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Mayor McGraw's State of the City speech

Complete text of Round Rock Mayor's speech

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Mayor Alan McGraw gave his first State of the City speech at an invitation only ceremony held at the Round Rock Higher Education Center on Thursday, Feb. 26. His daughter, Paige, a sophomore in high school, introduced her father to the crowd. Below is the text of his speech.

Mayor Alan McGraw 's "State of the City" Speech February 26, 2009

Let me warn you upfront. For those of you that have been getting used to my short speeches, this is not one of them. I figured since you paid \$10, you at least need to get your moneys' worth. I will say that it will go a lot faster if you won't jump up and clap every time I say something brilliant.

A few days ago, I was speaking to a group of realtors. They told me they didn't want to hear any bad news. So I agreed, and instead I gave them the "realistic" news. So if you hear anything today that sounds bad or troubling, just think of it as realistic instead.

In considering the State of the City, I'll be honest with you. I was having a difficult time finding a phrase to accurately describe the State of the City. In years past, we would have described it as "booming," or maybe "robust." I would be disingenuous to make such a claim today.

I thought about saying the state of the city is "not great, but it's a heckuva lot better than everywhere else." And while true, it just doesn't sound very professional.

So the more I thought about it, the more I realized that the answer was staring me in the face. And it's staring you in the face today, too. Each of you has been given a small token for your attendance today – and for your \$10 bucks. It's either a money clip or a bookmark, depending on your employment status.

But on that card is a definition from Andy Groves, former CEO of Intel. At first I was just using this as a nice little quote. But then I realized that this really is the state of where we are. He says:

"A strategic inflection point is a time in the life of a business when its fundamentals are about to change. That change can mean an opportunity to rise to new heights. But it may just as likely signal the beginning of the end."

Let me read that one more time: "A strategic inflection point is a time in the life of a business when its fundamentals are about to change. That change can mean an opportunity to rise to new heights. But it may just as likely signal the beginning of the end."

Although he speaks of businesses, it's an idea that is obviously not unique to businesses. It applies to governments, churches, civic groups. You name it.

Before we talk about Round Rock specifically, let me give you two examples. You decide for yourself how these inflection points are being handled.

The first is Austin. For years, Austin prospered under the engine of the semi-conductor industry. Perhaps it would be fair to say that the semi-conductor industry is now on the decline. Not because of anything Austin did, but because the fundamentals of that industry have changed.

Instead of sitting back and watching the fall, leaders like Pike Powers are standing up and saying "Hold on. We're in a slide. We've got to change focus." And as a result, you see a new collaboration under way to capitalize on battery and solar and other green technology.

The second example is the federal government. I believe we've reached a point in this country where fundamental change is necessary. So what do they do? Nationalize banks. Healthcare. Housing. Auto industry. Send a message that we're not going to let you fail. Reward bad behavior. Punish responsible behavior.

I'm not saying something shouldn't be done. I'm just asking, are the changes the federal government is implementing really going to take us to new heights, or are they digging an ever deeper hole? I know what Paige would say.



I heard an interesting quote on the radio the other afternoon. I didn't catch who said it. But the quote was "capitalism without bankruptcy, is like heaven without hell." I guess the question we should ask ourselves is what message we're sending to future generations about being responsible for your actions.

So as we talk about Round Rock today, be thinking about those two examples, and where we want to go. Which one sounds like a better model to follow.

For a realistic view of Round Rock, we must begin with a realistic view of the Nation.

- The number of Americans filing for unemployment benefits is at its highest level in a quarter of a century.
- Consumer confidence across the nation is weak.
- Industrial production and housing starts have continued to decline steeply, as consumers and businesses cut back on spending.
- Major companies continue to announce downsizing plans.
- And it's not just the nation. Global demand appears to be slowing significantly. A recent study by the Round Rock Chamber of Commerce showed that local businesses get 38 percent of their revenue from international sales. Only 5 percent comes from local sales. So we're kidding ourselves if we don't think the shrinking global economy affects us.

These are no doubt leaner times. Many of the luxuries my family enjoyed in the recent past are now just memories. What we once took for granted has now moved up the ladder and appear to be luxuries.

You've heard the arguments that slowing consumer spending isn't necessarily a bad thing. Many would say that the industrialized world has been guilty of being indulgent and gluttonous in our consumption.

