

“SERVICE TO OUR COMMUNITY”

Good afternoon and thank you. I would like to welcome each of you here this afternoon as we take a look back at the year 2004, and look forward to what I promise you will be an exciting new year in 2005 for the City of New Brunswick and its residents. As in years past, I am proud to be able to welcome you to this afternoon’s address at a new addition to our City’s landscape - the “home base” of our city’s recreation and youth services – a facility requested by...planned and designed by...and officially opened here this afternoon by our teen residents – ladies and gentlemen, welcome to our New Brunswick HUB Teen Center. My thanks to all the young members of our Teen Center, its Director Ed Spencer and Recreation Director Mike Blackwell for their assistance in coordinating today’s events – the grand opening, the guided tours, the reception - all the events that led up to today’s address. You have much to be proud of here in this new facility. It is uniquely your own – congratulations.

It is a distinct honor to be able to stand before you once again as I begin my fifteenth year serving as the 62nd Mayor of the City of New Brunswick, my lifelong hometown. The true excitement and genuine veneration I feel for the office I hold and the scope of the responsibilities you place in my hands as the Mayor of this great City does not diminish throughout the years. Instead, they become even deeper and enhanced as I realize the faith and confidence each of you place in me everyday.

However, I am humbly aware that the continuously improving quality of life and open and effective government we have here in New Brunswick is not the work of one person. It’s the work of literally hundreds of people on a daily basis, 24/7, dedicated to a common

goal: to get the job done – and serve our community. I wish to thank my staff at City Hall, our City Administrator Thomas Loughlin, all City Department and Division heads and all the employees of the City of New Brunswick. We are a team. We work hard. We get things done.

To my colleagues and friends serving on the New Brunswick City Council, I extend my deep appreciation not only on this occasion, but every day throughout the year, for your tireless work on behalf of all those in the New Brunswick community. In busy day to day life, it can often be forgotten that you are our residents' voice in city government. Today I am here to remind everyone that you each do an amazing job for our constituents.

I would like to extend my thanks to the individuals that make up our entire community and make it so unique and special: our residents, our city's board, authority and commission members, our educational and health institutions, our clergy and their congregations, our countless civic, fraternal and volunteer organizations, the New Brunswick Development Corporation, New Brunswick Tomorrow, New Brunswick City Market and the New Brunswick Cultural Center.

And finally, I thank my wife Laura, our daughter Rebecca and our son Casey and his wife Lindsay, and my mother, Helen, for their continual encouragement and love while I do my part to serve this great city of ours.

Over the past several years, the importance of service to community has been deeply stirred within our national and global community. We have experienced the realities of

events like the September 11th attacks, the ensuing war in Iraq and just last month we have seen the images of the totally incomprehensible devastation in India and South Asia.

Along with the pain, grief and apprehension these incidents and images have evoked, questions of our own humanity and mortality have been brought to the forefront. People across all continents are pondering “what can I do?” and “how can I get involved?” To that end, we, as Americans, are finding the answers to these questions in our local communities and hometowns. Indeed, our nation has stepped up to the plate – and done what is expected of a civilized and peace-loving nation – we’ve offered our service. Whether it’s been letter writing campaigns or care packages sent to our troops stationed in Iraq, corporate donations to fund the Ground Zero Memorial site or most recently school children saving pennies in jars across our nation to aid Tsunami relief efforts. Community service - and what we can accomplish through it as members of the human race – whether in our own backyard or around the globe - has given us the opportunity for action in these times of particularly unsettling events in our nation and around the world.

And as the old adage reminds us – service starts at home – literally within our homes, our neighborhoods and our towns. Community service, volunteerism and good will toward our fellow man are hallmarks of our nation – and indeed values that our nation’s government aspires to everyday. New Brunswick heeds the call of service to community everyday. The support, services and opportunities we routinely provide as a municipal government are examples of true commitment to our community. Examples of these uniquely “New Brunswick” community services were more than plentiful in this past

year. I would like to take this chance to highlight these acts and examples of community service as they relate to our municipal government here in our City of New Brunswick.

This year has been one of exciting change for the New Brunswick Public Schools community. After twenty-four years of service at the helm of the New Brunswick public schools, Dr. Ronald Larkin retired as our Schools Superintendent. His legacy of service to our education system was extraordinary. He oversaw the completion of three new schools in the City, developed the master plan for the new New Brunswick High School and partnered with leaders in the state's medical community to create the City's innovative Health Science Technology High School.

