all of the leaders of the region – both political and economic. And here is my conclusion. Some move, some shake. Some move AND shake. And some don't move or shake at

all. And they know who they are. And so do you.

Every single citizen plays a key role in designing Dayton's future, but everyone's piece of the puzzle needs to be connected to the other pieces in the proper order. You see, as Mayor, I envision myself standing over this huge puzzle. All the pieces are here. The people are here. The businesses are here and the facilities are here. Some of it has already been assembled and is ready to connect to the next

piece. That is what we need to do.

Connect the pieces. It doesn't have to be perfect. It just has to come together.

When I met with these business leaders, over and over I heard the same lament: We want to create jobs. The opportunities are there. The labor pool is there. But we've just been stymied by red tape, declining property values, and the fact that so many people think investing in Dayton is foolhardy. So we listened and we

asked for some solutions. This year we are implementing some of those solutions.

In fact, my Leadership Council, made up of 25 of the finest minds in the region has been challenged to work on solutions to move Dayton in a positive direction. I would like to recognize the members that I know are here tonight .....

Ted Bucaro

Larry Couchet

Steven LeFlame

Julie Liss-Katz

David McDonald

Irvin Moscovitz

Phil Parker

and Jeff Samuelson.

If anyone else is here, please stand.

Give these people a round of applause

because they truly care about this

city and they are all volunteers.

**Fact #4:** Dayton is evolving

2010 saw many positive changes at the

local government level, beginning with

increased transparency and a more 21<sup>st</sup> Century approach to sharing public information.

For the first time, City Commission schedules and materials were made available online for anyone to review before any contracts or legislation were voted on. We followed this up by implementing an online registration system for alarm permits and police reporting, as well as allowing citizens to find crime statistics, waste and recycling schedules, and

other information. We established a strict open-door policy with the Mayor's Office--you can send me an email, I'll actually get it and what's more, I read it! And chances are, I'll respond personally to you.

Facebook fans on the City of Dayton page increased from 1000 to nearly 7500 in 12 months, making communication with our citizens instantaneous with the click of a mouse. We have expanded our presence on YouTube and regularly communicate

with citizens via email and social networking.

In 2011 you will see more of this happening. You will be able to track housing violations and you can now pay water bills online. We have also improved our web sites to make them more user friendly. Check out the Recreation and Youth Services web site for a good example of this.

Let's talk about recycling. In January 2010 we were paying \$38 a ton for

trash to be disposed of in a land fill and \$14 a ton for Rumpke to take our recyclables. By mid year this dropped to \$6 a ton for recyclables and in 2011, based on the contract we have, this has dropped to \$2 a ton and grown from less than 200 tons to over 400 tons a month, saving the City money and resources.

Dayton's continuing economic recovery has never been more apparent. Just look at what is going on in the private sector.

Just one week ago, GE Aviation broke ground on the \$51 million research center it will occupy at the edge of the University of Dayton campus. This development and the technology jobs it will bring are huge wins for Dayton and should serve as a catalyst for other companies to invest in Dayton and our Ohio Aerospace Hub. The entire process from the public being notified in the press on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010 of GE's interest in the region to the

groundbreaking took a mere 54 weeks.

Not some 5 years.

Nearby, UD will soon begin construction on a new student village on Brown Street. The transformation of the campus area continues, and the University of Dayton continues to provide leadership and partnership for our city's future.

Progress is not limited to the southern side of downtown. To the north, a construction crane now stands

above Grandview Hospital, where a major investment in new facilities is underway.

Also just north of downtown, the reconstruction of the Great Miami Boulevard and Grand Avenue will begin very soon. This project will bring a new look and major road improvements to neighborhoods near Grandview and the Dayton Art Institute and encourage investment there.

And if you haven't seen it yet, I invite you to check out the latest and very striking new building at Dayton's Tech Town Campus. Its doors will open soon, providing even more opportunities for technology jobs in Dayton.

We also opened three new bridges since the beginning of 2010 which is amazing in itself. These are truly works of public art with their lighting effects.

Our business community continues to innovate and invest. Techmetals, an east Dayton manufacturing firm, recently completed a significant expansion in record time and its making specialty metal products for clients around the world.

In the heart of downtown, Premiere Health Partners is making a major investment at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Main by purchasing the former Fifth-Third office tower and keeping 700 jobs in downtown Dayton.

Also, very shortly, we will gather at the site of the old Howard Paper Mill on Edwin C. Moses Boulevard to begin the demolition of that long-abandoned industrial property. When it is gone, another eyesore will have disappeared and another brownfield will be ready for productive re-use.

Development and progress is happening in neighborhoods as well. In fact, we have seen an increase in volunteerism in the neighborhoods. Our Priority

Board Chairpersons have assumed a greater role in developing solutions for their neighborhoods and I would like to recognize those Chairpersons who I meet with regularly to solve problems and discuss ideas.

They are ... (and if you are here, please stand up):

Ms. Mary Ellington from Innerwest

David Greer from Northwest

Kevin Jones from F.R.O.C. (Or for those who don't know, the Fair River Oaks Council);

Dan Kennedy from Southeast;

David Powers from Northeast;

Ms. Patricia Rickman from Southwest;

and Stephen Seboldt from Downtown.

Community partners and investors are building dozens of quality housing units on every side of town—from downtown near Fifth-Third Field, to the Roosevelt-Westwood area, to Twin Towers in east Dayton, to the Fairfield neighborhood of northwest Dayton.

And, federal Stimulus dollars are being put to good use, with hundreds of rehabs or demolitions planned for the next two years. In fact, the first few new homeowners of Neighborhood Stabilization Program homes have already moved in. To these homebuyers and to our development partner CityWide Development Corporation, I offer sincere acknowledgment and thanks.

