

State of City Address
East Chicago Public Safety Facility
Thursday, March 15, 2007

Slide State of City

Slide MC Mary Leonard

10:17 Mayor George Pabey

Thank you Mary. I would also like to thank Just Friends and Mr. Ronnei G. for leading us in prayer and the national Anthem.

(SHORT PAUSE – Drink of Water)

Good morning and thank you all for joining me this morning and allowing me the opportunity to share my report on the State of our City and a vision for the coming year.

SLIDE NED RUFF

Before I begin, I would like to ask that you join me in a moment of silence for a man who played an important role in rebuilding our City. Attorney Ned Ruff was a true friend and now we honor his memory. **(10 Second Delay)**

Thank You!

Ladies and Gentlemen, I stand before you today and proudly tell you ***Our City is now financially and economically strong and growing even stronger!***

Together we are Reaching New Heights!

Two years ago, when I first took office, I promised that I would open city government to the citizens of East Chicago so that they would be able to recognize it as their government.

Slide This change started with the basic elements of rebuilding a dynamic City. Together, we have reached new heights by:

- Improving Public Safety,
- Developing an Interactive School System,
- Revitalizing Economic Development,
- Creating Jobs and Opportunities,
- Restoring Our Parks, and
- Providing Quality Services and Programs,

Many individuals in this room today have worked with me to keep that very promise. As a result this City has undergone a remarkable transformation.

Slide Council I would like to recognize the members of the East Chicago Common Council. Thank you for your commitment to East Chicago. Please stand and be recognized.

Slide D Heads To my Department Heads-Together, we have worked tirelessly to provide outstanding services to our community each and every day. I am extremely proud of you all, Please Stand.

Slide Take a look around our City and you will see:

- New buildings have been built,
- New infrastructure projects have been completed or are currently underway such as a city-wide truck route repair program.
- Our parks have been restored,
- New curbs, sidewalks, and parkway repairs, and drainage corrections,
- Old buildings are being rehabbed or replaced.

Slide We have done all of this with a responsible government. For the past two years we have been accountable to our City by:

- Responsibly spending gaming revenue,
- Gaining control of our finances,
- Reaching out to each homeowner by providing over \$1,500 in Property tax relief in the past two years.

Saving million of dollars by defending the city in the three major litigations which include:

- In the transfer station case, we terminated the contract and took the station back.
- Under the Racketeer Influence Corrupt Organization Act, we will not have to pay the attorney fees of the former city officials sued by the Attorney General under the RICO act.
- In the medical waste facility case, we were sued by the medical waste company that wanted to open a facility and won. As long as I am Mayor I will fight against our City becoming a dumping ground.

THIS IS DEFINITELY A NEW EAST CHICAGO!

**SLIDE East Chicago is Reaching New Heights, because we are:
IMPROVING PUBLIC SAFETY**

I have always stated that the safety of our neighborhoods remains one of my highest priorities.

I want to particularly thank the brave men and women who serve our Police, Fire and EMS. We are proud of your commitment to protecting and serving the people of East Chicago.

Please stand.

By building partnerships with the FBI, DEA, and the ATF, our police department has filed cases at the federal level. With their assistance and our pro-active

approach against crime, we have had a higher percentage of convictions and longer jail terms.

Slide These collaborations have led to:

- 30 Federal Drug and Gun Indictments in the City
- 10 Investigations before the Grand Jury
- 360 felony charges filed in State Court
- 20 Federal and State Search Warrants initiated by our Gang/Narcotics Unit
- 568 Misdemeanor cases filed in City Court
- 165 Firearms were taken off the streets and 40 gun permits were revoked.

What does this mean?

Slide Our commitment to public safety will remain a top priority to this administration.

I guarantee that no effort will be spared to ensure the safety of our streets, our schools and our neighborhoods. We all know the challenges our City faces, and we will continue to meet those needs aggressively.

Slide Because of that very commitment, next month we will place 11 new police officers on our streets.

We will do it block-by-block, day-by-day, and hour-by-hour. And we will succeed in making East Chicago one of the safest communities in which to live and raise a family.

