

Mallory's State of City Address

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It's been a busy couple of weeks for Cincinnati Mayor Mark Mallory.

Last week he spent time with President Barack Obama and a coalition of mayors from across the country, learning how the recently approved economic stimulus is likely to impact Cincinnati.

Yesterday Mallory attended the president's state of the nation address before the joint session of Congress.

And last night Mallory delivered his own state of the city address at the Duke Energy Center before an audience of nearly 700 people.

Focusing on issues pertaining to jobs and the economy, the upcoming census, crime and the value of the city's young people as partners for success, Mallory put a positive spin on the city's position relative to others.

"No city is immune to the struggling economy. However, here in Cincinnati, we are faring better than most," the mayor said. "This is an indication of the strength of our city, even in turbulent times."

Mallory cited 2,500 new jobs in 2008 and the start of construction on two very high profile construction jobs, the Banks and the Great American Building, as among last year's prime accomplishments.

Bringing more jobs to the city next year, and potentially impacting federal funding in a big way, is the 2010 census, said Mallory. The mayor claims the 2000 census missed the mark – failing to count almost 50,000 residents and costing the city \$104 million over the last nine years.

"We cannot afford to let that kind of money slip through our fingers," Mallory said. "That's why getting the count right is important for 2010."

He established the Cincinnati Complete Count Committee, a group whose purpose is to ensure the most accurate count possible.

He also adamantly restated his support for the controversial Streetcar system, emphasizing the economic boost similar systems have brought to cities including Tampa, FL, Charlotte, N.C. and Seattle.

"The benefits of the Streetcar system are too significant to allow the naysayers to derail our efforts," Mallory said. "The facts are clear. Streetcars must be a part of Cincinnati's future and we will fight to make it happen."

And despite a statistical setback in the city's homicide rate in 2008 – Cincinnati recorded seven more murders in 2008 than in 2007 – Mallory put as positive a face as possible on the issue by noting that the Cincinnati Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV) effectively reduced gang related homicides by nearly 40 percent. CIRV has, the mayor said, received state, national and international recognition for its successes.

But ultimately, according to Mallory, the city's young professionals are the glue that will not only hold the city together in the future, but also “infuse their energy into addressing issues of transportation, housing, education the arts and the environment.”

One member of the mayor's Young Professional Kitchen Cabinet, David Lombardi, chair of arts and entertainment and a former resident of Los Angeles, started off the evening by saying that he views Cincinnati as “a small town with big buildings” and crediting the city's quality of life and accessibility as keys to attracting a thriving young professional community.

Mallory concurred with that sentiment.

“Growing cities are those that attract and retain young professionals. And in Cincinnati, we are working hard to do just that.”

Mallory's term as mayor is up at the end of this year. He is expected to announce he will run for re-election in the coming weeks.