

STATE OF THE CITY 2019

HILTON GARDEN INN SUFFOLK RIVERFRONT –

SUFFOLK CONFERENCE CENTER

MAY 21, 2019      NOON – 2:00 P.M.

SUFFOLK: COME GROW WITH US!

MAYOR: BLACK TEXT

INTRODUCTION PROVIDED BY ROBIN S. COOKE,  
PRESIDENT, PORTSMOUTH/SUFFOLK TOWNEBANK

*SLIDE TITLE – SUFFOLK: COME GROW WITH US!*

THANK YOU, ROBIN, FOR THE WARM INTRODUCTION. AND THANK YOU, TOWNEBANK, FOR YOUR COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY AND FOR YOUR CONTINUED EXPANSION OF YOUR CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS IN OUR CITY. CONGRATULATIONS TO TOWNEBANK ON BEING ONE OF THE *FASTEST GROWING* BANKS EVER CHARTERED IN VIRGINIA, AND BEING NAMED AMONG FORBES' 2019 BEST BANKS IN AMERICA!

TO ALL OF YOU, GOOD AFTERNOON AND THANKS FOR JOINING US FOR SUFFOLK'S STATE OF THE CITY! YOUR PRESENCE HERE TODAY GIVES ME GREAT CONFIDENCE THAT WE, COLLECTIVELY, ARE POISED TO REALIZE OPPORTUNITIES AND GROWTH FOR YEARS TO COME.

THE SUFFOLK STATE OF THE CITY IS PRESENTED BY THE **HAMPTON ROADS CHAMBER**, AND ON BEHALF OF EVERYONE HERE, I WOULD

LIKE TO SAY TO ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE CHAMBER – **THANK YOU.**

THEY LIVE UP TO THEIR TAGLINE EVERY DAY, AS ***THE CHAMBER MEANS BUSINESS!*** WE APPRECIATE YOUR EFFORTS IN PROMOTING OUR REGION AND OUR COMMUNITY AND YOUR TIRELESS DEDICATION IN HELPING BUSINESS OWNERS AND ENTREPRENEURS NETWORK, LEARN AND BUILD THEIR BUSINESS.

BEFORE I CONTINUE, I'D LIKE TO RECOGNIZE MY WONDERFUL FAMILY JOINING US TODAY – MY HUSBAND, JESSE, AND OUR SON TRIPP AND HIS LOVELY WIFE MARY. NOT WITH US TODAY – *OUR NEWEST ADDITION TO THE JOHNSON HOUSEHOLD* – OUR PRECIOUS SIX AND A HALF-MONTH OLD GRANDSON, JESSE! WITHOUT A DOUBT, THERE'S ONE THING THAT RINGS TRUE NOW MORE THAN AT ANY TIME IN MY LIFE, AND THAT IS THAT *WHILE WE TRY TO TEACH OUR CHILDREN ALL ABOUT LIFE, OUR CHILDREN TEACH US WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT!*

...

I WOULD LIKE TO ASK THAT OUR MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL STAND AND BE RECOGNIZED.

VICE MAYOR LEROY BENNETT, COUNCILMAN MIKE DUMAN, COUNCILMAN ROGER FAWCETT, COUNCILMAN DONALD GOLDBERG, COUNCILMAN TIM JOHNSON, COUNCILMAN CURTIS MILTEER, AND COUNCILMAN LUE WARD – WHILE YOU ALL HOLD DEAR THE DESIRES AND ISSUES WITHIN YOUR OWN INDIVIDUAL BOROUGHES, WE KNOW THAT THE

OVERARCHING SUCCESS AND VITALITY OF THE ENTIRE CITY AND THE BOUNDLESS POTENTIAL THAT LIES AHEAD FOR ALL OF US LIES IN THE FACT THAT WE WORK TOGETHER, EVEN THOUGH WE MIGHT NOT ALWAYS AGREE.

THERE IS ANOTHER INDIVIDUAL THAT DESERVES SPECIAL RECOGNITION TODAY, AND THAT IS OUR CITY MANAGER, PATRICK ROBERTS, AND I'D ASK THAT HE ALSO STAND AND BE RECOGNIZED.

PAT IS A MAN OF GREAT INTEGRITY AND EXEMPLIFIES ON A DAILY BASIS THE FOLLOWING QUOTE: *"BEFORE YOU ARE A LEADER, SUCCESS IS ALL ABOUT **GROWING YOURSELF**. WHEN YOU BECOME A LEADER, SUCCESS IS ALL ABOUT **GROWING OTHERS**".* HE HAS SURROUNDED HIMSELF WITH A STRONG LEADERSHIP TEAM OF EXPERIENCED, DEDICATED DEPARTMENT HEADS. I WOULD ASK THAT THOSE JOINING US TODAY, AS WELL AS THEIR FELLOW EMPLOYEES, ALSO STAND AND BE RECOGNIZED. I WITNESS FIRSTHAND EVERY DAY JUST HOW TALENTED AND DEDICATED THEY ARE, AND OUR COMMUNITY IS FORTUNATE TO BE SERVED BY THIS INCREDIBLE WORKFORCE.

IN CASE YOU WEREN'T AWARE, MAY IS RECOGNIZED AS NATIONAL MILITARY APPRECIATION MONTH. WHETHER ACTIVE DUTY OR RETIRED, PLEASE STAND AND BE RECOGNIZED.

THIS MONTH, AND ALWAYS, WE RECOGNIZE THE SACRIFICES OF THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES AND THOSE MEMBERS WHO HAVE SERVED

THROUGHOUT HISTORY AND ALL WHO NOW SERVE IN UNIFORM AND THEIR FAMILIES. WE ALSO HONOR THOSE AMERICANS WHO HAVE GIVEN THEIR LIVES IN THE DEFENSE OF OUR FREEDOMS WE ALL ENJOY TODAY. WE ARE PRIVILEGED THAT MORE THAN THREE THOUSAND MILITARY AND CIVILIAN PERSONNEL NOT ONLY WORK IN SUFFOLK AT THE NAVAL INFORMATION FORCES AND THE U.S. JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF, AMONG OTHERS, BUT THAT THOUSANDS ALSO CALL SUFFOLK HOME.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS, THEIR MISSION IS “TO PROVIDE COMBAT-READY INFORMATION WARFARE FORCES TO OPERATIONAL COMMANDERS, ASHORE AND AFLOAT, THAT ARE FORWARD DEPLOYABLE, FULLY TRAINED, PROPERLY MANNED, CAPABLY EQUIPPED, ALWAYS READY, WELL-MAINTAINED AND COMBAT SUSTAINABLE.” HOW PROUD WE ARE THAT THE DYNAMIC WORK THESE CYBER WARRIORS PERFORM TO ADVANCE AND PROTECT THE *ENTIRE COUNTRY* ACTUALLY TAKES PLACE IN OUR CITY.

AS I’M SURE YOU’RE ALL AWARE, PREPARING FOR OUR ANNUAL STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS ALLOWS GREAT REFLECTION ON NOT ONLY ALL OF THE EXCITING SUCCESS STORIES WE’VE EXPERIENCED OVER THE PAST YEAR, BUT ALSO TO REVIEW HOW WE’VE *SHARED* THESE MESSAGES WITH YOU IN PAST YEARS.

IT’S OFTEN SAID THAT WE HAVE THE MOST UNIQUE OF ALL OF THE STATE OF THE CITY EVENTS, AND FOLKS THAT ATTEND EVERY YEAR ESPECIALLY

LOOK FORWARD TO WHAT OUR MESSAGE WILL BE AND HOW IT'S DELIVERED.

LET'S SEE..... I'VE PARTICIPATED IN AN ASSEMBLY LINE SPIN-OFF OF A LAVERNE AND SHIRLEY INTRO..... I'VE RIDDEN ON A GARBAGE TRUCK..... LAST YEAR WE HONORED THOSE WHO HAVE INSPIRED ALL OF US..... AND I'VE EVEN "JUMPED" (AIR QUOTES) OUT OF AN AIRPLANE!

