



Partners in Progress

Mayor Lioneld Jordan

**State of the City
January 20, 2009**

I am privileged to serve as Mayor of our wonderful city, and I am humbled by the responsibility that the people have entrusted to me. I am honored to be your servant, and I will work every day to make our community better for every citizen. That is my solemn pledge to you.

Thanks to the vision of Mayor Dan Coody, the dedicated effort of our fine Aldermen, the hard work of our outstanding city employees, and the contributions of many individual residents who share our civic concerns, I am pleased to report to the City Council and to my fellow citizens that the State of our City is sound.

We begin the year with a balanced city budget, solid progress on improving our infrastructure, dedicated police officers and fire fighters who assure our safety, and a commitment to institutional and individual partnerships to nurture and sustain the things we love about this great community.

We also begin the year facing many new challenges and we must be prepared to face those together with resolve. We are not immune from the problems of a faltering national economy, and we must anticipate and be prepared for the consequences of any revenue shortfall. We must be responsible stewards of our tax dollars, and we must maintain essential city services for our citizens. Toward that end, I have already begun to identify potential cost savings and have implemented a more effective management structure to improve efficiency and control costs. Our staff already has offered many good solutions, and we will institute an ongoing, frequent, consistent review of cost/benefit analysis of operations and projects to assure the services and quality of life that our citizens expect and deserve.

I believe in leadership by example, and I have proposed to cut the mayor's salary and roll it back to last year's level. I have signed an affidavit that I will not avail myself of the special lifetime retirement plan funded from general revenues. I have asked to return the

\$5,000 annual car allowance formerly paid to the mayor and instead, to use a vehicle from the city fleet when necessary to travel on city business. We have already achieved some savings in the salaries of top staff, and I will continue to look for savings in all areas of city operations. My staff and I are partners in this effort.

Even in uncertain economic times, we must be bold in our efforts to develop and implement a strategic economic development plan for our city. Not only can this lead to increased revenues without a tax increase, but more importantly, it can help assure green jobs, good jobs that pay a living wage, allowing individuals and working families to have the basic necessities and a better life. We already know that we need greater efficiency in the development approval process, a workforce trained for the jobs of the future, and better methods to accurately measure the results of our efforts. We can draw on the suggestions of recent studies and the work of my outstanding Transition Team to craft a plan that is consistent with Governor Mike Beebe's long-term strategic plan to help achieve economic improvement for our state through collaboration and cooperation.

To that end, know that I am serious, and within six weeks I will host a Community Summit on the Future of Fayetteville that will be open to every citizen and I will consider all views in forging our own economic and community development strategy. We must have the participation of the business community and advocates for working families, students and retirees, public institutions and private citizens, as partners in our shared progress. We will have, within 90 days, an economic and community development strategy that considers support for existing small businesses as well as nurturing new opportunities, and together we will work to make it a reality. A slow national economy is no excuse for inaction but an opportunity for us to move quickly and prepare now for our shared future.

My first and immediate goal will be to do everything possible to secure and support the establishment of a Satellite Campus of the University of Arkansas Medical School and a Regional Trauma Center in Fayetteville. In the longer view, we should also develop a close relationship with Arkansas Children's Hospital and seek a regional presence for that institution. This commitment clearly illustrates the close connection between economic development and our quality of life.

The University of Arkansas is a priceless resource, and it is one that helps define Fayetteville. We must be active partners in progress with the University, drawing on the vast local resources of knowledge and expertise as we grow together and achieve our mutual goals. From the development of knowledge-based industry, to community design plans, to solving social service needs, to collaborating on support for a vibrant arts culture, the possibilities are limitless. I will actively reach out and pursue this partnership.

The economic, environmental, and cultural aspects of Fayetteville's advancement are deeply interconnected. For example, any consideration of transportation policy must consider getting to work, moving goods, access to cultural resources, and environmental impact, requiring an integrated and connected system of streets, mass transit, multi-use trails, bike lanes, sidewalks, and parking, along with a revised transportation impact fee

to help growth pay for itself. We will pursue the development of each of these elements, and we will urge the Regional Mobility Authority to support a feasibility study and planning for a future light rail system.

As we consider infrastructure development, we must seize the same opportunities. My administration will go beyond the current recycling program to implementation of a comprehensive waste minimization program for our entire community. We are pursuing the idea of solar greenhouses to kill pathogens and reduce the volume of bio-solids now going to landfills. We are investigating an effective Hillside Development Ordinance and a storm water utility to better control the primary transmitter of pollutants into our water supply, and we will implement and enforce a better plan for the protection of riparian zones. We will be active partners with the “Green Infrastructure” project being developed with the help of the Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association, Arkansas Forestry Commission, the city’s Urban Forestry program, the Tree and Landscape Committee, and citizen volunteers. Our ongoing city sustainability efforts can also be expanded and shared to benefit the entire community, evidenced by our new initiative to provide and exchange CFL light bulbs in the apartments at Hillcrest Towers. In each instance, we will be partners in progress.

One major change that will be implemented is a reorganization of our Parks and Recreation Department. While much attention in the past has been focused on sports playing fields, we know that our outdoor public spaces can serve other essential functions. I will propose a new division, to be implemented without additional costs, that emphasizes our community heritage and citizen participation. Examples to be considered will be increasing the number of way-finding signs and local historical markers, planting of native trees and grasses in portions of the parks, establishing a community garden program in appropriate neighborhood parks, opening a convenient dog park, and partnering with the University, the County, the Fayetteville School District, the Washington County Historical Society, and private citizens to identify, preserve, and promote our historic buildings and other cultural resources. In conjunction with these changes, I will appoint a volunteer citizen task force on Festivals and Community Events to seek a closer partnership with the Convention and Visitors Bureau to identify needs and opportunities, and we will promote the “creative economy” in Fayetteville by developing a comprehensive Cultural Plan, in partnership with the Fayetteville Arts Council, the University, local artists, entertainment businesses, and concerned local citizens.

Finally, I want to reiterate and make clear my unwavering commitment to Open Government. This administration is dedicated to access, transparency, inclusion, timely responses, personal recognition, and exceptional customer service for our citizens, and we will be held accountable to those we serve. From Town Hall Meetings to an improved interactive city website to information on civic literacy to empowered Neighborhood Associations, we are preparing to implement real changes to better provide information to our citizens and, more importantly, to seek and consider ways for citizens to communicate their ideas, arguments, suggestions, and problems to their city government. My Transition Team has listened to your ideas and has made a series of steps we will be

implementing to assure an effective community conversation. We must be partners in the progress of our community, and every citizen must have a voice and be treated with the respect and dignity that they deserve. You have heard my ideas, I now ask our City Council to help me work toward these goals and I look forward to hearing their input and the input of citizens, especially how I can be a better mayor and do a better job for our city.

Thank you for your patience in listening as I share my plans and thank you for the opportunity to serve you and our city.