



Mayor Lloyd Winnecke

**STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS
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The Evansville Noon Rotary Club

Rotarians and special guests, thank you for the opportunity to speak today, to carry out the annual tradition of providing a status report of city government.

To my parents, Ralph and Shirley, and wife, Carol, who are here today, thank you for your continued love and support.

Last year at this time, our city was celebrating its 200th birthday, and it was clear that "our city was poised for action."

Friends, I stand before you today with pride to report that **the state of our great city is robust and ready for the next 200 years.**

In the last year, Evansville has made great progress. Our city is a destination for jobs. We've become cleaner and healthier. We've made great strides in our battle against methamphetamine, and through smart growth, we're creating a more vibrant downtown.

Over the past year, our administration – with support of city department heads and their staffs – has worked diligently to lay the foundation for our city's future.

Whether it was determining the future of Roberts Stadium, negotiating final settlement of a federal lawsuit mandating the largest public works project in the city's history or completing the challenging conversion of the city's financial software, we prevailed and are now moving forward.

Each day when I walk into the Mayor's office, I pass a wall with photos of past Mayors of Evansville all the way back to 1847 and Mayor James Jones.

Put simply, it is quite humbling to be the 34th Mayor of the city I love.

Facing adversity and addressing challenges of the day has given me a new appreciation of what it takes to lead our city and make decisions that impact the lives of my friends and neighbors.

Looking back at our city's history, legacies often were built upon single decisions by those featured on the wall. It is my goal to learn from those historic and important decisions, and to not lose sight of the most basic of services provided by your city government.

While it is my nature, indeed human nature, to want to solve every problem immediately, I've learned to exert patience and make smart, strategic decisions that ultimately benefit the city, in the long term, to its maximum potential.

Case-in-point are the city's economic development efforts. Evansville has been fortunate to have strong retention and expansion announcements in 2012, such as the 100 jobs that will be added by Ron Romain and his team at Professional Transportation, Inc.

SealCorp USA decided to stay in Evansville and expand. Kenneth Rusk approached Growth Alliance for Greater Evansville seeking options after the company outgrew its Vanderburgh County location and considered moving operations to Kentucky.

The Growth Alliance worked with city and state officials to put together a package that resulted in SealCorp expanding to a location on Diamond Avenue, retaining 47 jobs while adding 35 new jobs.

Yet another example was Whayne Supply, who chose to expand into a new facility in Evansville to be staffed by 50 new employees. The economic impact of this expansion to our community represents approximately \$150 million over the next 10 years.

Our work with Berry Plastics was a lengthy process, but a collaborative effort – spanning several months and involving more than a dozen people – that resolved a logistics problem that was preventing a major expansion.

The direct talks with company officials, and ingenuity and creativity demonstrated by our team to identify incentives and a rail solution netted 115 new jobs and a \$33 million investment by Berry in the Evansville operation.

More importantly, the expansion resulted in the retention of potentially hundreds of jobs that could have been moved out-of-state.

All of these projects demonstrate the competitive nature of economic development. While our team works with site selectors on potential projects on a daily basis, our community and region faces stiff competition from neighboring states with millions of dollars dedicated towards “closing deals.”

Even so, we are confident in our product and our workforce, which are strong assets that will continue to help our city grow.

The last year presented many learning experiences along the way. Shortly after taking office, our Administration was notified of an official visit of our sister city from Japan.

Months of preparation and close attention to protocol led up to a 2 day visit by the 4 person delegation from Tochigi City. We successfully hosted the delegation without international incident and even managed to accommodate their special request of visiting the Gerst Haus for kraut balls and a sausage platter.

The lessons learned in our first year, even when faced with uncertainty, made it clear that Evansville was ready to handle any situation and our administration was in a position to provide solid leadership for our citizens.

Regularly, I host a small lunch with employees from city departments. It is a chance to have a one-on-one dialogue and to share updates, thoughts, concerns or simply ask questions. It is also a chance for me, on behalf of a grateful city, to say thanks for their work.

Lunch with the Mayor is just one of the ways I try to make the Mayor's Office more accessible to people. I want all city employees to feel comfortable enough to walk up to me and tell me when things are going right as well as when things could use improving.

That's also the reason I launched the Citizens Concern Portal. The portal allows the public to contact the Mayor's Office using a cellphone to share a concern and even upload a photograph.

Since the application was launched in September, we have received more than 850 concerns, suggestions, and questions that have been directly answered through the online communication tool, in addition to calls or letters submitted to the office.