THERE IS A LOT OF WORK BY STAFF THAT GOES ON BEHIND THE SCENES PREPARING FOR THIS EVENT. OUR FOCUS IS ALWAYS TO HIGHLIGHT THE GREAT THINGS HAPPENING IN OUR CITY, BUT TODAY I WANT TO GIVE EVERYONE A SNEAK PEEK INTO WHAT GOES INTO THE PLANNING FOR THIS EVENT, AND HOW IT **GREW** INTO WHAT WE HAVE TODAY. LET'S HAVE SOME FUN TOGETHER...

(VIDEO – 3:15 MINUTES)

DON'T EVER LET IT BE SAID THAT I'M NOT UP TO A CHALLENGE! IF THERE'S ONE THING I'VE COME TO APPRECIATE OVER THE YEARS, IT'S THE KNOWLEDGE THAT INSPIRATION AND **GROWTH** ONLY COME FROM ADVERSITY AND FROM *CHALLENGE*, FROM *STEPPING AWAY FROM WHAT'S COMFORTABLE AND FAMILIAR*, AND *STEPPING OUT INTO THE UNKNOWN*.

AS A CITY, WE'VE ALSO DONE JUST THAT, AND WE HAVE A REMARKABLE SUCCESS STORY TO SHARE AS PEOPLE AND BUSINESSES ALIKE HAVE MADE THE DECISION TO **COME GROW WITH US!**

OUR POPULATION NUMBERS ARE GROWING ACCORDING TO THE U.S. CENSUS BUREAU. WE'VE RECORDED A STEADY POPULATION INCREASE EVERY YEAR SINCE 2012, AND WE'RE THE ONLY LOCALITY IN HAMPTON ROADS PROJECTED TO GROW TEN PERCENT OR MORE IN EACH DECADE BETWEEN 2000 AND 2040, ACCORDING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA'S WELDON COOPER CENTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICE. WE REMAIN ONE OF VIRGINIA'S FASTER-GROWING LOCALITIES.

WHEN IT COMES TO OUR FINANCIAL SUCCESS, WE KNOW THAT IF WE ***WORK ON OUR ROOTS, THE FRUITS WILL TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES!***

WE'VE AFFIRMED OUR TRIPLE AAA BOND RATINGS WITH STANDARD & POOR'S AND FITCH RATING AGENCIES, AND WE'RE SO CLOSE TO OUR **TRIPLE TRIPLE AAA** RATING FROM MOODY'S WE CAN ALMOST TASTE IT! WE'VE TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF OUR IMPROVED CREDIT STANDING AND HISTORIC LOW INTEREST RATES BY REFUNDING OUTSTANDING DEBT RESULTING IN COST SAVINGS OF CLOSE TO \$240 MILLION DOLLARS.

STAFF HAS AGGRESSIVELY PURSUED NON-CAPITAL PROJECT GRANTS AND SECURED MORE THAN \$2.78 MILLION DOLLARS IN GRANTS IN FISCAL YEAR 2018 ALONE, THUS ALLEVIATING SOME OF THE TAX BURDEN ON OUR CITIZENS.

JUST ONE WEEK AGO WE PASSED A BUDGET THAT NOT ONLY DOES EVERYTHING WE NEED TO DO FOR OUR CITIZENS; IT DOES SO WITHOUT IMPOSING A TAX INCREASE. WE HAVE INVESTED IN OUR

EMPLOYEES AND FULLY FUNDED THE REQUESTED BUDGET FOR SUFFOLK PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

WE TOTALLY UNDERSTAND THAT **“KNOWLEDGE IS LIKE A GARDEN; IF IT IS NOT CULTIVATED, IT CANNOT BE HARVESTED.”** IN FACT, LOCAL OPERATING FUNDS FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION HAS INCREASED BY MORE THAN \$10 MILLION DOLLARS IN THE LAST SIX YEARS, INCLUDING AN ADDITIONAL \$4 MILLION DOLLARS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2019.

WE’VE ALSO RECENTLY INVESTED MORE THAN \$60 MILLION DOLLARS TO BUILDING TWO NEW SCHOOLS WHICH OPENED THIS FALL: THE COLONEL FRED CHERRY MIDDLE SCHOOL AND THE FLORENCE BOWSER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.

OUR SCHOOLS ARE INDEED *LEADING THE WAY* FOR OUR YOUTH. LAKELAND HIGH SCHOOL RECENTLY EARNED THE PRESTIGIOUS NATIONAL PROJECT LEAD THE WAY DISTINGUISHED SCHOOL AWARD FOR THEIR PROGRAM IN BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES, AND NANSEMOND RIVER HIGH SHOOOL RECEIVED THE AWARD FOR THEIR ENGINEERING PROGRAM. HOW PROUD WE ARE THAT TWO OUT OF ONLY SIX SCHOOLS IN VIRGINIA TO RECEIVE THE AWARD ARE HERE IN SUFFOLK!

NO ONE COULD BE MORE PROUD OF THIS ACCOMPLISHMENT – AND THE MANY OTHERS SUFFOLK PUBLIC SCHOOLS HAS BEEN AWARDED THIS YEAR – THAN SUPERINTENDANT DR. DERAN WHITNEY. DR. WHITNEY, COULD YOU PLEASE STAND AND BE RECOGNIZED?

WRAPPING UP A TOTAL OF THIRTY YEARS IN EDUCATION, DR. WHITNEY ANNOUNCED HIS RETIREMENT EFFECTIVE THIS FALL, AS – IN HIS WORDS, HE “PASSES THE TORCH TO SOMEONE ELSE”. DR. WHITNEY, YOU’VE BEEN A BRIGHT LIGHT AND YOU’LL BE PASSING THE TORCH WITH THE FIRE BLAZING. PLEASE ACCEPT OUR HEARTFELT APPRECIATION FOR ALL THAT YOU HAVE DONE OVER THREE DECADES TO MAKE SURE OUR STUDENTS ARE TRULY PREPARED FOR THE FUTURE.

EQUALLY COMMITTED TO THE EDUCATION OF OUR YOUTH ARE THE MEMBERS OF THE SUFFOLK SCHOOL BOARD, AND I’D ASK THAT THEY PLEASE STAND AGAIN AND BE RECOGNIZED.

LIKEWISE HELPING TO “MAKE OUR STUDENTS SHINE” IS SUFFOLK’S CITY-WIDE TEACHER OF THE YEAR, PATRICIA WAEGERLE, ALSO JOINING US TODAY. PATRICIA, WOULD YOU PLEASE STAND?

AN EIGHTH GRADE MATH TEACHER AT THE BRAND NEW COLONEL FRED CHERRY MIDDLE SCHOOL, HER STUDENTS OPENLY ADMIT THAT THEY “LOVE HER LIKE SHE’S THEIR OWN MOM”, AND THAT “SHE KNOWS HOW TO MAKE MATH “CLICK” FOR THEM SO THAT THEY CAN UNDERSTAND IT IN THEIR OWN FUN WAY.” *LET ME JUST ADMIT THAT MOST OF US PROBABLY WISH WE HAD A TEACHER LIKE HER WHEN WE TOOK PRE-ALGEBRA!*

THERE’S A SAYING THAT, **“IT’S NOT WHAT IS POURED INTO A STUDENT THAT COUNTS, BUT WHAT IS PLANTED”**. PLANTING MORE THAN JUST THE SEEDS OF KNOWLEDGE IN OUR YOUTH IS THE

SUFFOLK BOYS & GIRLS CLUB, AND I'M PLEASED THAT JOINING US TODAY IS THE 2019 YOUTH OF THE YEAR REPRESENTING THE **ENTIRE** BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF SOUTHEAST VIRGINIA – SUFFOLK'S VERY OWN BRIELLE LITTLE. BRIELLE, WOULD YOU PLEASE STAND?

