Ladies and gentlemen of the City Council and the people of Fayetteville, I am pleased to report to you that the State of our City is sound.

It was Plato who first said that necessity is the mother of invention. During the past two years we also found that it is the father of tough choices and deliberate decisions. This administration and our thoughtful City Council have been effective stewards of your money under difficult economic circumstances, and our dedicated city employees have shared the burden and continued to provide outstanding service to our citizens. Our goal for 2010 was to reduce spending, to prevent any tax increase, to avoid wholesale layoffs of workers as has happened in other cities across the nation, and to maintain excellence in programs and services that our citizens expect and deserve. During the past two years, we have increased accountability and reduced the size of city government by cutting $2.8 million from the budget and eliminating 23 positions through attrition.

It is always easy for politicians to promise new programs, but it would be neither honest nor responsible until our economy improves. In 2011, we will offer no new programs funded by general revenues. We will honor our commitment to excellence within the confines of the budget, and we will invest in our workforce to assure that we retain highly competent employees and continue to provide excellent service to our citizens.

We believe that excellence is never an accident. It is always the result of a genuine commitment to public service, intelligent planning, and focused effort. It is also a result of the engaged residents of our vibrant community, where everyone has a vision of a better life, and everyone has something to contribute. We have committed to an inclusive and collaborative process for a sustainable community and economic development plan to move Fayetteville Forward. We hold that our quality of life includes economic sustainability, environmental sustainability, and social sustainability.
Economic sustainability is essential for the future we want in Fayetteville.

Our primary goal for 2010 was to secure funding for a Green Jobs Training Center in Fayetteville and to put people back to work in the jobs of tomorrow that pay a living wage. An active partnership among the City administration, the City Council, the University of Arkansas, Northwest Arkansas Community College, the Northwest Arkansas Labor Council, and the Fayetteville Chamber of Commerce, working with Governor Beebe and the Arkansas Economic Development Commission, made that a reality.

In February, we received funding of $1.3 million for the project, and in June we opened that center here in Fayetteville. In conjunction with the Fayetteville Forward Action Group, the Advertising and Promotion Commission, and the Chamber of Commerce we launched the “Find It In Fayetteville” campaign.

An essential key to the success of any city’s economy and business prosperity is the patronage and support of the community. Shopping and buying local helps businesses prosper, create jobs, and keeps Fayetteville working. In addition, the sales tax that you pay in Fayetteville supports our community by improving streets and sidewalks, provides support for our library, helps maintain our parks and trails, provides police and fire protection, and funds other city services.

We have made major strides in growing the creative economy and supporting the working artists in our community. The development of a Gallery Guide and the highly successful First Thursday event around the Downtown Square were two projects that grew out of the Creative Economy Group of Fayetteville Forward. Local galleries, sidewalk vendors, and performing artists make this a special event for everyone in much the same way that the Farmers Market has become both a shopping experience and a social event.

A new Business Registry program will enable the City to measure the number of jobs created each year and to ensure that public safety officials have accurate information and locations for business. We have seen new industry and new jobs coming to our city. Fayetteville has welcomed 33 new businesses in retail, service, and healthcare bringing 172 new jobs. Our existing manufacturing and processing industries have shown renewed strength. Superior Industries, Marshalltown Tools, Pinnacle Foods, Ayrshire Electronics, and APEI added more than 240 jobs to our local economy last year. We have seen a number of successful green businesses such as BlueInGreen, Silicon Solar Solutions, and Arkansas Power Electronics International growing out of the GENESIS technology-oriented business incubator at the Arkansas Research and Technology Park. In September, Delta Group Electronics celebrated the groundbreaking of a new facility to be located in Fayetteville. Delta Group plans to move its current 50 employees to the new facility and anticipates adding another 75 new jobs at the location. Working closely with the Fayetteville Chamber of Commerce as our contracted Economic Development point of contact partner, our goal for 2011 is to support expansion of existing businesses and industries, recruit additional green industries, and secure a commitment for a minimum of 300 new, good-paying manufacturing jobs to our community.
Economic sustainability also includes adequate infrastructure to support smart growth. Toward that end, the City negotiated the annexation of 99 acres of prime commercial and industrial property that will be served by the future extension of Van Ashe Boulevard, linking with the thriving commercial areas in the Fulbright Economic Corridor. The City Transportation Division completed over 9 miles of asphalt overlay on 31 streets city-wide and constructed approximately 6,000 feet of new sidewalk. During the coming year, we will overlay almost 10 miles of city streets and construct more than five miles of new sidewalks throughout the city. Six miles of existing streets were upgraded with bike lanes or shared lanes through the installation of pavement markings and signs. The League of American Bicyclists named Fayetteville as a bronze Bicycle Friendly Community, only the second city in the state to achieve that status.

