



CITY COUNCIL PRESIDENT \* CITY HALL \* 100 STATE STREET \* BELOIT, WI 53511

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## State of the City Address

To my colleagues on the City Council, City Manager Arft, City Attorney Casper, City Staff, and Citizens of Beloit. I am honored to stand before you another year and present my state of the city address. Last year I told you that the state of the city was good, this year I would like to take a different approach. You see if I say the state of the city is good someone could contradict that point, if I give the state of the city a letter grade someone could disagree with that as well. So this year I am using a term that everyone can agree with and that term is Progressing, I can truly say that the City of Beloit is progressing which simply means moving forward in a positive state. We have accomplished so much in a time when things seem to slow down. Allow me to list just a few, not all things that were accomplished this year.

- Finalist for the the all American city award
- Paddle and Trails was featured in the Northwest Quarterly Magazine
- Our protective services departments were recipients of awards
- DPW also received awards and Chris Walsh was appointed to the National Homeland Security Consortium
- We had the dedication of the Steve Greg Bike Path
- Downtown received an award
- City Manager appointed Vice President of a very prestigious organization.
- Kettle and Kerry Expansion
- Forward progress on the Casino project

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If we are honest with ourselves we can all say that we are moving forward take a look at the riverfront development, the gateway development, the continued development downtown, the wonderful work our code enforcement department does in keeping neighborhoods looking great, along with countless professional services provided by our protected services DPW and city staff. All of this shows that Beloit continues to progress or move forward.

Before I go any further I must stop and thank all of the city departments for their sacrifices during this year's budget process, one of the toughest budgets I have had to deal with since the 10 years I have been on the council but let us take notice that it will not get any easier in the years to come. I personally thank you for making the tough decisions in your department, though not popular, they were necessary.

Thank you for your willingness to continue to provide great service in the midst of the tough cuts that you had to do. All of you are professionals and you continue to show this even during these tough times. Thank you for sharing your advice during the process. I assure you it did not fall on deaf ears; however, in the end we had tough decisions to make that affect not only you but your departments and the citizens, which also include councilors. I feel I must pause here and say again with every decision we make it affects us also, this is why we examine, question staff, and request facts before we make decisions.

Once again I say thanks for what you do each and every day.

Beloit continues to accomplish great things; this is done by being forward thinkers or visionary thinkers. We must continue to move forward.

Move forward in the area of Economic Development, we must come in everyday not asking or waiting for new business or new development but seek after it. We must knock down doors of corporations to get them to think Beloit when they are talking about relocation, expansion, and economic opportunities. We must dialogue with other cities to see how

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they attract new businesses and imitate them; we have to think beyond this region. When attracting new businesses, they must be held accountable in maintaining agreed upon employee levels. I know we can't mandate this but we must let them know we will continue to monitor the agreement set forth.

Move forward in the area of pursuing of regionalization, this will ultimately help in cost savings for the city. We cannot give up on this; we must be diligent in this effort. Let's not accept the fact that other towns and townships will not meet with us, keep pushing and make it happen. We have done this with businesses and it has paid off.

Move forward in the area of Business retention; continue to visit businesses to see what their needs are and how we can help them stay here. No matter how small the business is we need to make sure they all feel they are important to the city.

Move forward in the area of code enforcement, although unpopular this area helps us present the city in a positive manner and has proven to help improve neighborhoods.

To the nay-sayers- the individuals who always say the city has not done anything or has not progressed, I say move on and develop a positive attitude. Instead of saying what we have not done find one thing each day that the city has done. For example, if you are able to drive down your street that DPW has plowed after a snow storm or your trash has been picked up by city staff, or you have called city hall and got assistance from a staff member. This is something positive.

As I reflect on my 2 years as president of the city council I can truly say it has been exciting, challenging, fulfilling, but most of all it has allowed me to work with a group of councilors who are very interested and dedicated in moving this city forward.

Having said this I must encourage the individuals seeking a seat on the council in the upcoming election, start studying now because when you obtain a seat you will have a short learning curve. You will need to be ready to hit the ground running. I must state this fact though, now is not the time to run for a seat for personal agenda items. You must be willing

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to work as team. There is no problem in expressing your concerns but at the end of the day we must keep in mind what is best for the city. As you start your campaign season it is very important that you concentrate on the City's accomplishments and not focus so much on the minor things that may be a challenge that we are working on. Keep in mind when you are thinking along the signs of the challenges there may be a lot of information you do not have.

I stated last year that we must do something to address the homelessness in the city, I know we are meeting and working on this but we must ask ourselves are we doing all we can to solve this problem.

In closing I would just like to borrow the lyrics from a renowned gospel artist by the name of Marvin Sapp who has a song entitled "Never could have made it without you". Now Pastor Sapp was talking in a religious aspect, however I would like to close this address out by saying to the Councilors, City Staff, and Citizens we never could have made it without you. Because of you the city council and staff are wiser- Wiser about the things that are truly important to you, we hear you. Keep making the calls, sending emails, and complimenting us on issues that affect the city, thus affecting you.

Because of you we are stronger- By binding together as citizens we continue to build a strong city, our staff and citizens are the best in any city around. You have stepped up and handled several tough issues and the city is a better place because of each of you.

Because of you we are better- a better community, a better place to live, work, and play. A better place to raise a family and a better place to have your business.

To the councilors I thank you for your dedication and determination to make this the best city possible you are doing a great job.

To the staff thank you for all you do each and every day in making the city run, providing services to the citizens. I want you to know that we appreciate what you do. Please focus on the positive things about your job and the services you provide.

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I challenge everyone in the city to continue to seek ways to move the city forward and promote the positive things we have accomplished. We can do great things when we work together for positive change.

As I did last year I would like to close this address out with a quote that I live by:

If I can help somebody, as I pass along,  
If I can cheer somebody, with a word or song,  
If I can show somebody, how they're travelling wrong,  
Then my living shall not be in vain.

If I can do my duty, as a good man ought,  
If I can bring back beauty, to a world up wrought,  
If I can spread love's message, as the Master taught,  
Then my living shall not be in vain