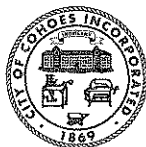


CITY OF COHOES

GEORGE E. PRIMEAU, SR.
MAYOR



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State of the City Address

February 13, 2013

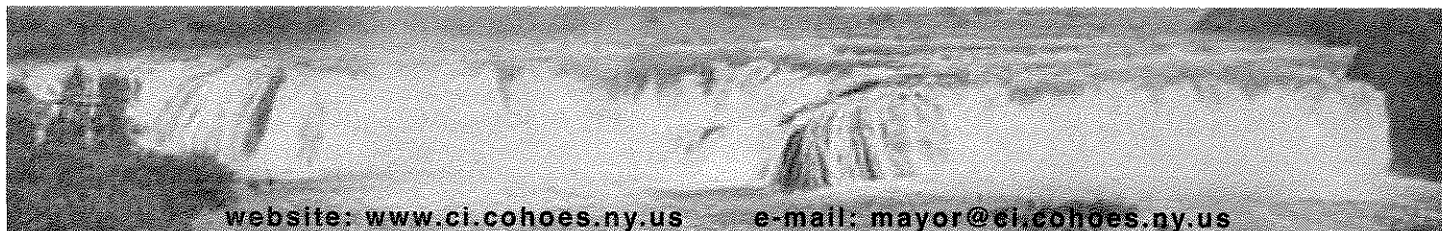
Common Council Chambers

Good evening members of the city council, fellow elected officials, our city workforce, and a special thank you to residents and friends of The City of Cohoes. It is with pride and optimism that I will highlight our accomplishments and progress as I present The State of The City.

These are challenging times to be sure but you'll see that The City of Cohoes has not only survived but thrived. While we're surrounded by retrenchment and recession, Cohoes has experienced real growth and a good share of prosperity.

I offer some encouraging examples:

- **The Paddocks at Lexington Hill** – 400+ high end apartment units with construction scheduled to begin this year.
- **Harmony Mills** – Ground breaking for Phase III took place on Dec 19; The last of 102 units of this award winning reuse project.
- **Admiral Walk** – 105-unit Condo development. Last of 4 buildings to be built in 2013.
- **Eagles Nest** – 5 styles of town homes with the advantage of home ownership minus the maintenance.



website: www.ci.cohoes.ny.us

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- **Cohoes City Lofts** – Jeff Myers newest housing project in his hometown, bringing new life to the down town area.
- **Heritage Trail** – When complete, this trail system links the Cohoes Falls to the Mohawk Hudson Bike Trail.
- **Black Bridge** – Reclaiming this treasure over the Mohawk enhances our bike trails, connecting Cohoes to The Delaware Ave Trail and Mohawk Hudson Bike Path.
- **Vision of Brownfield BOA Study** – This represents the completion of a downtown master plan, both short and long term: An exciting vision...a blueprint for our future.
- **Remsen Street / Bus District** – Re-Opening More Bread & Jam, Opening a Computer Repair Shop, an antique store re-located from Albany, Kendrick's Antique Jewelry, Columbia Mattress Outlet, Harmony House Tours & our new Beanery Auction House.
- **Spenwood Studio** – We sometimes forget our business which operates beyond the business district. The Spenwood Dance Studio is another example of an investment in what might have become an eyesore, The St. Agnes Lyceum into a thriving business. Spenwood Dance studio has an enrollment of 650 students, with 430 families.
- Last but not least, we welcome The Raven's Head Micro Brewery. Cramer's Armory certainly is a part of our history and I'm thrilled that Raven's Head have seen fit to invest in that great old building and invest in Cohoes.

While we are eager to remain business friendly we of course are always interested in attracting families to Cohoes. I believe our First Time Home Buyers incentive will help accomplish that and target areas that we would like to see home ownership growth in especially downtown. The First Time Home buyers program has been launched by The Cohoes Local Development Corporation. The Board of the CLDC has approved up to \$60,000 of funding for this new program. Grants of up to \$5000 will be made available to individuals that meet the HUD definition of a first time home buyer and I am proud to say we have already received applications.

