

INAUGURAL ADDRESS
MAYOR JOSEPH P. RILEY, JR.
MONDAY, JANUARY 9, 2012

My fellow citizens:

I wish to begin by expressing my profound gratitude to you, the citizens of Charleston, for allowing me this special opportunity for public service to serve you as your mayor. I have learned so many things during my tenure of service to you, and none more important than the understanding of the power and goodness of citizens this community. This government, your city government, is but a part. It is the community -- the neighborhood councils, community organizations, non-profits, businesses, individual citizens -- all caring and working to enhance the lives of our people -- all of that working in collaboration with the city that is the real power of government in our community.

As we begin together these next 4 years, my belief is, and our commitment to make it the best and most hardworking, that it will be most successful 4 years in our city's history. My belief of that is because of the knowledge that I have the power and ability and caring and the goodness of the people of the City of Charleston at my side. So let us roll up our sleeves and work together -- we have lots to do.

Because of you, we are at the pinnacle of our city's prominence in our country and the world and we are ascending. In various categories we are cited as one of the greatest cities in the country and the world.

We will rest on no laurels. Rather, we see that recognition as a challenge to do better and we will. And in the process as we go about our work, we will ask each other: Is this work what a great city would do? And if the answer is no, then we know we must do better.

And greatness is not a matter of size; rather is it a measurement of how hard we seek to excel in everything that we do.

A great city is a safe city because their citizens can achieve the maximum livability, success and pleasure they deserve when their homes, businesses, parks and neighborhoods are safe. Our first priority in Charleston is to continue to show the nation how a city that is very busy and diverse and urban and suburban can have the peace and order that its citizens deserve – safe from crime and fire.

A great city seeks to well educate every child – each and every one. No – the city does not operate schools, but that is no excuse. Our society used that excuse for a few generations and it failed. Educating our children is a community responsibility and the city government and its citizens have a huge role. That is why we are partners in Charleston Promise Neighborhood, working with other governments and the private sector to make sure that children from the poorest neighborhoods have the highest quality education. It's why we support the development

of the Meeting Street Academy, which like Charleston Promise Neighborhood will be a national model, as is the amazing Charleston Development Academy. It's why we have Lunch Buddies, tutoring programs, mentoring programs, afterschool programs and so much more. It does in fact take a village to raise a child.

But we must do more.

I will work to create the Charleston Literacy Initiative to make the challenge of having every child able to read well a community cause. We will work in partnership with the existing literacy organizations and initiatives and reading programs and with our schools. We will seek new partners and new ideas so that every child in our community reaches adulthood with a love of books. We will become known as Charleston being a community that reads -- that an adult population that can't read will have increased opportunities to do so, so that they can help their children and grandchildren. This is an exciting new opportunity and we can do it.

A great city is one that has a dynamic economy and jobs for its citizens. With the work of generations, we have made Charleston a most desirable place to live. We must create and attract more and better jobs here so our people and their children and their grandchildren can stay or come back home and work and live in the community they love.

We will do this by: growing manufacturing jobs on the strong base of Boeing -- seeking to attract other world class companies to our community.

We will not rest until our harbor is deepened to 50 feet, which will allow our port to increasingly create jobs and promote economic development in our region and in our state.

We will work collaboratively with the Medical University of South Carolina and South Carolina Research Authority to develop the Horizon District and make Charleston a center of biotech and life science jobs.

We will build on the amazing Digital Corridor, increasingly bringing knowledge-based companies to Charleston. There is the Silicon Valley on the West Coast. We believe Charleston can be the Silicon Harbor. Charleston is the perfect place, because of its beauty and energy and diversity, to create the perfect fit for those with creative impulses that being in this amazing city further enhance.

We will maintain our triple A credit rating, which is an important signal to businesses looking for a place to call home.

And a great city is always working to enhance the quality of life for its citizens.

We will work to complete the funding for the Septima Clark/Crosstown Drainage Project. The Market Street drainage construction will be underway this year and soon thereafter the West Ashley/Forest Acres and then when those are completed, we can begin the planning and construction of the next drainage improvements.

I-526 must be completed and now. We do know that the community is shirking its duty to future generations if it allows a needed highway improvement to fall prey to a very small, vocal and well-funded minority's assault on what is prudent and careful progress in our city.