During this past year, Dr. Larkin's successor Richard Kaplan was named New Brunswick Public Schools new superintendent. Serving students across our state for the past 30-years as a veteran teacher, principal, administrator and superintendent, he brings new perspectives and ideas to our district and our students. Superintendent Kaplan has critical knowledge of state funding to make sure our schools get their fair share. He has overseen many new construction projects and technology upgrades in the school districts he has led. We are fortunate to welcome Superintendent Kaplan as chief of our schools, especially in this time before our district begins one of the most ambitious school renovation and new construction agendas in state history – with a mission of serving both today's and tomorrow's students...

The "new" New Brunswick High School is the centerpiece of this agenda. The state-of-the-art facility will be built on Route 27, a focal point of the burgeoning Renaissance 2000

community. This new high school, funded with state grants through the NJ School Construction Corporation will feature 430,000 square feet, and will accommodate up to 2,300 students. It is being built for current and future use with classrooms, auditoriums and community space that will also serve our residents after school hours, as a true city-wide neighborhood community school and resource. The high school will begin serving our students in school year 2008-2009. However, service to our school student community does not stop there. Our Board of Education, our school administration, Site-Based Management Teams, PTAs and PTOs are working together on ten other new school projects including the following:

- The New Brunswick Health Science Technology High School will receive an addition and renovations, set to be completed in September of 2006.
- The current New Brunswick High School will be upgraded to serve as a new middle school and will open officially in school year 2009-2010.
- The Paul Robeson School will receive an addition and renovations, set to be completed by September of 2007.
- A brand new Redshaw School will open in September of 2007.
- The Roosevelt School will receive renovations, set to be completed by September 2009.

- A brand new Lincoln School will open in September of 2009.
- The Woodrow Wilson School will receive an addition and further renovations, set to be completed by September 2010.
- A new Kindergarten Center at the Lord Stirling School will open in September 2007.
- And another Kindergarten Center will open at the McKinley School in September 2006.
- And a third new Kindergarten Center will open on Sanford Street in September of 2007 and will be a welcome and significant contribution to our Georges Road Gateway Project partnership that we share with the residents, the Civic League, NBT, DEVCO and Rutgers University.

On an interim basis, each of these school communities will be accommodated at the New Brunswick Public Schools swing space facility that has been created on Van Dyke Avenue. As new schools are built, renovated and added to, the exploring, researching and learning will continue – without loss of educational service to our City’s school students.

As you can see, quite an ambitious school renovation and construction plan is underway in our school system. These new facilities will serve as beacons of educational progress,

spurring many great things ahead for our public schools community. New Brunswick students will have access to the most state-of-the-art learning environments along with our already dedicated and gifted teachers and staff to broaden and challenge the young students they serve. We look forward to this progress of service on behalf of all New Brunswick's students.

2004 was the most successful year to date for the New Brunswick Youth Services System's Play SAFE summer camp. It truly was a summer of fun for over 1300 New Brunswick youngsters who received their Play SAFE t-shirts and became official day campers through the months of July and August. Campers explored recreational, educational, cultural, artistic, athletic and social opportunities – while enjoying the traditional pursuits of summertime including trips to the pool and beach, hiking and exploring nature and taking in some cool movies at local cinemas. Over 125 camp counselors and personnel served our community's young people making for a summer of safe fun for all participants.

The new Youth Sports Complex, located right next door and which you all passed on your way in this afternoon, opened May 1st of last year. This new complex includes 15 acres of prime recreational space with five lighted sports fields – three for baseball & two for soccer. It serves as the official home of New Brunswick's Athletic Coalition for Excellence, better known as ACE. Already, the complex has served our community well – with over 450 sporting events held in 2004 alone – with many more to follow.

This new facility we celebrate this afternoon was a highlight for service to our community in 2004 – even before its grand opening today. Already hundreds of teens have signed on to become members and patrons - making good use of the sports equipment and recreational amenities. The new HUB Teen Center is open every weekday afternoon and evening until 9pm and on Saturday from noon until 9pm – and in the summer, the doors of this Center open at 10am and stay open until 9pm, Monday through Saturday. This Center features batting cages to serve a future Derek Jeter or Jennifer Finch, a golf range for a future Tiger Woods or Annika Sorenstam, a ping-pong zone to inspire the likes of a future Andre Agassi or Serena Williams, a 50 seat movie theatre to serve the budding interests of an up and coming Halle Berry and a cyber-café and snack bar that may spark the interests of a burgeoning Wolfgang Puck or Emeril Lagasse. And 2005 will see even more expansion and upgrades at this facility including a dedicated exercise suite to pump up a future Duane “The Rock” Johnson and a full service dance studio to create the stage for a promising J. Lo and a new computer suite to connect a future Bill Gates to the Internet. Our Teen Center serves the hopes and aspirations of our teen community – and we are happy it’s here. When the original HUB Teen Center opened on George Street in 1995, useable square footage measured 6,000 square feet. Over five years ago, when our HUB Teen Center moved to a renovated facility on Morris Street – the capacity was 11,000 square feet. And now our current Teen Center tops out at 17,000 square feet, and I cannot tell you about the incredible transformation this building has undergone with the assistance of many volunteers and many hours of labor. With donated materials and equipment this Center was created in the spirit of community service – once a diamond in the rough – and now a jewel to our community and its young people.

