

STATE OF THE CITY 2006

We are a city of forward thinkers; therefore, its government must act in accord. We no longer have the luxury of passive governing or government by reaction. Our stance should be one of intuition and planning, a proactive approach to development under our terms and direction, and that is exactly what we are doing. We enter into this New Year filled with direction and hope, as we carefully begin the rebirth of this City.

As you may have seen through your travels around the city over the past few months, we have initiated many projects, such as the new decorations that were hung in the Historical District during the holiday season. This is just a beginning of the face lift that will bring the shine back to our historical center, along with the completion of the Canal Fulton Canalway Center, which will have its official dedication on April 29th. We are planning a day full of wonderful events that will include invited guest, as well as the community. This center will be one of a few that is located on the Ohio Erie Canal Corridor that stretches from Cleveland to Zoar and will bring many visitors to our area.

Along with the revitalization of this area and the outstanding efforts of the Heritage Society in the care and maintenance of our city's trade mark, I will ask the Park Board to consider changing the name of Community Park to reflect and encompass the final piece of the historical park by the canal to the name of St Helena Park. This will pull together the entire package of our Canalway Center, and it will identify to those who come to our community the proud legacy that we share with all visitors.

We have completed the new tennis courts that are located at the Northwest Senior Center in Muhlhauser Park. These courts were constructed with funds from monies received from a FEMA award for flooding that damaged our old courts. These new courts have been designed to adhere to the regulation size and width of professional courts, and they have a system of lights that will allow you to play late into the evening.

Discovery Park is nearing its completion, and we hope to make the dedication of this wonderful park to the community and the residents of Echoing Ridge this year. This has been a project that had to be completed - a promise that will be kept. Discovery Park will be professionally designed to accommodate everyone with beautifully constructed traveling paths and sitting areas that will act as an oasis for all residents to enjoy.

I have not forgotten our kids within the structuring of our park system. I have asked the Park Board's Chairman to begin the process of locating and designing a place for a skate park. Not long back, a few students from Northwest Schools began a petition drive to secure signatures from other students in the area who

wanted to have such a park, and their voices have been heard. As this project begins to take shape, I will ask that our Park Board meet with them and seek suggestions that will allow the board to better serve their objectives.

We are not done with the park projects. As I have said in the past, the strength of a family oriented community must begin with a system of parks that serve all residents. This brings us to the biggest park project this city has, which is the newly acquired land located between the Canal Fulton Police Department and the Northwest Senior Center on Locust Street. I have asked the former President of Council and newly retired Councilman Mike Mouse to help me pull this enormous project together. With his dedication and strong desire, I know he will tenaciously work to bring all the pieces of this land development collectively. This property has been a focus of our attention for some time, and with Mike's help it became a reality. It's with great pride that Mr. Mouse agreed to undertake this important task and help me present to the Park Board a working section of land that will serve to be the centerpiece of our park system.

As much work as we have set for ourselves, there are other projects that we have started that are showing fruit. Last fall, I implemented a part-time Fleet Manager Program that allowed us to keep track of and maintain city vehicles. This program will allow us to identify how the vehicles are being used and find ways to prolong the use of each unit to keep from replacing them so often. We are also revamping our Web site as a way to provide a more informational site to the community and a better way for you to communicate with your city departments.

As a part of our effort to increase information flow to the community, we are looking at ways to place a city bulletin board that will scroll local information and events to the nearly 15,000-plus cars that travel by the Police Station daily. This will become even more important when the new Fire Station is complete and the entire building becomes the Canal Fulton Safety Center. This station (with the voters support) will serve to ensure that the quality of service to you and your family is the best we can provide. The Safety Committee, along with the Fire and Police chiefs, are currently looking at bids for this structure. We plan on beginning the construction phase in a matter of months.

The T.A.P. Committee is also sending out informational material to seek feedback from you on a joint recreational project that they have been tirelessly working on for months. This letter will contain questions on what you would like to see in the recreation center and what location you think would best serve this community. I encourage you to complete the survey and return it to us, so that we may better serve you needs.

Finally, to help us bring all these items together and help steer us into the future, we have hired (for the first time in this city's history) a fulltime City Manager. Mark Cozy is the type of forward-thinking leader that we will need to further our

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city and prepare us for a bright future. With a \$312,000.00 carryover from last year's budget, we are not only tending to your money but nurturing the growth of our young city in the same caring manner that a parent would raise a child, for it is the future that we are focused on and the time to prepare is now.

The state of our city is strong and so is its future.

Mayor John Grogan