BRIELLE CONFESSES THAT SHE'S GONE FROM BEING A SHY GIRL TO A LEADER WHO IS HAVING A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE YOUNGER MEMBERS OF THE CLUB, AND AFTER COLLEGE PLANS TO JOIN THE U.S. AIR FORCE. BRIELLE – WE KNOW THE SKY'S THE LIMIT FOR YOU!

YOU'VE HEARD ME SAY IT BEFORE, AND I'LL SAY IT AGAIN – *THE QUALITY OF OUR LIFE* IN SUFFOLK IS ONLY SURPASSED BY THE *QUALITY OF OUR PEOPLE!*

JOINING US TODAY ARE THREE GENERATIONS OF DENTISTS WITH ALMOST ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF COMBINED EXPERIENCE WHO HAVE CARED FOR MULTIPLE GENERATIONS OF OUR CITIZENS. PLEASE WELCOME THE PATRIARCH OF THIS REMARKABLE FAMILY, DR. LEROY HOWELL; HIS SON, DR. RALPH HOWELL; AND THE NEWEST MEMBER OF THEIR PRACTICE, RALPH'S DAUGHTER DR. DANI HOWELL. WOULD YOU ALL PLEASE STAND?

WHILE THEIR MULTI-GENERATIONAL DENTAL PRACTICE IS IN ITSELF RARE, WHAT IS PERHAPS MOST AMAZING ABOUT THIS FAMILY IS THEIR COMMITMENT TO THE COMMUNITY THROUGH THEIR TIRELESS WORK AND UNWAVERING INVOLVEMENT IN THE MISSIONS OF MERCY PROJECT WHICH HAS BROUGHT FREE DENTAL CARE TO LITERALLY TENS OF

THOUSANDS OF INDIVIDUALS ACROSS VIRGINIA. THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU'VE DONE TO IMPACT THE LIVES OF SO MANY, AND FOR LITERALLY AND FIGURATIVELY BEING THE REASON THEY CAN **SMILE!**

IN RECENT YEARS I'VE SHARED WITH YOU HOW THE HEALTHCARE OPTIONS IN OUR CITY HAVE CONTINUED TO BLOSSOM AND FLOURISH, AND THIS YEAR IS NO DIFFERENT.

WITH SENTARA BELLEHARBOUR'S GROWING CAMPUS IN NORTH SUFFOLK FOLLOWING THE COMPLETION OF THEIR \$33.5 MILLION DOLLAR EXPANSION HOUSING A STATE-OF-THE-ART AMBULATORY SURGERY CENTER, NOT TO MENTION RENOVATIONS TO THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT IN THE ORIGINAL BUILDING, A NEW HELIPAD, AND MORE, QUALITY MEDICAL CARE HAS BEEN BROUGHT CLOSER TO PEOPLE IN THE NEIGHBORHOODS WHERE THEY LIVE.

SENTARA OBICI HOSPITAL'S EXPANDED CAMPUS CONTINUES A LEGACY OF PROVIDING RESIDENTS OF WESTERN TIDEWATER WITH HIGH-QUALITY, PATIENT-CENTERED CARE. THE HOSPITAL FULLY INTEGRATES ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES SUCH AS SENTARA ECARE®, THE SENTARA ELECTRONIC MEDICAL RECORD SYSTEM, WHICH GIVES DOCTORS IMMEDIATE ACCESS TO HEALTH INFORMATION VIA A SECURE NETWORK. ELECTRONIC MEDICAL RECORDS ENABLE BETTER COLLABORATION BETWEEN PHYSICIANS, ELEVATING THE LEVEL OF CARE FOR PATIENTS AT SENTARA OBICI HOSPITAL AND ACROSS SENTARA.

IN LATE DECEMBER, WE WERE PLEASED TO LEARN THAT BON SECOURS WILL BE BUILDING A NEW HOSPITAL IN NORTH SUFFOLK ON THE CAMPUS OF BON SECOURS HEALTH CENTER AT HARBOUR VIEW. PLEASE JOIN ME IN RECOGNIZING THOM PREVETTE, DIRECTOR, ADVOCACY & COMMUNITY RELATIONS, BON SECOURS VIRGINIA HEALTH SYSTEM. TOM, WOULD YOU PLEASE STAND?

AS OUR POPULATION HAS GROWN, BON SECOURS STATED THEIR NEXT LOGICAL STEP WAS TO BRING INPATIENT CARE TO THEIR CAMPUS, AND THE HARBOUR VIEW HOSPITAL, A \$77 MILLION DOLLAR, TWO-STORY FACILITY THAT WILL BE VIRGINIA'S FIRST INPATIENT FACILITY WITH A SURGICAL FOCUS, IS EXPECTED TO BE **OPERATIONAL** – PUN INTENDED – WITHIN TWO YEARS.

THE SUFFOLK HEALTH DEPARTMENT HAS ANNOUNCED THAT ONE OF THEIR VERY OWN HAS BEEN SELECTED FOR STATEWIDE RECOGNITION FOR PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE OF THE YEAR! CONGRATULATIONS TO YVONNE CREECH, WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE NURSING HOME SCREENING PROGRAM, ON THIS WONDERFUL HONOR. DR. NANCY WELCH, INTERIM HEALTH DIRECTOR OF THE WESTERN TIDEWATER HEALTH DISTRICT, NOTED THAT, "MS. CREECH EXEMPLIFIES PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE'S ROLE, EFFECTIVENESS AND LEADERSHIP IN POPULATION HEALTH." WOULD YOU BOTH PLEASE STAND AND BE RECOGNIZED?

ALSO IMPROVING THE HEALTH STATUS OF CITIZENS ACROSS OUR CITY AND WESTERN TIDEWATER IS THE OBICI HEALTHCARE FOUNDATION.

SINCE 2006 THEY'VE AWARDED OVER \$48.6 MILLION DOLLARS TO ORGANIZATIONS IN ORDER TO RESPOND TO MEDICAL NEEDS OF THE INDIGENT AND UNINSURED AND TO SUPPORT PROGRAMS WHICH HAVE THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF PREVENTING ILLNESS AND DISEASE. WE COULDN'T BE MORE APPRECIATIVE OF THEIR PHILANTHROPIC EFFORTS.

A CITY CAN ONLY MOVE FORWARD WHEN IT HAS A STRONG FOUNDATION TO BUILD UPON, AND WE KNOW THAT PUBLIC SAFETY IS OUR FUNDAMENTAL BUILDING BLOCK. I WOULD ASK THAT CHIEF OF POLICE THOMAS BENNETT, SUFFOLK FIRE & RESCUE CHIEF MICHAEL BARAKEY, SHERIFF EVERETT C. HARRIS, AND ALL OF OUR PUBLIC SAFETY PERSONNEL JOINING US TODAY PLEASE STAND AND BE RECOGNIZED FOR THE EXTRAORDINARY JOBS THEY DO.

WE CAN PROUDLY STATE THAT IN SUFFOLK, NOT ONLY ARE WE FORTUNATE TO HAVE THE *VERY BEST* PUBLIC SAFETY PROFESSIONALS IN THE REGION, BUT THEY ARE ALSO PREPARED WITH THE LATEST EQUIPMENT AND TECHNOLOGIES – ALL DESIGNED TO KEEP OUR CITIZENS SAFE.