On behalf of the HUB Teen Center, I would like to personally thank Paul Reynolds and John Walton of the New Jersey Youth Corps for their day in and day out services to help renovate this facility. Thanks also to Drew McDonald of Jim Salerno Pontiac, Buick, GMC for donations to the computer labs here at the HUB Teen Center.

In 2004, the New Brunswick Youth Services System received a \$50,000 grant from the New Jersey Attorney General's Office to serve even more students with after school programming at the Lincoln School Annex. YSS now serves our after school community with eight school-based after school programming sites throughout our city serving over 900 students every day after school. On a daily basis, after school programming includes homework help and tutoring, supervised sports programs, computer training and exploration, dance and drama offerings, and much more.

In a joint effort among the City of New Brunswick, Rutgers University and the New Brunswick Housing Authority, the second annual "Big Chill Race 2004" garnered 2,000 toys donated for children living in public housing in the greater New Brunswick area. Over 1,700 runners showed true service to our community by collecting \$5,000 for donations to the Middlesex County Food Bank and donating hundreds of age-appropriate presents to young residents living in our public housing communities.

Many New Brunswick senior citizens begin each morning of the week the same way – with a hot delicious breakfast served up by Chef Robert Morales, the New Brunswick Senior Citizen Resource Center chef. In fact, on every weekday throughout the year,

made-to-order and nutritionally balanced breakfasts and lunches are served to our seniors through the good work of Chef Morales and the Senior Citizen Resource Center staff. Serving up a hot meal at a fraction of the cost to the senior community is just a small part of what the New Brunswick Senior Resource Center offers.

In 2004, the New Brunswick Senior Citizen Resource Center saw an overall increase in enrollment, with 108 new members signed on to take advantage of the social, educational and cultural offerings at the Center. From a cardio-exercise class, to Latino and African American film screenings or a pottery lesson and computer and Internet training – the Center provides outstanding services to our seniors. Yearly attendance for 2004 topped over 11,500 – an increase of over 900 patrons from 2003. In addition to providing hot breakfasts and lunches to our seniors, the Center’s daily menu now includes an increased deli service with more delicious choices. And as always, the Center STILL provides FREE transportation, TO AND FROM the facility at 81 Huntington Street, for ALL members.

Today, even greater numbers of our senior receive transportation TO and FROM their doctor and medical related appointments through the New Brunswick Dial-A-Ride services. Just consider that over 20,000 rides were provided by our City’s Dial-A-Ride staff and our fleet of 5 vans, accommodating anywhere from 12-15 passengers each. 20,000 individual rides – service to our community indeed thanks to Dial-A-Ride.

Late last year, our City began a new chapter of service to the businesses and shoppers of New Brunswick.. The day was December 29, 2004. Our City Council formally accepted

New Brunswick's designation as the state's newest Urban Enterprise Zone. And with the Council's acceptance of that designation, New Brunswick's Urban Enterprise Zone or UEZ, culminates years of effort to revitalize commerce and encourage economic development and growth throughout New Brunswick's business community.

Our business community is multi-generational and multi-dimensional. From the industrial corridors of Jersey Avenue, the festive "Brunswick Boardwalk" setting of Easton Avenue, the main street flair of George Street and City Market and the burgeoning French Street business community. New Brunswick's UEZ opens a new and exciting chapter of service to our City's consumer and business communities.

An Urban Enterprise Zone is a designation given by the State of New Jersey to assist and enhance commerce, job creation and overall economic development efforts in urban centers throughout New Jersey. New Brunswick's application for inclusion as an Urban Enterprise Zone (UEZ) was prepared by the Department of Planning, Community and Economic Development and was unanimously supported by the State's Urban Enterprise Zone Authority. The New Brunswick UEZ provides key incentives and services for businesses located in the zone and for those businesses wishing to relocate within the zone.

Incentives and services include a reduction of state sales tax (from 6% to 3%) to most items and goods sold to consumers; the elimination of state sales tax for businesses in the zone for business-related purchases such as building materials and office supplies and equipment; a tax credit of up to \$1500 for each new full time permanent New Brunswick

employee hired, and eligibility for financial assistance to businesses including low interest loans through the New Jersey Local Development Financing Fund.

