

Call The Roll

An E-Publication of Columbus City Council

October 2007

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As always, thank you for taking a moment to read the latest edition of *Call The Roll*, the electronic magazine featuring your members of Columbus City Council.

Many great individuals have served on City Council throughout the years and I had the privilege of helping to honor one of them during the dedication of the new *Jerry Hammond Center* at 1111 East Broad Street.

Jerry Hammond was a devoted public official who served on City Council from 1974 to 1990 and became the first African American to serve as Council President (1984 to 1990).

Mr. Hammond was a visionary who helped build stronger neighborhoods and supported economic growth. One of the initiatives that he created, the Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization (NCR) program, met both of those goals.

The NCR program provided technical assistance, loans and matching grants, capital improvements and planning services in 15 commercial areas surrounding downtown. Many of these areas, like the Short North, are now thriving residential and commercial districts.

Mr. Hammond also worked diligently to deliver crucial social services to Columbus residents while also forging strong relationships with suburban municipalities to help institute growth policies that benefited both the City of Columbus and our neighbors.

While he no longer holds elected office, Mr. Hammond continues his public service. He has remained active in leadership positions for various levy initiatives and is the recipient of more than 200 community service and achievement awards.

It is fitting that the newest City building, home to our Recreation and Parks Department, the 311 Call Center, and the Central Ohio Workforce Investment Corporation (COWIC), will be called the *Jerry Hammond Center*.

Sincerely,



Michael C. Mentel
Council President



(L-R) Council President Michael C. Mentel, former Councilmember Ben Espy, Mayor Michael B. Coleman, and former Councilmember Les Wright announced the dedication of the new Jerry Hammond Center.

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STRIKE FORCE NUMBERS SIGNAL SUCCESS IN 2007

City Council's investment in the 2007 Summer Strike Force is being called a success, as violent crimes like homicide, robbery and others are on the decline.

"I do not think we could see a better return on tax dollars than what the Strike Force has been able to accomplish this year," said Public Safety Committee Chair [Andrew J. Ginther](#). "The Strike Force is a prime example of police working harder and smarter to make the greatest impact on neighborhood safety."

Since beginning the 2007 Strike Force in the spring, Columbus Division of Police officers have taken an impressive amount of illegal guns, drugs and money off the streets. Officers seized more than 200 guns, an estimated \$1,000,000 worth of marijuana and crack/cocaine, and \$224,466 in cash.

"This is part of our comprehensive strategy to keep Columbus residents safe," said Mayor Michael B. Coleman, who held up one of the many weapons seized during the Strike Force's operations. "Our officers are on the offensive and the criminals are on the run."

During the Summer Strike Force, officers concentrate efforts in targeted areas and focus on deterring violent crimes and taking criminals off the streets. City leaders stress that the techniques officers employ in the summer are used year round, increasing the effectiveness of their crime fighting in Columbus neighborhoods.



Safety Committee Chair Andrew J. Ginther helped Mayor Coleman announce the success of the 2007 Summer Strike Force.



The Summer Strike force removed over 200 illegal crime-guns from the streets of Columbus in 2007.

Columbus City Council thanks all our police officers for the diligence and dedication they show every day in protecting the safety of Columbus residents.

"The citizens of Columbus have done a fantastic job of getting us the information we need to prevent crimes from occurring," said Commander Richard Bash of the Columbus Division of Police.



BIG DARBY ACCORD PROMOTES ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

At this time last year, ten different Central Ohio jurisdictions joined forces to protect one of Ohio's most treasured resources.

The Big and Little Darby creeks are classified as state and national scenic rivers in recognition of their natural beauty and high-quality plant and animal habitats. Even with increased awareness of environmental concerns, advancing urban development could potentially impact the watershed's delicate ecology.

In an effort to protect this natural resource, Columbus City Council and Mayor Michael B. Coleman joined forces with numerous local partners to craft a unified vision for the Big Darby watershed's future. Their work led to the development of the Big Darby Accord master plan. The plan provides a comprehensive approach to preserving the watershed while continuing to allow for responsible development.



Recreation and Parks Committee Chair Priscilla R. Tyson explores the Big Darby Creek.