Infrastructure for pedestrian and bicycle access adds greatly to our quality of life. We will create not only at the crossing of the Ashley River, but in time, a connection of over 50 miles of bike and pedestrian ways that form in themselves another park system interwoven with adjacent streets, highways, bridges and parks that allow people in or adjacent to their neighborhoods to be physically active and removed a bit more from the hustle and bustle of city life.

The Gaillard Performance Center will add enormous beauty to our city, create one of the great performing arts facilities in our country, add greatly to the success of our arts organizations, and be inspirational to our citizens -- especially our school children.

The new cruise terminal will be a most substantial civic asset, bolster our successful tourism management and create the opportunity to plan the redevelopment of the southern portion of the Union Pier property, connecting our city to its water's edge, creating new streets and building sites for people to live and to work and to visit and new opportunities for parks and the continued ability for a citizen to walk along the water's edge of our city on Charleston Harbor.

A great city understands and welcomes the opportunity it has to create a new and important institution, which will enhance quality of life, and serve not only the citizens in this

community but our country. We have this special opportunity and duty in the creation of the International African American Museum at what will become known as Arrival Square.

For a number of years, the Board of Directors has been working carefully to assemble information in an understanding of the history surrounding Charleston's most prominent role in enslaved Africans coming to America and helping build our nation.

To do this we will need and deserve national support. I will work hard with the Board and others to gain national financial help to allow us to build an appropriate building that will instruct and inspire people of this community and this country in all the years to come.

These initiatives -- drainage, highways, cultural assets -- are job creators as well. The investments I have outlined represent almost \$800,000,000 and will help create much needed construction jobs in our community as well as provide lasting expansion to our economy as well.

A great city works to make sure we remember those who might be forgotten. Our shelter for the homeless is a national model. We all must support their new shelter so that we can continue to be a beacon for our country on how we care for homeless. Just as our initiatives for affordable housing will continue so that this great city, increasingly prominent and successful, also increasingly has homes for people of modest resources so that we can all share this very special place together. And we must not forget our veterans who have served our country heroically and especially those who are coming home from Iraq and Afghanistan. When we have job opportunities, we should give them high priority. And when we see them on the street,

give them a pat on the back, encouragement to their families and let them know how grateful we are that they served our country and our world in this time of great need.

In the process of the lively debate in our community about cruise ships, a fundamental question emerged. What kind of city is Charleston and maybe even more fundamentally – what does it mean to live in a city?

A great city is not only lived in but it is carefully and diversely used. A long time ago it was said that “Charleston was too poor to paint and too proud to whitewash.” That has long since passed. A new affluence has graced our city. And with that, there may be on the part of a few the misunderstanding that they live in or have moved to a place that is like a gated community – affluent and exclusive. But that is not a great city. This and great cities are a part of a larger public realm.

There will always be sights and sounds in our city – the announcement from the Coast Guard Station; or on another part of the peninsula ships arriving or embarking; fire engines; and some time long ago, vendors with their wonderful songs and calls announcing their fresh crabs or vegetables; children romping, healthfully engaged in athletic activities on our playgrounds; students going to college; workers coming to the hospitals; cranes lifting huge containers; scientists and software engineers coming to work; streets and sidewalks bustling with people engaged in commerce, parks and public spaces busily and diversely used and shared; quiet zones for repose, reflection, solitude.

The answer to that question is that a great city, as Charleston is, is a real city – a public place, diverse people and activities working, living, energizing each other and happily sharing their city.

And there is more – much more -- that we know needs to be and will be done and, of course, challenges that are yet before us.

As we begin anew this term of public service together, we do so with energy and optimism, and determination to succeed and excel because of our awareness that what we do together as a city should be done with the understanding that citizen's lives depend on it --their lives and the quality of their lives, opportunities for success, achievement and fulfillment. And our duty is not just to the citizens of today, but tomorrow and generations to come. For the actions of a city have the power of impacting the quality of people's lives years away. It is why I ask myself and those with whom I work: Does this pass the 25 year, or 50 year or 100 year test? Will what we are doing benefit, encourage, inspire people years away. That will undergird our work to do better, to work harder, to achieve more because of our understanding that future citizens of Charleston depend on us. We serve this city in trust. We hold it in trust. We work for it and care for it in trust – for those of today and the tomorrows to come.