PUBLIC SAFETY IS MORE THAN JUST RESPONSE TIMES AND CRIME STATS – IT'S ALSO ABOUT ENGAGEMENT. NOWHERE IS THE COMMITMENT TO THE COMMUNITY OF OUR PUBLIC SAFETY PROFESSIONALS MORE EVIDENT THAN IN OUR NATIONAL NIGHT OUT CELEBRATIONS, OR WHAT WE REFER TO AS OUR **“GOING AWAY PARTIES FOR CRIME”!** FOR THE FIFTH TIME IN TEN YEARS, THE

CITY OF SUFFOLK'S NATIONAL NIGHT OUT EVENT WAS NAMED **BEST IN THE NATION** FOR OUR POPULATION CATEGORY BY THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TOWN WATCH. THIS RECOGNITION WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE AMAZING WORK OF INVOLVED COMMUNITY ORGANIZERS, OUR CITIZENS, AND CIVIC-MINDED BUSINESSES. WE KNOW THAT PUBLIC SAFETY ISN'T A SPECTATOR SPORT, AND THAT INVOLVED, ACTIVE NEIGHBORHOODS ARE ESSENTIAL TO THE QUALITY OF LIFE THAT WE ENJOY. "HOMETOWN CHARM" ISN'T A CLICHÉ – IT'S OUR WAY OF LIFE AND SOMETHING EXHIBITED AND EXPERIENCED EVERY DAY!

THAT IS ESPECIALLY TRUE AS IT RELATES TO OUR HISTORIC DOWNTOWN AND THE ONGOING RENAISSANCE OF OUR COMMERCIAL CORE. THERE IS A SAYING, *"IF WE DON'T CHANGE, WE DON'T **GROW**. IF WE DON'T **GROW**, WE AREN'T REALLY LIVING."* **CHANGING, GROWING, AND LIVING** CERTAINLY NOW DESCRIBES OUR DOWNTOWN!

WE CONTINUE MOVING AHEAD WITH OUR DOWNTOWN INITIATIVES PLAN TO SUPPORT NEW BUSINESS GROWTH AND TO PROVIDE ENTERTAINMENT OPTIONS INCLUDING CONCERTS AND COMMUNITY GATHERINGS TO DRAW EVENTS AND PEOPLE DOWNTOWN. PROJECTS CURRENTLY UNDERWAY INCLUDE THE REVIEW AND UPDATE OF HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES, DOWNTOWN BRANDING TO INCLUDE WAYFINDING AND PARKING SIGNAGE, AND THE EXPANSION OF THE PARKING LOT ON COMMERCE STREET. ENHANCED LIGHTING AND LANDSCAPING UPGRADES WILL CERTAINLY ADD TO THE AMBIANCE AND ATMOSPHERE.

WE'RE ALSO IN THE DESIGN PROCESS FOR THE FESTIVAL EVENTS VENUE AND MARKET HALL, WITH THE LIBRARY SQUARE AS THE ANCHOR OF A NEW ACTIVE PUBLIC SPACE ON WEST WASHINGTON STREET. THAT MUCH ANTICIPATED PUBLIC SPACE, ALONG WITH A MIXED-USE RESIDENTIAL HISTORIC REHABILITATION, WILL STIMULATE NEW ACTIVITY IN THE EASTERN HALF OF DOWNTOWN TO INCLUDE THE PHOENIX BANK BLOCK.

THERE LITERALLY IS A "SPARK" THAT HAS BEEN IGNITED IN OUR DOWNTOWN. MAKE THAT S-P-A-R-C, THE ACRONYM FOR ED BEARDSLEY'S *SUFFOLK'S PRIME ARTS, RETAIL AND CULINARY* INITIATIVE. ED, WOULD YOU PLEASE STAND?

THE WORK OF OVER FORTY ARTISTS IN DOWNTOWN SUFFOLK IS ON DISPLAY AT THE NEWLY OPENED *SPARC SHOPPE* ON MAIN STREET. THIS RETAIL ESTABLISHMENT HAS BEEN WELL RECEIVED AND WAS RECENTLY AWARDED A \$15,000 DOLLAR GRANT FROM THE SUFFOLK ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY TO OPEN UP THE SECOND FLOOR FOR MORE ARTIST SPACE AND A LARGER SPACE TO HOST CLASSES FOR THE PUBLIC.

THIS IS IN ADDITION TO *ONE PAST 7*, ED'S VISION COME TO LIFE LOCATED ON THE FIRST FLOOR AND MEZZANINE OF DOWNTOWN'S HISTORIC PROFESSIONAL BUILDING. HERE YOU'LL FIND EVEN MORE ARTISTS INCLUDING PAINTERS, CRAFTERS, TEXTILE ARTISTS, PHOTOGRAPHERS, JEWELRY MAKERS AND MORE WITH THEIR WORKS ON DISPLAY AND FOR SALE.

THEIR "SECOND SATURDAY" MONTHLY EVENTS ARE NOT TO BE MISSED, FEATURING ART DEMONSTRATIONS, MUSIC, SIPS, FOOD, ENTERTAINMENT, AND MORE. THEY CERTAINLY BRING TO LIFE THE CONCEPT OF "BLOOMING WHERE YOU ARE PLANTED".

YES, THE ENERGY OF ENTREPRENEURS IS PALPABLE DOWNTOWN. IF YOU HAVEN'T JOINED US LATELY, COME EXPERIENCE, SEE, AND TASTE WHAT SO MANY ARE TALKING ABOUT! BRICK & MORTAR BREWING COMPANY, RYAN'S STEAKS AND CAKES, GENERAL PUBLIC, SUSHI AKA, EL KORITA, BOOGIE'S SOUL FOOD, KENNY'S BISTRO, AND POUR FAVOR COFFEE SHOP HAVE JOINED THE BUSTLING FOOD AND BEVERAGE SCENE WITH LONGTIME FAVORITES AMICI'S, BARON'S PUB, BRIGHTER DAY CAFÉ, THE PLAID TURNIP, UNCORK'D AND HARPER'S TABLE. HOLLAND'S COUNTRY GOURMET, ORIGINALLY ESTABLISHED IN 1969, HAS COMPLETELY RENOVATED AND OFFERS IN-STORE DINING, FULL-SCALE CATERING AND CLASSIC COUNTRY TO-GO ITEMS.

THE FOCUS IS A FUSION OF CULTURES, AND YOU CAN FIND IT ALL! DOWNTOWN IS A 'DESTINATION' NOT TO BE MISSED!

WE CAN'T TALK ABOUT 'DESTINATION' WITHOUT DISCUSSING *TRANSPORTATION*! I'VE SHARED WITH YOU PREVIOUSLY THAT AS THE VICE CHAIR OF THE HAMPTON ROADS TRANSPORTATION ACCOUNTABILITY COMMISSION THE NEEDS OF THE ENTIRE REGION ARE A TOP CONCERN, BUT I'M ALSO EXTREMELY VOCAL ABOUT THE NEEDS OF OUR CITY. I CAN'T REMEMBER

WHEN I'VE SEEN MORE ORANGE CONES AND CONSTRUCTION GOING ON, AS WE KNOW THAT IN ORDER TO KEEP OUR ECONOMY MOVING, WE'VE GOT TO KEEP OUR PEOPLE AND OUR GOODS MOVING!

ONE PROJECT MOVING FORWARD IN PARTICULAR IS ESPECIALLY EXCITING FOR ALL OF US – NO MATTER WHERE YOU LIVE IN OUR REGION. THE HAMPTON ROADS BRIDGE TUNNEL EXPANSION IS A GENERATIONAL PROJECT THAT WILL ENHANCE MOBILITY, IMPROVE EMERGENCY EVACUATION CAPABILITIES, REDUCE CONGESTION, AND INCREASE TRAVEL TIME RELIABILITY. THROUGH THE COLLABORATION OF MULTIPLE DEPARTMENTS, BOARDS, AGENCIES, AUTHORITIES AND COMMISSIONS, THIS WILL BE *THE LARGEST TRANSPORTATION PROJECT IN VIRGINIA'S HISTORY* AND SOMETHING OF WHICH WE CAN ALL BE PROUD.