After many years of inaction, the City developed and implemented the Entertainment District Parking Plan to secure a revenue stream for the construction of a future parking deck to accommodate growth of Dickson Street business and the planned expansion of the Walton Arts Center and its programs. Working with Ozark Regional Transit, we have added a Dickson Street shuttle for parking patrons, and we will soon introduce a pay-by-cell-phone option to improve the process. In addition, a complete renovation of Block Avenue from Center to Dickson was completed with a new water line, curb and gutter, bio-swales, new sidewalks, street lights, trees, 4,000 square feet of planting beds, increased parking, and street overlay. These joint improvements should result in many years of reduced maintenance of this roadway. The Block Avenue improvements support local businesses and provide residents with a safer, more pedestrian-friendly and aesthetically-pleasing link between Dickson Street and the Downtown Square.

The City acquired the deed to a ten-acre water tank site, donated by Chambers Bank, saving approximately $100,000 in future expenses. A new water tank on Canterbury will soon provide increased pressure for residential and fire protection supply in the eastern growth area. Finally, the Wastewater System Improvement Project will be completed with the installation of Solar Bio-Solid Dryers. Fayetteville, like the rest of the nation, faces the toughest economy since the Great Depression; however, our goal and use of economically-sustainable practices has garnered us new strength and vitality. Necessity truly is, as Plato stated, the mother of invention.

We have also strengthened our social-sustainability practices.

Social sustainability includes the concern for basic human needs, adequate housing, efficient public safety, outstanding cultural activities, and robust civic engagement.

The City has worked to reduce impediments to fair housing, while our Housing Rehabilitation Program completed 13 projects, and our Housing Program community partners completed an additional 18 projects in 2010.
We were excited to be chosen one of only two cities in the nation to be awarded a $500,000 Sustainable Cities grant from The Home Depot Foundation. In cooperation with the National Center for Appropriate Technology and Partners for Better Housing, we will work toward building approximately 40 ENERGY STAR-certified homes for low- to-moderate-income families in the Walker Park neighborhood. This project will meet LEED Neighborhood Development Standards and advance community goals for healthy, affordable housing while improving access to alternative transportation corridors and increasing economic opportunities in the area.

Hundreds of Fayetteville residents contributed to the With a Can We Can! Program to stock local food pantries, and the city continued the light bulb replacement program installing money-saving CFL bulbs in public housing units. Our Community Development Block Grant program funded nine local nonprofit agencies that provide valuable services to the community. These included the Northwest Arkansas Free Health Clinic, Ozark Guidance Center, Fayetteville Senior Center, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Arts Live Theatre, and Credit Counseling of Arkansas, which provided foreclosure prevention counseling. Grants to the Fayetteville Public Library, Life Styles, and LifeSource International were directed to assisting disabled residents.

The City is a partner with the Fayetteville Community Garden Coalition, and last year we provided land for the Community Gardens in the Parks program and developed a step-by-step manual for creating a community garden. City Staff constructed a Children’s Garden at the Yvonne Richardson Community Center for the children attending the summer and after school programs and developed a program known as “Kid Crops” to teach cooking and nutrition, environmental sustainability, teamwork and community involvement through hands-on experience. Another community garden will be developed near the Senior Center in 2011.

