

Mayor Michael B. Coleman

Thank you. Pleased to be so warmly welcomed back to the Metropolitan Club.

Before I begin my speech, I want to say Thanks to you and all the families of Columbus who have stepped up so generously to aid the families of Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi who were devastated by Hurricane Katrina. Columbus is a city of compassion... and we united to raise more than \$500,000 in one day... Thank you.

Today, I'd like to speak to you about the economic prosperity of our city and some of our challenges as well as a few ideas on reinventing Ohio's economy to put people back to work.

Columbus is a great city. I love serving as its mayor... running the largest city in the state... the 15th largest in the nation... working with thousands of City employees and our \$1.5 billion dollar combined annual budget... I'm also proud that we continue to be the only one of the top 25 cities in the nation to earn the highest possible credit rating.

Columbus is finally receiving the national recognition we deserve:

1. We were ranked by Reader's Digest as the 4th Cleanest City in America;
2. Ranked as the nation's 7th most High-Tech City by Popular Science Magazine;
3. Ranked by Black Enterprise Magazine as the 9th best city in the nation to live, work and play;
4. Ranked by BET as the #1 best place to live, work and raise a family for African Americans... black families want what all families want, good jobs, homes and neighborhoods;
5. Columbus was ranked the 6th least expensive city in the nation to do business by KPMG;
6. AOL named Columbus the 2nd hottest town for Singles;
7. Ranked in May 2003 as the 8th best City in the nation for pets... and that is something I remind my dog of every day...

While our state is stagnated... MORPC says that 2 out of every 3 people who move to Ohio are moving to Central Ohio.

People are not moving here because of our beaches and our mountain views... people are not moving to Columbus because of our Theme Parks or Sunny Weather. People are moving to Columbus because we are a City of opportunity... where every one has a chance to succeed. Where our state is hibernating... our city is vibrant and alive... where young people are leaving our state in unprecedented numbers... our young talent is finding a life in Columbus.

My role as Mayor is to keep that momentum going... and to meet our challenges head on. And we have many challenges... like all big cities. My job as mayor is to meet those challenges and get results... to find a way to achieve no matter the obstacle. My job as mayor is to create, innovate, facilitate, inspire, to push - privately and publicly... to have the backbone to do what is necessary to get things done for our city.

In my view, that is what a governor should do as well for our state.

So with this... the key questions are:

1. How do we build upon our momentum for Columbus' future?
2. How do we take what I've learned about job creation and apply it to our state?

Columbus must continue to grow... and I have developed core principles on how we actually do that... which I have learned from real life experience as a mayor in the real world.

My experience creating and retaining 12,500 jobs has taught me many lessons about job creation that I feel can be applied beyond our city's borders:

1. Economic Development solutions is like a tailor made suit. There is no one-size fits all economic development solution... it must be fitted... sized... shaped to meet the needs of the community;
2. Leverage your assets... build upon what works;
3. Bring people together and Engage the private sector;
4. Create/Innovate/Change... (the communities that remain the same fall behind);
5. Do not hide from problems and do not fear failure... (fear of failure breeds paralysis and we must deal with problems openly, honestly and earnestly);
6. DO IT... get the job done.

Like in Northland... where an empty mall sat vacant... and the private sector didn't want to take up the challenge. We took action... and purchased the entire 84 acre site... 30% is already redeveloped... and we have commitments for another 25%. And we've brought nearly 2,000 jobs already to the Morse Road Corridor... which is currently undergoing a transformation... in an area many thought was giving up just 5 years ago.

It is the same with Downtown... where since 2000 we've seen 155 projects constructed or proposed and \$1.8 billion in new investment. When we started our business plan... our downtown was stuck in a malaise with no direction. We faced the highest office vacancy rates in the nation several years ago... we had islands of success in a sea of decline with no prospect of change. Now we've cut the office vacancy rate by almost 20% in just 2 years... at the same time as we added 1 million square feet of new office space. We've brought more than 1,500 new jobs downtown... and 1,200 more are being consolidated by the State of Ohio into the Old Lazarus building just a few blocks away... a building that is becoming the largest Green Rehab Building in America. We've also taken a cold housing market... and made it HOT... with 1,000 new apartments and condos already opened... and almost 3,000 more in the pipeline today. We've opened the new North Bank Park... and are looking to bring a new park system through the entire Scioto Mile. Broad and High, the Center of the Universe in Columbus... will receive a major make-over that will be a catalyst to more jobs and development around Capital Square. We're going to celebrate together as the Blue Jackets take the ice again... and we can all enjoy the booming Arena District and new I-670 cap that is now receiving international acclaim.