I've had some thought provoking discussions with the Mayor Pro-Tem about that very issue. He points out, quite correctly I think, that the real culprit is gluttony and indulgence on credit. So is it a bad thing that we are learning to live with less, and make the things we have last longer?

A few weeks ago I hosted a community prayer breakfast. Almost 200 people from all denominations showed up for the early morning event. Of all the things I've been involved with since becoming mayor, that has by far been the most well-received. Even more so than the short speeches.

The overwhelming comment I receive is that in this unstable time, it really causes us to focus on what's important. And personally, I can't say that's all bad.

But even though the rest of the nation is indeed suffering, I am proud to be in Round Rock, where things are not nearly as unpleasant. So let's look back at how Round Rock fared in 2008. There is plenty to be thankful for. Consider this partial list:

- In January, we broke ground on \$20 M in sports complex improvements to Old Settlers Park
- In February, Seton Medical Center-Williamson opened its doors, bringing Round Rock its third regional hospital.
- In May, our Police Department moved into a state-of-the-art headquarters on North Mays Street, a \$21.8 M investment in public safety.
- Also in May, Round Rock voters approved joining the Austin Community College taxing district, setting the stage for construction of a new campus in Round Rock
- In August, Texas State University broke ground on its nursing school, adding to its existing Round Rock campus
- In September, the City began the comprehensive planning effort to revitalize downtown
- In November, Texas A&M Health Science Center broke ground on its medical school, which will provide training to future doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals
- We also saw good news on business fronts. Teco-Westinghouse ramped up its assembly of wind turbines – the only such facility in Texas. Round Rock finally got its class A office space with the opening of Frontera Vista. We also welcomed the Art Institute of Austin and Reliant Rehabilitation Hospital.

Some other interesting points from a very successful 2008:

- We planted 818 trees and completed the Greater Lake Creek Trail project.
- We opened our first dog park...
- We received the award of "Excellence in Financial Reporting" for the 21st Consecutive Year
- We strengthened the City's ISO fire rating, which translates into lower insurance rates for citizens
- Our Convention and Visitors Bureau was responsible for \$10.6 million in economic impact from events it sponsored.
- We scored extremely high ratings from our citizens in our biennial customer service survey – again. In fact, 90 percent said the city is headed in the right direction.

And it's not like these successes have gone unnoticed. We received recognition on a regular basis from a number of publications. It seemed like every week there was something new. We've been ranked:

- One of America's Best Places to Live
- One of the Best Cities for Relocating Families
- Among 100 Best Communities for Young People
- No. 1 place to relocate or expand a business (Austin-Round Rock MSA)
- No. 7 best housing market in nation (Austin-Round Rock MSA)
- Best place to ride out the recession (Austin-Round Rock MSA)
- And last but certainly not least, we continually rank as one of America's safest cities

But as good as this all is, I told you that I would give a realistic picture of where we are. And that means mentioning the closing of Cypress Semiconductor with its 245 jobs, and Accrettech, with its 60 or so jobs. And that class A office space we worked so hard for still sits vacant.

Hopefully, we can turn those difficult situations into opportunities. We're working hard to have the Cypress building utilized for what it's capable of, rather than something less productive.

Let's take a look at the city's present financial situation. Is the City in a strong financial position? The answer is definitely "Yes." Are we being cautious, conservative and thoughtful about spending decisions? Again, the answer is "Yes."

Consider this:

- We have some of the lowest property tax and utility rates in the area
- We have excellent cash reserves, and are well-positioned to handle challenging economic times
- Our pay-as-you-go program has saved taxpayers about 10 cents on the tax rate, by allowing us to borrow less than we otherwise would
- But when we do need to borrow, I'm proud to announce that just this month, our bond rating was upgraded to AA+ with a "stable outlook." I think that says a lot, especially in this economy.

As you know, the City has two predominate sources of revenue for its general fund: sales taxes and property taxes. Our utility fund is a self-supporting enterprise fund.

We are one of the most sales tax dependent cities in the state, with nearly 60 percent of our general fund revenue coming from sales tax. Unfortunately, sales tax is also one of the most volatile sources of revenue. And, not unexpectedly, our sales tax collections for the current year have seen decreases when compared to same period the year prior.

Our sales tax results from the Christmas season were down 9.5 percent. Dell was down 5.2 percent while the rest of the City was down 11.8 percent.

