

In my last Update of 2009 I started it with the opening words of my last Update of 2003. I talked then of failing revenues, cities in jeopardy, high unemployment. Little did we know then we had just six years until we would be hit with the worst economic crisis since the thirties.

Layoffs, budget cuts, companies failing, 13% unemployment all accompanied by the threat of a pandemic flu and the possibility of a catastrophic flood made 2008 and 2009 a time we will not soon forget.

But here we are in 2010. Like America's small business, backbone of the nation, we've cut and cut, lost good people, key people. We lost 10% of our work force. Businesses we all know lost 50% or even more. Like those around us we stand ready to start again and we are all ready.

Our budget, smaller than the past, is balanced. We can stand the tests of the next few years when growth may be limited but as a community we will not allow ourselves to be limited to what we hear across the nation or through the media.

We may have fewer people working at the city but they are dedicated to public service and they have been out there proving as you have seen in many of my reports. Sometimes those reports full of figures may seem a bit boring but I hope they have shown you the extent of what your employees do for you every day.

There might be fewer of them but we are accomplishing more and more every day.

Regardless of conditions around us we still must provide service to our community. Now I do want to take a moment to give credit to your City Councilmembers. Look at their pages on our website and see what they are doing not just within the required committee and Council meetings but on a county, regional state and federal level to bring money and value back to our city. I firmly believe it is the work of this Council in bringing those grants, ideas and new partnerships back to our city that will mean we recover far faster than others cities in the region. Many of our Auburn Recovery measures are directly due to the efforts of this Council. Indicative of this Council is that one of the first acts of our newly elected Councilmember was to volunteer to represent all of us on King County's Law and Justice Committee. This is a Council that is involved. They measure up to the needs of the community – they prove it every day not by talk but by action.

Our Auburn Police Department has reorganized. At the time of the creation of the Fire Authority and the annexations I was there when the Auburn City Council committed to themselves that they would continue their efforts to

build up, equip and train our peacekeepers to be recognized as one of the best in the region for the benefit of our citizens and that is a fact today with the national accreditation the city of Auburn has received.

The Council's determination to protect the citizens of the city continues but with the Recession we had to recognize the financial limitations and the Police lost officers as well. As hard as we all worked to save positions both Council and I came to the realization that at this time there was no choice left to us. Still, we were able to save most of our officers through another federal grant we were able to access. Council does agree with me that we will continue that effort we started years ago, our self imposed desire to continue to expand the force as we build up our finances.

Council provided funding for years for additional cars, computers and the equipment of a modern police department. With all the aid, equipment and training provided for them your police officers have been given new abilities to go into the neighborhoods develop strategies to eliminate crime and stay with the community until the problem is solved. While we don't have all the money we need to keep adding officers right now we have made every effort to ensure the officers we have are fully trained and equipped for the task at hand. I know our officers are fully committing to delivering the services the public expects and requires to keep our community safe.

Today they are coordinating with my office as my Neighborhood Services Division reaches out into the neighborhoods whenever we get a call, email or visit asking for help. Block Watches are increasing every month and we are committed to working with each neighborhood, each block to make our homes safe. Our goal is to triple the number of Block Watches and to have one hundred neighborhoods involved in National Night Out in 2010.

But police cannot do their job without interaction with other agencies. We have established a new relationship with the Auburn School District, our sister cities of Algona and Pacific, service and non profit agencies to coordinate delivery of services to the community. The Auburn School District is working on a number of fronts with the city to prevent the spread of gangs into our community. Last year we saw some attempts at recruiting going on with the tagging done around the city. Outside groups from other parts of the country, local Latino and White Supremacists and other gangs made attempts to recruit our youth.

We are a place with some of the lowest income areas of the county and some of the highest. Loss of jobs, child abuse, domestic violence, dislocation and the lack of an expanded family are all fertile grounds for the gangs preying on our youth. The disenchanting higher income youth are as

much at risk as the children of poorer families who have given up hope at an early age.