Even in once distressed areas, we have made progress as well.

West Edge Business Center in Franklinton... built on the site of one of the worst public housing projects ever built in our City... with gangs, bullets and crime... at Sullivant

Gardens. We tore it down and created a business park that is now home to 5 companies and almost 1,000 jobs... a \$65 million dollar investment.

Now we're focusing on the King Lincoln District... an area where 68,000 people once lived... is now home to only 16,000 people. A neighborhood that was the center of commerce, culture, church and civics in the African American community 30 years ago... declined to an area with a 50% poverty level and 25% homeownership rate. It too is making a comeback... We rose above the nay-sayers and critics and refused to back down just because it was hard work.

Columbus must compete with the world and build upon our assets of logistics, entertainment, health care, automotive and our Downtown. We must nurture new business growth near Rickenbacker... where we will see as many as 20,000 new jobs flourish quickly in the years to come. We must plan for the future with new policies, new thinking and innovation.

Mayor Jack Sensenbrenner had a vision that Columbus could best position itself through its annexation policy... for 50 years he was right. Columbus thrived while other major Ohio cities became landlocked and watched their population and tax base slowly erode. The policy was simple... to "Grow outwardly." While the Sensenbrenner growth policy served our city well for 50 years... the cost of growth was being paid for by our existing neighborhoods and was affecting our ability to serve new neighborhoods. Residential growth without job growth strains police, fire, sanitation, parks, schools and all City services. Our new policy is to "Pay as we grow and create the jobs of the future..." where we pay for our growth as the costs are incurred.

I want to thank the 21st Century Growth Task Force... an 80 member committee... for helping plan our City's new Growth Policy.

We must begin to think regionally and not parochially.

Yes, Columbus and every other jurisdiction in Central Ohio pirates jobs and businesses from one another. It makes no sense for our region. We continue to take change from one pocket, put it in another pocket in the same pair of pants. I propose our region enter into a non-compete agreement where all of us agree not to use incentives to pirate one another's jobs... All jurisdictions must engage... no one can be left out. We must continue to create and innovate and stand on the cutting edge of progress.

That's why we've begun to focus on Green Development in Columbus... and why we launched the Get Green Columbus campaign in January. For as long as I can remember, people have implicitly believed that growth is bad for the environment and that the environment is bad for business. I believe we can grow responsibly while being responsible environmental stewards... In fact, sound economic development requires us to be good stewards of the environment.

In fact we just announced our first Green residential development... GREEN VIEW ESTATES... 32 homes to be built in partnership with MiraCit Development Corp, BIA and the Enterprise Foundation.

To keep this momentum going... today, I'd like to announce the creation of the Mayor's Environmental Advisory Council... which will be meeting today for the first time... many

are here. They are community leaders... citizens... experts and people who care about our region's future... and their work will guide City policy as we tackle the serious issues ahead.

While we still have challenges, we are dealing with them and fulfilling our promise to our city... but our state continues to lag behind. With 280,000 jobs lost over the past 5 years...with the proliferation of bankruptcies and foreclosures in Ohio... our state is on its back. The State needs to rekindle its entrepreneurial spirit... think creatively and act aggressively... and the next Governor will have to know how to get results.

My economic plan for Ohio is to retrain, rebuild, re-invent, re-stabilize, re-energize and most of all restore hope to Ohio and the good citizens who deserve better than the hand they have been dealt over the past decade.

A real 21st Century growth strategy requires the State to partner with local government rather than view them as an enemy or a competitor for scarce resources... After all, the local community is the building block for the state of Ohio. For the state to grow, to thrive again... its cities, small, medium and large... and their metropolitan areas must also grow.

Last year the United States Conference of Mayors released a report showing that Ohio's 15 metro areas generate nearly 85% of gross state product; over 84% of all jobs; and over 86% of all wages.

Our state needs to modernize its thinking on job creation... because the primary job of a Governor is to create jobs.

A good first step is the 3rd Frontier... which I support.

As Governor, I will start with the principles learned through my experience as a mayor.