The good news is that we are still making our current budget projections. For the current year, the Council budgeted conservatively in anticipation of a continued softening of the economy. At the wise and persistent urging of Councilmember Rhode, we budgeted even less revenue than where we started. It made budgeting a bit tougher, but was the right thing to do, as we now see.

For a couple of years now, our sales tax revenues from Dell have been declining. This is not because of a lack of Dell's performance, but because of a change in their business model that results in less sales tax being routed to Round Rock.

Instead of hoping for the best, the Council has been forced to acknowledge a fundamental shift has been occurring in our revenue model. Our dependence on sales tax will likely be less and less over time. Unfortunately, that means increased pressure on the property tax.

But the silver lining is that our reliance on Dell has steadily decreased. Following an aggressive attempt to lure more destination retail to town, and the passage of our Dell financial management policy, Dell sales tax now makes up only 38 percent of all sales tax. Just a few years ago, they accounted for well over 50 percent of all sales tax collected.

Property tax appraisals are another interesting subject. Going forward, the Chief appraiser indicated that property values are expected to decline over the next few years.

The current assessed value for all property in Round Rock is \$8.1 Billion. He is guesstimating that amount will decline to \$7.8 billion for the upcoming year, and then to \$7.7 billion the year after. To put that in perspective, we've been adding about a billion dollars a year in value the last couple of years.

So what does all this mean for next year's budget. As of today, we are projecting a \$3 million shortfall between revenues and expenses.

What is the City doing to close that gap? Our goal at this point is to maintain basic service levels and avoid layoffs. City departments are carefully reviewing all purchases to be sure they are absolutely necessary. All City employees, from the top to the bottom, are looking for ways to contain or reduce expenses. The shortfall is forcing us to take a hard look at materials and equipment purchasing, employee raises, and other items in the budget.

In making those decisions, we've got to prioritize. A few years ago when we did our 10-Year Plan, our citizens indicated strong preferences for public safety and transportation. These will remain priorities for the City of Round Rock.

The City is also undergoing an extensive review of our business processes in order become more efficient and effective at providing high-value services to the public. Where can we streamline or reduce duplication? The economic climate is requiring us all to be creative in identifying ways to cut costs.

While focusing on expenses is important, we also can't just roll up in a corner and wait for it to pass. We are still a growing community, even if the rate is slowed. Some capital projects must move forward. Roads must still be built. Bonds have been sold for the west side recreation center – now known as the Legacy Fieldhouse – and the citizens have been patient waiting on its arrival.

So for the remainder of the budget year, I think it would be fair to say that we are moving forward with "guarded optimism."

And that brings me back to where we began today. Changes are occurring in our community, not because of something we did wrong, but because of a shift in the fundamentals of certain industries and consumer behavior.

Realizing that we are at an inflection point – at the crossroads, if you will – which path do we follow? How will Round Rock

respond? Will this signal the beginning of the end?

Or do we follow the lead of people like Pike Powers and Tom Kowalski and Russ Peterman and embrace our changing climate as an opportunity to rise to new heights and prosper?

Let me read an excerpt from "US Economic History Since 1945" by Michael French:

"Under the changing conditions of the 1970s, existing technologies were not always appropriate for the changing patterns of demand and costs, while new investments were fraught with greater uncertainty than usual. American managers were unprepared for more challenging times. Aaronson (Susan Ariel Aaronson, an author) argued that U.S. business schools... provided little or no training or encouragement to entrepreneurship. Instead, they trained managers to fit particular careers or disciplines."

Personally I don't want us to be the community who is unprepared. I don't want Paige, or Jeffrey Maxwell, or little Megan Boles, to ask me 20 years from now why we messed things up so bad.

Looking back at our own history, where would we have been if our city leaders hadn't been prepared for something different the day Dell showed up on our doorstep? Where would we be if we had suffered from what I now call, "roundabout syndrome."

For those of you unfamiliar with that disease, it was discovered last week at our retreat. Will Hampton was making a presentation on the downtown master plan. The initial plan includes some traffic roundabouts - those circle intersections you see in Europe.

Well as soon as that was mentioned, every one of us lost focus. We failed to see a lot of the good in the plan because we were so wrapped up in something that was foreign to us.

Now I have no idea whether roundabouts are a good thing or a bad thing. Statistically, they appear successful. Whether they would work here I don't know. But the point is that moving forward in an ever changing climate, we need to have an open mind when it comes to things that seem foreign to us.

