

# Aurora aims to invest in future

BY MARIE WILSON

*mwilson@dailyherald.com*

Working smarter, saving money, leveraging resources and investing in the future.

Those are Aurora's goals as spelled out by Mayor Tom Weisner in his State of the City address Thursday.

From balancing the city's budget two years in a row without taking on extra debt, to investing in sustainability initiatives such as wind turbines and environmentally friendly features at the police station, Weisner gave several examples of how the city has worked on its goals.

"Certainly the world has changed and there are more than the usual number of challenges facing our city," he said at an Aurora Regional Chamber of Commerce luncheon at Piper's Banquets.

"But the good news is that we are changing, too. Changing to meet those challenges confronting us."

In some cases, changing means letting other organizations take responsibility for efforts such as special event planning, Weisner said.

The city eliminated its office of special events this year as a cost-saving measure, but Weisner announced the Paramount Theatre will organize the popular Downtown Alive and Blues on the Fox festivals this summer. Buddy Guy and American English are scheduled to be among performers.

"In the past the city took the lead on most community events, but things are changing," Weisner said. "By forging these partnerships with our citizens and community groups, we can be more

strategic with our time and our limited resources."

Community partnerships also will help the RiverEdge Park project move forward, as construction is expected to begin in the next few months. The Dunham Foundation joined the park's list of grant supporters — including the state, the Forest Preserve District of Kane County and the Fox Valley Park District — by announcing a \$2 million donation Thursday.

While the park is part of a plan to bring economic development, Weisner said the city needs to address the community's technology needs in order to accomplish educational development. He announced plans for a group that will examine ways to provide access to technology and utilize the city's fiber network.