



Dear Fellow Houstonians,

It has been the honor of my life to work for you as Mayor these last six years. Together we got Houston moving. We've led the nation in job growth, cut major crime rates to the lowest levels in decades, cleaned the air, improved our parks and libraries, made more efficient use of energy, tripled the number of neighborhood health clinics, revitalized some of most neglected neighborhoods, assisted returning veterans, invested over \$300 million in drainage improvements, improved recycling, and so much more.

We have done this all with disciplined, business-like management at City Hall, cutting property tax rates while raising senior and disabled exemptions. We reformed our public employee pensions. We amended our City Charter to limit the growth in property taxes. Even after natural disasters and recession, we have managed disciplined budgets, and for years built up budget surpluses. That has allowed us to double the cash on the City's balance sheet and weather this economic downturn without cutting services, raising taxes, or borrowing money to finance deficits.

We've done all this with a City Council that works as a team, largely free from partisan posturing. We have viewed diversity as a strength, not a liability, in this great city of opportunity.

We have been through good times-major sporting events, celebrations at our new Discovery Green, and numerous national recognitions as America's best city for economic opportunity. We have also been through tough times-Hurricanes Ike, Katrina and Rita, departing soldiers, the loss of firefighters and police officers, and now global recession.

Of course there is still much to do, and Houston will always have differences of opinion. But we can respect our neighbor's views, even when we disagree.

Andrea and I wish you and your loved ones a great New Year. Please keep in your prayers our City's new leadership, members of our Armed Forces, and all those who serve this community whose jobs put them in harm's way.

Respectfully,

Bill White  
Mayor