

Spokane is a safer, stronger and smarter community today than it was a year ago. And it will be an even safer, stronger and smarter Spokane tomorrow.

Over the past year, many of you have told me why you were here in Spokane. And as you came in today, you wrote down what Spokane means to you. I hope you still have these and if you do, hold them up for a moment.

What a great picture. From where I'm standing Spokane sure looks like a pretty cool place. And I hope that by the end of our time together today, you will see it from my perspective.

We are here today at North Central High School because of the great work done by **Spokane Public Schools** and Superintendent Shelley Redinger to build an educational system that meets the diverse needs of our students and presents unprecedented opportunities for hands-on, subject-specific learning. The magnet school model provides opportunities throughout our community for students to pursue their interests and receive an education that is second to none.

These schools, these students, are where our community begins. They are our future.

Some of you experienced firsthand the incredible results I'm talking about as you talked earlier this evening with STEM students and educators from North Central and other high schools throughout the community.

The construction you walked past on your way in tonight is a visible reminder that this place is growing to meet the dynamic educational desires of a high-achieving student body. We're

embracing that growth, encouraging it, enabling it. Because these students are the next generation of scientists, CEO's, doctors, lawyers and leaders who will take the mission of this community into the future.

North Central is just one of our community's success stories. From one of our developing neighborhoods, students are graduating and sharing their skills and their knowledge with our community.

North Central students have always had a heart for Spokane. Current City Administrator Theresa Sanders and Councilman Mike Fagan are both graduates of North Central. Many North Central grads have served our country. You can see their names out in the hall. The list includes Staff Sergeant and Medal of Honor winner, Ty Carter. Politician and philanthropist George Nethercutt established a foundation to promote a heart of civic engagement in our youth. You can't get much more Spokane than that.

Now, as we grow into a nationally recognized health sciences region, we hope that students will stay and continue their education here and give back in even bigger ways to our mission to be a City of Choice.

It's hard for me to believe that it's been more than a year already since we began our work to define Vision 2020 that will make us that City of Choice. We talked then about the importance of driving toward key community priorities. I called upon all of you and many others to help me identify our list and we went to work aligning the City's resources to our community's needs.

Over the past year, I've been reminded many times of the value of that alignment. I don't mean just the alignment of our

investments to your top priorities. I'm talking about community-wide alignment.

As we talked about what was important to us as a community, we saw that although our age, backgrounds and stories of what brought us to Spokane may differ, a lot of us had chosen to stay for the same reasons.

Ultimately it's our community's unparalleled offerings in living, learning and leisure that draw and keep great citizens here. It's downtown proximity to neighborhoods, strong community schools, work/life balance, and recreational opportunities for all seasons. It's a quality of life you cannot duplicate.

I am often reminded of Astronaut Jim Lovell and his statement about the Apollo 13 mission. Lovell said:

"From now on, we live in a world where man has walked on the moon. And it's not a miracle, we just decided to go."

Last fall, my team prepared a budget that addressed the priorities of this community, and did it affordably. I'm very proud of that budget and I'm even more impressed by the way we got there. My leadership team asked the right questions, engaged many citizens, pursued the right answers, and worked together across previously siloed operations to achieve the logical results that our citizens deserved.

This way of doing business, once unthinkable, has become the norm. You gave us direction 12 months ago, affirmed the priorities for this community, and we went to work. It wasn't rocket science. It was simply a team of people you entrusted to

work for you doing the work you asked to be done. We call that smart government.

During this process our eyes have been opened to the opportunities we have as a community. As we've invested in your priorities, we've found great partners in the community ready to do the same, and in some cases, already doing it.

So, we went to work:

- To make Spokane the safest city of our size.
- To make Spokane the fastest growing job market in the Inland Northwest.
- To be a model for cost-effective service delivery.
- To be a leader in innovative solutions.
- And to be the country's most giving community.

These are the goals you and the rest of the community defined for us. These are things we can all do – these are things we must do.

Even here you can see that government alone cannot and should not carry the torch to make these ideals reality. Our main role is one of leadership, though not always ownership. While we work to integrate projects that support regional development we also recognize our role integrating this community and the passions of its people.

I heard all of you here a year ago support these ideals for Spokane. So I call upon you again to reaffirm that we are headed in the right direction and investing in the things that will have the greatest impact on our community. And I am prepared to ask for your help again this year to guide our work moving Spokane forward.

Before I do, I want to share what we've accomplished over the past year with your guidance and support. When I began my term as Mayor, I saw great opportunities for us to streamline processes, find efficiencies in our operations and invest in the future of our community.

I could not have imagined that we would accomplish so much in two short years. And you should be so proud, just as I am, of the work that *your* city employees have delivered.

Truly exciting things are happening, and not just in city government. They are happening all over our community – in our neighborhoods, our downtown, our institutions, and your businesses. All cylinders firing at the same time – because that's what it takes to build the City of Choice. It takes people who realize that the responsibility is ours to keep this place one worth choosing.

2013 was all about living within our means. We identified our core competencies as a service provider, identified, with your help, the expectations of those we served, and funded those priorities first.

