



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Healy delivers 2012 State of the City address, declares Canton the “Utica Capital”

CANTON, Ohio – In his fifth State of the City address, Canton Mayor William J. Healy II stated that despite continuing budget constraints, the city is in position to maximize the opportunities presented by the emerging oil and gas industry in Ohio. Healy declared that Canton will be at the forefront of all oil and gas developments in Northeastern Ohio and stated, “I’m even more excited for the city of Canton and its citizens for what may be the turning point in our history that will redefine Canton for decades to come.”

As Mayor Healy reflected in the beginning of his State of the City address, “When I took office in 2008, our city was struggling, but we had lofty goals of not only stopping those downward trends, but also turning it around and putting Canton on the path to revitalization.” The focus then, prior to the economic downturn sweeping the country, was on the “Four Pillars – Safety, Education, Neighborhoods and Jobs.” These challenges provided a unique opportunity to transform the City of Canton into a more efficient and effective operation while still strengthening those critical “Four Pillars.”

Pillar One - Safety. Mayor Healy mentioned how crime was at an all-time high four years ago and that safety was addressed as a vital priority in the community. Intelligence Led Policing was an effective strategy implemented and successfully helped reduce crime. Although crime was reduced in our neighborhoods during the first three years, we saw an increase in 2011 of 12% overall that coincided with county cuts. Since the recent passing of the County Sales Tax, the Mayor expressed confidence that Canton will see crime numbers drop again in 2012.

Pillar Two - Education. The education system and increased graduation rates in Canton City Schools as well as Plain Local Schools continue to build a strong community. In spite of the economic struggles and reductions in funding from the state, improvements continue to be shown. The Mayor’s Scholarship Program has consistently proven to be successful by making scholarships available to any and all Canton residents who graduate from our public schools and have recently added the University of Akron and Stark State College to the program in 2012.

Pillar Three - Neighborhoods. Mayor Healy discussed the revitalization of Canton neighborhoods and announced that safety grants in the amount of \$100,000 will be awarded directly to neighborhoods, which is double the amount from last year. Canton’s Neighborhood Commission is now being put into action and will be operational next month. This Commission will create a direct line of communication between citizens and the city departments. The Commission’s main goal will be to facilitate the creation of a new Comprehensive Plan for Canton and to review the plan and update annually.

Community neighborhoods and youth will benefit from the Spray Park project, which should be up and running by midsummer. Senior citizens as well as all Canton city residents will have the opportunity to participate in the City’s Prescription Drug Card Program at no cost. This program will be available through the City Community Development office in partnership with the National League of Cities and offers savings of over 20% depending on the prescription and pharmacy.

Pillar Four - Jobs. Over the past year, the Mayor in collaboration with the Canton Regional Chamber of Commerce, Stark Development Board, local colleges and universities, and many other partners have added hundreds and thousands of jobs to the city. Companies like Medline, Astoria Nursing Home, Gervasi Winery, Old Dominion Trucking, VXI Global Solutions, Chesapeake Oil, the Cleveland Cavaliers and many others have helped move Canton forward and help lead our recovery.

Although concerned about city finances and state government cuts, Mayor Healy expresses confidence in a solid rebound from the current recession by unveiling the new logo and declaring, "The Hall of Fame City from this point forward shall also be known as 'Canton, the Utica Capital!'" Canton is the largest city centrally located in the development of the Utica shale oil and gas exploration, and dozens of companies have converged on this area. The Mayor explained how this opportunity could help Canton experience the birth of a new economy.

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