The Fayetteville Animal Shelter had a record year of pet adoptions — 2,082 animals—365 more than the previous record. Our shelter’s work is supported by Friends of the Fayetteville Animal Shelter, a new volunteer group dedicated to improving the Shelter’s operations and supporting the Shelter’s community programs.

We know that when people fall on tough times, everyone who relies on them suffers too, and this is especially true for pets. Ranger’s Pantry Pet Food Bank provided food for 208 dogs and 156 cats, which allowed those pets to remain in their existing homes when their families were experiencing financial difficulties.

Public safety is primary to social sustainability in a community. In 2010, our Central Dispatch Center became the first in Arkansas to receive the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials certification for training standards for Public Safety Telecommunicators. Our Police Department has now met 84% of the applicable standards for certification by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies. The Fire Department achieved 100% compliance for the National Incident Management System. As part of the City’s effort to increase openness and public participation, the Police Department introduced the innovative Online Crime Reporting System, allowing citizens to submit reports of non-emergency and no-known-suspect crime tips for vandalism, theft, illegal dumping, criminal mischief, and other misdemeanors.
The Fayetteville Fire Department welcomed new Fire Chief David Dayringer, who has improved management and training for the department and led the project development of a new City Emergency Plan for responding to such incidents as the ice storm of 2009.

Included in this plan has been the establishment of emergency shelters with power generators at the Senior Center, and all of the remaining fire stations now have generators as well. Fayetteville will be stronger and more protected now that it finally has a comprehensive emergency management plan. Also, during 2010, firefighters responded to more than 7000 emergency incidents.

Our trail system is a model of excellence regionally, statewide, and nationally. This year we added the Mud Creek Trail Extension, Bryce Davis Trail, and the Frisco Trail connection. A new feature this year was the Arts on the Trails kiosks displaying artwork from local elementary schools, the Yvonne Richardson Center, and the Boys and Girls Club summer programs. In 2011, we will complete construction of the Oak Ridge Trail, construct a connecting trail from Scull Creek Trail west to Mt. Comfort Road, and complete construction of Lake Fayetteville Trail. Federal and private funding will assist in making our trail system the gem of the 36-mile Razorback Regional Greenway.

Our city has 70 public parks, three lakes, and 36.5 miles of soft and hard surface trails. In 2010, we completed our development on Doc Mashburn Park, our newest neighborhood park, and dedicated the Iams Dog Park. The City also accepted a donation of 200 acres from Chambers Bank, and the citizens passed by 81% an ordinance providing that the HMR tax could be used for parks maintenance and development. Many park acres are preserved as natural areas, thus protecting our natural resources, urban forest and wildlife habitat. In other parks we hosted Concerts in the Park, Movies in the Park, the Annual Arts in the Park Show, the Lake Fayetteville Outdoor Festival, and the world's largest swimming training class in the Wilson Park Pool landed Fayetteville in the Guinness Book of World Records. The annual Lights of the Ozarks on the Downtown Square that drew 200,000 visitors to enjoy 300,000 festive LED lights, a Holiday Parade, horse and carriage rides, camel rides, pony rides, and pictures with Santa.

Festivals and large public events in Fayetteville celebrate the diverse cultural resources of our community, increase entertainment options for local residents, provide economic opportunities for local artists, entrepreneurs, and businesses, increase tax revenues for city government, and support local charities. To assure a proactive approach to attracting festivals, a festival task force of local residents developed a necessary checklist for festival promoters and other strategies for attracting events and making the process clear for event organizers. Our largest festival returned over $100,000 to our community non-profits.
Our nationally-acclaimed Fayetteville Public Library continued to set records for circulation and collection development. Lolly Greenwood, manager of youth services, earned the outstanding Children's Librarian Award from the Arkansas Library Association. I am especially excited about the launch of Project Fayetteville, the humanities initiative to create the first documentary about Fayetteville history and a Fayetteville digital image archive. The Government Channel’s “History Minutes” have already been successful in highlighting Fayetteville’s rich history in film.