The New Brunswick UEZ includes a Board of Directors comprised of local business, community and government partners. These partners include volunteers serving as board members from the Hyatt Hotel, Commerce Bank, Thomas Sweet Ice Cream Shoppe and C-Town Food Store.

An important service of New Brunswick's UEZ is to our City's shoppers, consumers and full and part time job seekers. With the regular state sales tax cut in half to three percent, shoppers using UEZ designated stores and businesses will realize substantial savings on all their eligible purchases. And with the 3% sales tax collected flowing back to our City, the UEZ will service future generations of our City, as this strong flow of capital is re-invested in new and ongoing economic development projects – including job training, small business planning, and façade and facility upgrades for businesses across our City.

Registration for UEZ businesses is required. For any of you here this evening who may be learning about our Urban Enterprise Zone for the first time, please take the time to find out more. Whether or not you are a New Brunswick resident – a New Brunswick business owner – or a shopper who enjoys our unique mix of shops, companies and services - find out about one of our City's most important designations in its history. For more information on the New Brunswick Urban Enterprise Zone, contact RuthAnne Beck, who serves as our City's new UEZ Coordinator at 732.745.5050.

The New Brunswick Office of Economic Development offered its Small Business Seminar Series once again. The services provided at four sessions focused on various business related topics including entrepreneurial success, small business financing and marketing. The decade of opportunities for knowledge and growth offered through the Small Business Seminar Series has serviced over 250 small businesses and entrepreneurs in the New Brunswick area. This past year's series was brought to our small business community with the help of the New Jersey Small Business Development Center.

Municipal service can also include preventative and maintenance measures to make sure our community members are safe and take advantage of all the services provided to them. The New Brunswick Sidewalk Repair Program offered through the Division of Community Development assists low- and moderate-income homeowners defray the cost of repairing damaged sidewalk. Grants from the federal government allows our City's Community Development Offices to pay up to 50% off sidewalk repairs to eligible homeowners through a Community Development Block Grant.

And likewise, over the past year our City applied for and received over \$350,000 in state grants for the New Brunswick Residential Lead Abatement Program. This program assists eligible low-income owner occupants with lead abatement in older dwellings in the City. The funds are administered through the New Brunswick Division of Community Development.

I urge all residents who may be eligible for lead abatement to call the Division of Community Development for more information at 732.745.5050 on these services our City provides.

One of the major physical redevelopment projects that has been on the New Brunswick's radar this past year is the new Magyar Savings Financial Center, being constructed at our City's Route 27 gateway at Somerset and French Streets. This 80-year old financial institution broke ground for a new state-of-the-art financial center. Magyar Savings, its Board of Directors and staff, many who have been with this institution for decades, have always put service above all when dealing as a lender and a neighbor. Today Magyar is a financial beacon, celebrating its Hungarian past and future – serving all residents in the greater New Brunswick community – just as it has done since the 1920s.

A new chapter of service to the Rutgers University student population began this past year as ground was broken and significant progress was made on Rockoff Hall. This \$75 million project, at the corner of George and New Streets, will feature a new multi-story Rutgers University student housing community. Rockoff Hall will accommodate over 670 students and the ground floor will feature new retail space, bringing with it new job opportunities and student-spurred commerce for our downtown. Rockoff Hall is being developed by the New Brunswick Development Corporation.

And progress continues on Heldrich Plaza, an 11 story multi-use facility at New Brunswick's Monument Square. Included in the Heldrich Plaza will be the Heldrich Workforce Center serving local residents with job training and specific education career

tracks. Heldrich Plaza will offer outstanding services to visitors within our City with a 250-room hotel. The Plaza will increase our downtown residential population and tax ratables with 30 new condominiums and ground floor retail space. And the Heldrich Center has and will continue to generate service to our community through unprecedented job creation, with over 700 permanent and construction jobs. Service indeed, under the name of John J. Heldrich, a legendary leader in this City – a man of true community service – still serving our City today – over 50 years after he began his career at Johnson & Johnson.

And another company name connected with service for years in our community for several decades broke ground this year on its first major residential project within our borders. Boraie Development Corporation will offer current and prospective residents a new 23-story luxury condominium community and offices called Spring Street Plaza, located in the heart of our downtown at Spring “Alley” – for you New Brunswick purists – and Paterson Street. This enclave will feature over 120 market-rate condominiums and will be an attractive addition to our skyline, featuring a rooftop deck and gardens, a health club and 24-hour concierge service to its residents.

