

Pedro E. Segarra: 100 Days as Mayor

Good afternoon.

100 days: Since the time of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, this benchmark has been used as a measuring stick for results. FDR's "First 100 Days" are legendary because a record number of bills were approved. This unprecedented success restored confidence in a fearful and depressed nation.

My first 100 days--- which is actually tomorrow--- cannot compare to what FDR faced and achieved. However, I did step into a unique situation. These are difficult economic times and our City is emerging from an emotional cloud. I want to thank our residents for their support, patience, and commitment to work with this administration and to move our City forward.

June 25th, 2010: I took the Oath of Office as the 66th Mayor of Hartford. From that moment, I took on the responsibility of leading this great City with dedication and compassion. My team and I work tirelessly to examine the fiscal and operational challenges that confront our residents--- many of whom are the poorest in the nation and we consistently seek ways to make our government more accountable and more efficient. I am determined to champion the assets of this City--- to the point where I lost weight (but I've gained it back), lost sleep, and gained a few more gray hairs. But let me tell you my friends--- Hartford is worth it.

This is all about partnerships and getting things done. We have established a new tone of collaboration with government, businesses, and residents. I am working with our partners at the Federal, State, and Regional levels--- especially with Connecticut City Mayors--- to find common solutions to common challenges.

In fact, this week alone I met with Mayor DeStefano of New Haven, Mayor Finch of Bridgeport, and Mayor Jarjura of Waterbury to focus on the unique problems and the strategies that are needed to save our cities. Most of these issues are budgetary in nature but the goal is to maximize our resources in order to preserve services as well as put more people to work.

I'm also encouraged with conversations at the State level. Meeting with Senate President Pro Tem Williams was dynamic and encouraging. I hope for the same results regarding discussions with the Governor to coordinate services for our re-

entry population and talks with the Chief States Attorney Office on tracking those on probation and parole.

I also plan to travel to Washington D.C. to meet with our Federal Delegation and with the Obama Administration to ensure the support we need to grow Hartford.

Job creation and pooling resources are also on the agenda when I meet with corporate partners who are stepping up to the plate in regards to supporting our improving educational system, our world renown Arts community, and our cultural assets including our historic parks. Our “Week of the Parks” campaign alone inspired almost 500 volunteers--- many of them from the business community.

I am responding to community concerns. My staff and I are in the midst of meeting with our Neighborhood Revitalization Zones and want to extend that outreach to our Faith Based Community, civic associations, colleges and non-profits. If we don’t know what’s on your mind, we cannot effectively prioritize the City’s needs. For example, when Parkville merchants had questions about public safety, I rode with the Police Bike Patrol to get a first hand look for myself.

This kind of hands-on action has taken place since day one and won’t stop because Sunday is day 101. I have already outlined my strategy for government responsibility which focuses on four key points: 1) ensuring accountability 2) safeguarding health, cleanliness and safety 3) creating jobs and improving education and 4) pursuing opportunities to accelerate and expand economic vitality.

I believe I have raised the bar by establishing my cabinet team of the Corporation Counsel, Chief Operating Officer and Chief of Staff. With three law degrees, three masters degrees and a Ph.D. collaborating as a team, trust me, there is no stone unturned in regards to finding ways to make government leaner, greener, more efficient, and more responsive to the large number of quality of life needs of the people who live, work and visit Hartford. Today, the Mayor’s Office alone is smaller, restructured, and we all wear multiple hats in regards to serving our constituents. Examples of savings: I drive myself and I pump my own gas.

Because we made prudent fiscal decisions, we returned \$2.8 million to the Rainy Day Fund. But we’re far from finished. Every possible option is still on the table. There’s an early retirement incentive, union contract negotiations are underway, and pension concessions are possible. Although we were facing a \$7 million deficit for this year, I have set a goal to close that gap by the end of the year. If the

City can continue to find measurable savings, we can continue to invest in our future.

Here are some investments that are paying dividends:

1. Week of the Parks: This brought about a new found awareness and respect for our open space and cleaned-up more than 1100 acres of parkland. We also hired 30 Hartford residents as seasonal workers.
2. Albany Avenue Library Branch is under construction: By next summer, we'll be able to service even more residents through educational services and resources and this project creates jobs for Hartford residents, and it connects development along Route 44.
3. Housing: Hartford received an additional \$1.3 million in HUD Neighborhood Stabilization Programming funds to reverse the effects of foreclosure. This is on top of the first round of funding of \$2.7 million.
4. Speaking of Federal commitments, Hartford is the recipient of the Greening America's Capitals project to utilize environmentally sustainable practices along the Capitol Avenue corridor and into its neighborhoods. Combine this with the investment of iQuilt to better connect our Downtown Arts and cultural assets and put it all under the umbrella of One, City, One Plan for conservation and development and we have one heck of a vision for the City for the next ten years.
5. We're adding more feet on the street: Saint Joseph College is opening its School of Pharmacy Downtown. This means an additional 300 people--- students and faculty--- who will live, shop, dine, and be entertained here.
6. However, all this doesn't mean much if people don't feel safe. So, let me share this with you: Major crimes this summer were down more than 4% over the same time period last year and down more than 32% over a 6-year period. However, I am not satisfied. There's more work to be done. As the Chief always says, "Success is never final."

On the same note, all too often, Hartford does not celebrate its successes. This summer, we played host to the best USA Gymnastics VISA Championship that brought more than 25,000 people to the City. Last weekend, another 15,000 families celebrated at the Family Fair at the Connecticut Expo Center. On September 11th, more than 1200 cyclists took part in the Bicycle Tour. Next weekend is the Hartford Marathon--- a premiere event. That's a lot to brag about!

So, what's next? We keep moving Hartford forward.

1. Starting tomorrow: We're proud to announce the Grand Opening of the Parker Memorial Center and Kelvin D. Anderson Gym, It is essential that

we keep investing in positive activities for our youth and families, especially in economically challenged neighborhoods.

2. The Wilson Davis Building --- which I affectionately refer to as “Bubby”--- is coming down by the end of October.
3. In November, we’ll unveil the “It’s About Us” Campaign--- a comprehensive strategy to give our children a stronger voice as we address how education can lead families out of poverty.
4. By spring, we’ll review the recommendations of the Green Ribbon Taskforce as to how to improve the quality, condition, financing, and governance of our park system.

But let’s not get ahead of ourselves. There’s important business to attend to right here, right now. We have two important announcements to share with you.

The first is a major investment in our youth and in our future workforce. The City of Hartford will receive significant Federal funding to increase our graduation rate.

(Congressman and Superintendent share a few words)

Our other big announcement is to staff the Police Activities League with a sergeant and two officers. I have heard cries from parents over and over again to establish meaningful activities for our youth. This athletic, recreational and educational program is extremely successful in Waterbury and Hartford’s PAL program will be too. I want to thank Chief Daryl Roberts for committing to the staffing and thank Brad Davis for championing this cause statewide. It is important to prevent problems, not just react to them.

(A few words from Chief Roberts and Brad Davis)

Waterbury experienced a 63% drop in crime by servicing 4,000 youths. We encourage the Fire Department and teachers to volunteer with the Police Department to help Hartford set a new standard.

Hartford can’t make this kind of progress without partners--- at all levels. The City can’t move forward without our residents, especially our young people, getting involved and getting excited about our community. There’s a lot happening. There’s a lot to celebrate. We’re 375 years old--- now that’s a benchmark for measuring progress.