



Kitchener's mayor delivers state of the city address

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570 News

Mayor Carl Zehr is daring Kitchener to be different.

That was the theme of Zehr's 2009 State of the City Address delivered this morning at city hall.

Zehr pointed to examples of visionary growth like the Stratford Festival to emphasize his point.

The mayor says he knows of a number of private sector initiatives for Kitchener that are real-life examples of the kind of different vision he's talking about, but he's not at liberty to reveal details.

Zehr adds visionary difference doesn't mean pouring tax dollars into problems.

Mayor Zehr's abridged speech:

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Today my remarks are going to focus on answering one important question.

In the face of all these global challenges - economic and otherwise - what can we do today to position ourselves to succeed tomorrow?

For me, the answer is clear - we must dare to be different.

After all, it is this community's willingness to be different - to take the road less traveled and to foster creativity - that has led to some of our greatest accomplishments.

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The arrival of the University of Waterloo's Downtown Kitchener Health Sciences Campus is already making this city a global competitor and research magnet in the fields of biotechnology and health sciences.

In addition to the Masters and PhD students who will be studying alongside some of the world's leading researchers and scientists, we have already begun to see economic spin-offs as a result of this campus.

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In addition to helping to attract HPR to our downtown, this city's \$30 million investment in the School of Pharmacy has already leveraged more than a projected \$130 million in public and private sector investment into three nearby projects alone - the health sciences campus, the Kaufman Lofts and the **Lang Tannery**.

This is a very strong return on our investment of municipal tax dollars.

Decades from now this community will look back at the establishment of the downtown Kitchener health sciences campus as a tectonic shift in our economy - and in our identity.

All because back in 2004 this community dared to be different in the way we grew our economy and invested in its future.

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Having already seen significant success as a result of our investment in the School of Pharmacy, it would have been easy for us to take our foot off the gas.

But daring to be different is infectious - so instead of just coasting into the new economy, we are bursting through the door.

Just last month it was announced that downtown Kitchener will soon be home to a Digital Media Convergence Centre. This centre will become a gathering place for the minds of tomorrow - researchers, students, pharmacists, artists and entrepreneurs - all looking to generate new digital media products and applications for use worldwide.

We can be confident that this new centre will bolster our already strong digital media cluster while attracting some of the world's brightest and most creative minds to this city and this region.

Perhaps what is most different about this project is the depth and breadth of the partnerships that have come together to make the vision a reality.

With the public and private sectors working together, and investing together, this community has once again shown its willingness to dare to be different - the benefits of which we simply cannot comprehend today.

Lana Sherman, a partner in **Cadan Inc.** is busy helping to build what we predict will become one of the most creative hot spots in Canada - The Tannery District. **Lana** is often reminding us that creative people want to work and play around other creative people. And that is exactly why they choose to invest in downtown Kitchener - because - the currency of tomorrow will be creativity and ideas.

Back in 2004, our decision to stimulate Kitchener's new economy through strategic investments into our community was very different. It was unprecedented for any Canadian municipality of our size.

Today as the world continues to struggle to find a way out of the current economic downturn, governments around the globe are turning to fiscal stimulus packages similar to our own.

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When you leave here today find one thing you can do differently to help move this community forward - one thing you can lead - or one thing you can get behind and help us push.

The next time you hear about city council daring to be different - to try something new when the outcomes are uncertain - don't be so quick to give in to the cynicism or to join the naysayers.

Dare to choose a positive vision for this community.

Dare to be a misfit - a rebel - a round peg in a square hole.

Dare to get onboard and support us as we take the road less travelled.

Dare to be different.