**Slide East Chicago is Reaching New Heights, because we are:
DEVELOPING AN ACTIVE LEARNING SCHOOL SYSTEM**

A couple of months ago School City Superintendent Dr. Juan Anaya and I discussed the creation of a Learning Community Center for Students and Adults that would provide technology based education.

Slide It gives me great satisfaction to announce today that the City of East Chicago has agreed to work with the School City, Ivy Tech and local industry for the creation of a Learning Community Center.

Slide This technology center will directly benefit our entire city to develop the learning skills necessary to enrich their own lives and those of their families.

Slide We will convert a 12,000 square foot warehouse into a state of the art facility, which will also house the JET Program.

Our resources will be shared with the School City as well as our entire community.

This project will begin next month and will be completed by October 2007.

Slide The Center will consist of:

- Large meeting rooms with a high definition wireless technology enabling participants to access presentations
- Two meeting rooms that will be able to host up to 32 participants that includes a retractable wall that will host up to 64 participants as needed
- Lap top computers with internet accessibility

Local architects have designed the facility and we will make sure East Chicago contractors build it. The contract will be given to local contractors in order to sustain our commitment to creating jobs and economic development

**Slide East Chicago Reaching New Heights, because we are:
REVITALIZING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

In our community, economic development will come only by recognizing the potential advantages of new and existing companies.

Slide Many new and existing businesses have recently invested or reinvested in our great city.

- Mittal Steel has invested \$10 million in our City with their Research and Development Center
- Dr. James Fergusson rehabbed an old church and invested over \$450,000 to construct his new family Eye Center
- Sterks, Walgreens, and Citizens Financial Services have also made long term commitments to East Chicago.
- A new Dunkin' Donuts now operates on Columbus and Grand.
- Union Tank Car Company invested over \$750,000 to improve production efficiency
- 2006 attracted over 25 new businesses in East Chicago
- BP Amoco made major headlines with their \$13 billion expansion which means the creation of thousands of employment opportunities

In 2006, we introduced many new concepts for our North Harbor Revitalization Effort.

Slide Photos Our local businesses have played an active role in this redevelopment process as they set up an Indiana Harbor Business Merchant Association. They have teamed with our developers in choosing desirable amenities including:

Slide

- Light fixtures
- Street furniture, and
- Parking Amenities

We encouraged the support of these important businesses because they have a vested interest in the revitalizing downtown Harbor.

This is their “home” and we plan on keeping it that way.

Over the next two years, we will significantly revitalize this historic area. We began in January and will continue in three phases through 2008.

Slide Phase One is expected to be completed in April and will include:

- New asphalt pavement,
- New water, sanitary and storm water sewer systems from main street North of Broadway to Guthrie.

Phase Two will begin in March 2007 and is scheduled to be completed in November 2007. It focuses on Main Street from Guthrie to 138th Street and on Broadway from Fir to Pulaski.

Slide This work will include:

- New sidewalks,
- New trees,
- A new amenity zone,
- New street furniture such as garbage cans and benches,
- New water, sanitary and storm water sewers,
- New asphalt pavement,
- New concrete curbs and gutters.

Phase Three will take place in March 2008 on Broadway from Fir Street to Michigan Avenue and from Pulaski to Martin Luther King Drive and on Main Street from 138th to Columbus Drive.

Main Street will also be transformed from a one-way street to a two-way street between Broadway and 238th.

This North Harbor development will create a more pedestrian friendly environment and allow restaurants the opportunity to offer outdoor seating. The sidewalks will be widened from 5 to 8 feet and an additional four feet will house new benches and garbage cans.

For added safety measures, new metal halide lights will be located closer together making the street significantly brighter.

Further enhancing the area's safety, the Police Department has committed to increase patrols and a new emergency call box will be installed at the southwest corner of Main and Broadway.

**Slide East Chicago Is Reaching New Heights, because we are:
CREATING JOBS AND OPPORTUNITY**

Last year, I introduced our JET (Jobs, Education and Training) Program that was designed assist our residents in developing careers.

We began with a handful of individuals that were enrolled in our pilot program. Today I proudly announce that we have assisted over 100 community residents with employment opportunities in 2006.

We are doing more than finding people jobs, we are helping them develop careers!

