

**Good evening. It's my pleasure to bring you the 2008 State of the City address, highlighting the year 2007.**

**Kettering is and always has been a progressive community with great thinkers, great leadership and a passionate constituency. I'd like to thank my fellow council members as well as City staff for their outstanding commitment to this City. And I'd like to thank, particularly, our citizens and businesses, who participate actively in making Kettering the Community of Choice to live work and play.**

**I love living in Kettering. The amenities that we have to offer are second to none. No matter where I go in the country, I'm always glad to come home.**

**We don't often highlight individual financial accomplishments in the State of the City address. That is due, largely, to the fact that our Finance Department works diligently under the radar. But our financial status is one of the most important contributors to our quality of life. Our finance department consistently works with the best interest of the City at heart. And while each and every year they are recognized in some way for their outstanding work, this year in particular they were recognized for their excellence in financial reporting. State Auditor, Mary Taylor, paid a visit to our Finance Department to give them the "Making Your Tax Dollars Count" award.**

**While financially we have subsidized amenities such as the Frazee Pavilion to a degree, there again sound leadership and management have led to the decrease of that subsidy over the last several years. Where else can you find an outdoor venue for music with such an incredible atmosphere and such incredible talent. While I am pleased that people from all over Ohio and even the country visit the Frazee each season, I'm even more pleased that we get to benefit from it right here in our community. In 2007 the Frazee was ranked 35 among all other outdoor amphitheaters in the world by Pollstar. That's up from our previous ranking of 57. I personally think we're the best. 2007 brought the return of Sheryl Crow; an**

evening with George Jones and an energetic show by the Doobie Brothers. And our free shows at the Frazee continue to offer great entertainment in the best possible environment for an evening out.

The Frazee also hosted the first ever Alter/Fairmont Pep Rally in 2007 which drew 2500 players, coaches, students and parents who showed their true team spirit and community support. The event was capped off by a live broadcast by WDTN channel 2's Operation Football Kickoff Show.

Our more than 21 parks were host to family picnics, little league games, outdoor recreation and so much more. In 2007 we were able to provide recreation opportunities to children who may not have otherwise been able to participate. Through our Financial Assistance Program 28 children went to summer camps because of donations made to the Kettering Parks Foundation scholarship program.

Our Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts department also reached out to 32 children from low income families in one of our neighborhoods by providing a free 8 week summer camp. With the support of our Board of Community Relations, the camp provided enrichment activities, meals and field trips, along with positive adult role modeling. Children who participated were able to experience things they had not previously experienced and visited places they had never been. Remarkably, this program also resulted in the children returning to school ready to learn and with fewer discipline and academic issues.

Two new programs were developed in 2007 for special needs children and a \$ 426,000 "Access to Recreation Grant" was awarded to Kettering, which will create outdoor accessibility at Pondview park for youth who cannot currently utilize the park and its natural habitat.

**A new dock was constructed at Pondview Park with the help of the Dor-Wood Optimists. Thanks to their support, the dock has greatly enhanced land lab learning opportunities.**

**The Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts and Kettering Police departments kicked off a brand new “community watch” program in 2007 geared toward keeping our Parks safe and enjoyable for families. The program calls on residents who live nearby to keep an eye on activity in and around their neighborhood parks. The programs mascot, Seemore the Eagle was unveiled in October.**

**Kettering added six new public art pieces around the City through the City Sites program. Three bus stop shelters were designed by Dayton architect and artist Mary Rohero. And three bronze sculptures, designed by nationally recognized artist Glenna Goodacre were installed. “The Runner” and “Old Man and His Dog” were placed at Lincoln Park Civic Commons and “Ollie” was placed at the Rob Dyrdek/DC Shoes Skate Plaza. Goodacre is probably best known for her women’s Vietnam memorial located near the Vietnam Memorial in Washington D.C.**

**Our Public Safety departments were actively involved in a number of initiatives in 2007. Most notably, the City’s emergency dispatch center was completely renovated and upgraded to the county’s 800 megahertz system. The upgrades took place simultaneously to our study and consideration of joining the county-wide dispatching system. After careful consideration, Council opted not to join the county wide system and our own dispatch center is now operating as a Public Safety Dispatch Center with both police AND fire dispatchers working in the same center. Dispatchers are being cross-trained to handle both police and fire calls and having the personnel housed in the same location has already proven to be efficient and effective.**

