

# Call The Roll

An E-Publication of Columbus City Council

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As most of our citizens are well aware, the national economic crisis created unprecedented fiscal challenges for the city of Columbus and required many difficult decisions. A bleak budget proposal, which already included \$82.9 million in cuts and layoffs, became even worse in January when City Auditor Hugh Dorrian announced a \$13 million reduction in expected revenue. Since the city of Columbus is legally required to pass a balanced budget—unlike the federal government—Mr. Dorrian's report left us with no choice but to make more painful cuts to reduce expenditures.

Staff from City Council and Mayor Coleman's administration immediately formed a joint workgroup to close the unexpected \$13 million gap. While the workgroup made recommendations such as temporary layoffs of non-uniformed personnel to help balance the budget, our Fire Fighters also stepped up in a big way. The Fire Fighters, who are willing to place themselves in harm's way whenever the alarm bell sounds, reinforced their willingness to sacrifice by forgoing their negotiated pay raises this year, saving the city nearly \$3 million. I can't thank the Fire Fighters and their union president, Jack Reall, enough for what they selflessly did to help the city.

While we were able to pass a balanced budget with the Fire Fighters' help, the nation's uncertain economy makes additional cuts later in the year a very real possibility. Whatever the future may hold, I know the citizens of Columbus are resilient and care for their community and I am fully confident that we will come out of this recession even stronger and more prepared to compete for 21st century jobs.

Sincerely,



Michael C. Mentel, President  
Columbus City Council

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**A recent visit to Faith Mission afforded President Mentel and other members of Council the opportunity to meet with residents who are being impacted the most by the national economic crisis.**

Visit Columbus City Council's [Web site](#) to learn more about Council's [initiatives](#) and to access links to city departments.

## **CRAIG CONTINUES HIS COMMITMENT TO SMALL BUSINESSES**



President Pro Tem [Hearcel F. Craig](#), chair of the Minority and Small Business Development Committee, recently championed legislation that provided additional support for the Northland Alliance’s efforts to create a special improvement district (SID) along State Route 161. Once established through a voluntary petition process, a SID allows business owners within a defined geographical area to raise funds for mutually beneficial district-wide services and improvements.

“The intent of our investment is to help stimulate economic growth along this crucial business corridor,” said Craig. “I want to thank our community partners in the Northland Alliance who have worked diligently with business owners in the area to keep this process in motion.”

**President Pro Tem Craig crafted legislation to help small business owners in one of the city’s once-thriving commercial corridors. Click [here](#) to listen to the announcement.**

Other SIDs have been created to assist businesses in areas throughout Columbus, including Morse Road, the Short North, Downtown, and the Discovery District.

## **PALEY WORKING TO PREVENT TEEN DATING ABUSE**

According to studies, one in every three teenagers will experience an abusive dating relationship by the time they graduate from high school or college, and 10 percent of adolescents report being physically abused by a romantic partner.

In light of these startling statistics, Judiciary and Court Administration Committee Chair [Eileen Y. Paley](#) sponsored a resolution declaring the first week of February as National Teen Dating Abuse Prevention Week. Paley also recognized the outstanding work of the Columbus chapter of the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW), who have been instrumental in providing teenagers with resources to escape abusive relationships.



**Councilmember Paley presented a resolution to the NCJW for their work in helping to prevent teen dating abuse. Click [here](#) to listen to Councilmember Paley as she discusses National Teen Dating Abuse Prevention Week.**

One of the group’s initiatives, the *Love Shouldn’t Hurt* program, provides a video and discussion led by trained volunteers to help students identify the foundations of healthy relationships, the warning signs of abusive relationships, and a safe strategy to break free from harmful situations. The program also offers students the resources they need to deal with this potentially life-threatening issue, including a pocket-sized resource card with contact information for one-on-one assistance through the National Teen Dating Abuse 24/7 Helpline (866-331-9474) and Web site ([loveisrespect.org](http://loveisrespect.org)), both of which can be accessed anonymously for assistance.

