

To the members of the clergy, elected and appointed officials, members of the business and philanthropic community, and to all of the citizens of our great city, good afternoon. Please accept the heartfelt thanks of the New Day administration for your presence here today. There are a few people to whom I would like to extend special gratitude. My family has been a lifelong source of support and inspiration to me. For that I will be eternally grateful. I would like to ask them to stand and be acknowledged publicly. Please join me in giving them a round of applause.

There are elected officials from all levels of government who are present today. Particularly to Mayor James Snyder of Portage and my cohorts in municipal government, City Clerk Raggs, City Judge Deidre Monroe and Common Council members Allen, Brewer, Brown, Pratt, Protho, Robinson, Rogers, Scott, and Shannon. Thank you for being co-laborers in the vineyard and sharing the privilege of service in a way that allows us to work together well even on those occasions when we may not agree. On occasion, we encounter elected officials who have difficult relationships between the Mayor and Council. I am happy to say that is not our issue.

To the members of the clergy and those who readily embrace the role that faith plays in the transformation of a community, thank you for your work on behalf of the citizens of this city and thank you for your effectual fervent prayers. Please keep praying, it is absolutely working in ways you cannot begin to see.

To our team, dubbed Team Gary, although so many of you have joined Team Gary, but I am specifically referring to those who work inside city hall or other city structures every day—thank you for the selfless sacrifices that you make. Thank you for protecting and serving; thank you for burning the midnight oil; thank you for soothing the ire of citizens who have called with complaints about service or the lack thereof; thank you for treating your respective job and responsibilities as something more than a paycheck. I greatly appreciate your efforts and commend you publicly for your hard work.

When I began preparing for the state of the city this year, I was immediately drawn to review the State of the City 2012 and 2013. I made a few observations. I noticed that the 2013 speech was two times longer than most I have given—I also noted that while we have accomplished a number of goals, we have some unfinished business as well. And while it would be easy to give you a score card and sit down—after all someone has decided to give me a report card on

Facebook—I resisted that urge. I want to provide enough information to compel those of you who haven't already done so to partner in the transformation of our city, and to update and encourage our existing partners to continue and expand their efforts to revitalize this city.

A couple of weeks ago, I attended an African American history program in the Indiana State House and learned about the courage, tenacity and perseverance of Mary Bateman Clark, an Indiana woman who took the person who had contracted with her for indentured servitude to the Indiana Supreme Court to gain her freedom, alleging that the indentured servitude that she was subjected to was pure and simple slavery in violation of the Indiana constitution. She was represented by a trailblazing attorney who did not mind bucking the system and ultimately she prevailed because members of the Indiana Supreme Court were willing to do the right thing. There was a team who worked beside Mary Bateman Clark to gain her triumph.

And in this month when we celebrate the accomplishments of African Americans to the success of this country, it seems appropriate to use Mary Bateman Clark as the shining example of what it will take to transform our community. Simply put, we can only make this happen together. This is best exemplified through a discussion about our challenges.

Crime, specifically, the murder rate, has been the Achilles heel of this administration. This is unacceptable. But sounding the alarm and doing something about it are two different things. We invited independent actors to help us take a long, hard look at our police department. As a result some personnel changes were made, some policies and practices were updated, and the number of officers on the street were increased. And while there are a number of changes still in progress, there are many factors that contribute to crime—lack of parenting, unemployment, lack of educational achievement, self-hatred. Such a multi-faceted problem lends itself to an equally multi-faceted solution.

But we can agree that the lead responsibility to address crime lies with the men and women of the Gary Police Department who work hard every day. And in accomplishing that task we have to work with others to stay ahead of the criminals. So today, I am announcing the development of a task force, led by the U.S. Marshal and our Department, to address the most active criminals, particularly violent actors, in the city of Gary. We will work with probation and parole officers, the regional stop team, the Sheriffs of Lake and Cook County, and our own officers to make sure they are engaged in law abiding behavior. Are you

aware that less than 1% of the population is wreaking havoc on the rest of us. We have the ability to know where that 1% is at all times.

