

STATE OF THE TOWN MESSAGE
Presented by First Selectman Raymond G. Baldwin – March 10, 2005

View the accompanying [State of the Town Powerpoint Presentation](#)...(in Adobe .pdf format)

Good morning ladies and gentlemen, honored guests and residents of Trumbull. I would like to thank Marilyn Greenberg, new President of the Trumbull Chamber of Commerce for hosting this Address. We'd also like to welcome David Stevenson as the new Executive Director of the Chamber, and thanks to Tim Bartlett our outgoing director for his good work for the town of Trumbull.

To start off on a lighter note, I'd like to relate three quick stories to open my presentation.

In the first, there was a fellow sitting in the stands next to a priest during a baseball game. A player comes up to bat, makes the sign of the cross, says a little prayer and hits one out of the ballpark. His next time at bat, he makes the sign of the cross, says a little prayer and hits a triple. Next time up, he makes the sign of the cross and hits another home run. Finally, the fan turns to the priest and says, "Hey, does this prayer stuff work out there?" The priest says, "It sure does...*especially, if you can hit.*"

So even with faith, you must have the proper skills, or an organization won't be successful.

The second...the comedian Robin Williams is a great baseball enthusiast and avid Yankee fan. He may have been the toughest boss of all time when he was honorary manager of the Hollywood Baseball All-Stars. One day they played an exhibition game against the Los Angeles Dodgers. Robin handed a bat to his first batter and said, "Go up to the plate and hit a home run." The batter went up to the plate and struck out. Williams replied, "They won't follow my orders; how can I manage them?"

We all know, *from a management perspective, not everyone listens all the time.*

Finally, a drunk stopped a man on the street and asked the time. The man looked at his watch and said, "four o'clock." The drunk scratched his head and said, "All day long, different answers."

The point being that many times there are different answers for the same question.

So these three stories illustrate my day and probably yours too...that is, *we all try to keep the faith even when people don't listen, and, we get different perspectives all day long.*

Well, it gives me great pleasure to stand before you today, to report on the state of Trumbull.

This morning, with the assistance of our Web Master, Patty Zablocky, I will not only be addressing three primary areas of accomplishment: our quality of life, our economic development and our educational system accomplishments, but I will actually show you some of them.

Obviously, standing alone, *each is a critical element* in helping create and foster a nurturing lifestyle and community. *But when joined together*, they make our community a solid force within our state.

I. QUALITY OF LIFE

Let me begin with our quality of life:

There are some things in Trumbull none of us can take credit for. The beautiful, undulating hills, the lush forestry and the natural streams and rivers are all a part of what helps make Trumbull a residential destination for today's contemporary homeowner.

But certainly, there are many areas of improvement that have taken place since we last came together, and I would like to review some of these.

Two years ago, a group of young women came forward and asked if we could build a few sidewalks in town. Today, we have installed over three miles of new sidewalks which residents can safely use to walk and exercise. Our hope is to continue this program so that neighbors can come together and enjoy what's around them.

- Last summer, we staged the very successful Beach Boys Concert, with over 4,500 people in attendance. This kind of family style entertainment brought three generations of music lovers together in our beautiful Indian Ledge Park.
We are currently attempting to determine what groups might be available for this year.
- This coming June 17 through 19th we will be hosting the 19th Annual Fairfield County Irish Festival at Indian Ledge Park. Another family-oriented event which will bring thousands of people together from Trumbull and throughout the region...followed the next week by our ever-popular Trumbull Day and another great weekend of fun and fireworks.
- Our cable television channel 17 has been upgraded, allowing for increased public coverage of meetings of the Town Council, Board of Education, Board of Finance and Land Use meetings. All this creates greater public access to governmental and community information.

I would like to thank John Annick and the members of the Channel 17 Advisory Committee for making these improvements happen...as well as Jim Lang and Kate Donahue for all their hard work on the Cable Advisory Committee.

- Access to information is important within every medium, so we've made some significant enhancements to our Main library and to the Fairchild-Nichols branch. The Central Library continues to be a great center for community functions thanks to our Librarian Karen Ronald and a very dedicated Board.
- At Tashua Knolls Golf Course, we have completed construction of a new nine-hole golf course which will open this fall, alleviating a great deal of congestion on the existing championship course. Last year, residents played over 30,000 rounds of golf, out of a total of 45,000 rounds.
- The concessionaire, Dominick Faustine, will also be renovating the clubhouse and catering facility during this coming year to round out a great golfing experience.

A few other areas of improvement include:

- The installation of an illuminated four-sided post clock at the corner of Church Hill and Main Street which was provided by the Jennie and Ethel Mallett Trust which is administered by former Probate Judge Aram Tellalian.
- There are five sewer projects in different phases throughout town. We are currently 60 % sewerred, and with the completion of the Canoe Brook Lake project which is currently under construction and Jog Hill, North Nichols and South Nichols which have been designed, we will be at 85%.

Future plans to add sewers to the north end of Trumbull are under review and have met with very favorable residential approval.

In the area of land acquisitions:

- We acquired two additional properties this past year, the Wagner Tree Farm and Taits Mill Road. This brings our total acquisitions to nearly 20 million dollars in the past 15 years. As an aside, in Connecticut, Trumbull ranks number one in the total amount of open space per capita, and we are continually seeking new properties to acquire for public use.

II ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In the area of economic development, we have six major projects that have helped improve our grand list, as well as bring jobs to our community.

I would like to thank the chairwoman of the Economic Development Commission, Beryl Kaufman, and all her members for their support, guidance and hard work in helping make many of these projects happen.

- The Trumbull Professional Center at 115 Technology Drive is a 93,000 square foot medical condominium complex. This is a \$16 million project that will create over 120 new jobs and is due to open this fall.
- Helicopter Support Services at 116 Quarry Road is a 188,000 sq. ft. facility, including office, warehouse and manufacturing space. This was a \$7 million project which will pay over \$600,000 in real and personal property taxes annually to the Town.
- The Park Avenue Professional Center at 5520 Park Ave. is an 85,000 square foot professional office complex. There were \$5 million spent in renovations, 300 new jobs, and over \$218,000 in property taxes.
- Unilever at 20 Merritt Boulevard is an 83,000 sq. ft. research and development facility. This involved over \$24 million in new construction, added 200 new jobs and \$450 thousand dollars in real and personal property taxes.
- Cooper Surgical at 120 Corporate Drive is a 40,000 sq. ft. warehouse, with tax revenue of \$23,000.
- And now there is Target at 120 Hawley Lane, a 71,000 sq. ft. retail facility which opened this past Sunday, March 6th. This involved over \$16 million dollars in construction costs, created 275 new jobs and will pay over \$470,000 dollars in taxes.

We also have several upcoming projects:

- A major expansion and renovation of the Trumbull Shopping Park has been planned and I would like to thank Westfield Corporation for its continued commitment to Trumbull.
- Unilever plans renovation of two 65,000 sq. ft. facilities in the Trumbull Industrial Park to add to its corporate presence here.
- And Lowes is also in the initial planning stages of constructing a new facility in Trumbull's north end.

But, as Economic Development Commission member Ron Linden pointed out, we aren't just focusing on "Home Runs", we want the "singles" and "doubles" smaller businesses bring to us. In the last three years alone, over 417 new small businesses have registered in town, serving a variety of needs throughout our community, and I'd like to publicly welcome them as well.

We like to support all the businesses which support us!!

So, with all of this, we are attempting to bring to fruition, a very planned, structured growth model ...without infringing upon residential areas...which will increase our tax base and add new jobs.

III EDUCATION

Now, let's talk about *education*.

We view education from two perspectives.

First, we have a responsibility to provide all our children with the best education we can afford. Second, an investment in education equals a greater return in our property values. Simply stated, a great school system creates a demand for people wanting to move into our community. And this is what we are finding here in Trumbull. A good educational system and higher property values are inextricably tied together.

The construction of the Frenchtown Elementary School was an important cog in our educational planning, as well as helping us meet the influx of 650 new students over the past four years.

Since the opening of Frenchtown, we have been working on our pre-school efforts. Our focus and that of Governor Rell and the State of Connecticut is to ensure quality early childhood development, particularly for our special needs children. As reported, the cost of education grows tremendously when children enter school developmentally behind, and studies have shown that early-childhood programs such as ours save money by reducing the need for special education and for students repeating grades.

Toward that end, we are moving vigorously forward with the Trumbull Early Learning Center which will open in August of this year. This will be a true state-of-the-art facility which will be a terrific resource for our preschoolers. I would like to publicly thank building committee chairman, Steve Wright, and his committee for their diligence and perseverance during this sometimes difficult process.

Other educational facility improvements include:

- At Madison Middle School, 6 former pre-school classrooms will be renovated by September to handle increased enrollment; and,
- At Trumbull High School, renovations and expansion are currently in the planning stages, and include the addition of thirteen new classrooms, the renovation/expansion of the commons area and the auditorium as well as the upgrade of the building's mechanical systems. The 2 new science labs have already been completed.

I would also like to take a moment to personally congratulate the students who are involved with "We The People", "Fed Challenge" and "Math Team", for their outstanding performances in state and national competitions. Our Superintendent, Ralph Lassogna, the Board of Education, teachers and staff have every right to be proud.

In the past few years, one of the areas I focused on was emergency services. And although I am not dwelling upon it at this time, I would, nonetheless, like to commend all of our men and women for their excellent service to our town and I would like to officially welcome two new Fire Chiefs to you.

Pete Russo is now heading the Long Hill Fire Dept, and Shawn Rice is now leading the Nichols Department.

And, as I'm sure most of you know, we were delighted last May to appoint Tom Kiely as our new Chief of Police. I know you all join me in offering them our very best wishes for their success, and safety of their men and women as they lead their respective departments.

Ladies and gentlemen, as Trumbull's chief executive officer, I am here to tell you that our town is in great shape.

We offer residents a wonderful quality of life. And we have an educational system that not only successfully prepares our students for some of the best colleges in the nation, but also prepares them to be the great leaders of tomorrow.

We have created an opportunistic business climate with aggressive economic development efforts which have proven extremely successful.

As a community, we are well positioned for the near future...but we must constantly seek out and explore new ways to do business, increase revenues and serve our constituents.

I appreciate you inviting me here this morning...and I wish all of you continued personal and business success for the remainder of this year.

Thank you.