Also breaking ground this year and making progress on schedule is the Rutgers University Safety Complex. Located at the corner of Commercial Avenue and George Street, between the Rutgers and Douglass/Cook campuses, this facility will bring a first-of-its-kind and state-of-the-art centralized student public safety building into our downtown. The project is also being developed by the New Brunswick Development Corporation and will feature seventy five thousand square feet and an overall investment

of thirty four million dollars into the burgeoning upper George Street neighborhood. The Safety Complex will join community projects within the neighborhood including the new Lord Stirling School, a new senior citizen community to be created within the original Lord Stirling School structure, the Hope Manor and Riverside townhome developments and recent renovations to the New Brunswick Apartments and Riverside Towers.

The new Walgreens Drug Store opened its doors late last year as another addition to our City's efforts to offer convenient shopping and amenities within our borders. The new store, located at 20 Jersey Avenue, will service its surrounding community and begins an exciting new shopping plaza and transformation in the Jersey Avenue/Handy Street neighborhood.

Transportation convenience and commuting time saved is also another form of service that is provided to residents, businesses and visitors of our City. New Brunswick is known as the "hub city" of New Jersey, with an impressive transit and private bus and rail system and an extensive network of highways conveniently converging within our borders. Among these major highway arteries is US Route 18. In 2005, the New Jersey Department of Transportation, along with the concerted effort of our City and many key partners, has begun the Route 18 expansion and improvement project, the most dramatic transportation upgrade our City has seen in decades. With significant public outreach and public information plans being dispatched by all major partners in this project, including a website specifically for the plan, the Route 18 expansion and upgrades will create a streamlined network of more efficient and easily accessible roadways – including a new Commercial Avenue bridge and further upgrades to our historic Boyd Park. This is a

four-year project funded completely by the New Jersey Department of Transportation through the Federal Highway Administration. We look forward to its completion in 2009 – and believe the improvements will be vital to our City’s successful future for decades to follow.

Also on tap for more progress this year is the Georges Road Gateway Project, a partnership with our residents, the Civic League, NBT, DEVCO and Rutgers University. This extensive project will service our community in one of our most ambitious, holistic neighborhood revitalization efforts to create a plan for community and economic development surrounding the Georges Road entrance into our City. The plan includes revitalized transportation, educational, business, employment, social service, healthcare and homeownership opportunities in the Georges Road community – a proud community whose progress will be key to the future of our City for many years to come.

And as I round out notable news in our transportation services agenda this year, the BrunsQuick Shuttle made its debut in 2004. This free shuttle bus services our residents, neighbors and students traveling in and around the City’s fifth and sixth wards. The Shuttle is jointly funded by our City, the New Brunswick Parking Authority, Rutgers University and New Jersey Transit.

Our City reached a milestone of service to our public housing community in 1997 as we began the HOPE VI housing plan for residents of the New Brunswick Homes. In 2004, our City celebrated another community outlined in our original HOPE VI plan, with the grand opening of Riverside, a 76-unit affordable and public housing townhome

community along Neilson, Oliver and New Streets. These three level townhomes contain separate backyards, garages and an impressive community center for residential functions and tenant and homeowner meetings. Riverside stands as a testament to the original requests of residents living at Memorial Homes – to stay close to their community and the convenient services of transportation, healthcare and downtown shopping and retail.

The next phase of the HOPE VI Memorial Homes replacement plan will serve nearly 50 senior families within our community. Renovations and refurbishing to the old Lord Stirling School on Carmen Street will begin this year. The resulting deluxe apartment units will feature private and spacious floor plans for our seniors wishing to take advantage of the services and amenities available in our downtown, near the banks of the historic Raritan and within close proximity to family and friends.

The wide variety of recreational, sports and leisure time services New Brunswick provides to our residents often takes place in over 150 acres of City parks and open space. This past year, our Parks Department reached a twenty-year milestone of service to our urban forestry program here in New Brunswick. On April 27, 2004 at Boyd Park in observance of Arbor Day, our Parks Director Jim Campbell and members of the New Brunswick Bureau of Shade Trees celebrated the 20th Anniversary of our City's distinction as a "Tree City USA". This award was presented by state DEP and United States Forest Registry representatives. Our City was singled out for service to keep New Brunswick green – and growing. Our Parks Department takes this recognition of service very seriously planting approximately 500 new trees every year within our City's parks, playgrounds, neighborhood streets, resulting in some 10,000 new trees planted during the

past twenty years. Congratulations on a job well done that will literally serve our community for decades to come.