Our Computer Services department created the free application that's available online through Google and Apple. You can download the app, send what amounts to a text message with or without a photo and alert us to a concern....anything from missing stop signs, to malfunctioning traffic signals and weed complaints.

That is just one way we are focusing on providing better customer service through technology. I also know it is our people who make the difference when it comes to serving the public.

Today, there are many of our department heads in the audience. On day one, I challenged them to set a new standard for performing their work and to inspire their teams to raise the level of their work higher and higher. My expectations more often than not have been exceeded and I'd like to have them all stand and be recognized.

I'm also very pleased to have a table of several special guests here with us who deserve recognition.

After two years of collaborative outreach with neighborhood association leaders and property owners, **Officer Eric Krogman and Officer Kevin Corbin** of the Evansville Police Department were successful in adding a new "Crime Free Multi-Housing Unit" Ordinance to local code.

The creation of a registry for rental property owners was a key measure that is viewed as an important tool to address reported crimes and assist with investigations.

Under **Chief Billy Bolin's** leadership, the Evansville Police Department has put a renewed focus on community engagement.

Whether it is the "Coffee with a Cop" program or the department's work to reduce citizen complaints by half from 2011 to 2012, the men and women of the EPD serve our city with distinction.

It should also be noted that the creation of the Gang Unit and use of “The Guardian” neighborhood surveillance vehicle are valuable new tools in efforts to keep our city safe.

All of our public safety officials deserve a thank you for their response to the fire event at the Grandview Tower Apartments this past year.

Our city witnessed 62 firefighters being called into action. Following the event, my office had numerous calls of appreciation of the quick response and work of the fire personnel representing 15 units of the 3rd Shift and 2nd Shift.

Firefighting is one of the most hazardous professions on Earth. And the most critical component in accomplishing the mission of the Evansville Fire Department is our firefighters.

Chief Mike Connelly and his team are leading by example and holding our firefighters to high standards and ensuring high quality emergency response to every circumstance, every day.

Public Safety Medical is providing 2013 Annual Medical Evaluations of all EFD personnel. This is a progressive move toward National Fire Protection Association compliant Firefighter medical evaluations. That helps us to achieve a higher standard and improved service to the community.

The Evansville Water & Sewer Utility Department recently surveyed hundreds of customers that regularly interact with the Department. The results were overwhelmingly positive for the level of customer service provided.

With us today is the individual directly responsible, **Linda Edwards**, our Customer Service Manager, provides the day to day leadership that enable the Utility to achieve such a high customer satisfaction score.

Under **Allen Mount’s** leadership, the Utility Department has implemented new billing software. This will allow customers the ability to view and pay their bills online beginning this summer.

One of the more visible city services had a major overhaul in the past year.

The new trash and recycling program has resulted in over 80,000 new carts being distributed to Evansville residents and at the same time, the fee for those services was reduced by \$1.50 a month.

Coming into office, my top local transportation priority was a full cloverleaf at the US 41/Lloyd Expressway Interchange. The revised plan of adding more stoplights to US 41 with a partial cloverleaf was simply unacceptable.

Through direct negotiations with the Indiana Department of Transportation, and ingenuity on the part of **City Engineer Pat Keepes and Assistant Engineer Chris Cottom**, approximately \$9 million in savings for the project was identified due to a local drainage alternative.

In addition to a local investment by the Metropolitan Planning Organization, the City and INDOT reached an agreement on a full cloverleaf, which is set for a bid letting this summer and construction this fall.

The Engineer's Department also completed construction improvements at the Lincoln Avenue and Green River Road intersection, which was 2 months ahead of schedule.

\$1 million was invested in sidewalk repairs, which are scheduled for completion by July. These improvements are spread throughout the city and locations were finalized after coordination with each City Council member individually.

It was truly a collaborative effort between the Administration and Council.

For the first time in our city's history, streets were pre-treated with brine prior to winter weather events.

When the factory informed the city that the brining equipment could not be delivered until sometime in 2013, mechanics **Mike Wiemer and Dave McKasson** in Street Maintenance took the initiative to build the necessary equipment from parts purchased in local hardware stores to pre-treat roads for the 2012-2013 winter season.

Todd Robertson and his team in the Transportation Services Department performed well in our first winter weather events and are taking steps for continuous improvement.

The Metropolitan Evansville Transportation System (METS) has had great success with the redesigned north US 41 bus route. Instead of making only six stops along the route, the bus now makes 51 stops – 32 regular stops including one at the new North High School – and 19 stops “on call” as needed.