We may eventually decide against something for good reason. But let's not suffer from roundabout syndrome where we don't even give ideas the chance to make their case.

With the questions of Round Rock's future in mind, let me propose a path to follow. We are undergoing a deliberate process to map out our goals and objectives in a new Strategic Plan - or guiding vision - for the City. This is not a plan of just council or staff, but a plan that had a tremendous amount of input from the citizens. As we poured through our Strategic goals, four key themes emerged:

- Economic Progress
- Places & Spaces
- Public Health & Safety, and
- High Value Government

Let's briefly highlight each of these Strategic areas and what they mean:

The first, and perhaps most important given our current condition, is Economic Progress. Economic Progress means we want to continue to diversify our economy and see quality investment, development and redevelopment in Round Rock. A big emphasis here is on attracting and retaining talent, or human capital.

Remember the discussion of Austin earlier with the semiconductor industry. Their fundamentals are changing, so they are now out looking for the next "big thing."

Round Rock is in a similar position. As I discussed, our reliance on Dell is softening. Cypress has closed its doors. Do we look for something new, or just go with the flow?

I say we recognize the change and add something new. Not that we're turning our back on what we already have. Far from it. We've had a great partnership with Dell, and look forward to a long relationship into the future. Just like Austin looks forward to benefiting from the semi-conductor industry. But it would be irresponsible not to diversify.

We've already got a great foundation with Austin Community College, Texas State University, Texas A&M Health Science Center, Round Rock Medical Center, Seton, Scott & White, Reliant. And what about Teco-Westinghouse with their wind generation? How do we capitalize on this foundation of education and healthcare and bio-science?

I think the first step is to realize what all these institutions have in common. Every one of them is in the business of advancing the ball. Of creating something new and better. Whether its better ways of curing illness, or more efficient ways of generating power. We've got to work to be the "City of Choice" for the talent that will shape the future. We need to be the city of choice for entrepreneurs, business leaders, researchers, educators and members of the various creative professions who are always pushing the next level of innovation.

Another factor is to recognize and continue to utilize the benefits of collaboration. Several years ago, through the leadership of citizens and then Mayor Maxwell, the city and chamber partnered in an effort to better serve the economic development needs of Round Rock. That partnership has been very successful, and should continue for years to come.

I would like to take a moment to introduce you all to our new Chamber of Commerce President Tom Manskey. We've already begun to develop a close relationship with him and look forward to strengthening our efforts.

Another collaborative project I have been working on in conjunction with our higher education institutions and our school district is

to develop what we're calling the "Round Rock Master Plan for Advancing Higher Education in Round Rock." We've been bringing all the parties to the table to talk about plans and ideas for the future. The end result of this project will be stronger partnerships and collaboration, and a more efficient, effective education system. We'll be able to show the Legislature that we're not duplicating programs and demonstrate the level of collaboration and "spirit" we have in Round Rock.

Diana, thank you for being here, and we look forward to working with you as we move higher education opportunities to the next level.

There are other regional initiatives based on the philosophy that Education = Economics. Many of you have heard of the E3 Alliance spearheaded by Executive Director Susan Dawson. Councilmember Carlos Salinas has been very active in this effort as well. These educational initiatives are essential to maintain a highly educated work force.

And if you don't believe it, just ask San Marcos. They are offering professors \$5,000 to live in San Marcos. Why? Because their percentage of educated citizens is so low that they're having trouble attracting new businesses.

We've also got to address our ability as a city to offer incentives. Unfortunately, incentives are a way of life in today's economic times. I don't like it. But it ignores the reality we live in.

Round Rock is actually fairly limited in what we can offer. So we've got to be creative. For example, we are currently surveying available land to ensure we have "green fields" available and utilities ready so that when a California company says 'we can't take it anymore, we've researched Round Rock, we're impressed with your talented workforce and we're ready to relocate,' then we can say 'yes, we're ready for you.'

And we also must continue to support our existing businesses. Your success and growth generate jobs and reinvestment in the community. Our existing businesses are truly the financial backbone of our community. And I don't know of a better advocate for them than Charley Ayers.

I mentioned earlier the decline in sales tax. Our goal has been to import sales tax into the region by focusing on destination retailers like IKEA and the Premium Outlets. But another important source of that imported sales tax is tourism.

