



Introduction

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen,

I bring you greetings on behalf of the City of North Battleford.

Thank you to the Battlefords Chamber of Commerce, President Sharon Mohagan and the Chamber board for again providing this opportunity for me to share with you a few accomplishments of the past years' operations and inform you of some initiatives that are currently under development and/or are to be launched in the near future.

City Employees

To begin this 'State of the City' address, I want to commend to you the City Directors, Managers and hundreds of employees that work so diligently, capably and competently every day to make our City a place people and business **choose** to make their home.

This team of devoted City employees continues to be led by City Manager Jim Toye, who has recently added to his many accolades, the distinction of being named by Saskatchewan

Business magazine as one of the top ten... 'persons of influence' in our province. This acknowledgement by the business community of the province brings significant recognition to the City he serves, and I want to congratulate Jim for this honor, and to thank him for his service to the City.

My thanks, and on behalf of the citizens of North Battleford, a collective thanks to Councillors representing the interest of our community, Ryan Bater, Don Buglas, Ray Fox, Trent Houk, Greg Lightfoot and Cathy Richardson. I also want to acknowledge and thank the service of former Councillors Ron Crush, Grace Lang and Brad Pattinson.

Accomplishments

Well, we **did** it! After years of perseverance and hard work of hundreds of people, the realization of a collection of recreation and cultural facilities is now a reality. Thanks to the collaboration and commitment of all three levels of governments, (Federal, Provincial and Municipal), and an Herculean effort of an amazing fund raising committee led by the aptly named 2012 Co-citizens of the year, all four components of the CUplex are now operational. We can all be proud of the accomplishment, and I urge you all to celebrate with us at the official ceremonies to be conducted May 24th at a noon BBQ, ribbon cutting and opportunity to view the facilities throughout the afternoon. Thank you all for your contributions

and support to something that contributes significantly to the attraction and retention of all ages to our community, and supports and develops business interests in our City.

But so much more has happened over the past twelve months:

- Harwood Manor commenced operations, offering extended services to seniors not available in our City before.
- Construction began on a 94 unit assisted living complex, addressing a gap in seniors housing opportunities.
- GRIT Industries relocated their manufacturing operations to the City.
- Building permits remained robust throughout 2012, providing an additional 140 living units to our City and over \$43 million to our taxable assessment.
- Ladies and gentlemen, over the past 5 years, the City has issued over \$200 million dollars of building permits, including over 300 new living units in our City. Obviously, people recognize value and opportunity in our City.

And OH! By-the-way, Happy Birthday North Battleford!

We've had a great time partying and celebrating our Centennial, thanks to a legion of volunteers committed to honoring our past and demonstrating fiercely strong community pride. Thank you to all who have contributed and supported our events.

Current initiatives

The City's Strategic Plan was adopted in late 2011 and implementation of the plan guided the development of both the 2012 budget, and the 2013 capital and operational plan endorsed by the current Council.

One of the priorities of the plan is Branding and Marketing.

I am pleased that significant advancements have been achieved towards this objective, as evidenced by the re-structuring of the Battlefords Tourism and Convention Association.

The newly defined organization now incorporates not only the traditional marketing of Tourism attractions, but now has partnered with the Hoteliers association to use and leverage additional funds generated by the voluntary collection of a 1% destination marketing fee by member hotels, further enabling the attraction and support for convention, sporting events, trade shows and other revenue generating attractions to the area,

thereby putting 'heads in pillows', 'seats in restaurants' and 'feet in stores'. It further embraces a mandate for business attraction and retention, providing other partnering opportunities with the business community.

Another priority identified in the City's Strategic Plan is downtown Development.

We need to support existing business in the downtown core, and attract new business to the area and create a positive change in the environment with an emphasis on cleanliness, safety and events programming.

It has not been without some controversy, but the Bylaw enabling the formation of the Downtown Business Improvement District this past month is intended to provide the structure necessary to achieve these goals and objectives. This is a further demonstration of the passion and commitment of the City's business community to make a difference and strive to create and contribute to a redefined, vibrant, clean, safe and entertaining downtown.

It will come to no-ones surprise in this room that crime exists in the City of North Battleford. Yet, I think what may surprise some in this room, is that crime has been declining year over year for the past three years.

From the 12 months ending 2010 to the year end 2012,

Person offences have decline 9%

Break and enters of Business has declined 32% and B & E's of residences have been reduced by 45%

Property offences are down by 11%,

Criminal code offences and drug offences have increased over this time period, attributable to the increase in officers on the streets, and in these instances, that is good,.....we're catching them!

Supporting the enforcement efforts of our police force, significant efforts, human and financial resources are being applied to address the needs of our personal and corporate citizens to not only be protected, but to feel they are protected, to know and to feel that they are safe. We work closely with the RCMP and have partnered with the provincial government to put more officers on the streets. Also, we have championed the establishment of a Safer Communities initiative known as the HUB. The HUB is a collaboration of community services and agencies that meet twice a week identifying and proactively addressing the needs of at risk individuals and families that would otherwise inevitably enter the judicial system at sometime in the future. The HUB concept has been demonstrated to effectively significantly reduce the incidence of crime in cities of Glasgow, Scotland, Chicago in the United States and most recently Prince Albert. The City commits to this program, ... as evidenced by the commitment of the City Manager to Chair the HUB committee, and by the participation of Fire and Bylaw personnel and other civic offices. The

investment is significant, and the returns to the well being of our City *will* be rewarding.

Today and tomorrow, the Municipal Planning Commission and City Council are meeting with, and being briefed by, our consultants of the Official Community Plan and a proposed revised Zoning Bylaw. The OCP is a broad land use policy document which sets out key growth and development objectives of the City and will guide development in North Battleford for the next 20 to 30 years.

Once finalized, the OCP will contain policy statements and future land use objectives related to residential, commercial and industrial land:

transportation, infrastructure and municipal services;
community services, amenities and park space: and
inter-municipal, inter-governmental and aboriginal co-operation.

The Zoning Bylaw will guide daily development towards the objectives of the OCP. An open house and public hearings will be forthcoming in the near future.

The newly defined Battlefords Tourism, the creation of the downtown Business Improvement District, the development of the HUB and the introduction of the Official Community Plan are a few of the initiatives evident that respond to priorities

articulated in the City's strategic plan. Much more goes on, on a daily basis.

The adoption of a 5-year capital development plan by City Council is a demonstration of our commitment to manage the residential, commercial and industrial growth evident in our City. We meet regularly with our partners in Education, Business, Health, First Nations, Rural Municipalities, Provincial and Federal Governments, in order develop and maintain relationships that foster collaboration and cooperation that will result in an even better community of tomorrow than we have today.

Conclusion

Ladies and gentlemen, my daily encouragement, my inspiration, my energy, my satisfaction, is a direct result of the growth and development I witness on a day-to-day basis. Yet I do not define this by percentages, it's not about numbers, it's about people.

It's about knowing that senior's feel that North Battleford is a great place to retire to,... housing, recreation, culture and health care all accessible and attainable.

It's because I witness daily, young families choosing to make North Battleford home because it is a great place for career

opportunities, family centered sports, recreational and cultural facilities.

I look around and see a diverse community, multi-cultural and rich in heritage and culture.

For all of this, I am confident the 'State of the City' is strong, healthy, prosperous , attractive, welcoming and open to everyone looking for opportunity and a quality of life second to none.

Thank you, thank you for being here today and thank you all for your contribution to the wealth and well being of the citizens of our communities.

-Mayor Ian Hamilton