To honor the one-year anniversary of this landmark agreement, Recreation and Parks Committee Chair [Priscilla R. Tyson](#) and Mayor Coleman participated in a hiking tour of Battelle Darby Creek. The hike allowed many of the Accord participants to get a firsthand view of the ecosystem that their partnership will help preserve.

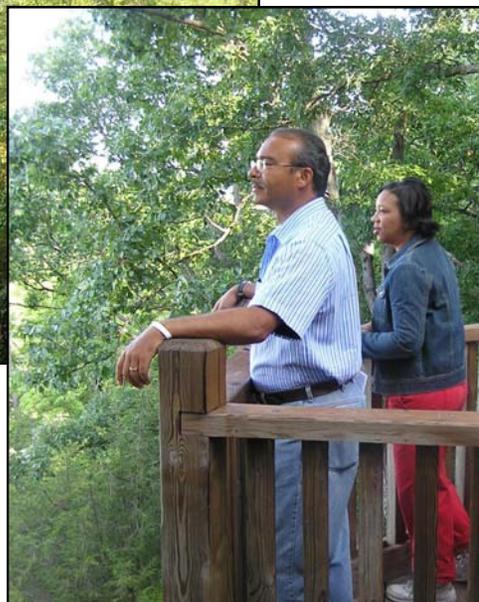
"The Big Darby is a gateway for people to discover and experience nature in its pristine state," said Councilmember Tyson. "It's home to a number of endangered species and also has one of the few remaining original prairie lands in Ohio. City Council will continue working in collaboration with our partners to conserve this asset."

"Rarely in history do you see so many jurisdictions set aside their issues to focus on the best possible strategy for the entire region," said Mayor Coleman. "The Big Darby Accord is proof that Central Ohio's communities are cooperating like never before."

"Preserving this natural resource is the responsibility of the whole community," said Development Committee Chair [Maryellen O'Shaughnessy](#). "I'm proud of the interaction between the Big Darby Accord Panel and the residents of the community. This is the community's park and we need their help to keep it a source of beauty and inspiration for generations to come."



Mayor Michael B. Coleman (left) and Recreation and Parks Committee Chair Priscilla R. Tyson (right) view the Big Darby from atop Cedar Bluff Lookout. This site contains one of the last remnants of original prairie land in Ohio.



COUNCIL PROVIDES NEW SWAT AND K-9 FACILITIES FOR POLICE

The best police force in the country is about to receive a new state-of-the-art training facility. Helping to celebrate this historic event were students from the Northwest Career Center and the Police Explorers Program. Students participating in these programs are interested in pursuing careers in law enforcement and are given the opportunity to experience what it is like to serve as a Columbus police officer.

“I’m thrilled that students from the Northwest Career Center and the Police Explorers Program are here for this significant occasion,” said Councilmember [Andrew J. Ginther](#), chair of the Public Safety Committee. “City Council is proud to work with Mayor Coleman to invest in the future of law enforcement, both through state-of-the-art facilities and the young people who might one day wear the badge.”

“This is a great opportunity for potential future police recruits to meet and talk to some of our Division’s best officers,” said Mayor Coleman. “The Columbus Police K-9 and SWAT units are among the most highly-trained units in the nation, but they are also often unsung heroes in law enforcement, keeping our patrol officers and residents from harm’s way in very dangerous situations.”



Students from the Northwest Career Center and the Police Explorers Program joined Councilmember Andrew J. Ginther (podium) and Mayor Michael B. Coleman (left of podium) to announce the new Special Police Unit training facility.

The new home for the K-9 Unit is part of a \$2.8 million renovation at the McKinley Avenue Police Complex, which also includes the Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) operations. The new K-9 facility will house nine police service dog teams. The K-9 Unit saves police officers from life-threatening encounters and plays a key role in numerous felony arrests. Last year, the K-9 Unit assisted in 2,939 criminal and narcotics searches that resulted in 798 arrests and the seizure of drugs with a street value of \$8.8 million and more than \$1 million in cash.