WHEN IT COMES TO TRANSPORTATION, CITY STAFF CONTINUE TO SEEK OUT OPPORTUNITIES TO FUND INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS. AS A RESULT, THE CITY HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN LEVERAGING LOCAL DOLLARS TO OBTAIN SIGNIFICANT STATE AND FEDERAL FUNDING. WE WERE ALSO AWARDED \$16.1 MILLION IN FUNDING FROM VDOT FOR THE NANSEMOND PARKWAY/WILROY ROAD OVERPASS FROM THE COMMONWEALTH RAILWAY PROJECT TO PROVIDE A LONG TERM PERMANENT SOLUTION TO THE ONGOING TRAFFIC AND TRAIN CONFLICT AT THIS INTERSECTION.

WITHOUT A DOUBT, *VITAL TO OUR QUALITY OF LIFE IS THE ABILITY TO WORK TOGETHER, LEARN*

*FROM EACH OTHER, AND TO HELP EACH OTHER  
**GROW!***

MAKE NO MISTAKE; WE HAVE SOMETHING EXTREMELY SPECIAL IN SUFFOLK – SO SPECIAL THAT MORE AND MORE PEOPLE ARE DECIDING TO CALL THIS CITY *HOME*.

**HOME** – A SINGLE WORD PACKED WITH SO MUCH MEANING. THERE’S A SAYING THAT, “*HOME IS A PLACE YOU **GROW** UP WANTING TO LEAVE, AND **GROW** OLD WANTING TO GET BACK TO.*” I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT NOT ONLY DID I GROW UP HERE, BUT I CAN’T IMAGINE ANOTHER PLACE ON THIS EARTH WHERE I’D RATHER BE!

IT’S EVIDENT THAT I’M NOT ALONE IN THESE SENTIMENTS, AS SUFFOLK HAS SEEN THE LARGEST PERCENTAGE INCREASE IN HOME SALES IN THE REGION, GROWING BY 8.6 PERCENT OVER THE PREVIOUS YEAR. SUFFOLK IS ALSO RANKED IN THE TOP TEN WHEN IT COMES TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN VIRGINIA ACCORDING TO INFORMATION RECENTLY SHARED BY THE MEDIA.

WE’RE WELL-POSITIONED TO OFFER A FINE MIX OF HISTORIC HOMES, URBAN LOFT LIFESTYLES, FAMILY-FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOODS AND BUSTLING MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENTS.

ONE SUCH DEVELOPMENT *SPROUTING* UP IN NORTHERN SUFFOLK IN AN AREA KNOWN BY LOCALS AS “THE SILOS” IS BRIDGEPORT BY BECO, LOCATED ALONG BRIDGE ROAD. 3800 ACQUA AT BRIDGEPORT

WILL OFFER 288 LUXURY APARTMENTS AND INITIAL UNITS WILL BE AVAILABLE THIS AUGUST. WITH THEIR TAGLINE “CENTERED AROUND YOU”, THIS WALKABLE WATERFRONT COMMUNITY WILL ALSO FEATURE BOUTIQUES, RETAIL SUITES, UNIQUE DINING OPTIONS, OFFICE SPACE, UPSCALE RESIDENCES, RESTAURANTS AND AN OUTDOOR ENTERTAINMENT VENUE THAT EMBRACES THE LOCAL STYLE AND FLAVOR OF COASTAL VIRGINIA.

ODU’S E.V. WILLIAMS CENTER FOR REAL ESTATE NAMED BRIDGEPORT IN NORTHERN SUFFOLK AS ONE OF THE *TOP 5* RETAIL DEVELOPMENTS BEING DELIVERED IN 2019 *FOR THE ENTIRE HAMPTON ROADS REGION.*

WHILE WE PROUDLY ACKNOWLEDGE THAT “*VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS*”, BECO IS TAKING THIS TO HEART AND DESIGNS ARE BEING DRAWN FOR SUFFOLK’S FIRST PERMANENT “LOVE” SIGN THAT WILL BE LOCATED ON THE BRIDGEPORT PROPERTY. THEY’RE ALSO BUILDING A 24,800-SQUARE-FOOT HARBOUR BREEZE MEDICAL CENTER ACROSS THE STREET FROM BRIDGEPORT, AND THEY ANTICIPATE IT TO BE 100% OCCUPIED AND OPEN BY THE END OF THE YEAR.

BECO’S TRACK RECORD IN OUR CITY ALREADY FEATURES THE HARBOUR BREEZE LIFESTYLE APARTMENTS AND PROFESSIONAL CENTER. WOULD CO-OWNERS BURT CUTRIGHT AND ERIC OLSON PLEASE STAND?

WE THANK YOU BOTH FOR PAVING THE WAY FOR AN ELEVATED LIVE, WORK, PLAY EXPERIENCE IN THE

AREA AND FOR HELPING SET THE STANDARD FOR FUTURE GROWTH IN THE MARKET.

WITH OVER 430-SQUARE MILES, LAND AND OPPORTUNITY ABOUNDS THROUGHOUT OUR CITY, AND BRIAN ROWE, REGIONAL PARTNER FOR WELDENFIELD & ROWE CUSTOM HOMES & NEIGHBORHOODS, HAS BROUGHT US TRUE RESORT-STYLE COMMUNITIES IN PROJECTS IN THE RIVERFRONT AT HARBOUR VIEW AND THE RETREAT AT BENNETT'S CREEK.

BRIAN HAS ALSO EXPERIENCED FIRSTHAND THE ALLURE AND ATTRACTION OF OUR DOWNTOWN AND HAS RETURNED TO DOWNTOWN SUFFOLK AND OPENED HIS BUSINESS OFFICE IN A BEAUTIFULLY RESTORED HISTORIC BUILDING WHERE HE'LL CONTINUE TO DIRECT PHASES OF SITE SELECTION, LAND PURCHASE, DESIGN AND MORE RELATED TO THE SALE OF RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT UNITS AND PARCELS. BRIAN, WILL YOU PLEASE STAND? IT'S GREAT TO HAVE YOU BACK IN DOWNTOWN, BRIAN!

THERE'S A QUOTE, ***"WE DON'T STOP PLAYING BECAUSE WE GROW OLD; WE GROW OLD BECAUSE WE STOP PLAYING."***

ON THAT NOTE, WHEN IT COMES TO *RECREATION* IN OUR CITY, OUR OPPORTUNITIES ARE ALSO CONTINUING TO EXPAND AND DEVELOP THANKS TO OUR NATIONALLY ACCREDITED PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT. SPECIAL THANKS TO DIRECTOR MARK FURLO FOR BEING SUCH A GOOD SPORT IN OUR VIDEO!

IN THE NOT TOO DISTANT FUTURE IS THE HIGHLY ANTICIPATED BENNETT'S CREEK RECREATION CENTER. PLANS HAVE ALREADY BEEN COMPLETED FOR THE RENOVATION OF THE FORMER U.S. ARMY RESERVE CENTER THE CITY OBTAINED VIA A LAND EXCHANGE AT THAT LOCATION WHICH WILL SERVE THE DENSELY POPULATED NORTHERN URBAN/SUBURBAN GROWTH AREA.

OUR LONE STAR LAKES PARK, A TRUE JEWEL IN OUR CITY, WILL BE ENHANCED WITH MORE TRAILS, ROAD IMPROVEMENTS, AND THE INCORPORATION OF AN INTERPRETIVE COMMUNITY CENTER AND MEETING FACILITY.

A WATER ACCESS STUDY AS PART OF THE PARKS & REC MASTER PLAN IS CURRENTLY UNDERWAY TO EXPLORE WAYS WE CAN PROVIDE OUR CITIZENS WITH *EVEN MORE* OPPORTUNITIES TO ENJOY OUR WATERWAYS, INCLUDING MULTIPLE SITES ON THE NANSEMOND AS WELL AS THE BLACKWATER RIVER.

AS PART OF THE STUDY WE ARE EXPLORING THE POTENTIAL FOR POSSIBLE DEEP WATER BOAT ACCESS, AS WELL AS THE FEASIBILITY OF DEVELOPING A WATER ACCESS FOR PADDLE CRAFT AND FISHING AT THE 380-ACRE FORMER DRIVER NAVAL TRANSMITTER SITE.

