

# WINNECKE ★ FOR MAYOR



## PROTECTING OUR COMMUNITY

Few issues impact the quality of life in Evansville more than public safety and security. Crime prevention and fire protection have a direct impact on growth, prosperity, and, ultimately, our ability to attract new jobs. We must have trust in the law enforcement community and the firefighters whose heroic commitment keeps the entire community safe.

Our local police and fire departments have done an exemplary job in recent years. We need to ensure that the leadership of our public safety departments – starting with the Mayor – promotes a tone of excellence, integrity and discipline in order to continue the success of these departments.

We must also work to constantly improve training, equipment, and cooperation. We have no requirement for radically reorganizing the police or fire departments, but we do believe there are numerous opportunities for positive, targeted change.

As Mayor of Evansville, police officers and firefighters can count on our administration to be an advocate for them in their mission, and working together we will provide each citizen with the highest standard of services and performance.

Sincerely,



**LLOYD WINNECKE**

## **1. LEADERSHIP AND COOPERATION**

Leadership of a quality police and fire department starts with the Mayor. Our administration will promote a culture of excellence that is founded on integrity and discipline.

The police and fire chief will report directly to the Mayor's office, creating an open, unfiltered flow of information. This direct line of communication will include frequent briefings from both chiefs relating to issues involving community safety.

The Mayor must have total confidence in the police and fire chief. We will re-assess the leadership of both departments and make the changes needed to ensure accountability and the highest standard of services and performance.

Furthermore, it is imperative that the men and women serving in each department have the same respect and trust in their leaders as in our administration. We will use both formal and informal performance feedback with department personnel to ensure appointed public safety leadership is well received both internally and by the greater community.

## **2. QUALITY EQUIPMENT, TRAINING & FACILITIES**

To do their jobs well, police officers and firefighters need quality equipment, adequate facilities and the latest technology. Our administration will make a commitment to the police and fire departments that they will have the most up to date equipment and technology to perform their jobs to the best of their ability.

Under Mayor Russ Lloyd, Jr., many police officers were allowed to take home patrol cars. This program was a great success both in allowing for faster response times and as a recruitment tool, and our

administration will continue to support it in the future.

However, since the program's inception in 2001, many of the vehicles purchased have come to the end of their productive life. Patrol cars are a primary tool for police officers to perform their jobs and, currently, many of these vehicles are in need of replacement. Our administration will look to retire these older vehicles in an expedited manner and return the take home program to what it was under Mayor Lloyd.



Our administration will look into providing greater training for all police officers and firefighters. Specialized training that will help keep all firefighters and police officers safe, such as the most up-to-date methods for handling meth labs, cyber crime, and the ever changing threats in this post-9/11 society. Training should be a priority for the frontline firefighters and officers, as well as the specialized units that assist them.

Each department must also have access to training equipment that gives police officers and firefighters the opportunity to stay in top physical condition.



Although the Fire Department has several new fire engines, the average age of the entire fleet still exceeds 10 years. The average rescue squad is 13 years old, and several fire trucks and quints (pumpers and aerial ladders) in the fleet are in excess of 20 years of age.

In addition to the need for emergency response vehicle replacement, there remain numerous areas where the department needs upgraded equipment. Specifically, maintenance on engines, ladder trucks and first responder vehicles needs to be

performed with greater frequency. The fire department has 23 apparatuses, six of which are held in reserve. None of these six reserve vehicles are properly equipped, making them obsolete in case of a large disaster.

Our administration will also emphasize modern and well-maintained fire stations which are adequately equipped with supplies for all emergencies, including fires, earthquakes and tornadoes. Evansville sits in tornado alley and on the New Madrid fault line. Currently, stations are not stocked with drinking water or non-perishable food items to sustain firefighters or the public in case of disasters. There is no excuse for Evansville to be ill-prepared for potential emergencies.

### **3. COMMUNITY COLLABORATION**

Our administration will strive to foster a renewed sense of community collaboration on matters dealing with public safety.