Fayetteville High School continued its tradition of academic excellence as a leader in number of Advanced Placement and National Merit Scholars. This year, voters approved and construction is underway on a state of the art high school facility for our students.

In partnership with the University of Arkansas, we submitted an outstanding proposal to support expansion of the Walton Arts Center in Fayetteville. Plans are now underway for construction of an additional 600-seat theater on the Dickson Street campus and the use of Bud Walton Arena and Razorback Stadium on the UA campus for major concerts.

Civic engagement and open government are linked more strongly than ever in our community. Town Hall meetings were held in all four wards again this year, providing an opportunity for direct dialogue among citizens and public officials. Both the City’s new website and the improved programming on the Government Channel received national awards in 2010, and the City has expanded its public information program to include social media. Among the more important changes in 2011 will be improvements to assure greater public participation in the City’s Public Access Television Channel, with more accessible hours and free training for Fayetteville residents, and operation of the City’s Education Channel by the Fayetteville School District. The city has undergone an extensive information technology assessment and is now working to fix and enhance our technological capacities and to implement a comprehensive and reliable emergency responder system.

Another pillar of a sustainable community is environmental sustainability, and Fayetteville has long held that environmental consciousness and commitment are required for success.

In 2010, we continued implementation of the Residential Energy Efficiency Program and have seen the first score of a perfect 100 from a residential project. A primary focus for 2011 will be exploring the possibilities of a Green Building Code for both commercial and residential construction. The Council strengthened the Hillside/Hilltop Development ordinance and enacted a Low Impact Development code addressing opportunities in new development projects. We continued our commitment to water quality, and our Nutrient Reduction Plan is successful. We are restoring stream banks on Niokaska Creek in Sweetbriar Park, on the White River near the airport, and along the Hamstring tributary in Red Oak Park. We have made great strides in streamside protection, but more protection
is required. I thank the people of Fayetteville for their commitment to being a clean and green community. After multiple education and public input sessions, a Streamside Protection ordinance has been proposed, and will be discussed at the next City Council meeting, to reduce non-point sources of pollution of our waterways and drinking water and to save millions of dollars in treatment costs.

The Solar Test Bed Project at the Fayetteville Public Library included 60 solar panels to provide alternative energy and support local green industry, and the installation of solar panels on the new LEED Gold District Court building is yet another example of excellence for other cities to imitate. In addition, we established a zero-interest revolving loan fund to allow non-profit organizations to improve the energy efficiency of their facilities. The City of Fayetteville has partnered with the University of Arkansas Sustainability Center and energy companies to develop the Ecological Fayetteville program, which provides a dashboard for residents to track their environmental footprint and conserve energy – another successful program with hundreds of participants and a model of the nation.

Fayetteville residents are maintaining a 56% participation rate for the curbside recycling program. In 2010, the city expanded its recycling program and began a paid commercial curbside recycling program for 153 participating businesses. We began a commercial paper dumpster program at 27 locations, including each public and two local private schools. Fayetteville has the highest number of Litter Free Zone schools in Arkansas.

The new wildlife habitat enhancement area at the Noland Waste Water Treatment Plant includes an informational kiosk and the bluebird trail through the prairie restoration area. It was one of the first businesses to achieve the Certification as part of our effort to become the first National Wildlife Federation Certified Community Wildlife Habitat in the state.

In 2011, we will expand our non-residential recycling program with the Broyles Avenue Recycling Drop Off and Education Facility that will include green space, energy-efficient lighting, swales to manage stormwater runoff, and artwork from recycled material.

Working with the Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association and the Environmental Study Center we undertook a project to restore a native grass prairie at Lake Fayetteville along the historic Butterfield Trail and began planting native grasses on the hillside at Mt. Sequoyah Gardens. We also worked with volunteers to establish native grasses and flowers along the Clabber Creek, Scull Creek, Mud Creek, and Frisco Trails. Conversion to LED lighting on trails is another continuing contribution to environmental sustainability.