“This event symbolizes our commitment to providing the men and women in law enforcement with the tools they need to combat crime and the facilities and training they need to keep our neighborhoods safe,” said Councilmember Ginther. “The Mayor and City Council will continue investing in our safety forces so that Columbus remains the best place to work, live, and raise a family.”



(top) Safety Committee Chair Andrew Ginther (2nd from left), Mayor Michael Coleman (5th from left), and other dignitaries broke ground at the site of the new K-9 and SWAT facilities at the McKinley Avenue Police Complex.

(right) Before the groundbreaking ceremony, Officer Melissa Carlson gave a demonstration of her dog, Altoss, in action.



NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION CONTINUES ON THE EAST SIDE



Councilmembers Priscilla R. Tyson (podium), Hearcel F. Craig (left) and Charleta B. Tavares joined community leaders in celebrating another example of neighborhood redevelopment.

The site of the deteriorating Whitney Young apartment complex on Columbus' near East Side is about to become the home of a new 28-condominium development. The project is expected to be ready for occupancy by next summer.

“The King-Lincoln District was once the epicenter of African American culture in Columbus,” said Health, Housing, and Human Services Committee Chair [Charleta B. Tavares](#). “This announcement sends a clear signal that City Council will continue to work with our partners to restore this area to its former glory.”

The site, known as “the Whitney,” will feature two and three bedroom townhouse-style condominiums ranging in price from \$159,000 to \$259,000. The project will contain a mix of six affordable units, 11 market rate units and 11 above market rate units.

“Investment is the key to unlocking the economic potential of the King-Lincoln neighborhood,” said Councilmember [Priscilla R. Tyson](#), who chairs the Administration Committee. “A project like this can only be successful with community involvement. I’m pleased to see residents taking an active role in rejuvenating their neighborhood.”

The \$6.4 million project is being developed by the Whitney Young Collaborative, which is a partnership between area churches Shiloh Baptist, Second Baptist, and Trinity Baptist, as well as Alpha Rho Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc.

“The redevelopment of this site is part of our overall vision to revitalize the King-Lincoln District with new housing, jobs, arts and entertainment,” said Mayor Coleman. “I’m pleased with the results of the Whitney Young Collaborative.”

“City Council appreciates feedback and input from residents as we support collaborative redevelopments like the Whitney,” said Judiciary and Court Administration Committee Chair [Hearcel F. Craig](#). “My colleagues and I will continue working with the community so that together we can build stronger and more vibrant neighborhoods.”



Councilmember Priscilla R. Tyson, Mayor Michael B. Coleman, Councilmember Charleta B. Tavares, and Councilmember Hearcel F. Craig joined members of Shiloh Baptist, Second Baptist, Trinity Baptist and the Alpha Rho Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc. for the groundbreaking ceremony.

JOB SUCCESS GRADUATES ARE READY FOR THE WORKPLACE



Another group of Columbus residents have learned new skills to help them pursue quality jobs. City Council’s Workforce Development Committee Chair [Charleta B. Tavares](#) was on-hand to congratulate them during a ceremony at the Godman Guild as they became the latest class to graduate from the *Job Success* program.

“All of us have challenges in our lives, and this ceremony indicates that these individuals have proven something to themselves and to their families—that we can overcome those challenges,” said Councilmember Tavares while speaking to the graduates.

Workforce Development Committee Chair Charleta B. Tavares and the latest graduating class of the *Job Success* program at the Godman Guild.

Job Success is a program funded by the City of Columbus, United Way, and the Franklin County

Department of Jobs and Family Services. The program is a four week course that includes job readiness classes, job placement assistance, and free child care. In order to graduate, students must pass a final exam, as well as competency tests in resume and cover letter writing.

“*Job Success* is the kind of program that City Council will continue to support because it fulfills two missions for workforce development: it helps train workers and helps provide Columbus companies with more skilled employees. Local companies should look for these people when hiring because they will know that *Job Success* grads have the skills they are looking for to make them more competitive in the job market,” Tavares said.

Renita Adams, a *Job Success* graduate chosen by her peers to speak at the graduation ceremony, says the self-confidence and work skills she learned while enrolled in the program will last a lifetime.

“This course helped me realize that I have the ability to overcome challenges in my professional and personal life,” said Adams.