So, if any of these folk are your relatives (and from personal experience I know they are, if these are your sons, daughters, nephews or friends, please put them on notice that we will be watching them. But that is not enough. This is not solely a punitive exercise. We want to catch them doing right and help them stay on the right track. I am asking business people and the educational community to give convicted felons an opportunity to do the right thing. Too often, they tell me of their desire to work and the stigma attached to their felony convictions. That is why we hire those who have been convicted of felonies in city government because we all deserve a second chance. That is why we are also working to provide training opportunities in traditional and non-traditional settings.

I am asking the faith community to pay special attention to those who have had trouble with the law in your congregations. After you testify on their behalf at sentencing, I am counting on you to provide the support necessary for them to turn their lives around. Encourage them to access the educational and vocational opportunities available in and out of prison. Tell them that the math of fast money always comes up short when you factor in the risk of death or jail. If we don't tell them, then who will?

We will also ask the council to consider an ordinance that will require gas stations and convenience stores that remain open after 10 p.m. to have cameras on their premises. Most businesses have cameras over the cash register and they should, but we need cameras on the outside ground because we have seen an alarming trend of violent crime on the premises of late night gas stations and convenience stores. This requirement is not cost prohibitive and this could provide a significant deterrent to those involved in criminal behavior and assistance to law enforcement as they work to protect and serve.

Despite our best efforts, we have not been able to erase the structural deficit. And while we have little control over the origin of the problem, we eagerly signed up to fix it and as I told a person who I called yesterday to apologize for our failure with alley cleaning and garbage collection, the buck must stop here. In the next year, we will make the necessary changes and difficult decisions to reduce the deficit, while evaluating many of the inequities that have existed in our salary structure for too long. This past year, we settled the seven year old back pay debt to police officers, but it does not change the fact that our public safety workers face the

greatest peril and receive the lowest pay in Northwest Indiana. That is shameful and this needs to be resolved.

About six months ago, we announced the advent of a 311 app to allow you to report problems throughout the community. We made it possible for you to use the telephone, smart phones and the internet to make us aware of abandoned buildings, flooding, vacant lots, pot holes, broken street lights and other issues that need to be addressed. And while you have been using this mechanism, we have not done the best job of addressing them in a uniform manner. Some of the matters require time and money, but there are some issues on the list that have been there far too long for no apparent reason. We are working on this problem as we speak and have every confidence that will be able to use the application to improve our service delivery to you.

Late last summer, we made one of the hardest decisions of our administration when through our own assessment, and despite the hard work of GHA personnel and board members, we entered into a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with HUD. Last August we stood before the residents of the Gary Housing Authority and heard about the deplorable condition of public housing in this city. We stood shoulder to shoulder with HUD officials to pledge improvements and while we have seen some progress, it has not occurred at the pace that we anticipated. So here is the good news, we have been able to recover over 5 million dollars that will allow us to reinvest in public housing by improving common areas at senior high rises, installing cameras and other security equipment, updating playground equipment and taking other measures to improve public housing. Recently, I learned that many of the conditions that were discussed during the summer still existed and I made a commitment to work closer with HUD to make sure that the work was done. For a brief moment, we did not pay attention in a way to secure our citizens. That won't happen again.

It is undeniable that education plays a key role in the progress of any community. Our educational institutions at the primary and secondary level have been challenged as a result of the heavy lift associated with educating a population of children who are steeped in poverty. That means that extra measures must be taken to ensure that all children learn. Now, I have no authority over education in this community, but I have enough sense to know that the success of the city is inextricably linked to the successful education of our children at the primary and secondary level. And so I have offered myself as a partner to all schools and I am announcing my willingness to use the convening ability of our office to bring all educational entities, including traditional public, public charter, private and faith-

based to say that we must create a continuum of well-funded educational opportunities to ensure that our children learn in every environment. While I can not tell one board or one superintendent what to do, I am willing to offer the city and mayor's office as a partner to improve educational achievement in this community.

If you paid any attention to my early prognostications when first elected to office, you know that the Sheraton hotel should be down by now and the airport runway should be almost complete. The fact that they are not is a lesson in the delicate balance between patience and a sense of urgency. It is also a lesson in transparency and the willingness to acknowledge when something has gone very wrong.