Our health care community had another banner year of service to our community with new leaders, national recognition for caregivers, and several new medical research facilities in our very own “health care city”. After fifteen years of service to the medical and academic community and to the greater New Brunswick community, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital President and CEO Harvey A. Holzberg is stepping down. We welcome his successor Dr. Clifton Lacy, who last served our state as New Jersey Health and Senior Services Commissioner

Both Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital and Saint Peters University Hospital received high marks on the 2004 New Jersey Hospital Performance Report of the State Department of Health and Senior Services. Indicators for this very prestigious service report included patient care and satisfaction and research and technology pursuits. We are fortunate indeed to have two outstanding medical centers such as Saint Peters University Hospital and Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital within our City’s borders.

This past year also saw the commencement of construction on The Child Health Institute located on the Robert Wood Johnson campus along French Street. The Institute, whose Executive Director is our City’s own Councilwoman Betsy Garlatti, will house more than 40 research laboratories investigating child related illnesses including cancers, heart defects – even autism. This \$73 million project will feature 127,000 square feet and will

open this spring, with 130 full-time employees, all working on a mission of service to the youngest members of our society – and making strides in research and investigation to lessen the effects and ultimately eradicate the illnesses and conditions that prevent healthy lives for children across our nation – and around the globe.

Known as a beacon of service to those battling the world's most deadliest disease, The Cancer Institute of New Jersey dedicated a new expanded facility on Little Albany Street in 2004. The new building will triple the amount of research laboratories – spurring more investigation, exploration and the ultimate goal of stopping this killer. The Institute currently services over 100,000 patients and their families annually.

Our City's premiere social services resource, New Brunswick Tomorrow, hosted its first Healthier New Brunswick 2010 Update session late last year. Healthier New Brunswick 2010 is a venture undertaken by the NBT Health Task Force to make certain that *each* and *every* New Brunswick resident achieves optimal health by the year 2010. This journey toward complete health service to our community got its start this year with a comprehensive community health assessment among interviewed New Brunswick residents. The survey helped pinpoint the greatest health care needs and concerns found among a cross section of our community. New Brunswick Tomorrow plans to utilize the information to tailor an optimal health action plan for all residents in New Brunswick, whether it's an infant receiving services through the Chandler Health Care Center, a retired grandfather undergoing angioplasty at Robert Wood Johnson – or a teenager attending a Diabetes information session at Saint Peters'. Our resident's health care needs are as varied as our population – and New Brunswick Tomorrow will work with all

our partners in our health care community to assure needs are met, services are offered and lives are enriched and enhanced for generations of New Brunswick residents.

Service to our community has always been the hallmark of the New Brunswick Police Department. Since the first volunteer police officers double-checked front doors on homes along Burnet and George Streets in the 1800s to today's bike patrols, crime prevention forums and public school outreach, our police in the City of New Brunswick have served residents with dedication, hometown pride and commitment to protect and serve. Never was this service more evident than in the past year. Three years after the tragic events of September 11, 2001 – our police force continues work on a daily basis to ensure the safety and peace of mind of our residents is a top priority. This year alone, our police force procured over \$100,000 in federal grants for homeland security, resulting in an increased police presence in our bustling downtown, heavily traveled train station, county government center and our filled-to-capacity theatres. We all witnessed the devastation of September 11th and our law enforcement recognizes our proximity to would-be terrorist targets and continues to work hard to provide for a safe and peaceful quality of life for all our residents. New Brunswick's men and women in blue serve to protect our peace of mind.

Among the service training initiated in 2004, twelve additional officers were trained for Bike Patrol efforts throughout our City – allowing easier access to neighborhoods and quicker response to incoming calls. The DARE and GREAT programs each had progress in 2004, with over one thousand students receiving information, in-classroom education and training on issues ranging from group communication and interpersonal dynamics to

proactive and positive aspects of community service, volunteerism and careers in law enforcement. While these programs are traditionally focused on anti-drug and anti-violence messages when it comes to our young people – a whole lot more goes on in DARE and GREAT training and education. The officers who serve as role models in these programs spark and inspire young people in our schools to do the “right thing” – where service to the community is the norm rather than the exception. These officers serve our school children with a vitally positive message everyday – and we applaud their efforts.

As a result of these and many other initiatives within our Police Department, we have seen our crime rate, according to the New Jersey State Police Uniform Crime Reports, plummet 15% just this past year and 48% since 1991, with juvenile crime dropping 60%.

Service to our community has never hit so close to our homes and our hearts than it did during the early morning hours of September 3, 2004. New Brunswick Emergency Dispatch received a 911 call at 3:03 a.m. that morning of a fire at a two-family residence at 50 Lee Avenue.