We are all too painfully aware of the tough job losses our community has

suffered in recent years. But today there is not only hope, there is real progress on the jobs front.

For the first time in several years, city income tax revenues are trending up. Though the increase is modest, it indicates that jobs are returning and our local economy is starting to grow again.

And there is real promise for future growth because of some recent investments by businesses in Dayton.

Homebuilder Ryan Homes has purchased a building in Dayton's Northwest Industrial Park and will locate a manufacturing operation there. Hiring begins this summer.

We also have a whole slew of trail-blazers taking a risk on Dayton by living their dreams and opening coffee shops, cafes, bistros and restaurants.

We also have people opening service businesses but often their effort is

overlooked by the media. To all of them – we are all grateful.

The City of Dayton has also been reaching out to its immigrant population, who are investing millions of dollars into our economic infrastructure. In fact, this very neighborhood is home to many citizens who recently moved to the U.S. from the former Soviet Union. I have met with many community leaders from the Ahiska Turkish community and have heard the same sentiment many times –

people from foreign countries want to live and invest in Dayton because this city holds incredible opportunities for people who want the American Dream. I'd like to give special thanks to Mr. Tom Wahlrab and the Dayton Human Relations Council for leading the charge in making Dayton one of America's most immigrant friendly cities. Tom, thank you for all you do.

It is important to note that Dayton's crime numbers in key categories have

continued to decline this past year,  
as they have for several years.

This success can be largely attributed  
to the crime prevention work that our  
Police Department is conducting under  
the leadership of Chief Richard Biehl  
and a first-class command staff. Our  
police are not simply reacting to  
crime, they are working in organized,  
intelligent ways to prevent crime, in  
cooperation with our citizens.

Dayton's firefighters, under the leadership of Chief Herbert Redden, are among the finest serving any American community, and we are fortunate to live and work with their protection and service.

As you can see, we are not quietly waiting for the world to notice Dayton and for opportunities to come to us.

We are building bridges and foundations for future growth on several fronts.

Commissioner Matt Joseph and City Manager Riordan recently chaired a workgroup focused on strengthening the relationship between the City of Dayton and Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. The possibilities there are enormous and promising.

I have a few people that I would like to thank personally before I conclude. Firstly, Tim Riordan our City Manager. He is at the helm of this ship we call Dayton. Without him we would not be

actively moving forward at our current  
pace.

I also want to thank Stanley Earley  
and Shelley Dickstein our assistant  
Managers who work tirelessly keeping  
Tim in order!

I want to thank every single city  
employee and every single County  
employee who work endlessly to provide  
safety services to our citizens. From  
Law enforcement, fire and emergency  
services, road and sanitation, water

and recreation as well as convention centers and airport staff. Without them we would not have this city.

As a side note, in case anyone is interested. The City Manager and I meet regularly with the county administrator Debbie Feldman and County Commissioner Debbie Lieberman. If any County Commissioners are here, please stand.

I really want to thank the staff of the local newspaper who have helped me become a better leader by teaching me

not to react to the news of the moment. On the same note, I want to thank the staff at Fox 45, Channel 2, the Dayton Business Journal and the Dayton City Paper for their willingness to help promote the positive stories about Dayton.

I also want to acknowledge William Pace who told me that he wanted to become a voice for the people and has willingly attended some 500 plus neighborhood and Priority Board meetings to hear citizen concerns and

has put out many sparks before they became fires. His proactive approach is a model for other like-minded people to follow. In my entire time on the Southeast Priority Board I have never met anyone willing to attend that many community meetings!

Then there is my personal aide, Jason Webber. He is my bulldog in the Mayor's office. Without him, this event would not have been possible and my life would be more hectic than it already is.

In conclusion, I present **Fact #5:**

Dayton will prosper.

But don't take my word for it—just ask the Financial Times, who just yesterday named Dayton one of America's Top 10 Cities of the Future in the. Dayton was chosen out of 405 cities across North and South America. Among cities with populations less than 250,000, we ranked second in foreign director investment strategy, third in small business friendliness,

and ninth as a City of the Future. The Financial Times praised Dayton for our Tech Town technology park, the Ohio Aerospace Hub, our focus on advanced manufacturing and information technology, our abundant water supply, and our skilled workforce.

Our future is bright even if our present is filled with challenges. But let's be realistic – change will not happen overnight. The type of long-term changes that we are currently experiencing won't be felt for a long

time. I'm talking years. You don't solve decades worth of decline in one year or four years, and any politician who will tell you otherwise is a flat-out liar.

However, we have to anticipate the inevitable, and it is inevitable that things will get better. Enough with the negativity – we can't listen to the naysayers who are so quick to say that Dayton is falling apart. Look closer. Growth is happening – slower than we'd like – but it IS happening.

We can no longer make money the primary focus of our projects or let money dictate how we proceed. We must focus on solving the problems and then utilize what limited resources we have to solve those problems. If we have no money then we just have to fix problems without it! If we inspire people to start their own businesses and create jobs for citizens then the money will come.

Ladies and gentlemen, YOU are the ones who will lead the recovery. Not government. So get involved. All government can do is help support you. The passion and devotion that will change Dayton will only come from you – the citizens.

The tide has shifted. If you haven't already done so, it's time to switch surfboards so we can move forward together, united with this new tide.

I will be frank. We don't know what the future holds, but moving forward to reach it is better than standing firm and getting knocked over by that tide, especially when you have seen it coming for a while.

They say that the best way to predict the future is to create it. I believe that the future of the Gem City is great. I believe that you believe it too. We have world class buildings, we have world class school facilities and higher learning facilities, we have

world class citizens with world class ideas. Now is the time for us to put those ideas into action. This is our moment. Let's work together and seize it.

Thank you and God bless.



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