While the Sheraton is not down, the demolition of that 20 year eyesore is underway. It represents the first substantial step in the work of the Northside Development team—a group that includes the Environmental Protection Administration, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Transportation, Northern Indiana Regional Planning Commission, the Gary Public Transit Association, the Legacy foundation and the Regional Development Authority working hand in hand with the city departments of Redevelopment, Community Development, Green Urbanism, and Planning. However, the Sheraton is also a lesson in our responsibility to this community. The lowest most responsive bidder was a company from Michigan. Throughout the bid documents and in pre-bid meetings, we emphasized the importance of employment for local people. A few days ago I learned that they passed over Gary, over Lake County, over all of Northern Indiana to bring asbestos workers in from Michigan. I also became aware that they had not addressed established requirements of the Indiana Department of Environmental Management relative to the project. Within three hours of learning this information, I conducted a meeting in my office to put the company on notice that before I allow them to jeopardize our relationship with environmental oversight regulators or ignore qualified citizens that I am entrusted to serve, that I would shut down the project.

As bad as the Sheraton needs to go, our community's dire need for jobs is greater. Last Saturday, I was in Walgreens on Bridge Street (with my Walgreens frequent flyer card of course) talking to Sam who was a member of Laborers' Local 81. He beamed with pride as he talked about having worked on the Walgreens and Thea Bowman High School and how he knew there were local people capable of removing asbestos and doing work on the Sheraton. Well I knew then and I know now he was telling the truth and we owe Sam and his colleagues better.

Up until May of last year, I had reports that the runway expansion and barrier removal project at the Gary/Chicago International Airport was on schedule. It was as if I was the bad witch from Oz who did not want any bad news. I repeated this information in a number of venues only to learn that not only were we behind schedule but that a number of steps to insure completion had not been undertaken. While there was blame to go around, I did not have time to engage in finger pointing so I asked our then Chief of Staff B.R. Lane to do what I knew she could do best, go to the airport, find out what we don't know, and hold the contractors accountable. While we have not removed every barrier, environmental challenges remain and delays may still occur, we have come a lot further in the five months that she has been there than the year and a half that others spent blowing smoke with their heads in the sand.

In spite of the challenges chronicled, many of the plans that were foreshadowed in 2013 have come to pass. Because of the hard work of the Community Development Department, the Gardens on Carolina, is now filled to capacity with seniors who are enjoying attractive, affordable housing. The South Shore Commons, a supportive housing for homeless veterans and families opened at the end of last year. These were projects begun under the Clay administration that we ushered to completion. The new CR Works building on Jefferson, is ready for occupancy and currently taking applications for attractive living quarters. And we recently broke ground on supportive housing for homeless veterans. The new Boys and Girls Club in the renovated Tolleston school is a testament to what can happen when public and private entities band together on behalf of a community. Our first families are now working to make their Dollar Houses homes after resurrecting the Dollar House program that caused us to receive inquiries from as far away as Australia about moving to Gary.

We have boarded up over two hundred structures and demolished almost two, but we are now preparing to submit comprehensive applications for hardest hit dollars just made available by the state. I should note that the idea to use money from that fund for demolition came as a result of the work of the students at the University of Chicago.

The city of Gary was the first large city in Northwest Indiana to join the ethics commission because we wanted to send the message internally and externally that we plan to do business in a way that is above reproach. And I would note that some people have started to throw stones because of that decision. Now I like a bargain or the "hook up" as well as the next person, but that type of behavior has no place in government.

Despite the challenges outlined with our homicide rate, we have seen reductions in crime in every other area. Our officers have been engaged in the community through their work with the explorers program, their efforts with truancy court and their support of many community events, very often as volunteers. We have also engaged in unprecedented collaboration with Indiana University and other police agencies throughout northwest Indiana.

The constituent services department with the help of the Communications Dept, the Genesis Center staff and many other departments led a city wide Thanksgiving give-away that resulted in over 800 baskets to those in need, an uplifting gospel concert and a monetary contribution to the Northwest Indiana Food Bank. This same type of collaboration between the University of Chicago's Harris School of Public Policy, Constituent Services, General Services, the Sanitary District and Redevelopment have resulted in the success of the 5x5x5 program adopted from Macon, GA.