The Sports Capital of Texas campaign draws thousands of families and amateur athletes who spend money in our restaurants and stores, adding sales tax revenue that supports the City's general fund. Ultimately, this means more money to pay for important city services like parks, libraries and public safety. This is one reason we invested \$18.2 M into the Old Settlers Park improvements. It's also why we are looking at spending hotel/motel tax to build a Special Events Center. With Nancy Yawn's contagious energy, we want to take the Sports Capital of Texas campaign to another level in 2009 and 2010. Our second strategic "theme area" will hit on more tangible things throughout our City. We call it "Places & Spaces". The emphasis here is on quality and pertains to our transportation, parks, arts and culture, our neighborhoods and the overall character and environment of the community.

We discussed the importance of this at the economic summit we held last year. Economic vitality is important. But as the old saying goes, "He is very poor. He only has money."

There must be more to our lives, and our community, than the pursuit of the next dollar. We must also focus on the quality of the life that we provide for our citizens. It is also critical to attract that talent that is so important to our continued success.

In previous cultures, people migrated to good soil and waterways. Communities prospered. People still migrate, but not for the same reasons. Instead of looking for the quality of the soil, they look for the quality of the life. Access to schools. A wide range of recreation and entertainment opportunities. Culture.

And a good transportation system. Transportation will always be a priority. We've got to support the development of major density centers, and continue to develop funding mechanisms for mobility and connectivity options. We've got to keep transportation up to speed with everything else going on in the City.

As with everything, we have limited resources that must be prioritized. But we will improve AW Grimes near our university corridor. There are other transportation proposals out there. Once they are studied, this Council will face tough decisions on rail, public transportation and other regional efforts.

I would be remiss if I did not thank Mayor Pro-Tem Joe Clifford for representing us on CAMPO. Joe, you have no idea how happy I am that you enjoy all those long CAMPO meetings.

In addition to our transportation, we're examining how our City looks. This Goal is to improve aesthetics, development & redevelopment quality and sustainability of the City, while trying to reach the proper balance with economic considerations.

Redevelopment will be increasingly important as the city ages. Do we just let older developments deteriorate, or do we as a city offer incentives to revitalize those areas? As an incentive to cover the expense of redevelopment, do we allow developers to share in the added tax revenue that their risk generates. My answer is absolutely. We can't simply focus on new development as the city core continues to age.

One major project is our Downtown Redevelopment Plan. We have a very quaint downtown with a small-town feel but it's not the place, or the destination, that it could be. We have been working extensively to gather ideas from residents, businesses and property owners about how to expand and vitalize downtown. The concepts they developed are exciting and visionary. The question we must ask ourselves is whether we take the easy route and do nothing, or whether we take some chances and be bold in our efforts.

We're told that arts and culture is important to those creative professionals that we'd like to recruit. But it's also important to those citizens already living here, as evidenced by the response received to the community's effort to organize. I'm proud to say that there is a new initiative to promote art, theater and music led by the newly formed Round Rock Area Arts Council. Their kick-off event is tomorrow evening in this very building.

This Council is led by Cathy Kincaid with Community Impact and Councilmember Kris Whitfield. Dale Ricklefs, our Library Director and Cindy Demers also serve on the Board of Directors for this nonprofit organization. Ladies, thank you for your service.

I mentioned revitalization of commercial centers. But what about neighborhoods? We must always remember the value of our neighborhoods, the fabric of the community.

Every few months, presidents of our homeowners and neighborhood associations meet to share their neighborhoods' challenges and successes. There is one success story I would like to highlight today. If you don't know him yet, you soon will.

Will Williams, please stand up. I'm not sure if it's his charisma or his persistence that makes him so successful, but as president, Will has transformed the Kensington neighborhood and some other neighboring subdivisions. He works at it every day trying to improve the park in their community and working with neighbors to improve relations with each other. Thank you, Will, for your leadership and for taking other neighborhoods under your wing as well.

The third area of focus is Public Health & Safety. This really is our primary mission as a City. If we're not keeping our citizens safe, we have failed. While we continue to rank among the safest cities in the nation, our work here is never done.

While we normally think of police and fire when we talk safety, there is more to it than that. At the recent Council retreat, our Council ranked dependable, safe water at the top of the priority list. As long as we're in Central Texas, water management will be an ongoing challenge.

