

City of Mishawaka State of the City Address

Department Reports for 2011



THE MAYOR'S OFFICE

David A. Wood, Mayor



Mayor David A. Wood

It is truly an honor each and every day of the year to continue to serve the close to 50,000 citizens that call Mishawaka home. Managing over 500 employees and millions of dollars of tax payer money isn't easy, but in performing this work our Mission Statement continues to be at the heart of everything that we do. Indeed, our mission is what inspires every decision made in this office. Our mission statement bears repeating:

“Working together to build the “best Hometown in America” by delivering exceptional services, promoting safe and clean neighborhoods, elevating the quality of life and inspiring pride in our community.”

Mishawaka's government is open, friendly, personal and accessible to all of our citizens. We never lose sight that the Mayor's office, City Hall, the Council Chambers and all of our facilities are yours, the citizens of Mishawaka. That too, is the way we operate the Mayor's office. We are here to help you by answering your questions, listening to your concerns and suggestions and directing you to the right department to make sure that you receive the services that you – our citizens need. After all, it is the *Mishawaka way of doing business*.

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and accessible...***

In 2011 we had some memorable events, activities, and ongoing efforts initiated by this office worthy of mention in this annual report. Some of the more significant ones are as follows:

Faith Based Roundtable

The Mayor's office hosted pastors of the faith-based community and participated in roundtable discussions to further build the relationships and partnerships needed to serve the needs of the Mishawaka community. As a result of those discussions, many local churches have expanded their community outreach programs in Mishawaka schools. Specifically, a program was developed that has enriched the lives and furthered the education of many children through donations of much needed school supplies. The group sponsored families in need during the Christmas season and is the backbone of the newly formed non-profit, "Help with Love". This program assists many local families by providing basic, essential services that are not immediately available through other non-profits and service providers.

Mishawaka is blessed with a rich community of faith-based organizations. The City and the citizens of Mishawaka are grateful to our faith-based community leaders, pastors and

church members for their longstanding dedication to making the Mishawaka community better while making sure that no one is left behind. As Mayor, working to help organize and support efforts such as this continues to be some of my most meaningful work. I will continue my involvement in the months and years to come.

Martin Luther King Drum Major Award for Community Service

One of the better aspects of the Mayor's job is recognizing our citizens for doing great things. The Drum Major Award, sponsored by the Martin Luther King Foundation, City of Mishawaka, City of South Bend and the Chamber of Commerce is given to six people each year from Michiana who are recognized for their dedication to community service. The Drum Major Award was inspired by Dr. King's speech at Ebenezer Baptist Church on February 4th, 1968.

The City of Mishawaka is proud to recognize three winners of the Drum Major Award from 2011. I am grateful for their dedication and personal commitment to community services and their love and respect for humanity.

Jose Alvarez

A native of Colombia, Jose has been the Diversity Office at Saint Joseph Regional Medical Center for the past 5 years. Alvarez endeavors to do everything possible to assist his clients in realizing their dreams. His diversity initiatives strive for commitment, accountability, communication, community partnerships, workforce development and supplier diversity, and initiatives to provide the best quality of care to all patients of SJRMC. You will often see Jose out and about in the community making sure that he contributes to the brainstorming and organizing of diversity and inclusion and awareness events. He is firmly convinced that our community will be stronger the more we all work to increase opportunities for everyone. Jose has served on many community boards and committees.

Bettye Green

Bettye, an associate of Saint Joseph Regional Medical Center for over 34 years, is a registered nurse in the Community Outreach/Partnership Department. While dedication to her patients is top priority, Bettye's tenacious passion and work in educating community residents about the importance of good health practices means much more to her than just a form of employment. As a breast cancer survivor herself, one of her many passions is educating minority women about breast cancer risks and prevention. Bettye was appointed to three committees in the President's National Action Plan Against Breast Cancer. She has continuously fought to eradicate breast cancer and to keep Black Women at the table. She is an educator, trainer, committee member for many groups and is constantly serving her community by promoting healthy living to those most at risk.