We developed a budget that adhered to the basic finance principles ratified by our City Council:

- We didn't spend more than we took in
- We didn't spend one-time money on recurring expenses
- And we made sure resources were in place to maintain quality services in case of financial disaster

As a result, we were able to reinvest in enhanced services that support long-term development in our region.

We understand our responsibility to create a platform upon which this community can grow. This starts with stable and affordable city services.

We understand the need for sustainable infrastructure: from stormwater mitigation to safe roadways.

Our police force understands that trust is earned over time and one interaction at a time. Most importantly, we understand that our number one responsibility is to give you the confidence, through our actions, to live and invest in our community and in yourselves.

And we are seeing very positive signs that such investment is already taking place. Last year was a record year for new construction and sales tax revenue. We also saw a bump in median household income.

Together, we can fulfill Vision 2020 much faster. Through partnerships we have seen some of our greatest successes. Whether internal, public or private, we've been most effective when we've partnered with others who share our passion for a safer, stronger and smarter Spokane.

Just a few recent examples include:

- Our ongoing partnership with the City Council has enabled us to develop and present a unanimously adopted budget ahead of schedule that delivers on your priorities at an affordable price.
- Private partnerships are happening every day in our community. One that we've been able to be a partner in is the City Hall Plaza/Huntington Park renovation. We've

worked closely with Avista and Greenstone to revitalize this community staircase to the river and an important connection to the Centennial Trail.

- Our continued relationship with Spokane County and other regional partners that, after years of conversations about a regional solution to **animal control**, launched a program that meets the needs of our diverse community.
- We and our partners also established a **Criminal Justice Commission** to review our current system and make recommendations for reform.
- In 2014, this work will continue as we evaluate and implement the commission's recommendations and operate a **regional solid waste disposal solution** that expands on the success and recognition our recycling program has already achieved.

The pages of this report in front of you are filled with more details of our work. They're things that my team and I are very proud of. I encourage you to take it with you and read about the great things going on in your city. But I don't want to spend our time together focusing on what we've done. What I want to talk about today are the exciting opportunities that still lie ahead as we continue on the path to Vision 2020.

Though we have accomplished much and made great progress, there is still significant work to be done. And as long as you will allow us, we will be honored to do that work for this community.

The roadmap is in place for great things to happen in Spokane and we will not let up until we see them done.

A safer, stronger and smarter Spokane is possible, and in my opinion, inevitable if we use document as a guide and remain committed to our vision.

So what are we doing that's going to make Spokane a **safer** place to live, work and play? Because this is where we begin to have a true impact on life in our community.

- **25 additional officers means a safer city.** But additional officers mean much more to this community than just boots on the ground. Having worked firsthand through the challenges facing our Police Department, the process of *hiring a Chief* to confront those issues, and having seen the positive results of a data-driven approach to fighting crime, I can say with certainty that we are on the path to a safer Spokane.

And continued investment in the implementation of Use of Force recommendations and work with the Department of Justice and other national advisors will keep us on that path.

- **Adaptive emergency response improves community outcomes.** We're reinventing fire and emergency service delivery because demands are changing and we must evolve to meet them.

A fire and emergency services task team has been working over the past year to evaluate cost comparisons for some of our most significant expenses. One product of that team's work has been its recommendation to test **Alternative Response Units**, which allow our responders to get to medical calls faster without sacrificing any functionality once

on scene or monopolizing any unnecessary resources. We have also added four more firefighters to the department.

In an age where demands on emergency service providers are increasingly medical in nature, we want to make sure we prepare our teams to determine and deliver the service you need, when you need it. In short, we're only taking necessary equipment to every call.

A stronger community is one prepared for economic growth. We are stronger today and we will be even stronger tomorrow. Every day we are working to become more financially stable, adaptable, and user-friendly. As we strengthen the foundation for development, and continue to promote and incentivize both public and private growth, we become a place of choice for both business and residential living.

- **Building for education is building a future.** Whether that's support of Spokane Public School's vision for an education of choice, or continued development in the University District, it's work that invests in the future of our region by investing in the education of our next generation's leaders.
- **Hotel and convention business grows jobs.** Continued development in our downtown core supports our work to be a nationally recognized convention destination. Moving at the speed of business, we are able to support and complete coordinated projects that add value for our citizens and visitors.
- **Vibrant neighborhoods: the fabric of our community.** Growth is happening in our business districts that strengthens our economic vitality as a region and the quality

of life in our neighborhoods. The transformation at Kendall Yards, the renovation of the Perry District, the Garland Business District and the Hillyard neighborhood has encouraged us to develop a replicable model designed to capitalize on opportunity areas that we will define with the help of City Council leadership.

- **Spokane competes for National Compassionate City recognition:** It was about a year ago that Mayor Fischer of Louisville, Kentucky gave a presentation at the US Conference of Mayors. He talked about the compassion of people in his community. As he spoke I thought of our own legendary leaders and felt a deep sense of pride in this community and our people. Mayor Fischer challenged us that day to become the “most giving city in America.” I took up that challenge, which you’ll be hearing more about in the weeks and months ahead. Our people are the heart of this community. And compassion has remained one of our core values.