Police and schools work with my offices to coordinate services. We have combined Neighborhood Services and Cultural Diversity Division and our Human Services Division into one under the Community Services Department to interact with police and school as well as coordinate help for those in need and to have an efficient system to refer to each other within the city.

As a century old city we are all immigrants here and we have seen new immigrants in almost every decade since the area began to develop. We have welcomed each new wave of population, many such a part of us they are no longer recognized as such. Middle Europeans, Scandinavians, Greeks, Italians, Japanese all followed the First People to this area and all were immigrants here followed by peoples from South East Asia then South and Central America, India, Africa and from all across the old USSR. All have been immigrants and all add to the fabric of our community.

We do have a special bond with another nation as the City of Auburn and Muckleshoot Nation overlap geographically, culturally and in many other ways. We must all remember that this is the time to create new friendships and partnerships.

For all who are in Auburn are our people. We are people bonded in more ways than we are not. As adults we must reach out across the boundaries we have created for ourselves. I will always reach out in friendship. Some times because of where or how we grew up trust is not always there. Let us each one who hears or sees this message know it is time for them personally to decide to begin so that in the generations to come will not know those differences existed.

We have such a rich city here and many are there not just to provide assistance but also to enrich the community. Our Community Services Department is also an economic development arm of the city.

We need more people coming to our downtown to support our local merchants. We need to prove value in our downtown as we redevelop so we leased the theater. We have great ethnic groups that make up our community whose cultural arts should be seen and preserved so we make the theater available to them.

As a city we can display their arts so we ask the groups to perform at the theater. Through this we add value.

We have an arts group that wants to have a place to meet and display their arts and learn from each other and we have a place for that which also adds value to our city and aids or redevelopment efforts.

The mission of our city's Arts Commission includes adding value by bringing our community together through art and we are working to expand their programs.

As we create value we create the possibility of more economic development, additional sales tax and property tax to the city and therefore more ability to provide services to our people.

We all must understand that many of our diverse populations don't need economic assistance. Many can make a decision to provide economic assistance and development in our city. By bringing our populations together we can build something that reflects all that is good in Auburn.

While we've had to reorganize and downsize our Parks, Arts and Recreation Department we still have great parks here in Auburn, recreational programs for all and our Arts Division continues to move forward.

For the benefit of our youth at risk, developed with input from our multi-cultural Roundtable, School District, Police Department, business community, citizens and most especially most of our council members your Council is moving forward on Phase One of the Les Gove Community Plan to build a gym between the existing Senior Center and our Parks Building. The Parks building will then be transformed to a youth center perhaps run by the Boys and Girls Club or other similar agency. This connection will allow seniors to use it during the day and our children in the afternoon and evening. We need more and more activities to keep our children involved, engaged and occupied during the difficult time of adolescence.

In addition we are building a Boundless Playground at our Les Gove Campus so that children and parents with special needs can use and appreciate this facility. Councilmembers brought this to us from a national meeting and they will enrich the lives of generations to come.

One of the problems we have had is getting our youth, our senior as well around town to locations such as these facilities at Les Gove, downtown, the YMCA, Junior Achievement and the Mall.

Well, Past Council Member Roger Thordarson led the effort that developed the first commuter shuttle from our neighborhoods to the Transit Center but working with staff and Council he took it further and just weeks ago we

signed an agreement that he began that will bring a Metro Shopper Shuttle for our citizens to use and it will be used to get downtown, to the mall, the YMCA, Senior Center, Library and Theater.

For decades efficient and ongoing trusted daily service has been a goal of this city. Thank you Roger for your contribution to you city. This will be a real shopper service but also give our kids a way to get to current and newly developed services.