Councilmember Tavares challenged the students to continue their education in order to get the most out of their careers as possible.

“You need to ask yourself, *is this all I want to do or is there another level I want to reach?* If it is additional training or education, the Godman Guild will be here to help make your dreams a reality.”

Students interested in participating in *Job Success* should visit the [Godman Guild Association’s Website](#).



Renita Adams speaks to the *Job Success* graduating class at the Godman Guild.

TYSON CONTINUES ENVIRONMENTAL PLEDGE AT NEW *GREEN* NEIGHBORHOOD

Columbus is becoming a national leader in promoting energy efficiency. The first “green” neighborhood, where homes are built with energy-saving and environmentally friendly features, is now open for occupancy. Frederick Rogers, a Gulf War veteran, is one of the first residents to move into the new homes in GreenView Estates.

“I felt that I needed to do my part in the service to my country, and it is the same with our *green* home,” said Rogers. “We were in an apartment prior to my deployment and my utility bills were actually higher in the apartment than in this house.”

GreenView Estates is located off of Woodland Avenue and is being developed by Sovereign Homes and MiraCit Development Corporation. In just one year, the site went from an abandoned housing project to a model community, setting a standard for other builders.

“City Council’s commitment to the environment is our investment in the future,” said Councilmember [Priscilla R. Tyson](#), chair of the Recreation and Parks Committee. “When we design homes and buildings that are energy efficient we take responsibility for making this world a better place. We are making a statement about the values we hold important.”



Councilmember Tyson celebrates the opening of GreenView Estates, a model “green” neighborhood that she hopes can be replicated elsewhere in Columbus.



A home located in Columbus’ first “green” neighborhood.



The development is located in a designated Neighborhood Investment District, or NID, which will allow homeowners to receive a 15-year property tax abatement estimated to save buyers \$51,000 over the life of the abatement.

“Residents will save almost \$1,000 a year on energy bills alone,” said Mayor Michael B. Coleman. “These homes feature low-flow toilets, showerheads and faucets. They use Energy Star Appliances and lighting that help save energy.”

NEW CROSSWALKS AND WARNING LIGHTS TO PROTECT STUDENTS



Judiciary and Court Administration Committee Chair Hearcel F. Craig speaks about neighborhood safety.

The City of Columbus is wrapping up a \$2 million, seven-year initiative to protect residents, especially students who walk to class. Councilmember [Hearcel F. Craig](#), Mayor Michael B. Coleman, School Superintendent Dr. Gene Harris, and County Engineer Dean Ringle were joined by a group of students to celebrate construction of new crosswalks and improved warning lights and signs near West Mound Elementary.

“This is an exciting time for our families. By filling in these sidewalk gaps, we will provide a continuous, safe route for all pedestrians, especially our children,” said Councilmember Craig. “This investment will also improve the quality of life for these neighborhoods.”

Work to upgrade school warning lights was just completed at West Mound Street Elementary School. Work to upgrade the warning lights at Hilltonia Middle School is under way, as is the upgrade of the traffic and pedestrian signals at the intersection of West Mound Street and Belvidere Avenue.

“Too many kids in too many neighborhoods have danced with danger for far too long while walking along and crossing busy streets,” Mayor Coleman said. “We’re investing millions of dollars to create a safe environment for our children to walk to and from school.”



“Our children are our greatest resource, and we appreciate the efforts of Mayor Coleman and City Council to keep them safe,” Columbus City School District Superintendent Gene Harris said.

On a daily basis, the two schools serve 1,050 Columbus students.



(top) Councilmember Hearcel F. Craig (front), Mayor Michael B. Coleman (right), and Greater Hilltop Area Commission Chair Gary L. Baker II participated in the ceremonial crosswalk lighting.

(right) After the ceremony, Councilmember Craig met with students from West Mound Elementary.

CITY INCREASING EFFORTS TO ELIMINATE GRAFFITI

Columbus is stepping up efforts to put an end to graffiti, vandalism, and illegal dumping. At a recent press conference, Mayor Michael B. Coleman and Judiciary and Court Administration Committee Chair [Hearcel F. Craig](#) unveiled the City's newest weapon against vandalism. Dubbed "graffiti cams," these digital cameras are designed to deter potential taggers with motion-activated voice warnings.