Deputy Chief James D’Heron was the first to arrive at that scene - within a minute and a half of that 911 call. Without regard to his own safety, Deputy Chief D’Heron immediately entered the building to alert the occupants in an effort to evacuate the premises. All of the occupants (including two children) safely left the building as a direct result of Deputy Chief D’Heron’s actions.

Tragically, Deputy Chief D’Heron was then caught in a fire that immediately claimed his life.

Since our Fire Department was chartered in 1764, Deputy Chief D’Heron is the fifth firefighter to give his life in the line of duty. Bravery, courage and selflessness are the legacy of Deputy Chief D’Heron. He gave his life in the line of duty for his fellow man. Service to humanity cannot and will not ever be demonstrated in a more valiant fashion. Deputy Chief D’Heron is and always will be New Brunswick’s hero. As we say goodbye to our dear friend, Jim D’Heron, we welcome the six new New Brunswick firefighters sworn in this past year, who will continue the proud tradition of our firefighters’ dedication and commitment to protect the lives and property of our city’s residents. They are:

- Christopher Casale
- Dana Christianis
- Jason Kormondy
- John Lombardo
- Robert Piparo
- Theodore Wright

Ebenezer Baptist Church - Saint Peter the Apostle Roman Catholic - Saint Mary Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church - Anshe Emeth Temple and Christ Church. All New

Brunswick houses of worship. All New Brunswick congregations. All serving the New Brunswick community for over 500 years in total, each makes news for their service to our community in 2004.

Ebenezer Baptist Church's Pastor Reverend Lonnie Ford received national recognition last year when he was appointed to the National Board of the Convention of Progressive Baptists. This year Reverend Ford celebrates 30 years of pastoral service to the Ebenezer community.

2004 was a groundbreaking year for the Anshe Emeth Temple on Livingston Avenue with the start of a \$10 million expansion including the restoration of the temple's sanctuary, a new library and technology center and renovations to the temple's school building along Sanford Street.

Saint Peter the Apostle Roman Catholic Church received a Capital Grant from the New Jersey Garden State Historic Trust for \$500,000 for overall rehab of the church, rectory and convent structures overlooking historic Old Queens campus along Somerset Street.

Christ Church, serving our City continuously since 1740 completed the majority of its church and facility renovations, including a dramatic and painstaking steeple renovation.

Saint Mary Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church congregation celebrated its 100 years of service to the New Brunswick community with a an anniversary celebration with

events throughout the year attended by hundreds of faithful servants to this religious community.

Many of the public services provided by our municipal workforce are so vital to our daily lives, and yet many times are taken for granted. They keep our streets clean, our water pure and our residents equipped with information and resources. For example, this year the New Brunswick Water Utility pumped, treated and delivered nearly 8 billion gallons of water to New Brunswick, Franklin Township and Milltown residents and businesses. 2004 also saw the installation of 4200 linear feet of new water mains and 17 new fire hydrants. And in the pursuit of true customer service, our Water Utility reduced their response time for customer inquiries from 30 minutes to 20 minutes. Time saved in service to our residents.

Our Public Works road crews paved over 33,000 square feet of roads in the City...repaired 2400 potholes...swept over 3,400 miles of curb line and removed over 40 inches of snow during 2004 snow events. Collectively, New Brunswick residents, businesses, church, schools and municipal buildings collected 21,000 tons of solid waste and recycling material including 1820 tons of bottles and cans...280 tons of newspaper...2250 tons of mixed paper and cardboard...550 tons of leaves...overall recycling tonnage for New Brunswick in 2004 was UP 350 tons.

New Brunswick Clean Communities Program hosted 9 citywide clean-ups with 800-850 participants in total and 10.5 tons of litter picked up.

New Brunswick Clean Communities also hosted the 1st Annual New Jersey Clean Communities Awards Banquet at the Hyatt Regency. Hundreds of state, county and local communities attended and our City was honored for its clean communities efforts and longtime New Brunswick resident Minnie Worley was recognized with the statewide Concerned Citizen Award for organizing many clean-ups in her neighborhood and beyond. Minnie – thanks for your continued selfless service to the community.

This year our Division of Inspections began a new chapter of service to neighborhoods throughout our community with the Community Clean Sweep Project. During the weeks of April 26 through May 7 and September 27 through October 8, two comprehensive and highly organized sweeps of our entire City by the City Division of Inspections focused solely on quality of life and property maintenance issues. Addressing issues including litter and garbage violations, illegally parked cars, graffiti, overgrown grass and hedges, non-approved furniture stored outdoors – in short, the issues that create a negative impact on the positive quality of life for residents enjoying this City and all it has to offer. The first sweep issued over 230 tickets for litter and garbage, 35 tickets for illegally parked cars and over 1,300 additional violation notices for City code violations. This first sweep proved effective, as the second sweep showed a significant decrease in violations across the board, with 300 tickets for improper garbage storage violations and only half-a-dozen graffiti violations.