WE'LL SOON BE OPENING OUR INCLUSIVE PLAYGROUND AT LAKE MEADE PARK NEAR DOWNTOWN WHICH OFFERS AN INCLUSIVE EXPERIENCE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, THEIR FAMILIES, AND FRIENDS. THIS IS A WONDERFUL COMPLEMENT TO THE EXISTING KIDSZONE

PLAYGROUND, NATURE TRAIL THAT WINDS DOWN TO THE RIVER, SKATE PARK, TENNIS COURT, DOG PARK, WALKING TRACK AND MORE AT THIS CONVENIENT LOCATION.

ANOTHER INCLUSIVE PLAYGROUND IS IN THE WORKS FOR THE NORTHERN END OF OUR CITY SO THAT WE CAN CONTINUE TO PROVIDE OUR YOUTH WITH SPECIAL NEEDS AN INCLUSIVE AND SENSORY ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH TO DEVELOP LIFELONG FUNCTIONAL RECREATION SKILLS.

*SUFFOLK IS A PLACE FOR EVERYONE* – AND THESE NEW PLAYGROUNDS HELP US MAKE THAT IDEA MORE A REALITY FOR *ALL* THE CHILDREN IN OUR COMMUNITY.

OUR DIVISION OF TOURISM ENTHUSIASTICALLY MARKETS OUR CITY AS A DESTINATION FOR LEISURE AND BUSINESS TRAVELERS, CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS, RETREATS AND REUNIONS. ALONG WITH AWARD-WINNING GUIDED TOURS, SUCCESSFUL ANNUAL EVENTS, A POPULAR FARMERS' MARKET AND MUCH MORE, TOURISM OPERATES A STATE-CERTIFIED VISITOR CENTER SEVEN DAYS A WEEK, YEAR-ROUND. ADDITIONALLY, THEY NOW MANAGE THE DAILY OPERATION OF ONE OF SUFFOLK'S MOST RECOGNIZABLE LANDMARKS, *THE SEABOARD STATION RAILROAD MUSEUM*. YOUR CONNECTION WITH SUFFOLK ARTS, OUTDOOR ADVENTURE, HISTORY AND FAMILY FUN STARTS WITH OUR TOURISM OFFICE.

IN THE INFINITE WISDOM OF CICERO, ROMAN STATESMAN AND PHILOSOPHER, ***"IF YOU HAVE A***

***GARDEN AND A LIBRARY, YOU HAVE EVERYTHING YOU NEED.”***

OUR NEW CENTRAL LIBRARY, TO BE KNOWN AS LIBRARY SQUARE, TO REPLACE THE MORGAN MEMORIAL LIBRARY ON WEST WASHINGTON STREET, WILL GIVE PEOPLE A PLACE TO CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER, WITH THEIR COMMUNITY AND HISTORY, AND WILL ALLOW THEM TO ACCESS THE TOOLS AND IDEAS THEY NEED TO DREAM BIG AND LEAD SUFFOLK INTO THE FUTURE.

WHEN I THINK ABOUT ALL THAT DIRECTOR CLINT RUDY AND HIS STAFF HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH IN RECENT YEARS, I KNOW THERE'S NO LIMIT TO WHAT OUR LIBRARY'S FUTURE WILL HOLD.

THEY'VE BEEN THE RECIPIENT OF MULTIPLE AWARDS, MOST RECENTLY THE 2018 VIRGINIA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION'S PUBLIC LIBRARY INNOVATOR AWARD, AND THEY'VE RECEIVED NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR INITIATIVES TO ENGAGE OUR CITIZENS.

CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT AND ENTERTAINMENT AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL IS THE PURPOSE OF THE SUFFOLK CENTER FOR CULTURAL ARTS. FROM TOP-NOTCH PERFORMERS OF ALL GENRES GRACING THEIR STAGE AND VISUAL ARTISTS FEATURED IN THEIR GALLERIES, TO COMMUNITY FOCUSED PLAYS, WORKSHOPS AND CAMPS, THEY LIVE UP TO THE **COMMUNITY** OF A COMMUNITY ARTS CENTER.

THE SUFFOLK ART LEAGUE ALSO HELPS US EXPRESS OUR CREATIVE SIDE AND IS DEDICATED TO MAKING THE ARTS ACCESSIBLE NOT ONLY TO OUR OWN CITIZENS, BUT ALSO TO THOSE IN SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES. WITH THEIR CLASSES, EXHIBITS, AND COMMUNITY-FOCUSED EVENTS, THEY BRING A VARIETY OF ART ACTIVITIES TO GROUPS OF ALL AGES AND ABILITIES.

IT'S EVIDENT THAT WHEN IT COMES TO OPPORTUNITIES TO ENJOY LEISURE AND CULTURE WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY, WE TRULY OFFER SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE, AND THERE'S NO BETTER TIME TO EXPLORE, MAKE MEMORIES AND SHARE YOUR ADVENTURES WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS. WE CAN BE PROUD OF HOW WE ARE **GROWING**, AND IN PARTICULAR, BE PROUD OF HOW WE ARE DOING IT **TOGETHER!**

IN SUFFOLK, WHEN IT COMES TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, WE'VE *CULTIVATED* AN ENVIRONMENT THAT IS IDEAL FOR *GROWING A THRIVING BUSINESS!*

OUR CONTINUED SUCCESS IS ROOTED IN CAREFULLY PLANNED STRATEGIC GROWTH AND INVESTMENT THAT HELPS US MAINTAIN A STRONG FINANCIAL STANDARD AND SOUND FOUNDATION ON BEHALF OF OUR CITIZENS.

LOOKING BACK AT THE SUCCESSES THAT 2018 BROUGHT, WE SAW OVER **\$83 MILLION IN NEW PRIVATE CAPITAL INVESTMENT WHICH IMPACTED 687,000 SQUARE FEET, CREATING 1,395 NEW JOBS IN OUR VIBRANT COMMUNITY.**

PLANTING THE SEEDS FOR SUCCESS AND INVOLVED DEEPLY IN THESE ANNOUNCEMENTS IS OUR PHENOMENAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TEAM, AND I'D ASK THAT KEVIN HUGHES, OUR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR, AND HIS AMAZING STAFF PLEASE STAND. EVERY DAY THEY DO THEIR BEST, FOR THEY UNDERSTAND THAT WHAT YOU **PLANT** NOW, YOU WILL **HARVEST** LATER!

THE WORK OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IS SUPPORTED BY MANY. IN PARTICULAR, I'D LIKE TO RECOGNIZE AND ASK THAT THE MEMBERS OF THE SUFFOLK ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY STAND AND BE RECOGNIZED FOR THEIR COMMITMENT AND TIRELESS EFFORTS IN PROMOTING OUR CITY.

REALIZING OPPORTUNITY IS THE NAME OF THE GAME IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, I'M PLEASED TO SEE AN *OPPORTUNITY REALIZED* AT OBICI PLACE. THE SITE THAT SAT VACANT FOR A DECADE IS NOW TWO-THIRDS COMPLETE IN FOUR SHORT YEARS. ANCHORED FIRST BY THE MERIDIAN OBICI APARTMENTS, THE RETAIL COMPONENT HAS TAKEN SHAPE WITH A NEW GROCERY OPTION WITH ALDI'S. A NEW CHARTWAY CREDIT UNION, JERSEY MIKE'S AND DUNKIN' DONUTS ARE ALSO NOW OPEN.

THIS DEVELOPMENT PRESENTED AN OPPORTUNITY TO BRING NEW TO MARKET RESIDENTIAL AND RETAIL OPTIONS TO CENTRAL SUFFOLK. ADDITIONALLY, IT HAS PRESENTED AN OPPORTUNITY TO BRING A USE THAT HAS BEEN OF INTEREST IN THE AREA FOR AS LONG AS I CAN REMEMBER. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND THE EDA ARE CURRENTLY

FINALIZING NEGOTIATIONS WITH *CINEMA CAFÉ* FOR ONE OF THEIR AMAZING “DINNER AND A MOVIE” CONCEPT THEATERS AT OBICI PLACE.