Our Public Works Department was reorganized as well as we moved all of the development functions to Planning so our Public Works personnel could concentrate on their increasingly difficult mission goals set by Council. Council has dedicated funds through the Save Our Streets initiative so that all local streets will be repaved and brought up to standard. Now we are reaching that point where the remaining streets are those that are of broken concrete, no curbs or gutters, little or no storm drains, sewer pipes made out of clay and leaking water pipes. Costs for replacing sewer pipes, water pipes and storm drains come out of those specific rate payer utilities. Replacing too many of those streets in any one year could dramatically increase our citizen's utility bills so staff works their plans to keep costs within the ability of the utilities.

Public Works will continue the work on the minor arterial streets you saw started last year. Miles of arterials have been crack sealed and deep patching has stretched each dollar farther than we ever thought possible as we work on these streets.

You've seen many of our folks out on the levees all summer. We've escaped the storms of the fall and now we wait to see what Nature will bring this spring. Next summer the Corps of Engineers will begin to test the newly installed grout curtain. If those tests are successful it may provide some higher level of protection at the dam for the upcoming year. Still, until a permanent fix is designed and your federal government approves the funding to allow the installation to begin we will still see a higher level of risk.

I know for some that live on or use the levees for hiking and fishing that four mile long barrier is more than a minor inconvenience. It is no question. But we must weigh that against the certain knowledge that if we have flood producing storms then a break caused by someone wanting to get across their backyard or someone trying to cross the barrier for recreation could cause a break that can flood homes and injure our citizens.

With all of that we still live in a century old city. Every day of every year we work on maintaining our infrastructure. Sewer pipes of clay must be updated. Water pipes of iron dating decades ago and water wells begun in

the 1800's as well as storm systems of pipe and plastic all have to be maintained, expanded and developed.

Arterial streets must be resurfaced about every seven to ten years and local streets can go a bit longer. The big regional freight and commuter corridors are increasingly difficult to maintain.

With the losses in income to the city of Auburn caused by that massive change in state tax law that is called Streamline Sales Tax and the additional sales tax losses from the economy I asked the community to come together last year for the Mayor's Task Force on Arterial Streets.

We enacted the recommendations of that group including closing sections of our arterial system to regional truck traffic to save street service for use by our citizens. We are working with industry, two ports, two counties and the state of Washington on a regional solution.

If we are going to continue to be a trade region, if we are going to be asked to continue our role as an industrial city and partner then first there must be a partnership that must work together for a regional freight and commuter system that is not just built once but funded yearly for maintenance.

Our roads are at capacity and there is little hope that any of the federal stimulus money the mayors of the United States worked on will ever get through from the state of Washington. We need to fix what we've got and make the best of what we have. That includes reminding state and federal officials of Auburn's position at the center of the south's transportation hub.

We have facilities at our Transit Center and Sound Transit needs to be held to their promise of the long overdue second parking garage. Auburn's position at the center of regional transportation with Sound Transit, Sounder bus, Pierce Transit, Metro, Burlington Northern, Union Pacific and Amtrak must be recognized.

It is time to re-establish the Amtrak stops in Auburn. Auburn has been a train hub for almost a century and we should look at expanding this form of transportation.

That central fact has already been included in comments for the proposal to expand Amtrak service in our state and must also be examined as the study continues to re-open the Auburn to Chicago Amtrak link on Stampede Pass.

Auburn also supports the expansion of the use of the Stampede Pass line for the commuter use by a self propelled passenger car or DMU to deliver commuters from the cities of Black Diamond, Covington, Enumclaw and others. Those south east cities have little hope of highway expansion but the railroad holds hope for them. We must work with our citizens along the line but folks; have to tell you, a single vehicle commuter car is a lot quieter than grain cars being slammed together.

Within the city I have reorganized our Planning and Development Department to become more agile and able to assist development while protecting the interests of the city. At the same time it will give the individual homeowner who wants to remodel or sell their property much more information and individual guidance. As citizens and developers come to the new counter there will be one united group of city employees there to meet their needs.