And ridership has skyrocketed. From October 4, 2011 through February 12, 2012...when the route first started...only 607 people rode the bus during that 4 month period.

But, during the one-year period since the route was enhanced, ridership was 13,765!

Our Finance Department has received much attention in our first year in office and their work to complete the conversion of the new financial software program should be applauded.

A key task in that process was full reconciliation of all bank accounts, which was the primary responsibility of **Anita Martin**. Anita has made an outstanding contribution to this effort, as she inherited a difficult situation and corrected numerous problems.

While Anita is recognized today, she represents a Finance Department that puts in long hours and performs well under public scrutiny.

The creation of a four page “citizen’s budget” was a new tool developed by the Finance Department in an effort to explain city finances in an easy-to-read format.

Most importantly, the City’s finances remain strong and have been reinforced by various rating agency’s reaffirmation of bond ratings. Moody’s Investors Service reaffirmed ratings for the Evansville Arena Lease Rental Revenue bonds and the Evansville Sewage Works Utility bonds.

At the same time, Standard & Poor’s reaffirmed the AA minus rating for the Evansville Park’s District bond.

Moody’s described the city’s financial obligations as being of “high quality” and cited the city’s “growth in the manufacturing sector, with expansions planned at Berry Plastics and Toyota.”

They said the city’s growth in the Downtown area is expected to continue as well, with an upscale hotel connecting to the Ford Center arena and The Centre.

Again, thank you to City Controller Russ Lloyd, Jr. and his staff for keeping our city finances strong.

At Swonder Ice Arena, **Bill Nadeu** is leading an effort to move the Parks Department to a new computerized point of sale system that will improve efficiency and customer service.

Instead of tracking rentals, reservations, inventories and sales manually using paper records, information can now be entered into the point of sale system and tracked online. Bill and staff are working hard to get the system fully implemented by summer.

The Parks Department has taken a lead role in coordinating the Energize Evansville initiative, which is the monthly program held in our parks to promote fitness and exercise.

We’ve averaged over 25 participants each month since the program launched last May. Our Energize Evansville Fitness in the Park partnership with Push-Ups for Charities drew nearly 300 people to the Evansville State Hospital in an attempt to break the Guinness World Record for the most people doing continuous pushups for 90 seconds.

Another Energize Evansville partnership with Healthier Evansville and WNIN attracted more than 2-thousand people to the city’s first-ever Streets Alive! A nearly 2-mile stretch of Fulton Avenue was filled that day with people exercising and visiting booths offering health and fitness information and healthy foods.

The Pigeon Creek Greenway continues to expand and now stretches 6.7 miles from Sunrise Park to the Heidelberg Canoe Launch. The trail received recognition at the state level in January when it was named Indiana’s “Trail of the Year” by the Indiana Greenways Foundation.

Lloyd Pool underwent significant renovations in 2012 to the tune of more than \$200,000. That included a new pool liner, repairs to the sun deck, repainting the locker room and installing new

heaters and repairing leaks. The city has also begun discussions to determine Lloyd Pool's long term future.

Looking at community development efforts, **Carolyn Rusk**, the Evansville Brownfields Coordinator, has worked for over 10 years with the Indiana Department of Environmental Management, insurance companies and attorneys to clean up and remove one of the city's most blighted structures.

This year, her efforts paid off and a \$1.2 million lawsuit over contamination at the former Swanson Nunn Electric Company site on SE Eighth Street was settled.

The insurance funds are now in hand and will be used to demolish the structure and remediate the contaminated site beginning with demolition of the building this summer.

The Department of Metropolitan Development has spearheaded efforts to make significant repairs and modifications to the historic Old Post Office Building in preparation for a new substantial tenant with the Social Security Adjudication offices.

Additionally, DMD administered over \$2 million in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds through 24 local agencies serving over 30,000 Evansville residents from infant daycare, youth employment programs, meals on wheels to programs supporting the Tri-State Food Bank.

To each of the 1,506 full-time and part-time employees of city government, I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you for your public service. Every day is a team effort in city hall.

Without a doubt, momentum is in our favor and if you remember nothing else from my remarks today, know that **Evansville's time is now.**

Upon reflection, it can be concluded that last year was a period of transition, clearing the city's plate of long-standing issues or projects. 2013 is a time to make decisions on the path forward.

Now is the time to plan and develop a phased plan to build Roberts Park and create new synergy with Wesselman Nature Preserve, Wesselman Park and the Evansville State Hospital grounds.

If you have driven east on the Lloyd lately, the old Roberts Stadium lot is changing dramatically and will soon be an empty lot. We've heard from residents and we've done our homework.

