Mayor's Journal September 1 -October 10:

Fall is upon us and many exciting events are drawing nearer. I have had a hectic past couple of weeks with meetings both in and out of the office, but as the Clinton Library countdown continues and the Heifer International headquarters construction moves forward, things will only continue to get more hectic, in a good way.

Each month, I have several reoccurring meetings, such as: the Solid Waste Board; Metroplan; Chamber Executive; New Futures; Criminal Abatement Program; I-30 Task Force; Pulaski County Empowerment Zone; Bond Committee; Central High 50th Anniversary Committee; Chain of Hope Corridor committee; MLK Task Force; various staff meetings and City board and agenda meetings just to name a few. Each of these meetings is important in respect to the issue they concern. All of these plus my additionally scheduled appointments make for my busy schedule.

Over the past weeks, I have met with Chancellor Anderson from UALR to discuss a possible merger of Little Rock's Wastewater with North Little Rock's Sewer. We have asked UALR to conduct a feasibility study between the two systems. They have agreed to do so and will get us information within the next few months.

An exciting program is coming up on October 15 and 16 in which you will want to participate--'Dining 4 Diversity.' This is a program developed by the Racial and Cultural Diversity Commission. Ethnically diverse groups of four or more will receive 20% off on the cost of their meals at twenty area restaurants on Friday night's dinner and Saturday's lunch and dinner. For more information, call 244-5464.

Since I am already talking about the RCDC, they did a phenomenal job on WorldFest. I am proud of what I saw and what I have heard others comment to me. The staff and volunteers put in countless hours to ensure a successful event. My hat is off to all who worked on this event.

Recently, I had the privilege of speaking at the Little Rock Police Department's 61st graduation. These men and women are top notch and will serve our citizens well. Congratulations to them for enduring such a rigorous school. Good luck!

On October 2, I attended the unveiling of a sculpture of Rocky the gorilla at the Little Rock Zoo. The piece was created by John Deering, Kathy Deering, and Steve Scallion. It is an outstanding work of art. Also on hand at the Zoo that day was Peter Gros of Mutual Omaha's Wild Kingdom.

Later in the day, I presented a Key to the City to Steve Burke, the Chief Operating Officer of Comcast. Steve and others from Comcast's corporate headquarters had flown in from Philadelphia for Comcast's Day of Caring. Each year, this event has hundreds of volunteers who help clean up certain areas in the City. This year, Comcast employees worked with City Year participants to clean up Riverfront Park.

I rounded out the day by hosting the dedication of a new street in the Clinton Presidential Park. Around fifty friends and supporters gathered to dedicate Dean Kumpuris Street. Dean has been a longtime advocate of downtown redevelopment and co-chaired Little Rock's efforts to land the Clinton Presidential Center.

I have the opportunity to visit with Pulaski County Judge Buddy Villines regarding funding for the Regional Detention Facility. This facility is closed often due to overcrowding. I also participated in a public forum to discuss this issue with members of the Quorum Court.

The Mayor's Youth Council is back in full swing of things. We had our kick-off in September and projects have begun. At a recent meeting, a representative from Heifer International discussed their upcoming 60th anniversary. The Mayor's Youth Council is also volunteering with the Arkansas Arts Center by planting trees, as well as BOO at the Zoo. If you have an event of which you would like for us to be aware, please call my office.

Speaking of BOO at the Zoo, this annual event if fun for the entire family. From October 22-24 and 28-31, you can experience a safe, family friendly Halloween complete with contests and rides. Zoo Director Mike Blakely and his staff work tirelessly on this event each year. For more information, call 666-2406.

It was a pleasure to host the First Annual Mayor's Volunteer Recognition Luncheon on October 4. This event paid tribute to the over 200 individuals who serve on Little Rock's 34 City Boards and Commissions. In my 2004 State of the City Address, I expressed my desire to thank our City volunteers for the hours they give in service to our community. While this was only a small token of my appreciation, I hope everyone enjoyed it. The luncheon, which took place at the Holiday Inn Presidential Center, was emceed by Denise Whitaker. Our keynote address was delivered by Pat Lile of the Arkansas Community Foundation. Each of these did an outstanding job in assisting me in expressing appreciation to all who serve the Citizens of Little Rock.

Lastly, I was honored to present Doyle Rogers the Lions World Services for the Blind Vision Award. Doyle has done so many wonderful things for our community. For over twenty years, his leadership has made Little Rock and Arkansas better. I was flattered to present him with such an esteemed award. Congratulations to a well-serving recipient.

God Bless you and keep you safe!