WE FIRST SHARED SOME EXCITING PRELIMINARY NEWS WITH YOU LAST YEAR ABOUT *THE POINT AT HARBOUR VIEW*. YOU MAY RECALL THAT THE SUFFOLK ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY IS WORKING WITH GEE’S PARTNERS ON THIS 55-ACRE MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT OFF OF INTERSTATE 664. THIS SITE ALSO SERVES AS THE GATEWAY TO THE AMAZING 300-ACRE FORMER TIDEWATER COMMUNITY COLLEGE SITE THAT SITS ON THE JAMES RIVER. THE TCC REAL ESTATE FOUNDATION IS MAKING GREAT STRIDES AS THEY CONTINUE TO PREPARE THIS EXTRAORDINARY, ONE-OF-A-KIND OPPORTUNITY FOR DEVELOPMENT, AND WE ARE A PARTNER IN THIS INITIATIVE. THE SUFFOLK CITY COUNCIL APPROVED FUNDING FOR THE ENGINEERING OF THE 1.3 MILES OF SHORELINE IN ORDER TO PROTECT THIS IRREPLACEABLE ASSET FROM EROSION AS WE PLAN FOR A FUTURE PUBLIC SPACE THAT WILL SPAN THE LENGTH OF THE ENTIRE WATERFRONT.

THESE DEVELOPMENTS OF THE FUTURE WILL BUILD UPON THE EXCITING DEVELOPMENTS WE ENJOY TODAY. NEW RESTAURANTS AND RETAILERS ARE OPENING DAILY IN THIS CORRIDOR INCLUDING ZOE’S KITCHEN, MARCO’S PIZZA, TIJUANA FLATS, FREDDY’S FROZEN CUSTARD AND STEAKBURGERS, MOD PIZZA, DUCK DONUTS, AND WILD BIRDS UNLIMITED, JUST TO NAME A FEW.

OUR FOOD AND BEVERAGE PROCESSING CLUSTER HAS ESPECIALLY FLOURISHED WITH NEW JOBS AND INVESTMENT, AND I'LL BE HIGHLIGHTING JUST A FEW OF THOSE FOR YOU.

VIRGINIA'S CAFFEINE CAPITAL CONTINUES TO EXPAND. UNILEVER, THE PARENT COMPANY OF LIPTON, HAS BEGUN BLENDING THE UBER-POPULAR TAZO TEA AT THEIR SUFFOLK PROCESSING FACILITY. THIS EXPANDED PRODUCTION INCLUDES NEW INVESTMENT TO ADD RECEIVING AND BLENDING EQUIPMENT, ALONG WITH HIRING ADDITIONAL EMPLOYEES TO HANDLE THE EXPANDED OUTPUT. LIPTON TEA HAS A LONG-STANDING HISTORY IN SUFFOLK, BEGINNING NEARLY SIXTY-FIVE YEARS AGO, WITH THE SUFFOLK OPERATIONS NOW THE LARGEST TEA-PROCESSING FACILITY IN THE ENTIRE UNITED STATES. I WOULD ASK THAT THE TEAM FROM LIPTON STAND AND BE RECOGNIZED AT THIS TIME.

SUFFOLK COMPANIES CONTRIBUTING TO THE "CAFFEINE CAPITAL" MONIKER INCLUDE MASSIMO ZANETTI BEVERAGE USA, LIPTON TEA, J. M. SMUCKER, PACORINI, CONTINENTAL TERMINALS, CROWN CORK & SEAL, PEET'S COFFEE, AND PROAMPAC. ALTOGETHER, THE COFFEE AND TEA MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES IN SUFFOLK GENERATE APPROXIMATELY \$844 MILLION DOLLARS IN OUTPUT PER YEAR.

COOKE SEAFOOD U.S.A. IS MAKING A SPLASH IN SUFFOLK AND HAS COMMITTED TO INVESTING NEARLY \$3 MILLION DOLLARS OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS AT ITS WANCHESE FISH COMPANY OPERATION, INCLUDING EXPANDED CAPABILITIES AND ADDING UP TO SEVENTY NEW HIRES IN CORPORATE LEADERSHIP

AND RETAIL SEAFOOD PRODUCTION. COOKE HAS CONTINUOUSLY INCREASED ITS IMPORTS AND EXPORTED PRODUCTS THROUGH THE PORT OF VIRGINIA, ALL WHILE INVESTING MILLIONS IN UPGRADING THE SUFFOLK LOCATION TO BETTER HANDLE AN INCREASED AMOUNT OF SEAFOOD COMING INTO THE FACILITY FROM A VARIETY OF THE COOKE FAMILY OF COMPANIES AROUND THE WORLD.

ONE VERY PUBLIC PLACEMENT WILL COME OUT OF THE NEW RETAIL LINE – MARTHA STEWART’S NEW SUITE OF SEAFOOD DISHES. HER ENTIRE NEW “TRUE NORTH” LINE WILL BE PRODUCED IN THE SUFFOLK FACILITY. THE PRODUCTS INCLUDE TWO SALMON DISHES – ATLANTIC SALMON WITH LEMON HERB BUTTER AND SOCKEYE SALMON WITH MISO BUTTER – AS WELL AS ALASKA POLLOCK AND A MEDLEY OF POLLOCK, SALMON, AND SCALLOPS. CAN WE ALL SAY “YUM” TOGETHER?

SMITHFIELD FOODS LEASED A 20,000-SQUARE-FOOT SPACE AT THE BRIDGEWAY TECHNOLOGY CENTER ON HARBOUR VIEW BOULEVARD, BRINGING WITH IT APPROXIMATELY 170 NEW PROFESSIONAL SALES AND LOGISTICS JOBS.

HAMPTON ROADS MOVING & STORAGE, LOCATED IN NORTHGATE COMMERCE PARK, HAS TAKEN THE CONCEPT OF “*COME GROW WITH US*” TO ANOTHER LEVEL! WITH THEIR **LOCAL ROOTS GARDEN** ON THEIR LAND ADJACENT TO THEIR FACILITY, THIS SPRING THEY’VE CULTIVATED A COMMUNITY GARDEN IN THE HOPES THAT IT CAN BECOME SUSTAINABLE AND PROVIDE NOT ONLY FOOD, BUT ALSO EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD HARVEST IS EXPANDING THEIR HYDROPONIC GROWING OPERATIONS IN SUFFOLK THANKS TO STEADILY INCREASING CUSTOMER DEMAND, AND AFTER ENJOYING THEIR FRESH SALAD AND DRESSING AT TODAY'S LUNCHEON, IT'S EASY TO "TASTE" WHY! THEY NOW HAVE ADDITIONAL OPERATIONAL SPACE AT SUFFOLK INDUSTRIAL PARK TO PACKAGE AND PREPARE FOR DELIVERY AN ARRAY OF THEIR "BEYOND ORGANIC" PRODUCE AND FARM PRODUCTS INCLUDING AN AMAZING CHOICE OF GREENS, CULINARY HERBS, LOCALLY-SOURCED CUCUMBERS, EGGS, CHEESE, DAIRY PRODUCTS, BREAD AND OTHER ITEMS TO BE HOME-DELIVERED.

JUST LIKE THE NEIGHBORHOOD HARVEST'S STORY, NOTHING IS MORE INSPIRATIONAL THAN THE SPIRIT OF AN ENTREPRENEUR, AND IN SUFFOLK WE ARE BLESSED TO HAVE A NUMBER OF THEM. I'D LIKE TO RECOGNIZE A HUSBAND AND WIFE TEAM – BECKY REED AND STEVE WADDELL. WOULD YOU BOTH PLEASE STAND?