Experts agree that the best use of that property is green space. An improved quality of life is directly linked to economic development, thus signifying the larger scale benefits of this type of amenity to the community.

Here with us today is one of the inspirations for the park concept, **Ms. Barbara Dye**, who attended public hearings held by the Roberts Stadium Task Force and submitted a detailed drawing of what Roberts Park could be.

I am so glad that she could be here today and be a part of the effort to move the park forward.

With a \$150,000 planning grant secured by the Welborn Baptist Foundation, we have a unique opportunity to develop a phased multi-year approach to create Evansville's own version of "Central Park," with direct, recreational linkage to Wesselman Park and the state hospital grounds.

Now is the time to organize and assemble grassroots support for a new Interstate 69 bridge over the Ohio River.

Decades ago, individuals such as **Rolland Eckles, Wayne Henning, John Schwartz, Randy Rohlfer, Bob Koch** and many others began efforts to lobby and advocate for Interstate 69.

We owe them a great deal of thanks and their work was rewarded with the ribbon cutting last year.

I am so pleased to have my friend, **Henderson Mayor Steve Austin** is here today, as we have made a commitment to take a leadership role in advocacy for a new bridge, which would further increase connectivity between our communities.

We must start now for our future generations to fully experience the benefits of Interstate 69.

Now is the time to capitalize on the excitement of downtown Evansville.

With the thriving success of the Ford Center and the adjacent Centre, the missing link is a convention hotel.

According to the Convention & Visitors Bureau, Evansville has great potential, in terms of increasing convention business and further events downtown with a new hotel.

The City just hosted the Great Lakes Valley Conference Tournament at the Ford Center, which attracted 6,000 attendees downtown and will host the Division II Elite Eight next year.

We've been successful in demonstrating to the NCAA that Evansville is ready for additional events and a new convention hotel is integral to making it happen.

The city is currently in negotiations with HCW, out of Branson, Missouri, an experienced hotel developer.....for a new convention hotel.

It is our hope that a development agreement will be reached in the near future with a potential ground-breaking this summer.

Looking long-term, the city is excited about the potential downtown medical campus, which would attract even more jobs and development.

I'd like to recognize **Dr. Steven Becker**, director and associate dean of the Evansville IU School of Medicine, who is in the audience today.

Dr. Becker is leading a committee that plans to expand the IU Medical School program in Evansville. The decision by Indiana University to grow the current 2-year program at USI to a 4-year program is a tremendous opportunity for our community and the entire Tri-State region.

Consultants recently recommended downtown Evansville as the preferred location and city officials are working to make that happen. While the official time-table for completion is undetermined, IU has made the decision to expand the program with intent to make initial request of state funding in 2015.

The addition of the school and medical education campus would truly be a transformational project in the downtown area.

Now is the time to embrace our evolving community.

Recent studies talk about the increasing diversification of the U.S. population, and Evansville is no different.

At a recent news conference in my office I introduced members of the Latino Advisory Committee to the public and announce plans for Fiesta Evansville, a Latino Summit and the second annual HOLA Gala.

My office has continued support for Evansville's Celebration of Diversity Lecture Series. This year's special guests will include singer, song writer and philanthropist John Legend on April 23 at The Centre.

In September, the series will spotlight Leigh Anne and Sean Tuchy, whose heart-warming story of adopting an African American athlete was featured in the movie the "Blind Side."

My office continues to reach out to the homeless community through support of the annual Homeless Connect and the new Veterans Reintegration Program launched in 2012 by ECHO Housing Corporation.

And the Human Relations Commission continues to work to promote inclusion. That is extremely important because in order to promote economic development, cities must be welcoming to all people.

Now is the time to further eliminate the remaining red tape in city government.

In our first week in office, we partnered with City Council to amend several ordinances related to building plans, permits and associated fees.

It's time to take the next step and identify other areas for improvement.

The Mayor's office will spear-head a new initiative focused on **"Doing Business with the City."**

Ben Miller's team at the Building Commission has been in conversations with **Daniela Vidal** with the University of Southern Indiana's Division of Outreach and Engagement on ways to streamline services.

Today, I am glad to announce a new partnership with USI to support a Lean program for the City of Evansville in 2013. Lean is the philosophy that is embedded in an organization's culture, it is about continuous learning and everyday focused improvements.

Steps to implement comprehensive multi-department permitting have been identified and are key components in efforts to make it easier for builders and developers to navigate local government with ease.