Dennis Lee

When Dennis started as a volunteer at St. Joseph Regional Medical Center he was looking for a meaningful way to impact his community. Dennis already had a full time job at Sam's Club, but wanted to do more for those around him. Dennis' volunteer roll as

Ambassador Courier at SJRMC aptly suits his demeanor. Dennis' work involves many diverse activities including escorting guests to patient's rooms, making deliveries, greeting guests at the Information Desk and virtually anything else he is asked to do. At the new hospital Dennis volunteered to be a tour guide and orient associates with the new hospital. Whatever task Dennis does he has a smile on his face and performs it with the most sincere thoughtfulness for patients, guests and associates. For his outstanding work, Dennis was awarded \$1,000 by the Wal-Mart Foundation which he donated to the Sister Maura Brannick Health Center. Dennis is truly a blessing to all of those he comes in contact with.

Welcome Home Vietnam Veteran's Day

It has been overdue, and I had the honor and privilege of meeting with veterans of the Marine Corps League, Vietnam Veterans of America, Disabled American Veterans and members of the VFW Post 1167 on Wednesday, March 30th to proclaim "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day. A resolution was passed by the United States Senate designating March 30th as "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day". The City Of Mishawaka is proud to honor these veterans who bravely served our country and deserve our recognition and gratitude. Mishawaka is, so far, the only city in the State of Indiana that has designated this day for their Vietnam Veterans.

Mishawaka Optimist Club Youth Appreciation Breakfast

Every year, the Mishawaka Optimist Club honors the young men and women of our community who display positive self-esteem, a happy countenance, healthy relationships, personal strength and uplifting attitudes towards other. In 2011 it was my privilege to announce the winners of the 2011 Optimist Club Award. They are:

First Baptist Christian School: Adam Kliing and Lindsey Henderson

Marian High School: Sean Swanson and Mary Kate Kibbe

Penn High School: Michael Schragger and Kristen Cornish

Mishawaka High School: Alex Trippel and Cassie Bohannon

Mayor's Youth Initiative

The Mayor's Office has continued to reach out and engage the youth of our community by continuing great classroom programs and being involved in the schools. Indeed, Mishawaka's future is the youth of today. We have a great responsibility to build a community that our youth can be proud of and I actively seek out every opportunity to engage our youth and get input and feedback on the type of community that they wish to live in. In fact, engaging the youth of Mishawaka continues to be one of the highest priorities of my administration.

Several youth outreach initiatives include:

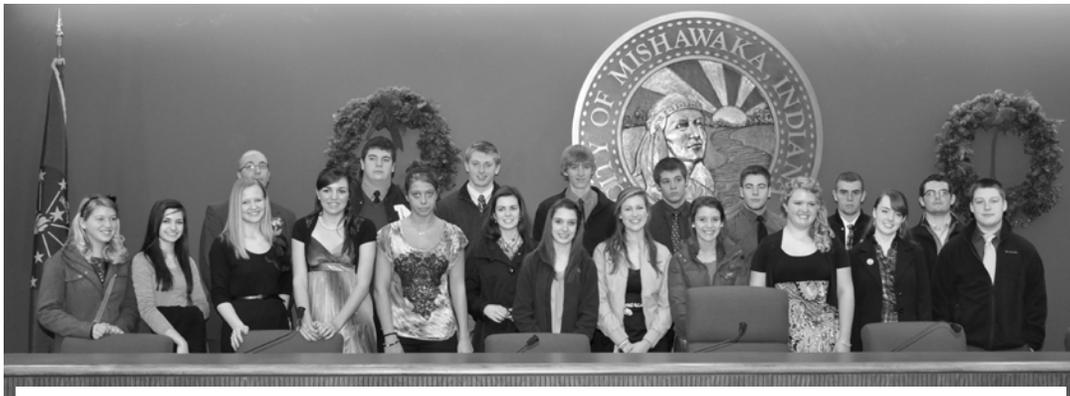
- Lectures on Local Government, Mishawaka High School Government Class
- Reading in classrooms, grades Pre-school through 6th grade
- The Mishawaka History for 3rd grade students
- The Indiana History for 4th grade students
- DARE for 5th and 8th grade students
- The “If I Were Mayor” essay contest for 6th grade students in association with the Indiana Association of Cities and Towns
- Annual Town Hall Meeting at John Young Middle School
- Appearing at Career Day at Mishawaka High School
- Participating in Fire Safety Month and the “Fire Safety Obstacle Course”
- Member of the Beyond the Cave Committee to help students with financial aid and college preparation
- Mayor’s Youth Advisory Council