"Our goal is to prevent graffiti and encourage private property owners to remove it from their homes and buildings as quickly as possible," Councilmember Craig said. "The Glen Echo Ravine is one of the few places in Columbus that has a full tree canopy. City Council and the Mayor refuse to allow the actions of a few vandals to spoil this beautiful environment for the rest of our citizens."

"Glen Echo Park, with its glorious ravine and meandering stream, is a diamond in our community," said Catherine Girves, director of the University Area Enrichment Association. "We appreciate the work the City has done over the years to clean up the graffiti, and thank Mayor Coleman and City Council for adding cameras to the City's graffiti-fighting efforts."



Councilmember Hearcel F. Craig speaks out against vandalism.



(top) After the press conference, Councilmember Craig and Ian MacConnell discussed the potential of the cameras to deter vandalism. As president of the University Area Commission, Mr. MacConnell spends every Sunday cleaning up graffiti in the University District.

The City has invested in five digital cameras that are being placed in neighborhoods and areas frequently tagged with graffiti.

"Graffiti is not art—it is vandalism that pollutes our parks, litters alleys and violates neighborhoods," said Mayor Coleman. "Graffiti taggers are not welcome in Columbus with their gang logos and destruction. We are stepping up clean-up efforts and preventative enforcement with these digital cameras being deployed to catch vandals in the act."



(right) Mayor Coleman and Councilmember Craig remove graffiti from a wall in Glenn Echo Ravine.

NEW BOMB ROBOT HELPING KEEP COLUMBUS SAFE

The Columbus Division of Fire's Bomb Squad is now better equipped to respond to tough situations after the City recently acquired a new \$300,000 bomb robot, the *BOZ 1*. Public Safety Committee Chair [Andrew J. Ginther](#) participated in a recent demonstration of the robot's capabilities.

"In today's global war on terror it is imperative that the City of Columbus stay on the cutting-edge of technology," said Councilmember Ginther. "High-tech equipment like the *BOZ 1* robot will allow bomb technicians to deal with potential threats efficiently and effectively while keeping our men and women in uniform out of harm's way."

With only 60 of these particular robots manufactured, the Columbus Division of Fire is the first organization in the United States to possess this remarkable device. In addition to improving response to explosive devices like car bombs and other hazardous material incidents, *BOZ 1* enables the City to more safely conduct search and rescue missions.

The *BOZ 1* weighs 1300 pounds, can reach up to 16 feet high, and has the capability of lifting up to 440 pounds with a 3.5-foot arm extension. That is 10 times heavier than what the Division's current robot can lift. Locked vehicles will be no match for *BOZ 1*. Its hydraulic jaws have 12,720 lbs. of opening force, 8,500 lbs. of closing force, and 1,000 lbs. of thrusting force for dismantling cars and breaching doors. The robot is equipped for remote operation from over a mile away and has three infrared and two zoom cameras. *BOZ 1* can operate for up to four hours without recharging and has the ability to maneuver through rough terrain.



The cutting-edge *BOZ 1* robot can be remotely operated from over a mile away.



(top) Safety Committee Chair Andrew J. Ginther operates the controls of the new *BOZ 1* robot.

(right) *BOZ 1* is capable of dragging a large vehicle while it's in gear. This allows the Division of Fire to quickly move a potentially dangerous threat from a populated area to a safer location.



CITY PURCHASES ADDITIONAL POLICE CRUISERS



After inspecting a new squad car, Safety Committee Chair Andrew J. Ginther (center), and Councilmembers Priscilla R. Tyson (left) and Hearcel F. Craig (right) were given an overview of the vehicle by Commander Michael Springer.

City Council and Mayor Michael B. Coleman are preparing early for important initiatives like next year's Summer Strike Force by ordering 20 new squad cars for the Columbus Division of Police.

"This is a perfect example of teamwork between City Council and the Mayor to make this project a reality," said Public Safety Committee Chair [Andrew J. Ginther](#). "We are tapping many different funding sources with one goal in mind: improving public safety."