**In the spring of 2007, the Kettering Police Department implemented its first drug canine unit. “Bandit” was donated to the department by a former patrolman and**

**Bandit and his handler have already been instrumental in making successful drug arrests during traffic stops. They have also assisted narcotic officers and SWAT on drug related search warrants.**

**We recently welcomed four new officers to the Kettering Police Department, bringing the department to full strength. Fully employing our Police department was something we promised you before the May 2006 Income Tax levy and it's a promise we're proud to say we've fulfilled.**

**Kettering's Fire Department underwent a comprehensive study by an outside consulting group which involved the review of the (department's organization and management), (operational and staffing needs) and best management practices. This study has already proven to be instrumental in reorganizing the Fire Department and will be critical in the months to come as we continue to make some recommended enhancements to the department. Major promotions took place within the department as former Assistant Fire Chief Robert Miles was hired as the departments new Chief and Captains Terry Jones and Neil Frederick were promoted to Assistant fire Chief status.**

**The Fire Department is another area of Public Safety that we've been working to hire to capacity. Several positions have been filled and as we begin to make enhancements as a result of the Matrix report, we will likely seek to fill even more positions.**

**We welcomed 26 new Volunteer firefighters in 2007 bringing our total number to 110. We will soon be starting a new recruitment for even more Volunteer firefighters.**

**As usual our city's ACTIVE volunteer program was busy helping the city to function as efficiently as possible. I'm always amazed by the fact that we have more than 1,100 men and women who give of their time and talent to make this city**

**operate productively. Volunteers perform duties in this city that save us money - almost \$ 800,000 in 2007 with more than 45,000 hours of volunteer time logged.**

**I had the privilege of recognizing Alan and Mary Kay Feller with the Mayor's Award in 2007 for their countless hours of service to the after school program at Christ United Methodist Church for Kettering middle school students. In addition, students Catie Miner and Kyla Morgan, both of Kettering Fairmont High school were recognized for their volunteer service.**

**The Volunteer program administered another successful Neighborhood Pride program, with more than 50 awards presented to Kettering residents who earned recognition for maintaining their homes in an award winning manner. A volunteer committee contributed hundreds of hours over the summer evaluating the more than 600 nominated properties.**

**The Kettering Leadership Academy, another Volunteer program, graduated their fourth class in the spring of 2007. The fifth Leadership Academy class began in the fall of 2007. This program has far exceeded our expectations as graduates are involved in Kettering boards and commissions, PTA's, local non-profits and church leadership activities.**

**The 2007 Make a Difference Day effort in Kettering focused on two major areas: our Seniors and our Troops. Volunteer youth groups raked leaves for over 20 senior citizens on Make a Difference Day this year and Kettering residents, schools, churches and businesses donated thousands of items for our troops currently serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. As a result, more than one thousand care packages were sent to our soldiers.**

**Senior Housing and Transportation were two issues addressed in 2007. The Senior Transportation program was reorganized and expanded utilizing volunteer drivers. The program has doubled its member usage and expanded the driving area. Senior**

**Citizens can utilize the program to go to doctors appointments, church, the grocery or even to visit a friend. The expanded program received the highest annual award given by the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association for its successful efforts to expand service area, increase ridership and decrease city subsidy.**

**A new Senior housing development is underway. The Franklin Foundation is developing the former Birchwood Swim Club site into 24 new units for senior housing. The Franklin Foundation already operates two similar developments in Kettering; Kettering Park Manor on Woodman Drive and Mary Irene Gardens on Dorothy Lane. We look forward to working with the Franklin Foundation again as they match our determination for affordable and comfortable senior housing.**

**Community Development remains a focus in Kettering. We are a community with an aging housing stock and as such we do our best to provide Kettering homeowners with financial support to make necessary upgrades and enhancements to their homes.**

**Our housing rehabilitation program helped 8 homeowners in 2007 to complete or begin necessary upgrades to their homes. The Home Enhancement Loan Program, in conjunction with DayAir Credit Union, helped to write down the interest rate on 6 home improvement loans. In 2007 the program enabled homeowners to update numerous kitchens and bathrooms; build room additions and expand living space by rearranging interior walls and windows.**