Mayor’s Youth Advisory Council

The motto of the Mayor’s Youth Advisory Council is “Youth of Today.....Leaders for Tomorrow”. Their self created mission statement is as follows:

- “The Mayor’s Youth Advisory Council shall provide a voice for the young adults of our community allowing the opportunity to address issues and concerns that affect them directly and offering solutions to local government officials through participation and community involvement.”

In October, several local students and I began a new year of the Mayor’s Youth Council. The 2011-12 year marks the 8th year of the program and the largest Youth Council to date



The 2012 Mayor’s Youth Council

with over 25 teens participating. The Mayor’s Youth Council held their election in November and selected their 2011-12 officers: President, Mitchell Hixenbaugh; Vice-President, Sam Schrader; Treasurer, Vince Rovotto; and Secretary, Gina Spalding.

My goals for this program are three-fold. First, I want the program to be a valuable educational experience for the members where they can learn about their city, its local government and the services that it provides. Secondly, I believe it is vital to get input from these young citizens about the community in which they would like to work, raise their families and retire. Finally, the Council is expected to perform community service projects of their own creation, planning and organization.

While learning about the operations of our City is important, I am particularly proud of the community service that our Youth Council has already provided in their short term in office. Indeed, this fine group of students has already left a big impact on their City and it is in this area that I see their passion to improve their community shine through.

September 11th Remembrance Ceremony



September 11 Candlelight Memorial

September 11, 2011 marked the 10th anniversary of the terrorist attacks that shook our nation and changed the world. This September 11th, several hundred members of our community came together for beautiful candlelight Remembrance Ceremony at Robert C. Beutter Park. While those tragic events happened a decade ago, it is hard to imagine a day going by where each and every one of us have not somehow been affected.

From September 1st through the 14th, a very special Memorial was on display at Robert C. Beutter Park honoring fire fighters lost in the World Trade Center attacks in New York City. The Memorial included 50 customized markers, each identified with the name, rank, and unit of one of the 343 fallen fire fighters lost in the World Trade Center attacks. Former Mishawaka Fire Department Chief, Gene Goddard, was instrumental in bringing this special exhibit to our City.

I would like to especially thank Father Barry England, Reverend Larry Whitehead, Congressman Joe Donnelly, former Mishawaka Fire Chief Gene Goddard, the Mishawaka High School Band, the Mishawaka Police and Fire Departments and their Honor Guards, Debbie Ladayga Block, the Mishawaka Common Council, my family and all of the men and women of the Armed Forces and citizens who participated in and attended to make this ceremony an event to honor and remember the heroes and people who lost their lives on that tragic day.

Winterfest in our Hometown

The Mishawaka Business Association, the Mayor's Office, the Mishawaka Parks Department and the Mayors Youth Advisory Council created another "Holiday to Remember" for the children of Mishawaka. The December 2nd arrival of Santa and Mayor Wood on the City's newest fire truck, decorated by Stacy Vervynct and Marsha McClure, was a sight to see on a cold winter's night!



The largest Christmas tree ever to adorn Robert C. Beutter Park was donated by the Delma Minglin family and cut from the front yard of their home on the corner of Broadway and Liberty. The tree was decorated with thousands of lights and ornaments made by the school children in the City Of Mishawaka. Hallie, granddaughter of Delma, had the honor of "flipping the switch" to light the tree.

Christmas Carols were sung, hot chocolate and Christmas cookies donated by Martin's Supermarkets were served, and the children visited with Santa and the Mayor. The second day of the event planned for Saturday evening (at the ice rink), had to be canceled due to the unusually mild winter weather, and was postponed until Saturday, December 10th. We look forward to continuing this well attended event in 2012!