The police department leadership will be responsive to community concerns that address violent and drug related crimes, property crime and the use of crime prevention methodology. Disciplinary matters will be referred to department leadership and the respective merit commissions for fair hearings and expeditious processing.

The success of our public safety efforts requires open communication between the police department, fire department and the community. Creating more public-private partnerships, including collaborative efforts with non-profits and neighborhood groups, will be explored as a way to better educate the public on how they can help each department fulfill their mission to keep our city safe and secure.

### **4. PARK SAFETY**

Our police department does an exemplary job of patrolling parks, but without additional resources, their efforts are

often hampered. Park Rangers were used in the past to assist with this task, but once they were eliminated, many of our local parks began some level of deterioration. Our administration will emphasize a greater police presence in our parks and look at reallocating resources to ensure the highest level of safety.

We will also work to ensure that all Emergency Kiosks located in parks and greenways are functional and in good working order.

### **5. DOWNTOWN ARENA**

Many residents have expressed anxiety about their safety and the safety of their vehicles when attending evening events at the new arena in downtown Evansville. For the arena to be successful, we will need to review all options for increasing area patrols during events.

We will also explore a public-private or public-nonprofit partnership that would provide shuttle service from select parking areas in downtown to the new arena. This type of service can assist those with disabilities and help alleviate concerns about the distance between available parking and the arena. The Metropolitan Evansville Transit System (METS) will provide buses and transit vans from its back-up fleet to serve as shuttles to and from events at the arena. A partnership with the city and a private/nonprofit entity will absorb the operating costs and provide a new revenue stream for the selected organization.

### **6. METH LABS**

In 2010, Vanderburgh County experienced a sharp rise in reported methamphetamine (meth) labs, peaking at over 100 for the year. Through 6 ½ months of this year, there have already been 70 labs reported, most relating to the new “one pot” method of cooking meth.

This spike in reported labs, the concern over the volatility of the “one pot” method, and subsequent fires and property damage due to exploding labs has plagued the Police and Fire Departments. Our community has experienced 16 meth lab related fires, seven civilian injuries, one injury to a firefighter, and one related fatality this year alone.

Our administration will work closely with the police, prosecutor, and judicial system to combat meth in Evansville. We will also ensure that police officers and firefighters are provided the best tools for combating meth labs, including proper training for the recognition and disposal of labs.

However law enforcement alone will not solve the problem. We will need an all-out effort to reduce demand and provide treatment. Specifically, we will do so through a three-pronged approach:

- Educating youth, schools, and the community at large through a mass marketing campaign designed to highlight meth’s destructive power.
- Reinforce the emphasis the police department has placed on cracking down on meth in its patrol assignments.
- Training landlords and businesses on how to spot signs that a meth lab may be operating on their premises.

Statistics have shown the majority of meth users are out-of-work. As with many community ills, a healthier economy will be a useful tool as well.

## **7. ABANDONED / BLIGHTED PROPERTY**

Abandoned and blighted properties are a growing concern for citizens and our safety departments alike. These properties can, and have, become dens for drug activity and arson, drastically reducing surrounding

property values and becoming dangerous playgrounds for children.

As we have mentioned in previous position papers, our administration will overhaul the city’s website and internet presence to be more user friendly and solicit citizen concerns. Abandoned or blighted properties reported on this site will go directly to the Department of Metropolitan Development (DMD) to be addressed in a timely manner.

Our administration will also seek the help of the fire department in reporting abandoned properties. Firemen routinely make scouting trips around their area. We suggest that as firefighters map possible routes, they also look to report abandoned properties.

The Front Door Pride initiative has taken steps toward addressing this problem, but by its nature, it focuses on targeted, smaller areas. Our administration will seek to team up with housing development organizations in order to cover a wider segment of the city. We will also work with neighborhood associations to ensure that rental property owners are held accountable for blighted properties.

Crime Prevention Officers (CPOs) can also be a helpful ally in the fight against property abandonment. Our office will encourage an open flow of information between residents and CPOs.