**Our Community Development Block Grant program, known as CDBG, actively pursues grants and funding in order to help our residents to stay in the homes they love.**

**And while we continue to create opportunities for our current homeowners, in 2007 we were fortunate to also be able to attract new home buyers through a variety of new home developments.**

**Madison's Grant, for example is a 150 lot Ryan Home development located off of Swigert Road that affords home buyers the opportunity to build a new home. This development continues to be the fastest selling single family development for Ryan Homes in Southwest Ohio**

**Johns Towne Woods is an HBS condominium townhouse development on Devon Avenue behind Wagner Wood. This impressive development offers buyers upscale, maintenance free condominium living with custom home options. HBS is the same company that built David's Retreat on David Road.**

**The Villas at Kettering Pointe is an Inverness housing development located at the former Van Buren Shopping Center site. This development will include 35 new patio homes with many amenities nearby.**

**The Town Homes at Kettering Crossing is a development along Haig Avenue that offers 12 affordable and modern town homes for purchase.**

**So you can see that though we are a community with very little room to grow, we do take advantage of good opportunities for new home development whenever we have the opportunity. Now it's also our responsibility to see to it that our neighborhoods, new and old, are maintained appropriately.**

**In 2007 we established the property maintenance task force, comprised of city staff, residents, and business leaders. As I campaigned for Mayor in 2005 the number one issue that residents brought to my attention was that of property maintenance.**

**Many of you feel that we haven't been stringent enough with our property maintenance enforcement. With the creation of the Task Force, we're doing something about that.**

Several goals arose from that task force, not the least of which is to establish more stringent property maintenance enforcement. We have added to our property inspection staff. We will be changing our code to allow for more efficient enforcement and we are identifying neighborhoods that need more attention. In the long run we know that our efforts will result in what our residents have told us they want, and that is holding more people accountable to keeping their properties up to standard.

That being said, it's important that you know that as a council, we are also very concerned about residents who do not have the financial means to make drastic improvements to their homes in a speedy manner. That's why we will continue to work with you in the most compassionate and cooperative manner as possible as we begin to enforce our codes more stringently.

One of the most crucial aspects of keeping our neighborhoods up to date is our Capital Improvement Program. In 2007 we completed nearly 6.5 million dollars worth of construction projects on Kettering's roadways. Key projects include: Phase two of the Dorothy Lane & South Dixie Reconstruction; the Acorn Area Reconstruction which included new curb, gutters and sidewalks and a variety of repair and overlay programs. Key projects that began in 2007 that will be complete this year are the Greenhouse Drive Residential Rebuild and the median landscape on West Stroop Road from South Dixie to Tait Road.

Capital Improvement projects, while extensive and at times intrusive, are entirely necessary in order to ensure that Kettering is a safe and commutable community. That is why we plan our capital improvement projects, five, ten and even 20 years in advance.

Pre planning is also required for Street Division activities such as snow removal and leaf pickup. In 2007 the Street Division began employing (de-sugared) beet juice to the streets prior to a projected snowfall. So far it appears that the eco-friendly

**mixture is doing a better job than our brine mixture and this will be fully evaluated at the end of the snow season.**

**Leaf Pickup is probably one of our most challenging programs. And it's also one of our most popular. As of the beginning of this year 1,800 truck loads of leaves, totaling over twenty seven thousand cubic yards of leaves had been picked up. Those leaves will be cultivated at our Leaf Farm and made available to residents as leaf mulch in the spring. In 2007 more than 7700 cubic yards of compost and over 5300 cubic yards of mulch were processed and spread by either the city or citizens.**

**Economic Development is another integral part of city business. Not only is it important to maintain the businesses that we have, but we must be constantly looking to attract new business into this community.**

**In 2007 Mead Westvaco completed tenant improvements and moved 237 employees into the Kettering Corporate Center on Hempstead Station Drive.**

**Consolidated Vehicle Converters purchased an 82,000 square foot building on Hempstead Station Drive and are currently making major renovations to the building, which will yield 65 new employees with plans to grow.**