Planning and Development, Public Works, Finance and Utilities as well as Information Services, those computer folks, will all be located in the new offices across the street to provide a one stop shop for all that might need services in our city. City Hall was built in 1978 to house the government for 21,000 people. At almost 68,000 people the city has grown and even though we run a pretty tight ship we've got little room left for the people you need.

The new offices will have that central counter you can go to for all your needs in that new facility. As for Council and I, the City Attorney and Human Resources, we will remain where we are to be available to serve our citizens.

With the reorganization we are ready to see a successful decade begin with 2010. We will be ready to take advantage of the changes already taking place. Council and I are committed to raising the income level of our city through economic success so that we can begin to decrease the reliance on property taxes.

I spend a great deal of time talking about development. There's a reason. With the economy, property devaluation, sales tax losses and the massive change in state tax code created by Streamline Sales Tax we have suffered great losses in income even while our city has grown. Citizens need city services. We must keep our community safe. Council has worked for years to try to find solutions so that we can provide the needed services even as income decreases.

Auburn is a very special place. Quality of life is important. Parks and programs, trails and rivers wind through our city. We are a place of parades and we actually have a downtown where others have lost theirs. All of this is and so much more are a part of the fabric of our city.

So how do we get the money we need to run the city and keep the quality of life we treasure?

Council and scores of citizen committees and boards determined to increase the revenue base of the city through specific development to bring the business we need where we want it to be sited and to ensure it does not over run our neighborhoods.

Across this city development efforts that began years ago are now moving forward. Two of the six downtown blocks have now been redeveloped and almost 200,000 square feet of new buildings have added to the business base of our community. This year as the result of our successful approvals of six million dollars in federal and state grants specifically for a downtown redevelopment effort Division Street will be transformed into the new Promenade and with that four addition blocks of retail and professional offices, condominiums and apartments will start to rise one after the other in the heart of our town. Designed to be a link between a new and old Auburn we will see growth that compliments not destroys existing business.

While we finish that process started by all sectors of our community as they combined to create the 2001 Downtown Redevelopment Plan I have asked them to come together again. Citizens, Chamber of Commerce, Auburn Downtown Association, hospital, school district and others will take part. We will have representatives from north and south, hills and the flat as we ask them to design downtown Auburn for 2030. How big should it be? What do we need? What is the mix of business and hospital, school and retail? How do we preserve neighborhoods, expand downtown living and create a positive environment for generations to come? This will be the question and their charge and you are welcome to join in the effort.

We will focus our efforts to rebuild the business community on Auburn Way South and work with the new business and residential development on the north end of our city and at the far south. Supermall continues to expand and we need to make sure it adds to the value of our city and its merchants.

We must first continue our work to create value. The shops, the big stores, the restaurants we all say we want here have not come and will not come just because we've said so. They will come when we can prove to them it will be profitable for them to be here and our efforts to date are part of that process.

That effort is not just a job for a single economic development manager. It is the job of the city and the chamber and the ADA and the school district and the hospital and Boeing and all of the residents of Auburn.

Every time an individual comes to a shop in Auburn let's tell them how well we are doing. When you are at a meeting, a seminar or on vacation any where in the world tell the people you meet to come to auburn, bring their business to Auburn.

Do you want more businesses in the downtown? Then shop in downtown Auburn. Go the *The Ave*, bring people to all the restaurants.

You shop keepers and store owners create a message for your store, your block and your city. Do you want more business? If you do then it is your responsibility as well to prove value. Together we are the salespeople to the region and beyond to create value here.

The businesses we want and need, located in the places we want them to go while preserving our community that serves to lower our own personal property tax rates. That's the goal and the obligation each of us carries for ourselves, our families and the generations to come.

It is 2010 and it is time to step up to our future. Auburn is More Than They Imagined and this is your time to join and spreading the message.

Together we have been changing the face of Auburn.

Together we are making a difference.

Are you ready for 2010? Are you ready to spread the message of Auburn?

May you all have a Happy and Prosperous New Year!