

Statement of the Conditions & Affairs of the City of Spokane

Mayor Dennis Hession

October 9, 2006

"It shall be the duty of the mayor annually at the second meeting of the city council in October to communicate by message to the city council a statement of the conditions and affairs of the city, and to recommend the adoption of such measures as he may deem expedient and proper."
(Spokane City Charter, Article IV, Section 24)

This is a message of Optimism, Hope, and Positive Expectations.

We are pursuing an agenda designed to ensure a better life for each of our citizens.

(CVB video.)

This video reflects our pride in this community, the amazing quality of life we enjoy and how we like sharing it with the world, and speaks in many ways to our priorities.

Mayor's Priorities:

- To grow Spokane's economy and create jobs.
- To keep our community healthy and safe.
- To provide outstanding, affordable service to our citizens and secure the City's financial stability.

Accomplishments:

Let's break down these priorities and look at a few examples of what we are doing:

Grow Spokane's economy and create jobs (Growing Economy):

- **Kendall Yards (Compliments to John Pilcher & Tom Arnold):**
 - Established multi-discipline teams.
 - Found the PUD application technically complete in June, sending it to the Hearing Examiner.
 - Worked with developer to achieve PUD approval, worked with the West Central Neighbors to respond to their concerns, paving the way to begin construction this spring.
- **University District:**
 - Assumed leadership of this project to continue to move it forward.
 - Acquired and are utilizing \$45,000 EPA Grant for technical assistance in the U District.

- Began brownfields work in the University District.
 - Proposed budget amount of \$20,000 to implement of U District master plan.
 - Working to expedite federal process in order to break ground on extension of Riverside Ave. (Have received \$7 M from federal gov't for this project.)
- **Annexation (Compliments to Dave Mandyke):**
 - Developing annexation Strategic Plan.
 - Completed two annexations and started two more.
 - Other annexation proposals will be forthcoming.
- **Facilitating Growth:**
 - Developing new on-line Permit System—expected January 2007.
 - Hired 9 new employees within the Building enterprise fund and proposed to hire 7 positions in building, planning, engineering services, and fire in 2007 budget to expedite building permits and keep up with demands of development and growth.
 - Partnered with Spokane County and Avista to establish a site selector web site.
 - Began 5-year update of the Comprehensive Plan, a process to update the critical areas ordinance, and adopted new commercial and residential development standards and regulations.
 - Initiated creation of a Local Redevelopment Authority (LRA) to redevelop the Joe E. Mann Reserve Center on Market Street.

Keep our community healthy & safe (Health & Safety):

- **Public Safety**
 - Hired new Police Chief Anne Kirkpatrick.
 - Initiated external review of Otto Zehm and firefighter cases.
 - Asked Washington State Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs to review the Department's policies, procedures, and communications practices.
 - Expanded Police presence in downtown.
 - Initiated review of the City Citizen Review Commission form and constitution.
- **Water Quality & Quantity**
 - Agreed to a joint plan to improve dissolved oxygen in the Spokane River by significantly reducing phosphorus.
 - Along with the City Council, advocated a statewide ban on phosphorus in dishwasher detergents.
 - Began public education phase of our water stewardship program. (Compliments to Mary Franklin and Chelsea Wood of the City Council Office and Brad Blegen, Director of the Water Department).

- **Other**
 - Initiated structural engineering review of River Park Square parking garage and proposed retrofit of the garage.

Provide outstanding, affordable service to our citizens and secure the City's financial stability (Service and Financial Stability):

- **Financial stability:**
 - Launched Efficiency & Effectiveness Study/Commitment to implementation!
 - Established an ad hoc committee comprised of COOs and college professors to look at our organizational structure.
 - Developed a strategic, conservative budget (which we'll talk about in a minute)
- **Albi Stadium**
 - Led effort to reach agreement with Spokane Public Schools and Mead School District, allowing for the continuation of high school football at Albi.
 - Settled outstanding contract issue with Brett Sports. (Rob Crow)
 - Established committee to consider long-term future of Albi and propose solutions for the surrounding property/complex. (Crow and McLaughlin)
- **Other**
 - We are building even stronger leadership.
 - In addition to Anne Kirkpatrick, we hired City Attorney **Jim Craven**, Human Services Director **Jerrie Allard**, and Risk Manager **Pam Schroeder** and promoted **Gene Jakubczak** to Fleet Services Director.
 - Solid Waste Director (naming selection committee this week).
 - Launched on-line job applications.
 - Expanded hours at Spokane Public Library and re-invigorated storytime for young children through the use of volunteers. (Compliments to Library Director Pat Partovi and Library Board.)