The vision of service started by philanthropist Andrew Carnegie in the early 1900s as he donated funds to our nation's and City's public library system is alive and well today in New Brunswick. The staff of professionals at the New Brunswick Free Public Library, served our residents very well in 2004 clocking over 3,000 hours of operation and service over this past year with 92,000 items borrowed by 6,700 registered patrons during 150,000 visits. Over 6,000 new books were added to the library's collections as well as 460 DVDs, videotapes and books on tape. Patrons spent over 27,000 hours on library computers for Internet access and word processing. Over 8,000 members of the greater New Brunswick community attended over 400 meetings in the library's Community Room. Real examples of service to our community indeed from a resource that was built in our City over 100 years ago. Mr. Carnegie would be proud.....

What else can we as a City look forward to in 2005?

Our partnership with Rutgers University will explore exciting new initiatives for revitalizing the 5th and 6th wards for the benefit of all our residents, both student and non-student alike.

We will look to further improve our gateways into the City with new neighborhood initiatives along Remsen Avenue and Georges Road, expanded shopping, office, and light industrial development and employment opportunities along Jersey Avenue, and development and transit improvements along Easton and Livingston Avenues.

We will push for new retail opportunities for our residents and to establish New Brunswick as a true shopping destination.

We will look to become more pedestrian and bicycle friendly and to expand upon the highly successful BrunsQuick Shuttle in an effort to create a better bus shuttle system for the entire City.

We will take advantage of monies invested in technological upgrades within the Police Department with Crime Mapping, Mobile Computing and Digital Imaging, and with our Water Utility with the implementation of a new state-of-the-art filtration system that will expand our systems capacity and even further enhance the quality of our City's water supply.

We will look to create hundreds of new housing opportunities within our City's borders.

And we will continue to enhance our neighborhood revitalization programs, where we have invested more than \$16 million in City supplied funds, by taking steps to ensure the efficient and effective operation of our City's Housing Inspections Division. I will ask the City Council to authorize the hiring of the New Brunswick-based accounting firm of Withum, Smith & Brown to conduct a full and complete review of all financial and procedural policies relating to the Division. The review will include recommendations for possible improvements in both operations and delivery of services.

The Housing Inspections Division provides a critical service by improving the quality of our City's housing stock and is one of our first lines of defense when it comes to ensuring the physical safety of our residents. We will commission this audit to take a thorough look at existing policies and procedures to obtain a strengthened and more effective Housing Inspections Division.

As part of the audit, a review of the organization, position descriptions, duties, functions, training, personnel and reporting relationships within the Division will be studied. The audit will also include a representative sampling of inspection reports and documents, housing unit selection and scheduling, inspection methodology, and record keeping. The interaction among the Housing, Fire Prevention, Rent Leveling and Tax Assessing Divisions will also be examined along with models of data collection and sharing and networking.

Fulton Square, a 190 townhome and condominium community will get underway in 2005.

We will see more development within our healthcare community, further entrenching New Brunswick's image as the Health Care City.

And we will continue to recapture our waterfront with our partnership with the Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders as the Brunswick Landing project progresses toward making the Raritan a haven as a recreational waterway in New Brunswick.

We will focus on these and many other initiatives in 2005, all the while making sure we continue to provide the best in services at an efficient cost, as evidenced by the 6th lowest overall increase in property taxes in Middlesex County in the last 5 years and the 3rd lowest overall in the past 10 years.

As I began this afternoon's trip here to the HUB Teen Center from City Hall with Kevin, I was reminded of the past speeches I have delivered on behalf of the office I am so proud and honored to hold. Our City has come a long way, but we also have so many more opportunities to come with regard to serving this great City we call home. Active and involved community service on behalf of the residents of the City of New Brunswick has been and will continue to be the standard we as a municipal government work toward every hour of every day. Most importantly, the services we provide to our residents have an impact that can reach out from our back yards to the world community around us. As I reminded you earlier this hour, service to the community starts at home. Whether it's safe streets or clean streets, new schools or new businesses, senior services or teen services, new highways or restored houses of worship, healthcare breakthroughs or ground breakings – New Brunswick strives to be a community of service for our residents. We will continue our journey of service, and hopefully pass on the tradition of service to future generations, including the countless young people this new Center will serve for years to come.

At this time, I would invite you to please join us at the Teen Center Café refreshments. And please take advantage of the guided tours from our Police Department's Student Liaison Outreach Team student ambassadors.

Once again, thank you for your time and attention. Good evening.