Our youth are on fire. Not only do we have we seen the great work done by young people with the Urban League, ECIER Foundation, WDS Corporation, the YWCA and the Boys and Girls Club, but the young people who have literally transformed 839 Broadway to one of the best places for kids in the city have done everything from clean graffiti to hosting a youth conference to giving away socks while challenging each other to be the best they can be. It has gotten to the place that not only do I pay close attention to emails from Councilman Ron Brewer, but I pay a tad more attention to the emails form Ron Brewer Jr. because of his pivotal role and work with the Youth Services Bureau. This is only the tip of the ice berg for a park department that implemented one of the largest youth job fairs in the state of Indiana.

Earlier I discussed the collaborative effort that is leading to the demolition of the Sheraton Hotel. That is only the first stop for our northside development team. In 2013 alone, we received over \$700,000 and invaluable in-kind services from architects, public health works, planners and others to move this project forward. I would daresay that the early success of the Northside Redevelopment project was one of the biggest factors in helping us to gain a coveted spot in the Strong Cities Strong Communities program under the leadership of the Obama administration. Many of you heeded my request to contact the President about making Gary a Promise Community; this measure worked because SC2 has many of the benefits and even though some would point to the problems that make Gary eligible for this special designation, I would encourage you to focus on the positive potential that comes because Gary has gain a positive spotlight on the national stage.

The University Park project is underway as IU and Ivy Tech plan to break ground on a building that shares office space, classrooms and a performing arts center while we contemplate a mixed use building that will bring retail and housing for an area that is prime for development.

We have experienced success in economic development through the establishment of a new Truckstops of America, the sale of the Screw and Bolt factory to developers who want to take this plant out of moth balls and the settlement of a six year old lawsuit with Majestic Star Casino that has resulted in cash to the city and the construction of a road with federal dollars. We have seen over 1000 jobs created through a partnership with Majestic that focuses on local citizens and by working with TA Petro, Schneider Trucking and other employers to ensure that Gary residents get jobs.

The Gary/Chicago Airport Board has proven that Gary is in fact open for business thanks to the completion of the public/private partnership deal with AFCO/AvPorts/Guggenheim/Loop Capital and Mike Mullen some of the most experienced and accomplished development and financial people in the United States. And they are currently entertaining proposals for development on and off airport property. This will make the airport runway expansion and barrier work undertaken by the new board and Interim Airport Director BR Lane even more valuable. And for all of those who doubt the potential success of this partnership, then I would point you to the contracted commitment to invest 100 million dollars over 40 years with the first 25 million over the first three years; I would point you to the fact that there is a 30% local employment requirement and a 20% disadvantaged and minority requirement and a 6% veteran business requirement. There will be a \$300,000 investment in workforce development. I would point to the fact that these partners have managed successful airports and engaged in successful developments all over the United States. And I would also point out that this P3 was the only airport public private partnership that was successfully completed in 2013, although finalized in 2014. That is progress.

Despite recent challenges with garbage and alley clean up, our general services team, aided by the Traffic Dept, Recycling, Gary Sanitary District, Gary Police Department, Gary Fire Department, Constituent Services, Communications and a small number of local contractors have earned a place in the Guinness Book of world records for clearing nearly 6 feet of snow from nearly 500 miles of streets over the past two months with four large snow trucks and 11 pick-up trucks. Cities like Portage and East Chicago have over 30 snow plows and less than a quarter of the territory to cover and that is why Mayor Snyder was so selfless when he saw us

getting pummeled by a storm on 1/21 that did not impact Portage and other communities as much. That's why he sent me a text and said he wanted to help. Not because he wanted to get people to Portage businesses and certainly not because of political gain despite the handful of small minded critics, but because he was doing something that some of us have forgotten how to do—he was being neighborly. But even with assistance from a variety of places, the bulk of the snow burden has been shouldered by general services. Talk about the little train that could. And while it has not been perfect, none of us are, there were some weeks when Kevin Guydon and his team were working twelve hour shifts around the clock. That is the epitome of teamwork.