2007 Budget & Beyond

Last week, you received my preliminary budget. We will continue to work through the budget throughout the month. Let me reiterate a few points.

- This budget has been built to be consistent with my top three priorities.
- The core of the budget will continue to be spent on police and fire protection, parks, libraries, and streets.

A Strategic Budget

This is a strategic budget. It is not just about the x's and o's of income and expense. This Budget is designed to:

- Enhance financial stability. (Remember 2008)

- Preserve revenues earned this year. (Sales tax revenues in 2006 are up 11 percent over 2005 sales tax revenues.)
- Limit expenditures to 2006 budget levels **plus** agreed increases by contract **and** expenses over which we have limited control (fuel, asphalt, utility payments, medical insurance)
- Be frugal in our spending of budgeted funds for 2006 and 2007 in anticipation of 2008.
- Make key investments, particularly to **facilitate economic growth and development** to create jobs and to implement the recommendations of the **efficiency and effectiveness study**.
- Implement the findings of the Efficiency and Effectiveness Study. We are reserving decisions on new employee positions and programs until we consider recommendations from the study.

What does the future look like?

Spokane is a City on the Move, one that is changing and growing. We will continue to see:

- Increased population.
- More recognition on a national, international scale (for sports, entertainment, culture, quality of life, etc.)
- More in-fill development within the City.
- More urbanized development outside the City.
- Progress on rebuilding streets and on reaching other transportation solutions.

The **heart** of our City is changing even more rapidly than the rest of the community. Our future includes:

- More residential options.
- Significant development at its fringes (Kendall Yards and University District).
- More historic building renovations.
- More hotel rooms, restaurants, and shops.
- More recreational & cultural opportunities (expanded trail network, whitewater park, Fox Theater renovation)

Where are we going?

So, what does this all mean? Where are we going as a community?

I've said it before. We are *the* City of Promise.

- No longer are we the City with potential waiting to be discovered.
- This active assertion is a bold statement by this institution and its citizens.
- We are engaged in a plan for growth and development which this community has not experienced since the beginning of the last century and which promises significant change and prosperity for our citizens.

As the largest City in the Inland Northwest, we are the hub of commerce, culture, business and health care for our region.

New Initiatives

We are planning for our future. There are a number of initiatives that we are developing that will be announced as they mature, but here is a preface to some of those initiatives:

We are closely examining what it means to be a responsive, customer-service driven organization.

We are working on plans to make government more transparent and addressing issues related to potential conflicts of interest, and setting standards for responding to customers.

We talked earlier about the great economic growth Spokane is seeing, and we must work as a City to continue to be a leader in economic growth and job creation. We are working on plans to:

- Address concurrency and impact fees.
- Increase capital investments in strategic infrastructure.
- Enhance Spokane as an urban place.

We're also examining how we can leverage our assets—and in particular, our real estate--to create revenue opportunities to fund critical City functions and programs. We are seeking ways to diversify our income resources that don't require our citizens to contribute more.

We'll also continue our work to enhance our quality of life. People live here because they choose to. They want this urban center within a stone's throw of an abundance of nature's wonders, and we as a City must protect and enhance this unique quality.

We are also pursuing ways to further preserve and enhance our quality of life by using smart growth concepts to promote:

- Environmental stewardship.
- Responsible use of energy.
- Multiple transportation options.
- Healthy lifestyles.

Closing

We know there is much to do.

John Kennedy once said: "All of this will not be finished in the first 100 days. Nor will it be finished in the first thousand days, nor in the lifetime of this administration, nor even perhaps in our lifetime on this planet. But let us begin."

And so we have begun.