City Hall

Spending more time at City Hall I appreciate even more what a magnificent building we have. But old buildings have issues. Handicapped access and security are 2 important challenges we currently face. We will begin renovations on our Ontario Street Entrance making City Hall handicapped accessible. I am also concerned with building security for not only city hall employees but those that have business in City Hall. Working with the NYS Court Administration as well as our own departments we will be reviewing building safety and examining issues such as entry points and overall security.

Public Safety

The growth we strive for is only possible in a safe environment. I am appreciative and proud of the tireless efforts of our public servants in the areas of police & fire protection, as well as our code officers.

Cohoes police and fire fighters have had a busy year with:

- **CAD Calls:** 17,020
- **Fire Dept:** Total Calls 3,133 (Fire calls – 80)

In addressing public safety I believe prevention is a vital part of our responsibility. We are grateful to the dedicated work with our officers on the street as well as the detective bureau. The detective bureau handled **818 cases** not only solving crimes but preventing crimes as well.

Building & Planning – Code

The efforts of our building and planning department along with code enforcement go beyond bricks and mortar to real quality of life issues. I am personally committed to fair but aggressive code enforcement. Our code officers have had a busy and productive year conducting more than **1,500 MRI and ROP inspections**. These inspections and resulting corrective action have undoubtedly resulted in accident and fire prevention as well as

overall quality of life improvement. In addition to our inspections we have issued **422 building permits**.

Department of Public Works

Recycling- As we try to do maximize our recycling efforts I'm pleased to report that the co-mingling of recyclables, combining paper with plastic/bottles has resulted in greater participation and tipping fee savings. I commend both the community and DPW for this tremendous progress.

City Finances

I conclude with the state of our finances not because it is least important but because it is the foundation. It is only because our financial house being in order that we are in a position to move forward. I'm proud to have played a part in this as council president but must thank John McDonald and Comptroller Mike Durocher for their leadership and discipline. Their efforts along with our department heads who have been asked to do more with less have us financially stable- and that is no easy accomplishment these days.

You are no doubt aware of the dramatic increases pension contributions. For the City of Cohoes this has meant an increase of more than \$600,000 over the past 5 years. Through sound financial planning and controlled spending we have been able to meet this skyrocketing bill without borrowing or depleting our fund balance. That is an amazing accomplishment. We realize our property tax payers carry a heavy burden but we have done our best to hold the line with **zero tax hikes over 2 of the past 3 years**.

Because of our financial stability we have been able to actually take care of business and make investments such as:

- **Business District Cameras** - Prevention & assistance with investigation involving our bus district.
- **9 New Patrol Cars**
- **New Fire Truck**
- **Electrical Fire House Upgrades including Stronger Generator Capability**
- **3 New DPW Dump Trucks and a Recycling Truck**

In recent years we seem to hear doom and gloom at most levels of government. I sincerely believe that in Cohoes we really are in a better place. Communities which share our demographics consistently show a decline in population. In Cohoes we have reversed a decades long trend actually realizing an increase in population. Yes there is growth and progress. On a personal note I must say that these past seven weeks have certainly been interesting. Sometimes even entertaining. As council president I felt connected to the issues of running a city but John warned me and he was right that it's different when you're sitting in "THE CHAIR".

But again on a personal note I must say that in Cohoes, at this time, it's not a bad seat. In fact I kind of like it and I'm pretty excited about what could lie ahead. So while this is not the night for such announcements I'll just say I might be interested in delivering this message of hope again next year. In the meantime I would thank you all for taking time to be here this evening and for your support and encouragement. As I've said before and I will say it again tonight, I'm only as good as my team and my community and right now I feel pretty good about both.

Thank you and good night.