In our continuing effort to restore the tree canopy damaged by the ice storm, 1,100 trees and 200 shrubs were given to residents to plant on their property to help restore our City’s urban forest. Additionally, the City planted approximately 230 native species of trees in parks and along trails and 240 mitigation trees along
streets in nine residential locations. For the 15th consecutive year, Fayetteville received the Arbor Day Foundation Tree City USA Award.

We have done much for community sustainability in the past year—environmentally, socially, and economically. These are the foundations that make Fayetteville a model for our state and will lead us into another banner year in 2011. Our community sustainability is secured by our city’s strongest asset — the people—who again answered the call for volunteerism and were recognized by Governor Beebe for the second year in a row as Arkansas Volunteer Community of the Year. In 2010, Fayetteville residents donated over half a million volunteer hours to strengthening Fayetteville, families, and the fun that makes Fayetteville uniquely Fayetteville. We will build on our strengths to take our great city to the next level in 2011.

It truly has been an amazing year for our city. No other community can compare with the state and national recognition earned by our citizens. Among the individual and community awards are:

- Cindi Cope was named Volunteer Individual of the Year Award by the Arkansas Recreation and Parks Association
- Julie McQuade was named the Arkansas Volunteer Coordinator of the Year
- Lolly Greenwood was named Outstanding Children's Librarian by the Arkansas Library Association
- Fayetteville took home 3 out of 4 annual prestigious Water Environment Federation awards. David Jurgens received the Bedell Award for extraordinary personal service; the Burke Award was presented to Duyen Tran and Billy Ammons; the Laboratory Analyst Excellence award was presented to Donna McChristia
- Tim Luther received the state Wastewater Manager of The Year award, and Duyen Tran received the AWEA President’s Silver Award
- Fayetteville Community Gardens received the Therapeutic Recreation Program of the Year from the Arkansas Recreation and Parks Association
- The Gulley Park Stream Restoration won the Natural Resources Program of the Year from the Arkansas Recreation and Parks Association
- The Fayetteville Soccer program was awarded the Sports Management Program of the Year award from the Arkansas Recreation and Parks Association
• Fayetteville received five blooms for Environmental Awareness from America in Bloom
• The City received the Keep Arkansas Beautiful Shine Award for the third consecutive year for making significant strides in providing programs and instituting policies to create sustainable communities
• The League of American Bicyclists named Fayetteville a bronze Bicycle Friendly Community
• Fayetteville received the Southern Growth Policies Board Innovator Award for Fayetteville Forward
• For the 15th consecutive year, Fayetteville received the Arbor Day Foundation Tree City USA Award
• The Arkansas Community Development Society named Fayetteville as the recipient of its 2010 Innovative Community Development Program in a community of over 50,000
• Arkansas Volunteer Community of the Year for the second consecutive year
• The Government Channel won 3 Bronze Telly Awards in a national competition
• City of Fayetteville Fleet services was ranked the sixth top Fleet Division in the nation
• The City’s website was honored as a top local government website in the nation
• Fayetteville High School was named to Newsweek’s 2010 Best US High School List
• CNN Money named Fayetteville as one of the nation’s best places to retire
• Fayetteville received Forbes’ number 15 slot as one of the top metropolitan areas in the nation for businesses and careers
• US News and World Report listed the University of Arkansas’s College of Business and School of Law as top tier graduate programs in the nation
• NWA Media and CitiScapes list the Fayetteville Public Library as Best Library in their readers’ poll
• Forbes Magazine lists Fayetteville as the number 7 top college sports town
• The District Court and Prosecutor Facility received LEED Gold certification from the U.S. Green Building Council

Excellence is not an exception; it is the prevailing attitude in Fayetteville. It is a characteristic of our community that we bring important issues forward and make wise decisions about them, while other cities and towns are often left to decide between alternatives they have not chosen themselves.

Fayetteville is the light and the example of excellence for other Arkansas cities. We are that city on the hill that cannot be hidden, a diverse community working together to honor our past and to continue our progress toward an even brighter future.

That is the State of our City as we begin this new year.