

THE CITY OF ZACHARY - MAYOR'S ANNUAL MESSAGE THE STATE OF THE CITY

January 10th, 2017 was the sixth anniversary of the City's current administration. It also served to remind us that one hundred fifty-two days ago; August rains triggered a series of weather events that would forever change the lives of many Zachary families, friends, neighbors and fellow citizens.

The resultant "1000" year rain and flood event, better known in government as FEMA – DR 4277 would have far ranging effects, without regard for its victims or the debilitating socio-economic impacts that it would generate during its short life.

The long term effects are still painfully obvious and all one need do is to drive through the parts of Zachary most heavily impacted by the storms passage in order to bear witness to the loss and devastation suffered by so many. There are those who would say that Zachary fared better than many other communities; a statement arguably challenged by the 450 Zachary homeowners and 50 businesses severely impacted by this singular event. "Resilience", a now favored recovery buzz word and one given new life following the flooding is seemingly in use everywhere. By definition, its current relevance pertains to the local rebuilding effort, one intent on lessening the impact of some like or future occurrence.

Personally for me, "*resilience*" best describes the Zachary residents most impacted by the event, as well as those spared from it. All have been touched by the knowing of someone directly impacted by the disaster, with all readily conceding that much still remains to be done.

Unfortunately, patience with the pace of recovery (or the lack thereof) has long since been replaced by the same nagging frustration shared by so many. Thankfully, salvation and its sense of comfort can still be found in Zachary's very giving and ever present community spirit, one which remains as an abiding reminder that a better and more peaceful time will return. Daily challenges however do remain, and others may likely evolve as recovery efforts continue. Zachary's landscape, now dotted with temporary manufactured housing unit's and the occasional lingering debris pile, serve as constant reminders of how far we still need to go until once again made whole. Together we will get there, and in the process become a stronger and better community for having done so.

The Mayor's Annual Message while often viewed as the opportunity to tout the City's year of accomplishments simply pales in comparison to the many

individual and personal losses experienced locally.

I would however use this opportunity to thank Zachary's very dedicated and committed City Council members who spent countless hours of their own in support of their constituents impacted by the flooding event.

I would be extremely remiss if I did not acknowledge too, the collective efforts of Zachary's City workers who aided in the local governments recovery effort. Several of them continued the long hours and days of work in spite of having been victims of flooding themselves, and to them I remain especially grateful.

If there is a valuable lesson to be learned from the experiences of the past year, it is that we've proven we are stronger together and should continue building on that base going forward.

As a community we should remain mindful and clearly focused when "reflecting on our present blessings, of which we all have many, and not on past misfortunes of which we all have some."

Our community's commitment to progress through recovery will surely guide us, and may God continue to bless our Zachary community and its entire people?

David Amrhein, Mayor