

## Mayor's Inaugural Address

Let me begin by thanking everyone who came here this evening. That is a wonderful show of support for your new council, your family, and your friends. And thank you to the Cogeco audience for tuning in – we promise the sound system will be looked at this year.

The 11 of us want to thank the electorate. You put us here, and tonight we took an oath to serve you. We will not forget our oath, and we will not forget you. We accept the responsibility and we accept the mandate for change you have given us.

This is also the final night to say thank you to former Mayor Jack Burrows. We know you will continue to be a wonderful ambassador for the city.

There are a lot of changes happening in the political scene. Very shortly Canada will have a new Prime Minister, and Nipissing will have a new MP. Two months ago Ontario swore in a new Premier, and Nipissing elected a new MPP. And this month the citizens of North Bay elected a new council. And here we are tonight – part of the change that's sweeping the country.

You have elected a great team. This is a very strong Council, very united, and very eager to accept an active role in planning for our future. Let me explain how we see our role: the Mayor and Council are here to provide Leadership – or doing the right thing; the administration and staff are here to provide Management – or doing things right. This will create an environment for things to get done, and satisfy your demand for change, accountability, and seeing that the City is run in a business-like way.

We did not get elected to do things the way they've always been done. You have said to all of us that we must prioritize our wants and our needs. Some have said that the City has been like a homeowner who spends too much on restaurants and golf club memberships, and no money on the clogged furnace and leaking roof. Well, that all ends tonight.

We will begin now to prepare a budget for next year that will tackle the issues facing us. Our Deputy Mayor will serve as budget chief and he and his team must draw on every ounce of their experience to provide a sound plan for the future. We will all have to tighten our belts. This means our people must do more with their existing resources. We have to do the practical things that every other business has had to do. The public understands the problem – and now we must deliver. This is not a call to cut people or services – this is a reality check that says cut the fat and cut the waste. We're referring to travel, to memberships, to lobbyists, to consultants – all the things that taxpayers love to hate. And it's also a call to the Federal and Provincial governments to honour their commitments to provide the much needed New Deal to cities. We want, and we need the infrastructure money that's been promised. We will be asking our MP and our MPP to deliver on their governments' promises for the gas taxes and other infrastructure monies.

And your new team has hit the ground running.

Last week we attended meetings with two companies regarding the use of the underground NORAD facility, and met with Bell Canada on the same file. We met with the tourist groups about bringing a large summer event here. And we met with a U.S. prospect interested in opening a facility in North Bay. Simply put, your new council has been very busy!

And we will continue with this aggressive schedule. Many meetings are already scheduled with companies you've been hearing about over the last two years. We intend to bring closure to these deals very quickly. The longer a deal is out there floating around, the more problematic it becomes. Let's bring these deals home now, and start growing our way out of debt.

We all promised jobs, growth, and opportunity. We all promised hope. These pro-active moves that we've taken – even before we're sworn in, are a sign of the times. We will do things differently. We will do what's right.

On a personal note, let me tell you that it is a tremendous honour to be your Mayor. To Miss P, to my mom and dad, my mother- and father-in-law, my brother and sister-in-law, my aunts and uncles, and all of the people who supported me – thank you so much for your help and for your faith.

You have elected a great team.

We say to you tonight ...

North Bay, hang on for one he lluva great ride!