As I have traveled the state... it seems apparent every region of Ohio is dynamic, diverse and unique from every other region. The needs in Toledo are very different than the needs of Columbus... Cleveland is different from Athens... Urban needs are different from rural needs. As such, the state's economy should be viewed on a regional basis... and the State should develop regional plans for economic prosperity... and invest in the assets of that region with a tailor-made economic plan, not the one-size fits all economic plans of the past.

We have within our state government a sleeping giant... our Colleges and Universities. It is 10% of our state budget. It represents 62% of our state's employees.

It's in every region, every corner of our state, and affects our families and our future. But, it's a sleeping giant without a clear mission from today's State leaders. The time has come for us to harness our colleges' and universities' ENORMOUS POWER to create Ohio jobs, to create Ohio prosperity and to benefit Ohio families.

Let me be clear... in the Coleman administration the mission of our state colleges and universities will be to educate minds and create jobs. We will HARNESS THE POWER of our 39 colleges and universities. We will HARNESS THE POWER of their collective

knowledge and the \$9 billion they spend. We will HARNESS THE POWER of their 101,000 state employees.

When I'm governor, you can count on a representative of our colleges and universities sitting at my right hand at every cabinet meeting doing the people's business by working every day along with me to educate and create.

Under the Coleman administration, Colleges and Universities will serve as engines of economic change, engines of economic development, engines of business expansion and job creation.

This is what happens when we focus our colleges and universities to create the jobs of tomorrow.

1) When Ohio businesses are threatened by mergers or downsizing, Kent State University's "Ohio Employee Ownership Center" teaches employees how to buy out the companies... and keep it open. They have already saved and created 11,000 jobs. That's a good thing.

2) Ohio University's "Innovation Center" is an incubator for new ideas... providing research for businesses pursuing ground-breaking technologies... like wind and solar power and hybrid cars. In the last year, they added almost \$8 million dollars to the local economy.

3) The "Hamilton County Business Center" represents 40 companies working with the University of Cincinnati College of Engineering. It is a that shows how businesses can grow using Ohio's homegrown engineering talent.

4) And here in Columbus, The Ohio State University, Sci-Tech, Battelle and our business community are taking research and turning it into new businesses and jobs.

These are just a few examples of what all of our colleges and universities will be expected to do under a Coleman administration to benefit us all.

We need to engage our private sector in this mission to build Ohio's economy... and use their know-how and their resources to do what sometimes Government cannot. We can incentivize private dollars for investment in the most needy areas of our state... both urban and rural... where private investment can sustain long-term economic growth. That's why I will create an Ohio New Market Tax Credit... modeled off the Federal program... and tailored to the needs of our state.

Sometimes the answer to our future is as simple as location, location, location. Is there any state more central to world markets with better water, rail, air and highway transportation potential than Ohio? We built those assets to ship steel and cars and grains... but are they any less an asset today and what is their true promise for tomorrow?

We have a transportation system in our state which is 2nd to none... yet we do not, as a state, capitalize on it as an economic development tool to create jobs in the distribution of product... like we are here in Central Ohio at Rickenbacker Airport. We must use our

transportation systems as an economic development tool to promote jobs and progress in our state.

Over the next several months, I will talk about these ideas and more on how we can compete in the future. I will talk about our small businesses, how they can grow... I will focus on entrepreneurialism, health care, schools, prosperity and more. I will take the experience... and the lessons I've learned... and the principles that guided through these years as your mayor... and put it to good work to bring our state back to greatness and economic stability.

During the course of this campaign... you will have many opportunities to compare candidates. You will hear about their life's obstacles. You will hear how close they are to God and Country. You will hear about values... and candidates trying to "out-value" each other.

But, the real measure of values isn't what rolls off the tongue. Real values are measured not by words, but by deed and action. Where are the values in families without jobs, children without healthcare and young people without hope who have given up on Ohio and moved away?

There are more people leaving the state every day and 280,000 jobs have been lost in the past 5 years.

We need to remember the values of our forefathers... our parents... and the hard working people who built this state to greatness. We're all people of faith... but my faith in God demands that I also have faith in the people of Ohio and our potential to be the best... to make this a great place to live and work for all families.

The bridge to Ohio's future can no longer be littered with the empty promise of failed leadership. We need leadership that works. The next Governor of the State of Ohio is going to have to get the job done.

God Bless you and thank you for all you do.