Already, I meet monthly with the Southern Indiana Builders Association to listen to concerns while seeking solutions to existing problems. Bringing parties together to discuss issues is half the battle.

Lastly, we often hear that many building codes are cumbersome and unnecessary. The duplications between state and local governments are a continued problem, particularly when a business wants to expand facilities or build new buildings.

We're doing our part on the local level and the next step is changing state laws to allow local decision-making that will eliminate burdensome duplication.

"Doing Business with the City" will be an ongoing initiative for continuous improvement as described in Lean philosophy.

Without a doubt, there are new challenges on the horizon, but they are largely temporary and it is incumbent on us to find solutions or change the program based on circumstances.

Just recently, I was reminded by **Pat Keepes**, our City Engineer, of some guidance that I gave at our first cabinet meeting during our first week in office.

Pat still had these notes posted on his wall that will remain as principles of my administration;

- Punctuality
- Honesty
- Nice Matters
- Open Discussions

- “Rip the band-aide off”
- Don’t panic
- Stay grounded
- Customer service
- Employee engagement
- Have fun
- Be responsive to City Council

Looking forward, it is critical to keep perspective when faced with adversity.

Like thousands of other cities across the United States, Evansville is under mandate by the Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Justice to improve wastewater systems and curb overflow of raw sewage from combined sewers into waterways.

As a result of the Clean Water Act of 1972, the city must develop a long term plan to control combined sewer overflows, consistent with applicable water standards.

The Evansville Sewer & Water Utility has developed a draft plan called Renew Evansville to ensure smart investments in our wastewater system, while meeting the requirements of the federal mandate.

As the city must submit a final plan by May 31st, public hearings will take place in early May. **It is clear that this federal mandate will dwarf any other major project undertaken by our city.**

While the need is present and the mandate is clear, I will make sure the federal government recognizes the financial burden that will be placed on rate payers. Affordability is an issue that I can and will fight for on the citizen’s behalf.

Correcting misinformation is a challenge that we attempt to overcome daily. I’ve often said this misinformation makes a difficult job even more difficult.

Our administration is exploring new ways to communicate directly with the public, and we encourage citizens to utilize social media such as Twitter and Facebook. In fact, excerpts from today’s speech are being posted live on Twitter using the handle @EvansvilleINGov.

The new www.evansville.in.gov website was unveiled this past year and we continue to use our You Tube channel to relay news and information first hand.

The opportunities for citizen input are numerous and I encourage citizens to take advantage. Whether it is a road hearing, monthly traveling city hall meeting with all of our department heads, we want your feedback.

This past year, the City partnered with Leadership Evansville to create VOICE, a citywide visioning program to allow participants to opportunity to sit down in an open environment and share their ideas and suggestions for an ideal future. To date, there have been 23 sessions held in all parts of the city with nearly 1,500 participants.

Even with our challenges, I remain optimistic for Evansville's next 200 years.

Our Clean Evansville initiative is a shining example of citizens working with a sense of pride in their city. Special thanks to Keep Evansville Beautiful, Allied Waste/Republic Services, and our Clean Evansville Committee for their efforts.

To date, volunteers have picked up over 20,000 lbs. trash during our monthly clean-ups. It is a never-ending job and our office receives calls weekly on new locations that need attention. I ask that you join me in this important effort to rid our city of trash.

I'm often asked about the stress of the job or the long hours. **It is all true, but the reward of coming to work every day, making decisions to improve our city is truly special.**

The job of mayor comes with daily highlights, including the opportunity to visit local schools.

When I have that occasional rough day, I look to those encounters for perspective. As an example, here are two letters from the Scott School second grade class to whom I spoke.

"Dear Mayor, I was so happy you came to our school. It was very fun to have you come. You are nice and I will pick up 3 pieces of trash so I will be a leader. It was fun to have you come and talk to the 2nd grade. You help decide how to spend money for things in Evansville. It was excellent for you to come. I enjoyed you talking to us. Sincerely, Sydney"

"Dear Mayor, I was so excited that you could come here and talk to us. My favorite part was that you won Dancing with the Stars on your first try. I hope you become mayor again because I like the way you run Evansville. Do you have someone who picks up trash? Who was your favorite teacher at school? What is your favorite place to eat besides Turonis? As you can see, I wrote a lot of questions so if you can answer all of them, please send me a letter back and please don't write in cursive. Your friend, Drew"

These letters are a reason that I am optimistic for our future.

With all my heart, I believe in the citizens of Evansville. I ask the citizens of Evansville to continue believing in themselves and believe in our great city.