**The former Groby's property has been demolished in order to make way for a mixed use development that will include commercial and office space. First Financial Bank will be the first business to move into the new development.**

**The Kettering Development Corporation, in cooperation with the City began the demo of building 47 at the Kettering Business Park. While we have managed to recoup much of the job loss stemming from defense department reorganization, there is still work to be done to build out the Business Park entirely. The City will work diligently in 2008 to market the available property from Building 47 in order to continue the success of the Business Park.**

**Kettering Crossing is a new development located at the former site of the H&H Manufacturing and PayDay Car lot. Frisch's opened on the property in 2007, as did LaRosa's.**

**Kettering Pointe is a mixed use redevelopment at the former Van Buren Shopping Center. All of the commercial and retail construction at that site is complete and the development is one hundred percent occupied. The former Elder Beerman Store site has been razed and will be divided into two out lots for new commercial development.**

**And one of Kettering's largest and most significant employers, Kettering Health Network, held their groundbreaking ceremony for the Schuster Heart Hospital in October of 2007. Construction on this project is scheduled for this year.**

**Economic development is a critical piece of city business as the city's income tax makes up a significant percentage of the City's revenue. It is becoming more and more challenging to maintain and attract businesses in today's economic climate, yet we remain steadfast in our efforts.**

**Through the years the concept of collaboration has become essential for local government survival. Fortunately for Kettering, we have always recognized and respected the concept of working together and sharing resources with our neighbors. Our positive relationship with our schools was born from just that sort of philosophy. We collaborate with our schools in a number of arenas, not the least of which is the School Resource Officer Program that places policemen and women into our schools. When we established the new summer camp program in one of our neighborhoods, we worked closely with the neighborhood school to do it. And we as a council supported the School Board when they felt the need to put a new initiative on the ballot this past year.**

**But even beyond that, we work closely with our schools when it comes to economic development issues that might impact the schools in the long run. For example, in 2007 the City renewed a tax sharing agreement with the school district. This agreement states that anytime the City uses a Tax Abatement as an Economic Development incentive the City has committed to sharing a portion of the new income tax revenue created by the new job base.**

**Another collaboration that is working for Kettering residents is our cooperative relationship with Unified Health Solutions and the residents of the Oak Creek Neighborhood.**

**Through this collaboration initiatives have been created for youth in the area such as mentoring and after school activities. In addition, initiatives for adults will include computer classes and financial training.**

**The City collaborated with Oakwood for the 5<sup>th</sup> MLK Celebration breakfast and with the Kettering Rotary and the KMO Chamber on the first annual Mayor's Charity Ball, which was held at Reynolds and Reynolds in April of 2007. In our first year with the Mayor's Charity Ball we were able to raise over \$10,000 for Daybreak. And on April 12 of this year we will hold the second annual Mayor's Charity Ball benefiting We Care Arts – another local not for profit organization.**

**Working together is the way of the future. As a progressive city we have seen the writing on the wall for many years now regarding the need to work cooperatively with other groups, organizations and entities when and where it makes sense. We will continue to use our best judgement regarding collaborations in the future. Many of the things that make us a successful city are due to the fact that we didn't go it alone, but we partnered with like-minded organizations on new programs or initiatives. It's prudent, it's responsible and it's effective to create partnerships that make sense for the future of this community.**

**As I wrap up this 2008 State of the City address, highlighting the milestones of 2007, I'd like to honor the memory of a dear friend of mine and of the City of Kettering. Bernie Wanamaker passed away in June of this past year and with his passing we lost a public servant like no other. Bernie wore many hats for the City, volunteering for the fire department, working with the City's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary committee and he always had his camera ready for every event. Bernie sat right up there on that bench for every single council meeting and we have missed his presence greatly.**

**To our dear friend Joanne Clodfelter, we pray for a full and speedy recovery and look forward to seeing you soon at another city council meeting.**

**And finally, to my wife Maureen. Thank you for your support, understanding, and time in allowing me to do this job I so love.**

**With that, I thank you for your attention and for your love and commitment to this community. May we as council always have the best interest of this community at heart in our decision making process. I look forward to another year of making Kettering the Community of Choice to Live, Work and Play.**

**Good night and God Bless.**