## SUPPORTING FAMILIES WITH EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT



Tax season is in full swing and so is the effort to help Columbus residents keep every dollar they have earned.

The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is a federal program that began as a “work bonus” to reward families that had moved from welfare to employment. Today, it continues to lower the tax burden for low and moderate-income individuals and families.

“The EITC puts thousands of dollars back in the pockets of hard working Columbus residents,” said [Charleta B. Tavares](#), chair of the Health, Housing and Human Services Committee.

**County Treasurer Ed Leonard and Councilmember Charleta Tavares met with residents to explain the benefits of the Earned Income Tax Credit.**

According to the Franklin County EITC Coalition, more than 10,000 low-to-moderate-

income households in Franklin County miss out on tax credits and refunds. That’s nearly \$10 million that could help individuals and families in this community meet basic needs—money that would be invested in the local economy. The EITC guidelines are:

- ✓ **No Children:** If single, maximum income is \$12,880. If married, maximum income is \$15,880. The maximum credit is \$438.
- ✓ **One Child:** If single, maximum income is \$33,995. If married, maximum income is \$36,995. The maximum credit is \$2,917.
- ✓ **Two or More Children:** If single, maximum income is \$38,646. If married, maximum income is \$41,646. The maximum credit is \$4,824.

As an alternative to tax preparation services that may charge residents hundreds of dollars to file tax returns, the EITC Coalition provides numerous sites around Franklin County where IRS-certified volunteers complete tax forms and file returns for free.

For more information on free tax preparation or the EITC call 2-1-1 or visit [keepitsaveit.org](http://keepitsaveit.org).



## CITY ANNOUNCES REDEVELOPMENT PLANS FOR CITY CENTER MALL\_\_\_\_\_



From a vacant building to a vibrant center of activity. That is the goal behind the transformation of City Center mall into an urban oasis surrounded by residential and business development.

City Council President [Michael C. Mentel](#) joined Mayor Coleman and dozens of other civic leaders to announce plans for the Columbus Commons project, an 8.9 acre park which will replace the old mall by autumn 2010.

“Columbus Commons will spur investment and economic growth in the heart of downtown as we begin to phase in new businesses and residences,” said Mentel. “This project will be a tremendous addition to the growing list of amenities that help define our downtown.”

**Council President Michael C. Mentel joined Mayor Coleman in announcing the plan for Columbus Commons. Click [here](#) to listen to the Council President discuss this new venture.**

The mixed-use development is expected to remind residents and visitors of McFerson Commons in the Arena District, with tree-lined streets and sidewalks, and ground-floor businesses with living spaces above. Capitol South Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation is the non-profit group working with the city and business community to make the project a reality.

“We are starting with a clean and green slate for this site, which is unusual in the development world, but the perfect solution for City Center,” said Guy Worley of Capital South. “Eventually, we will create an entirely new neighborhood with residential, retail, office, and entertainment uses that will change the face of downtown Columbus.”



**Artist renditions of the Columbus Commons downtown neighborhood.**

## **GINTHER PROMOTING JOB GROWTH IN TOUGH ECONOMIC TIMES**

In a time when many companies are downsizing, a Columbus business is expanding its operation with the help of City Council. Development Committee Chair [Andrew J. Ginther](#) sponsored legislation to assist Mission Essential Personnel, a global personnel and management company, in creating 108 new jobs and retaining 84 existing jobs.

“With this announcement, Mission Essential is helping solidify Columbus’ position as one of the premier places for businesses to call home,” said Councilmember Ginther. “In this challenging economy, city leaders are working with companies of all sizes to make Columbus the most attractive business option they can find.”

With its headquarters in Columbus, Mission Essential was established in 2004 by two former members of the U.S. Army Special Forces. The company assists clients with specialized requirements for national security and corporate objectives. Mission Essential has grown from six employees to more than 150 employees in the United States and more than 700 worldwide. The city is offering the company a Jobs Growth Incentive of 25 percent for five years.