Because of the great job done by our communications staff, Gary is now seen in a positive light. We have been covered by everyone from NBC Nightly News to Al-Jazeera. Some people think that I live for the camera, but I have never believed the hype. Every time I talk about the positive things that are happening in the city of Gary, people start to believe that our mission is possible

For the past two years, I have been talking about the need to restore hope to those in and out of our community. Government has overpromised and under delivered for so long that many citizens have given up. Take Silas Sconiers for example, the African American Angler, a man who longs to fish in Lake Michigan in Gary. He has become so frustrated about his efforts that he has made suggestions that are far beyond my control. And while I was not happy with what seemed like a refusal to listen to reason, I took a moment to understand the frustration associated with the failure of government to meet his needs. Take others who spend time ignoring the progress I have just outlined and putting our administration on blast and sometimes even spreading lies on social media and other public forums. But this work is not for the thin-skinned or as our council president often says the fate of heart. I can take a hit and even give a punch or two when necessary.

Please remember that the deep seated, seemingly intractable problems that we are working to solve every day were not created overnight and certainly won't be solved with lightning speed. But make no mistake, despite the potholes, broken street lights, streets that need paving, sidewalks that need fixing, we are making progress every day.

We used to have an inside joke because I said that our work in the city wasn't really hard, it was simply an exercise in assembling moving pieces. Well today allow me to go on record that this work (and I have to use the word work because members of the clergy are present) is hard. From the outside looking in, everyone

thinks they can do it. I know about being an arm chair quarterback—I used to be one. But when you participate in a service where a mother is burying two sons or a daughter and granddaughter, you admit that it is hard. When you hold a mother’s hand in an ER when her 18 year old child has breathed his last breath, you admit it is hard. When you are faced with the decision to buy fire equipment or snow removal items or when you have to decide which leaking roof to fix first when you don’t have funds to fix any, you know it is hard. When you receive letters from city employees recounting how hard they work and how difficult it is to make ends meet and you agree they deserve a raise but you can’t do anything about, it is hard. The truth of the matter is that there are some days that this job literally brings me to my knees.

But that is where my faith comes in. The faith that I have been anointed to lead this city in such a time as this. The faith that all things are possible with God and nothing is impossible without Him. The faith that some things must be taken by force and that faith without works is dead. The faith that each and every one of you in this room and many who are not here have a role to play.

The only way that we can build the Gary that our children, grandchildren and great grandchildren deserve is if we do it together. This, ladies and gentlemen, is a team sport. That is why our existing and future partners are so important and despite the danger of getting in trouble for missing someone, allow me to call the roll. NIPSCO, Majestic Star Casino, Indiana University, the University of Chicago, University of Illinois, Ivy Tech Community College, Local Data, the Legacy Foundation, Knight Foundation, NIRPC, the RDA, Indiana State Police, Indiana ACT, U.S. Conference of Mayors, National League of Cities, Bank America, EPA, HUD, DOJ, Lake County Sheriff, Gary Community School Corp, 21st Century Charter Schools, Lake Ridge School Corp, Lake County Highway Dept., Lake County Commissioners, Treasurer and Auditor; Governor’s Office of Faith Based Initiatives, the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority, U.S. Steel, WLTH, Whittaker and Company, NGC Corp, the Times of Northwest Indiana, the Baptist Ministers of Gary and Vicinity and the Interfaith Clergy Council, Northwest Indiana Interfaith Federation, Haywood and Fleming, B. Coleman and Associates, the Gary Jet Center, the Urban League, NAACP, Indian American Water, Schneider Trucking, Waste Management. Even though we don’t always agree with some of those on this list, they are partners because they have chosen to be a part of the solution, even by sometimes motivating us to do better through their criticism.

So what are you going to do? Will you continue to place side bets or do your part to get in the game? What role will you play in our renewal so that you can stand with pride when our collective labor begins to bear fruit.

We are currently working with the U of C students to survey every vacant parcel in the city. Every time I join them and walk through the neighborhoods of this city that I love, I see people who have cared for their homes for 10, 20, 30 and sometimes even 50 years. I see people who are new residents, like the lady whose habitat home I had the privilege of working on this summer. I am moved by the meticulous care that people give to their property even when they look out their front windows to eyesores. It is during these times that I understand that these people love this city as much as I do and it is my honor and privilege to work on behalf of them every day. God bless each and every one of you and God Bless Gary, Indiana and the United States of America.