

STATE OF THE TOWNSHIP - 2007

Thank you. I'd like to take this time to welcome everybody to my third annual State of the Township address. I would like to thank the Redford Township Junior Chamber for hosting this event in the new Jaycee Hall. Our community has made lots of progress in this past year. Before I get into the community, the realities of the states' financial crisis has hit local municipalities. Having worked countless hours on the 2007 -2008 budget it was evident that we had to make tough decisions. In the budget, I once again budgeted for a state revenue sharing cut of 7%. The news out of Lansing has not been good. The first two and a half years of my administration, through conservative budgeting, my administration has asked our township employees to do more with less.

Since taking office, the township has reduced its staff by more than 26 positions which means one out of 10 township employees have either retired, or left the employ of the township but we have yet to lay anybody off. In fact, no office staff has been cut more than my office staff. I recently eliminated the Confidential Assistant position and currently have a 19 year old Redford Township college student as my administrative aide. The foresight of not filling and restructuring township departments has saved Redford Township taxpayers millions of dollars annually, although many of these decisions were very difficult because it required change in an institution that has been running the same way for 30 years. I would like to take this time to thank my township department heads and staff members who have worked diligently during tough times to make sure township services for our residents would not be interrupted. Could our department heads and staff please stand for a round of applause.

We're not out of the woods yet. Lansing still has a lot of work to do. I meet with the Speaker of the House, Andy Dillon on a weekly basis discussing issues pertaining to local municipalities. Despite what you hear regarding Michigan, the economic rebirth has already started in Redford Township.

Redevelopment for Redford Township is leading the way for economic recovery in southeast Michigan. While other people are no longer building, redevelopment for Redford Township, we are building. We're not only building new, we are modifying old and preserving our past. Has our downtown changed the past two years? As the governor would say, the naysayers said Redford Township couldn't have a centrally located downtown. The naysayers said no restaurants would open downtown. Naysayers said the buildings were aging, too old, antiquated. The naysayers would say we are an aging, inner circle suburb with no growth potential. I say Redford Township can be more. We don't have to be content with being a bedroom community anymore. We can have a downtown where people will walk, eat, socialize, and even have a few spirits. This past year two new restaurants opened in our downtown area. We have our long standing food and spirits establishments believing, and investing in redevelopment for Redford Township. I would like to thank Rod and Renee Baker for opening up R & R Café, Angela Alvarez and my wife Barbara for opening up Cinco de Mayo

Cantina, Sandy at Sandy's by the Beech, Ron at Michno's Café and John at Redford Grill for the financial commitment and believing in redevelopment for Redford Township.

I will tell you folks, investing in Redford Township is a wise business decision. We don't have neighborhoods without homes. We have safe neighborhoods with affordable living. Redford Township is centrally located. We are 20 minutes from downtown Detroit, 30 minutes to Ann Arbor, 30 minutes to Pontiac, 30 minutes to Monroe. We're such a great destination, we're even 30 minutes from another country. Developers, business owners, realtors, come to Redford Township. Botsford Hospital believed in redevelopment for Redford Township. In fact, they're making a two million dollar investment right across the street. They're moving so fast, I don't think they're giving the workers a lunch hour, which we need them to do, so they can go have lunch at our downtown establishments. I would like to thank Botsford Hospital for believing in redevelopment for Redford Township. Where once sat a building that my grandfather helped move from Corktown for a church back in the early 50's, where my father and mother worked on various community projects with their days on the Redford Jaycees, soon, I can take my kids and other Redford Township families and seniors can go for the best medical attention with the newest equipment in the area.

Six buildings have been torn down in the downtown area in the last year. And now we have new storefronts throughout the Five and Beech corridor.

Redevelopment in Redford Township is happening right in front of our eyes. Just take a drive down Plymouth Road. Redford Township has worked with business owners to believe that Plymouth Road is a viable road to locate their business. The Robinson Furniture store sat vacant for many years, but is now home to Lincoln Behavioral Services who chose to expand their operations in Redford Township rather than moving out. Two new strip malls have been built along the Plymouth Road corridor, along with a new car dealer in the old Murray's warehouse. The Karate School is moving from 5 Mile Road to Plymouth Road. They could have moved outside of the township but they believe redevelopment for Redford Township is a wise business decision.

If you ask any township resident, what is the biggest eyesore in the past 10 years in Redford Township, this building would definitely be at the top of the list. We heard people from around the township that they were tired of looking at a blighted, large, outdated building in the north end of town. The township has recently purchased Cambridge Nursing Home and plans to tear down that eyesore for redevelopment for Redford Township.

I asked the residents of this great community to invest with us, we're investing in you. In fact, we're putting the 3rd year of our roads program in full effect. Last year, we paved nearly 15 miles of new roads in this township. You could see the pride and the change in the community, in the neighborhoods. More people were

walking, more people were biking, more people were socializing with their neighbors, planting more flowers, paving new approaches. Redevelopment in Redford Township takes partners. Regardless if you're an entrepreneur, or if you're a homeowner, invest in your community.

The neighborhood pride program is working. Drive down our roads, drive through our neighborhoods. You'll see how well it's working. Although it's not a perfect program we are making progress. In 2005 we collected \$4,200 in fines. In 2006 that number jumped to \$25,357, a 600% increase. The message is clear... we are not going to tolerate tall grass. We are not going to tolerate junk cars. If the house is vacant, the homeowner will still cut the grass. If not, WE will cut it and charge the owner. We will not tolerate blight in our community. However, we need your help to let us know where the problems are. Have pride in your neighborhoods. We need partnership for our pride program to be successful.

Last July, our township was named the twenty fifth safest community in the United States by CNN Money Magazine. Our community takes great pride in our police and fire departments. We will continue to make public safety a priority in the years to come. We must strive to put a high priority on public safety. People move into safe neighborhoods. People expand businesses in safe communities. All of our Redford Township Police and Fire employees, please stand for a round of applause. Your commitment and service to the residents of this great township are noted.

Last year I announced that a new spray park was going to be added to Capitol Park. In June, this became a reality. The splash park has been a huge success. We had thousands of our residents bring their own kids and grand kids to utilize this new jewel in our community. I witnessed a single mother studying for college tests while her young child was playing in the spray park. This is proof that Redford Township cares.

Under tough economic times, when people cannot afford family vacations, I have been told by residents, they love our community events. It's like having vacations in their own home town. We care about young families. We care about our seniors. The community events, Cinco de Mayo, our fireworks, our Oktoberfest and our Christmas parade have been embraced by the community. Tens of thousands of people have attended these events this past year. Last year I received a letter from a resident that stated our township festival was one of the greatest days of her life. That's what community is all about. That's what life is all about. It's about reaching out to new people in your own community. Understanding various cultures, becoming one community.

Redevelopment in Redford Township is an important part of becoming the community we all want to become. We're well on our way but we have a lot more work to do. Thank you. God Bless Redford Township. God Bless America.