We formed the Brushy Creek Regional Utility Authority in 2007 to ensure an adequate water supply through our ultimate build-out. This is a regional partnership with Cedar Park and Leander. For the past year and half, Councilmember Scott Rhode has served us well as president of the board for the BCRUA. That may have felt like a thankless job at times, but really, Scott, we do thank you for your work and leadership as president.

And on a personal note, most of you know that Scott will not be seeking another term on council this spring. Scott, I just want you to know how much we appreciate your service to your community. You have been an invaluable member of this council, and you will be sorely missed.

Councilmember George White will be taking over as our representative on the BCRUA and I thank him in advance for his commitment to this important endeavor. And thank you, George, for your leadership on water conservation issues.

Water is a precious resource. As a result, water conservation is critical. We, as a Council, agreed that we need to boost awareness about ways people can reduce water usage. We recently hired a Water Conservation Specialist to head up the education and public awareness components.

In our most recent biennial customer service survey, 88 percent of residents who responded said they feel safe walking alone in their neighborhood at night. You don't find that everywhere you go. We have top-of-the-line police officers and firefighters who put their life on the line to keep Round Rock safe. Our commitment is to maintain this as a top priority.

Speaking of safety, we also have a very special guest with us here today. And her mission is also to protect us. As many of you know, Round Rock, in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce and a long list of businesses, organizations and volunteers, have "adopted" about 800 soldiers from the 404th Aviation Support Battalion out of Fort Hood. We have provided support in the form of hundreds of care packages mailed to Iraq – with everything from Frisbees to home-made cookies to letters from Berkman Elementary students, to even archery equipment and javelina hog targets.

Joining us today is Captain Megan Burke. Megan, please stand. Let's honor her.

Two Councilmembers here have really put in a lot of hours and coordination to make this partnership such a success – thank you Councilmember Rufus Honeycutt and Councilmember Kris Whitfield. Your efforts have not gone unnoticed.

Finally, for all of these things to work, the city government must perform efficiently and effectively. We call this High Value Government, and it's the final Strategic Initiative I'm going to discuss today.

This concept is an important one. It means that you as citizens trust in your City and feel you receive prompt customer service, and that the City organization is run effectively. This is also very much about recruiting and keeping good employees.

Many of you know Jim Nuse, our City Manager. He is here with David Kautz, our Assistant City Manager and CFO, and Cindy Demers, our new Assistant City Manager. They work hard to keep this City running smoothly and efficiently, and truly are public servants.

Our Goal is to maintain and enhance public confidence, satisfaction and trust in City Government. As an example, we are taking a close look at our development process and how we can better align key departments to improve communication and efficiency. Some of you may have received my e-mails over the last few weeks asking you to participate in a joint city/chamber survey on the development process. Our consultant has received 230 responses and will begin analyzing that data. We pledge to make improvements accordingly.

A major priority for the City is to continue and enhance sound business and financial practices and tools. This goal will be achieved

by developing a "Return on Investment" model to test all of our strategic initiatives, maintaining our current practices that work, and developing additional tools that improve the effectiveness and efficiency of city practices and operations.

Before I close I would like to thank Dr. Edna Rehbein, Dawn Hernandez and her staff for hosting us today at this beautiful facility.

I must also thank my assistant, and one of the hardest working people I know, Jill Goodman. Jill was really the one responsible for this program today.

I would also like to thank Paige's English teacher for letting her out of school to come speak with us today.

And finally, and perhaps most important, I must thank my wife, Kathy, for supporting me and adjusting the best she can to my new "Mayor's schedule." There's probably only one other person in the room (Nyle) who knows what a real sacrifice this is for the family. Thank you for always being there, even if I'm not.

In closing, it is an honor to be your mayor during this challenging, but exciting time.

If we really are at an inflection point, and I think we are, then I have all the confidence in the world that this community will rise to the challenge. It has proven itself over and over again.

To do that, we must seek to ensure that residents, visitors and businesses experience a welcoming community, a safe community, a City that retains the key elements of a small town, a community of both pride in the past and supportive of future opportunity, a community where diverse cultures, social groups, and ethnic groups are welcomed and engaged in civic life, and a city with a "game-on" attitude and spirit.

Then we can be assured that Paige, and all those she represents, will be pleased with the decisions we made, and the legacy we left them. I hope you take your "Inflection Point" bookmark/money clip, as a constant reminder of your role in keeping Round Rock great.

Thank you.