Councilmember Ginther inspected one of the newly delivered squad cars along with fellow Councilmembers [Hearcel F. Craig](#) and [Priscilla R. Tyson](#). City Council approved using \$688,480 from the Photo Red Light Enforcement Fund, the Public Safety Initiatives Fund and the Permanent Improvement Fund to pay for the new squad cars.

By purchasing the cars now, the City was able to lock in 2007 prices, potentially saving money and ensuring delivery in time for important police programs next year.

"We're providing our police officers with the right equipment they need to keep us all safe," said Councilmember Hearcel F. Craig. "With this purchase, Columbus has invested \$3.5 million in police vehicles this year alone."

In 2007, City Council has appropriated funding for 62 new cruisers, more than 60 unmarked and covert cars, and nine new motorcycles for the Division of Police.

"City Council is always looking at creative ways to support our public safety forces," said Councilmember Priscilla R. Tyson. "I applaud the Mayor for his leadership in working with us to identify the funds we are using to purchase these new police cruisers."



One of the sixty-two new squad cars being added to Columbus Police force.

CITY GOVERNMENT 101



President Pro Tem Kevin L. Boyce gave the government students of Eastmoor Academy an overview of the role of City Council.

The government class at Eastmoor Academy High School received a lesson in local government from one of City Council's most experienced elected officials. President Pro Tem [Kevin L. Boyce](#) was invited to speak to Eastmoor Academy's government class about the structure of city government and the role that City Council serves as the legislative branch of local government.

President Pro Tem Boyce shared how his double major in Political Science and Finance helped him prepare for his current role as chair of the Finance Committee.

"It is important for you to know that you can make a difference in your community," Boyce told the students. "The actions you take now will play a pivotal role in shaping the men and women you will become. Education is the key that unlocks the door to your potential. As you attain your educational pursuits, stay active in the community."

President Pro Tem Boyce also conveyed how one of Council's most important tasks is adopting the annual operating and capital budgets, and provided them with an in-depth overview of how the budgetary process works.

"It is vital that the leaders of tomorrow understand how city government works," said Councilmember Boyce. "I was excited to see the class asking so many questions about City Council and how we operate. When I was in high school I knew I wanted a career that would make a positive impact on the community, but at the time I didn't know the best way to go about it. By sharing my experiences, I hope I inspired at least one of those students to seek a career in public service."

If you would like to learn more about the organizational structure of Columbus City Council or the legislative process, visit [Council's Website](#).

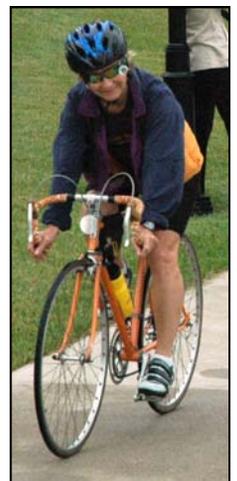
PEDALING TOWARDS THE BICENTENNIAL

Columbus residents who prefer getting around on two wheels instead of four should be pleased to learn more about the Bicentennial bond package that will be presented before the citizens for approval next year. Part of the bond revenues would be used to expand bike lanes and routes in Columbus, connecting neighborhoods and the entire region for cyclists.

"Bikes are an environmentally friendly and healthy way to get around town," said Councilmember [Maryellen O'Shaughnessy](#), chair of the Development Committee. "Now we need to look at our street system and find ways to make our roadways more conducive for bicycle riding in Columbus."

O'Shaughnessy joined dozens of other cycle enthusiasts, including President Pro Tem [Kevin L. Boyce](#), at a meeting to discuss a regional plan that will add miles of bike lanes to the city. Currently, Columbus has approximately 87 miles of bike lanes and trails. If the Bicentennial bond package is approved next year, the city has plans to add an additional 60 miles of lanes within four years. The plan also calls for improved street-crossing protection and signage for bicyclists.

"Voters will have a chance to build a system of bike trails that stretch from east to west and north to south, all across Columbus," said Boyce. "The bond package will also improve other recreational opportunities for residents, including adding more dog parks."



Councilmember Maryellen O'Shaughnessy.