Slide Take a look at these men and women who have been impacted by our JET Program. They are:

- Certified Nursing Assistants
- Carpenters
- Iron workers
- Welders Slide
- Painters
- Technicians
- Millwrights, and
- Plumbing apprentices

Slide We have been meeting and building relationships with local employers including:

- Bp Amoco,
- Mittal Steel,
- Safety Kleen,
- Northwest Indiana Building Trades,
- Praxair,
- Nipsco,
- St. Catherine, Union Tank

I would like to thank these businesses for supporting our community with their ideas, their time, and their financial support.

By creating innovative programs with strong partners, this JET Program will continue to create hundreds of new jobs for Eat Chicago residents and will result in great opportunities for economic development in our City and our entire region.

Slide East Chicago is Reaching New Heights, because we are:

RESTORING OUR PARKS

To build strong communities, we must have healthy environments.

Slide In August, we celebrated a grand opening for the first phase of McArthur Park.

For years, our children and families had traveled to neighboring towns for miniature golf and batting cages.

NOT ANYMORE!

Slide MacArthur Park is now home to a nine-hole state of the art miniature golf course. It is now equipped with professional five stall batting cages. This spring, we will refurbish our nine-hole golf course and bring it back to life for the first time in years.

Slide Take a good look at our youth, why can't the next Tiger Woods or another Kenny Lofton come from East Chicago, Indiana?

The renovation of Tod Park is also a project of which we can be proud. It's no secret; the plans for this park have been going on for years.

Slide This state of the art park is equipped with:

- New Basketball Courts
- New Soccer Fields
- New California Style Volleyball Courts
- A Gazebo for Outside Events such as Concerts and Plays, and
- New Playground Equipment

We will have the best parks in the state of Indiana.

They are extremely important to the development of our community. Our children and families deserve a safe haven to play, learn and grow.

And that is exactly what they will get. Just take a look around and see for yourself.

Growth is happening right before your very eyes.

Last summer, we held several meetings at the Clemente Center with Community leaders regarding the revitalization of Nunez and Callahan Park.

Slide Neighboring churches, neighboring businesses, The Clemente Center, Lincoln Elementary School, area residents joined to participate in work sessions

where we discussed, designed and helped to create two new wonderful parks that will benefit our entire community.

OUR people are building OUR parks! Who better to do this job than those who live, play, learn and grow in them.

This administration is accountable to our city residents and we will continue to honor our community's best interests, especially with regards to safety.

**Slide East Chicago is Reaching New Heights, because we are:
PROVIDING QUALITY SERVICES and PROGRAMS**

Slide In 2005, we were all devastated by the unexpected destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina. I will never forget how our community joined together to raise over \$20,000 and another \$50,000 in clothing, food, water, and supplies.

Slide This year, tragedy struck a little closer to home. As pouring rains devastated Northwest Indiana last August, our City once again maximized its resources to provide quality services to our residents.

- Our City was the first to contact the state and Declare a State of Emergency
- We assisted Senior Citizens with Utility issues
- We worked diligently with FEMA
- We set up a Crisis management Team that bombarded the air waves with necessary information
- Our government channel was updated regularly with important messages
- We were in direct contact with the Governor's Office
- Our Crisis Management Team worked tirelessly to help seniors and those with disabilities
 - Document damage
 - Take Communication Accessible

I'll never forget that week because this entire community made me proud to serve as its leader. As I drove through the City, I saw young helping out old, neighbors with minimal damage helping those with major problems.

I saw East Chicago working as a supportive community.

Out of the devastation, came great compassion and warmth.

Along with great services, our City has also provided valuable programs.

Slide There is no greater feeling than to see a young child's smiling faces. Expect for seeing over 6,000 smiling faces laughing and singing as part of our Feed the Future Program.

Slide For the past two years, Students from Kindergarten to 8th graded have filled Central's gymnasium with commanding energy and excitement as Santa Clause, Koko Taylor, Boxing Champ "Bone Crusher Smith," and others have given our kids a Christmas they will **NEVER** forget.

Last year, winners of a special raffle received lap top computers encouraging the importance of education and learning.