“I’m pleased that Mission Essential is committed to staying here and growing in our community, and I’m proud to help this company as it continues to thrive,” said Mayor Coleman. “We’re fighting for every job and we will continue to be aggressive in our economic development strategy to attract and retain jobs.”



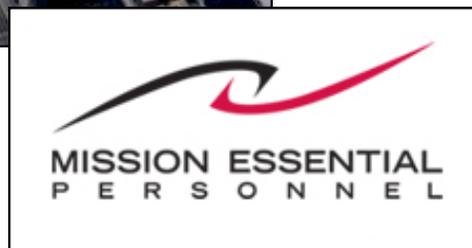
**Councilmember Ginther sponsored legislation to help create 108 new jobs in Columbus.**



**Mission Essential Personnel is headquartered in Columbus. Despite the economic crisis, the company is continuing to grow and has partnered with the city to maintain its current workforce and create over 100 new jobs.**

Mission Essential is proposing to expand its Columbus operation, including the installation of a sensitive compartmented information facility, which will enable classified and confidential conversations with clients. Mission Essential plans to complete its expansion project within the year.

“Columbus has been a great home,” said Mission Essential CEO Chad Monnin. “We are committed to continue to grow our company in Ohio, and the city of Columbus has been a valued partner in allowing us to do so.”



## COLUMBUS CITY COUNCIL WEB SITE UPDATED



**Councilmember A. Troy Miller plans to use his technology expertise in his role as chair of the Administration Committee.**

[City Council's](#) Web site has been restructured for more user-friendly navigation. While the site may have a new look, it continues to offer a wide variety of resources to keep residents informed of the issues impacting their neighborhoods. Council's meeting calendar, press releases, and initiatives are just a few of the features residents are able to access on the site.

As chair of the Administration Committee, Councilmember [A. Troy Miller](#) oversees legislation related to the Department of Technology.

"I am excited about these updates and am pleased that we are working to provide the public with greater access to the work we do on their behalf," said Councilmember Miller.

As part of the update, users can now download *Call The Roll Radio*, which airs weekly on 91.5 Freedom FM at 7:00 am and 2:00 pm on Saturdays, from the [media portion](#) of the Council Web site. The radio program features interviews with members of Council and other Columbus leaders on topics that range from pending legislation to upcoming community events and programs.

## WILLIS' LEGACY CONTINUES TO INSPIRE YOUTH



**Councilmember Tyson participated in a ceremony to rename Berliner Park's flag football team after football great, Bill Willis.**

Bill Willis is a true Columbus legend. An All-American two-way football player at Ohio State, Willis helped break the color barrier in the National Football League by being one of the first African Americans to play in the pro ranks.

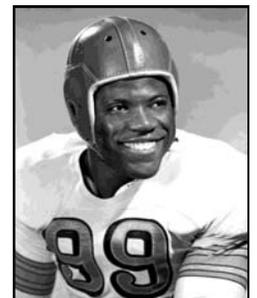
As a member of the Pro Football Hall of Fame and the College Football Hall of Fame, Willis' #99 jersey was officially retired by Ohio State last season. A year after his passing, his impact on football in Columbus is still being felt.

off-field accomplishments of Willis by renaming their youth football league the Bill Willis #99 youth flag football league. Councilmember [Priscilla R. Tyson](#), chair of the Recreation and Parks Committee, attended the Berliner Park ceremony marking the renaming of the league.

The Columbus Recreation and Parks Department is celebrating the on- and

"Mr. Willis' work ethic and sense of sportsmanship is an example to all of our young people," said Tyson. "If they work hard, play by the rules and believe in themselves, they too can achieve greatness in many different areas of their lives."

Joining Tyson at Berliner Park to help highlight the importance of Willis' contributions to society was Willie O'Ree (picture—far left), another legend in professional sports. In 1958, O'Ree became the first African American player in the National Hockey League.



**#99, Bill Willis.**  
*(photo courtesy of The Ohio State University)*