

I would like to take this opportunity to formally welcome you to the City of Bethlehem. Most of you know that Bethlehem is often referred to as the Christmas City, but I can assure you that Bethlehem is open for business year round. Bethlehem is well on its way to full recovery from industrial decline, but there still is much more to do. I think the Chamber personifies the power of partnerships and I recognize that to continue to move Bethlehem forward we must partner with the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce, the Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation, LVIP, the DBA, and our small businesses and non-profits to maximize our private enterprise potential.

My core beliefs and values of accessibility, accountability, partnership, public safety and fiscal discipline will be the guiding principles for my first year in office. I feel strongly that the business of city government will need to be conducted in an open and transparent manner in order to facilitate public input and the cooperation of city council.

In my first 50 days in office, I set an aggressive schedule for myself meeting with many community partners. My door has been open for St. Luke's Hospital, Lehigh Valley Hospital, Moravian College, Lehigh

University, Northampton Community College and the list goes on. I wanted to meet with these groups to build strong relations where we could formulate a middle ground in advancing their mission but also benefiting the city.

First and foremost, Bethlehem city government will be open and accessible under my leadership. In addition to meeting with community leaders, I established an open door policy, the second Monday of each month, where residents can come and discuss their issues with the Mayor. I am pleased to announce that 15 residents came to city hall two weeks ago.

Quality of life issues in our neighborhoods will receive particular attention. I will seek to form public private partnerships that can enhance overall code enforcement efforts in Bethlehem so that we can assure that the health and welfare of our residents is maintained through rigorous code enforcement.

It is my goal to hold quarterly town hall meetings, conduct neighborhood walks where various department heads will be joining me in identifying violations and inspecting many areas of our city to ensure our neighborhoods are not neglected and our housing stock is

not being ignored. This will conclude with a town meeting for the residents to bring their concerns directly to the Mayor and his department heads.

Throughout this year, I have called upon my department heads to work together to improve our city's website to further open access to our residents and partners to the city of Bethlehem. I feel our present website is antiquated in serving our community and needs a total overhaul. The website needs to accommodate developers, residents and businesses to have equal access to identify questions that they may have on how to function and operate in our city. Our residents should be able to pay their bills, purchase swim passes for city pools, and book reserve times for the ice skating rink all through the city website. Presently, this is not the case and this must and will be updated.

Many cities have struggled with municipal finances during the past five years. In Bethlehem city government, we must find a way to live within our means just like families do in their households during challenging financial times. Families meet those challenges by taking a number of steps to operate efficiently and economically and likewise city government will need to take some kind of approach in

order to work itself back onto sound financial footing. Borrowing is not the proper way to balance a budget. During the next few weeks, I will be announcing the formation of a financial advisory task force to work with the administration in developing ways to reduce costs, streamline city operations and focus on delivering essential services. It is my intent to reduce the need for outside consultants. I believe that the Lehigh Valley has qualified legal and investment companies to serve our needs. This will result in further savings for the tax payers.

As many of you know, my father was a detective in the Bethlehem police department so I have a natural interest in assuring that the public safety in Bethlehem is second to none. As I look at our great city and the promise that it continues to hold for our citizens, I am very aware of the vital role that public safety has played in our past success and growth and the significant role it will continue to play in years to come. Public safety is a key component of economic development. It is my belief that public safety serves a vital role to promote the city's livability and ability to attract further economic growth. A safe Bethlehem attracts millions of visitors to enjoy our great city each year. A safe Bethlehem allows individuals to invest in

or relocate their business to our city. A safe Bethlehem allows individuals to raise a family within our city limits. A safe Bethlehem is fundamental to move our city forward.

An active and focused economic development effort is needed in Bethlehem to ensure our future growth and sustainability. Expanding the city's tax base through well thought out economic development initiatives will allow the city to continue to provide high level services to its residents. We need to continue to make Bethlehem an attractive place for new businesses to locate and existing businesses to expand. The department of community and economic development has been charged with developing a business retention strategy for existing businesses and a marketing plan that attracts new business investment. Shortly I will be announcing a business advisory task force to provide ideas regarding the business community and additionally give the administration an external view of how city policies are affecting the overall economic climate for business in our community. The city of Bethlehem has been successful in transforming its brown fields. At the end of last year, Bethlehem was awarded the city revitalization and improvement zone designation known locally as the CRIZ. This truly is a game changer for the city. It

enables the city to develop its most challenging parcels that are underutilized. The CRIZ will empower Bethlehem and its private sector partners to proceed with previously stalled and pending development projects that will further solidify Bethlehem's future.

I CAN ASSURE YOU....BETHLEHEM IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS!

I would like to walk you through some slides to highlight the financial stability and direction that our great city is heading.