Finally, we’re working **smarter** and harder to meet the needs of this community through data-driven decisions, consistent citizen engagement efforts, innovative solutions, and proactive programming. And the best part is – it’s working. It’s driving down crime rates. It’s changing the way we do business, the way we serve our citizens, and the way we, as a community, see ourselves.

- **Youth and Police Initiative builds community.** As a result of our data-driven safety strategies, we identified key relationships where investment in proactive approaches could drastically impact the future of our community. The Youth and Police Initiative started this summer pairs officers

with young men and women in our community who benefit from such relationships.

- **Local organizations tirelessly serve most vulnerable populations.** We have enhanced both public and private partnerships to further community efforts to **end long-term veteran and family homelessness.** These partnerships are also being utilized to develop pilot projects like community courts that offer alternatives to incarceration and provide citizens with the services they need to enhance their own quality of life.
- **A cleaner river faster:** Expo '74 was a turning point for our community. Before that we were turned away from the river. As we embraced our history and recognized the true beauty of our front yard we came back to its centerpiece. We have now begun our next major investment in our river. This investment is also the centerpiece of our integrated clean water strategy, which will allow us to address combined sewer overflows, stormwater mitigation and the highest level of treatment technologically possible at our state-of-the-art wastewater treatment facility.

But this story gets much better. Our innovative approach to cleaning up the river will allow us to achieve additional public amenities in our parks, along our street right-of-ways and on our shorelines to the benefit of future generations. The ultimate goal of this substantial investment is to bring

all of our citizens back to the river, much like Expo did in the 70s.

- **Integrated thinking gives our citizens smarter and more affordable government.** And that integrated thinking hasn't stopped at the river. City-wide we are delivering integrated street and infrastructure projects like Crestline and the upcoming High Drive project. These plans are complete with robust citizen engagement, comprehensive solutions for all modes of transportation, and the delivery of unmatched quality underground and above ground.

Our next step has to be in the river so that we can build a greener Spokane complete with natural solutions to stormwater mitigation and wastewater treatment. Our ultimate goal is to clean up our river – so you can get in.

The end result of all this work? A safer, stronger and smarter Spokane that is a cooler place to live, work and play.

Building that choice location for living, learning and leisure can look different for all of us. At the city of Spokane, we know we have successfully contributed to this ultimate goal when we have done a few key things:

- Controlled the cost of government
- Engaged our citizens in decision-making – every time, without exception
- Made Spokane a safer place to live by both crime reports and the sense of security you feel
- Enhanced the fabric of our community – both through the natural beauty of this place and the vibrancy of our people

- And held ourselves accountable to continually deliver on these goals

It's not a miracle. We just decided to go.

Our success as a community is not as complex as putting a man on the moon. It is about all of us deciding to just "go." There's an opportunity today for you to do just that. There's a seat at our table.

Margaret Mead said this:

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, concerned citizens can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has."

And I firmly believe that there is no statement that more accurately represents exactly what's happening in Spokane today, the promise of our community, or the passion of our people.

So, I invite you to pull up a chair and fill the empty seat at our table. Spokane is counting on you.

We've spent a lot of time today talking about the amazing things we've accomplished as a community. But those "things" are not what truly makes this place the City of Choice. It's the fact that we have some of the greatest people I know caring and working to make it so.

Over the past 24 months as Mayor, I've had the opportunity to personally thank a few of our great leaders for their work. There are so many that serve this community day in and day out, whose missions at work and in life are to simply make Spokane a better place to live, work and play.

You work and interact with the people I'm talking about every day. I hope you are just as inspired by their determination, their passion, their love for this community, and their leadership as I am.

Spokane is made of people, passion and promise and that's why I love it here. I want to know why you came, why you stayed and what you love – so that I can help make Spokane an even better home for you. I want your businesses to be successful, your families to feel safe, and for all of you to realize the promise our region holds.

I hope that you will actively participate in realizing that promise because what you bring to this community makes a difference.

It already has.

The seat is here. How you fill it is entirely up to you. You've heard me talk enough today about all the things going on across the City that excite me, but that's really just the tip of the iceberg.

We are the foundation upon which all of you have the opportunity, the talent, the ability and the resources to build. Don't let that go to waste. Get involved. Talk to your colleagues, your coworkers, your families and your friends. Find out what's going on in the community that excites you – and be a part of it.

There's an opportunity for you on advisory committees, task forces and citizen-led boards or commissions. Maybe you feel

inspired to be the next leader of a project like Expo '74 or the renovation of Riverfront Park.

Our city has much to offer, and all of you have much to offer our city. I encourage you to visit our new website, spokanecity.org (*on the screens*) and check out the many opportunities available to you and the projects we have lined up that could get off the ground with your passion and talent behind them.

Make our Spokane your Spokane.

The City of Choice, the heart of Vision 2020, this empty seat – is for all of you. And it requires all of you.

Make your choice today – choose what drives you. Choose our future. Choose Spokane – and fill the seat.