


H30 | Sunday, May 17, 2015 | South Bend TRIBUNE
SB 150



"Our city's 150th birthday is ... the first year of the next 150 years, a hinge point that will connect the past, present, and future of our hometown."

BUILDING ON THE PAST INTO THE FUTURE

South Bend will continue to adapt to changing times

From our early days as a fur-trading outpost, through our industrial heyday in the automotive era, to today's 21st-century city, our South Bend community has always reinvented itself while holding true to our roots. Looking ahead, I am convinced that the decade we now live in will go on record as one of the most transformative and positive times in South Bend's history. But to make good on the promise of these years, we will need to continue doing what we do best: take what we have and constantly find new ways to draw value from it.

Our city is already filled with evidence of South Bend's knack for adapting to the times. Our city took a disused river run called the East Race, idle after decades of energizing factory powerhouses, and transformed it in 1987 into the country's first man-made white-water rapids. Some of our most prominent downtown apartment living, such as Stephenson Mill and South Bend Central High, came about in the 1950s as a result of the imagination of those who saw new value in historical structures and invested to put them to new use.

Thanks to the vision of my predecessors, acres and acres of once-crumbling factory grounds are


now primed for high-tech jobs, with Ignition Park now hosting companies in fields like data centers and turbomachinery research that didn't even exist when the last Studebaker rolled off the line here in 1963. And there is more where that came from in the heart of the city, between the former Studebaker site on the south edge of downtown to the currently redeveloping LaSalle and Hoffman hotels in the north.

Meanwhile, our neighborhoods have adapted to major transformation since population shifts in the 1970s and 1980s emptied thousands of houses in our city. Today, thanks to superb nonprofits, neighborhood organizations, and city action, our residential areas are filling with a mix of newly built residences and long-standing homes restored for the years ahead. A network of great parks, large and small, enriches the identity of each neighborhood, while community-oriented planning ensures the diverse character of our residential areas in the decades to come.

It is remarkable how new development and long-standing history intersect in our community. Later today you might decide to canoe along the river that has sustained life here since the only local inhab-

itants were the Potawatomi Indians, visit the reconstructed 19th-century cabin of Pierre Navarre, and take in a show at the Morris Performing Arts Center, which has stood in its place since 1922. Or you might grab something to eat at Eddy Street Commons, ride your bike down dedicated lanes in city streets to the Civil Rights Heritage Center on the west side or cross the river to fetch a healthy snack at the Purple Porch Co-op grocery downtown — none of which existed even 10 years ago.


The character of our city has always had to do with blending the past and present with an eye toward the future. That's why our city's 150th birthday is more than a milestone. It's the first year of the next 150 years, a hinge point that will connect the past, present, and future of our hometown. I have the great fortune of serving as mayor during the year in which we celebrate all that has made our city what it is — and open the door for all that is to come.



— Mayor Pete Buttigieg


PAST MAYORS REFLECT ON THE CITY'S FUTURE

As South Bend celebrates 150 years of incorporation, The Tribune asked former mayors Jerry Miller, Pete Nemeth, Roger Parent, Joe Kernan and Stephen Luecke to comment on where they see the city headed in the next 150 years.




Miller (1972-76)

"This city's always going to be successful because of the assets we have with transportation, water, the (University of Notre Dame), the education systems here ... But I've always said it's not important about the total growth; what's important is the quality of life we provide for citizens, and I think we've done a great job with that."




Nemeth (1976-80)

"South Bend has a unique location, certainly with the (University of Notre Dame) right there, the river, it's a beautiful river. I think there are assets there that can be taken advantage of. The question is whether the city will take advantage of them."




Parent (1980-88)

"We need to make South Bend, which has been the engine for development for this region for a heck of a long time, a very attractive place to work and live, even if people don't necessarily live and work right in it. Because when people come here to look at the area they look at South Bend ... And if you see an East Race, a baseball stadium, these sorts of things, and that the city is moving forward, I think that's important."



Kernan (1988-96)

"There will be much more vitality. We already feel it now. You come down on a Friday, a First Friday, evenings during the week, you have trouble finding a parking place. And there are just so many good things going on. It's just going to be the case of continuing to build on the momentum that's been created."



Luecke (1996-2012)

"South Bend will continue to be the vital center of this region, for culture, for education, for business. And it will be interesting to see how, as society changes, South Bend manages to transform itself, to continue that leadership role. But I have every faith that it will because it has in the past, and its people and its spirit say that it will in the future."