Slide Along with our fantastic Christmas Parade, this year we added live theater productions of "It's a Wonderful Life," and the "Urban Nutcracker" to our exciting lists of holiday festivities. We provided hundreds of complimentary tickets to senior citizens, community organizations, and schools, in order to expose our community to the arts.

Slide Our office also partnered with YO.EC (Youth of East Chicago) to bring the enthusiastic spirit of American Idol to our community. Sophomore Roderick Brown, a member of the Central Choir, won the first East Chicago SuperStar as he stunned audiences with his rendition of "My Funny Valentine." This kid is amazing! He also performed in Feed the Future, and our Black History Salute to African American Music.

We will continue to support our youth and their dreams!

Slide Our culture is another reason to celebrate East Chicago. Our City's diversity is the very backbone of our community.

Our Public Library, who I might add is operating efficiently with 65 employees as opposed to 109 in 2003, is committed to displaying exhibits showcasing East Chicago's impressive cultural diversity and art.

With our successful Mexican, Puerto Rican Parades and Black History Month celebrations, we continue to celebrate our culture.

Last month we concluded our Black History Celebration with a Concert that brought the Legendary Opals back to East Chicago to perform together for the first time in over 40 years.

(SHORT PAUSE-WATER BREAK)

Now THAT we have taken a look at our many of our accomplishments, let's take a few minutes to share a vision of our future.

We just received a federal grant from Homeland Security for install warning sirens throughout the city.

Slide

- Next month we will officially break ground for construction of the long awaited Railroad Avenue Overpass
 - It will offer pedestrian sidewalks, decorative lighting and walls.
 - It will allow emergency vehicles to avoid delays caused by passing trains.
 - The city has already begun acquiring property and site preparation will begin this spring.
 - This project is set to be completed in Spring 2008 and is a \$9 million project, with 80% of funds coming from federal sources.
 - **And most importantly – IT WIL HAPPEN!**

In May, we will begin Phase One of our Block Stadium Renovation. This will include:

- A New Grand Entrance
- New bathroom facilities
- New ticket booth and concession stands

Last month, the East Chicago Water Board approved borrowing necessary funds to build our much needed water filtration plant.

Water is one of our most cherished natural resources and our community deserves quality drinking water.

AND WE WILL PROVIDE IT!

Slide Our lakefront is another ongoing project. Last year we opened the beach for public swimming for the first time in over 10 years. We will continue to provide a beautiful beachfront experience for our community, as we will:

- Expand a beach boardwalk from East Chicago to Gary,
- Provide retail opportunities, and
- Incorporate easier access from our local neighborhood.

(PAUSE 5 seconds FOR CONCLUSION)

Slide-Montage

This is definitely an exciting time to be in East Chicago. We will continue to work together to move this City forward and to ensure the very brightest future for all of our citizens.

I renew the promise I made to the people of East Chicago when I first became Mayor-the promise to build an even better and stronger City.

With your support and with God's help,
I WILL CONTINUE TO KEEP THAT VERY PROMISE.

One thing I realized very early on is that great change can never be accomplished from one particular person or program, it takes the will and passion of countless voices, working together to make a difference.

There is a wonderful pride and enthusiasm in the City. Everywhere I go I am simply amazed how many people's roots came from East Chicago that still have relatives here.

Just mentioning East Chicago makes people's eyes light up with excitement and pride as they instantly take a trip down memory lane as if it were yesterday.

I was extremely proud this past weekend to hear about the success of our Men's Basketball team. Over 4,000 East Chicago fans packed Michigan City's gymnasium to root OUR team to victory! And we will do the same this weekend in Lafayette as win the Semi-State Title.

We are all in this together.

We all want to see East Chicago flourish. Together, we are all leading the charge for positive change. I strongly encourage and challenge each and every one of you to involve yourself in our City's rebirth.

As we conclude, I would like to share with you a video recapturing inspirational moments of 2006. Sit back and enjoy!

Video

Once again, I would like to thank you for your time and attention today as I shared with you:

A reminder of yesterday,
A look at today, and
A vision for tomorrow!

Together we have accomplished a great deal but as I said before, And I will continue to state with your continuing support.
The Best Is Yet To Come!

THANK YOU AND MAY GOD BLESS EAST CHICAGO!