

State of the City Speech
Monday April 8, 2013
Common Council Chambers

For many, the last several years have been difficult as the Nation, this State and the City have struggled with the economic downturn. It is no secret that times have been hard for many as they sought employment and worried about making ends meet. As a City we have struggled to keep up with ever increasing pension costs and health insurance, but we have managed to keep the ship afloat and keep our budgets under the 2% tax cap and maintain services to the benefit of our citizens. We as a City have maintained our quality of life and even managed to continue to make improvements to our environment, our parks, plants and buildings. All too often I hear and read about people who lament that Hornell is not what it used too be. We cannot ignore the fact that we have experienced the loss of populations and experienced the economic downturn that all of the Southern Tier and Western New York has experienced since the late 1950's. And yet we have managed to survive and keep our community alive and in many cases, thriving as compared to other communities our size. I would love to return to our glory days, but we cannot look backwards. Our jobs are to look forward and to create the best community that we possibly can. We cannot do it alone as elected officials; we need every citizen to become

stakeholders in this community. We must build pride and a sense of caring for our neighborhoods and for our neighbors. I call upon every Common Council member to spearhead and rekindle interest in neighborhood preservation and enlist the help and support of your ward residents in creating excitement and caring within your neighborhoods.

One of our strengths as a City and one that has set us apart from other communities is our sense of community - neighbor helping neighbor. We have lost this in some areas of our City and we must regain this total sense of community and develop pride in each other.

This can start by simply picking up after your dog if they have done their business in a City Park or neighbor's yard or your yard. Responsible pet ownership, whether it is a cat or dog. Have your pet spayed or neutered and be mindful of their whereabouts and make sure that they do not negatively impact your neighbor. Just walk around Veterans Park and Michael Fucci Memorial Park and see the dog feces left on the walkways and grassy areas because their owners did not pick up after them, even when waste bags are provided. Its simple - take pride in our parks, pet ownership, our neighborhoods and take pride in your property.

This spring and summer the City will conduct a ward by ward review on neighborhood conditions. We will concentrate on problem areas, working with common council members to address blighting and public safety conditions. We have led a 20 plus year pitch battle to retake our neighborhoods and we are going to redouble our efforts to improve the most important component of any community...Strong, viable, vibrant neighborhoods.

The City of Hornell has experienced some good economic news since the first of the year; we have seen new contracts awarded to Alstom and they have begun hiring and rehiring some employees. Their future looks promising. We have been successful in working with SAVE-A-LOT in bringing a grocery store to the Rail Road Centre Plaza, which has resulted in the plaza being fully occupied for the first time in years and also meeting a great need for our citizens with a new grocery store opportunity.

Recently we have heard the news of Peter Wall's great success and the expansion of his business operations into the vacant Depot building which has been underutilized since Alstom moved out in 2008. This historic structure will be fully occupied and utilized by these new business interests with a resulting increase in new employment opportunities, creating 100 new jobs.

Stage Stores, parent company of Peebles, will purchase the building they have rented since 2000 and invest a substantial amount of money in upgrading the store, adding new floor space and elevators. They will be investing over \$1,000,000 in downtown Hornell and also creating 4 new full-time positions.

The Hornell Community Arts Center has been completed and is becoming an integral part in enhancing our community's arts base. Local artists have purchased several buildings in downtown and they are investing in rehabilitating them for studio and gallery space.

One of our Common Council members has purchase the former Knights of Columbus Hall and invested in this space to create a banquet and convention space.

So many positive developments in our small City should give rise to spirits and letting people know we are alive and well in Hornell, New York and we are positioning ourselves for the future and improving our community for current and future generations.

We as elected officials and all our citizens have a part to play in making Hornell a great place in which to live, work and invest in. It starts with each resident - each individual should be proud and take pride in the community in which we live.

Several years ago I informed the common council and the community that I probably would not seek another term as your mayor and at the time I meant it. No one wants to overstay their welcome and you always fear that you may become stale and stagnant. I, after much soul searching and prayer, feel I still have the fire in my belly and a desire to serve and improve my community. I, if the voters will have me, have decided to seek one last term of office so together we can move our beloved community forward together.

"I believe that a man should be proud of the City in which he lives.

And that he should so live that his City will be proud that he lives in it."

ABRAHAM LINCOLN