BECKY IS THE CEO OF REED INTEGRATION, ONE OF THE FOREMOST MANAGEMENT CONTRACTING COMPANIES DESIGNED TO TRAIN YOU AND YOUR TEAM TO DELIVER A FIRST-CLASS, ON-BUDGET PROJECT EVERY TIME. HER HUSBAND, STEVE, RECENTLY FOUNDED *NASONI*, A REDESIGN OF YOUR FAUCET WITH APPLICATIONS FROM HOME, OFFICE AND HOTELS. STEVE HAS BEEN RECOGNIZED AND HAS RECEIVED NUMEROUS AWARDS FOR HIS PROJECT AND IS CURRENTLY FINISHING CERTIFICATION TESTING

WITH A LIVE LAUNCH AND PRODUCTION LATER THIS SUMMER.

IN THAT SAME ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT, I'D LIKE TO RECOGNIZE THE HAMPTON ROADS CHAMBERS' SELECTION OF SUFFOLK'S SMALL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR – *RELAY ELECTRIC LLC*. ANOTHER HUSBAND AND WIFE DUO, SHANNON AND CAREY LEE, WOULD YOU PLEASE STAND? PROVIDING FULL SERVICE PROFESSIONAL LIGHTING AND ELECTRICAL MAINTENANCE AND DESIGNS FOR CLIENTS ON THE SOUTHSIDE AND THE PENINSULA, CONGRATULATIONS ON THIS WELL-DESERVED RECOGNITION!

ROUNDING OUT OUR LUNCHEON MENU TODAY WILL BE TASTY TREATS PROVIDED BY ANOTHER NEW BUSINESS NOW OPERATING IN SUFFOLK – BLUE BELL CREAMERIES!

AS PART OF THEIR COMMITMENT TO RETURNING TO THE REGION, THEY'VE CONSTRUCTED A 14,000-SQUARE-FOOT DISTRIBUTION FACILITY IN THE NORTHGATE COMMERCE PARK. THE DISTRIBUTION CENTER CONSISTS OF STATE-OF-THE-ART COLD STORAGE SPACE AND SERVICES CUSTOMERS IN AN APPROXIMATE 70-MILE RADIUS OF SUFFOLK.

WE'LL ENJOY A VARIETY OF ICE CREAM FLAVORS FOR DESSERT IN THE HILTON LOBBY AND ON THEIR VERANDA OVERLOOKING THE BEAUTIFUL NANSEMOND RIVER. JUST LIKE THEIR COMMERCIAL JINGLE STATES, "*BLUE BELL TASTES JUST LIKE THE GOOD 'OL DAYS*"!

WHEN IT COMES TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, I REMAIN INSPIRED AND ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE CITY OF SUFFOLK AND ALL THE HAMPTON ROADS LOCALITIES.

AS THE MAYOR OF SUFFOLK, I HAVE THE HUMBLING OPPORTUNITY TO SEE AND EXPERIENCE THE MANY FACETS AND INTERWORKING OF MY COMMUNITY AND THE PEOPLE THAT MAKE IT ALL POSSIBLE. I SEE THE CHALLENGES, THE STRUGGLES, THE OPPORTUNITIES AND THE CELEBRATIONS. AND NO MATTER THE HIGH OR THE LOW, I'M ALWAYS LEFT WITH THE IMPRESSION OF THE INCREDIBLE HUMAN SPIRIT THAT EXISTS IN SUFFOLK AND IN HAMPTON ROADS. IT'S THIS HUMAN SPIRIT THAT MOTIVATES ME TO LEAD AND TO LOOK FORWARD AT OUR COLLECTIVE BRIGHT FUTURE.

IT'S EASY TO GET CAUGHT UP IN THE STORIES OF A BUSINESS ANNOUNCEMENT, WHETHER IT'S A GRAND OPENING OR AN EXPANSION. BUT IN SUFFOLK, WHAT I'M FOCUSED ON, AND WHAT MY TEAM IS FOCUSED ON, IS THE PEOPLE; THE PEOPLE BEHIND THOSE STORIES.

WE HAVE BEEN PUTTING A TREMENDOUS AMOUNT OF EFFORT IN COLLABORATING MORE EFFECTIVELY WITH OUR BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND OUR SCHOOL SYSTEM. RECENTLY, OUR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT ESTABLISHED A NEW INITIATIVE CALLED "SUFFOLK SCHOOL TO WORK". WORKING WITH A FEW OF OUR LARGEST EMPLOYERS TO SET THE TONE, TARGET UPSTREAM DISTRIBUTION AND SYSCO FOODS ARE TEACHING CLASSES IN OUR HIGH SCHOOLS ON

THE WORLD OF WORK AND OPENING THE DOOR OF OPPORTUNITY TO SUFFOLK STUDENTS.

IN THIS PROGRAM WE HAVE FOUND THE WORKFORCE CHAMPIONS IN EACH OF THESE BUSINESSES, AND PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANTLY, THEY ARE PEOPLE OUR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS CAN RELATE TO. THESE CHAMPIONS ARE MAKING TIME IN THEIR ALREADY JAM- PACKED SCHEDULES TO DEVELOP AND TEACH THREE CLASSES EACH SEMESTER TO TAKE TO SUFFOLK JUNIORS AND SENIORS AND SHARE WITH THEM THE FACTUAL DETAILS OF WHAT IT TAKES TO SUCCEED IN THEIR BUSINESSES AS WELL AS THE “REAL WORLD” AFTER HIGH SCHOOL.

WE THEN WEAVE IN THE VIRGINIA WORKPLACE READINESS SKILLS PROGRAM, ADOPTED BY OUR SCHOOLS, SO IT HAS A SEAMLESS LESSONS LEARNED ASPECT FROM WHICH THE SCHOOLS CAN ALSO FIND ADDITIONAL BENEFIT. THE MORAL OF THE STORY IS THAT WE HAVE SPENT THE TIME TO FIND THE RIGHT “PEOPLE”; THE REAL “CHAMPIONS” TO TAKE “REAL LESSONS” AND “REAL OPPORTUNITIES” TO THOSE THAT MIGHT NOT YET KNOW WHAT THEY ARE EVEN LOOKING FOR.

WE TAKE THESE RELATABLE MESSAGES TO OUR FUTURE WORKFORCE FREQUENTLY, AND WE PAIR IT WITH AN OPPORTUNITY THAT CAN BE REALIZED TO CREATE A REAL PATH FORWARD. IN TODAY’S HUSTLE AND BUSTLE AND NON-STOP MULTITASKING WORLD, WE MUST STOP AND MAKE SURE THAT WE ARE TAKING TIME TO HELP EACH OTHER AND CREATE

OPPORTUNITIES. I LIKE TO THINK OF IT AS THE SUFFOLK WAY; *PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE.*

THIS CITY'S GREATEST STRENGTH IS ITS PEOPLE. *ALL IT'S PEOPLE.* AND THEIR SUCCESS IS WHAT PROPELS NOT ONLY THEMSELVES, BUT OUR ENTIRE CITY FORWARD. WE ARE A CITY THAT PRESERVES ITS HISTORY, CHARACTER AND SENSE OF COMMUNITY, EVEN IN THE MIDST OF TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE. *WHILE TIMES MAY CHANGE, OUR VALUES DON'T.*

IN CLOSING, THE STATE OF THE CITY OF SUFFOLK IS VERY STRONG. AND IT WILL **GROW** EVEN STRONGER IN THE YEAR AHEAD AS WE WORK TO ENSURE THAT ALL OF OUR RESIDENTS BENEFIT FROM OUR RECENT PROGRESS AND HAVE A VOICE IN OUR FUTURE DIRECTION. WE'VE SHOWN THAT DIFFERENCES DON'T HAVE TO DIVIDE US. WHEN WE COME TOGETHER, ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE! ***DON'T GO THROUGH LIFE, GROW THROUGH LIFE!***

THANK YOU AND GOD BLESS!