

2007 GOVERNMENT LEADER OF THE YEAR
MAYOR GRAHAM RICHARD

After first being elected in November 1999, Fort Wayne Mayor Graham Richard began asking city government workers questions like: Who are your customers? Are they happy with your services? How are you measuring improvements in what you do?

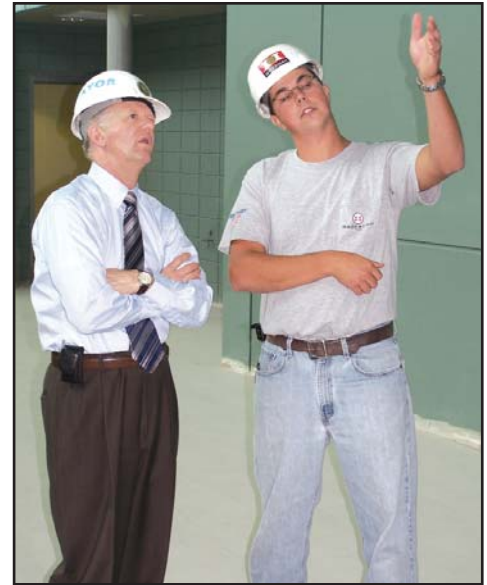
Blank stares and replies along the lines of “we work for the government, we don’t have any customers” were what Richard was greeted with. Undoubtedly, the same questions would have generated similar responses in other communities and levels of government. As he prepares to leave the mayor’s office after serving two terms, many of those same city employees will quickly and proudly discuss their customers and provide the spreadsheets to detail the service improvements.

Why is that so important? The incorporation of Six Sigma and Lean techniques has resulted in improved efficiency and an energized government workforce. The bottom line: \$27 million in documented taxpayer savings in Richard’s eight years.

That is just one area in which the mayor and Fort Wayne have made local, state and national headlines. A historically low crime rate, unprecedented incorporation of technology, a Regional Public Safety Academy that is drawing attention from the Pentagon and infrastructure investments that help set the stage for a promising future are among big, bold check marks in the accomplishments column.

If he leaves behind a legacy, Richard says, “It’s our investment in the future. It’s the water, streets, sewers, broadband, airport. That is the number one outcome I am most excited about.” Another benefit, within the community, is “a stronger can-do attitude, a belief system.”

Marilyn Moran-Townsend, CEO of CVC Communications and a longtime business and community leader in Fort Wayne and statewide, served on Richard’s transition team as he prepared to take office and in several appointed community roles during his tenure. She says the mayor may not be one to tout his own accomplishments, but “people around the world are doing that for him. I’m proud to be a citizen of Fort Wayne when my mayor has such an acclaimed national reputation for excellence.”



A tour of the Regional Public Safety Academy finds Fort Wayne Mayor Graham Richard receiving a construction update from Tom Werling.

Becoming the BEST

In his 2006 book, “Performance is the Best Politics,” Richard notes that one of his early priorities was to implement B.E.S.T. – Building Excellent Services with Teams. When his initial customer service questions yielded few responses, the challenge may have increased, but so did the resolve. He soon found out it was a lack of processes, not willingness.

“There was not a functional financial metric system in place. It took six to eight months to implement that,” he recalls. “We had very talented people here; they had never been given the training and the tools.”

While some were hesitant about the pressure that comes with data measurement and meeting stated goals, the majority “were really excited about the opportunity. It became a self-selection process of leaders. The people who came forward and wanted to learn were rewarded. They are now department heads, division heads and running major programs in city government.”

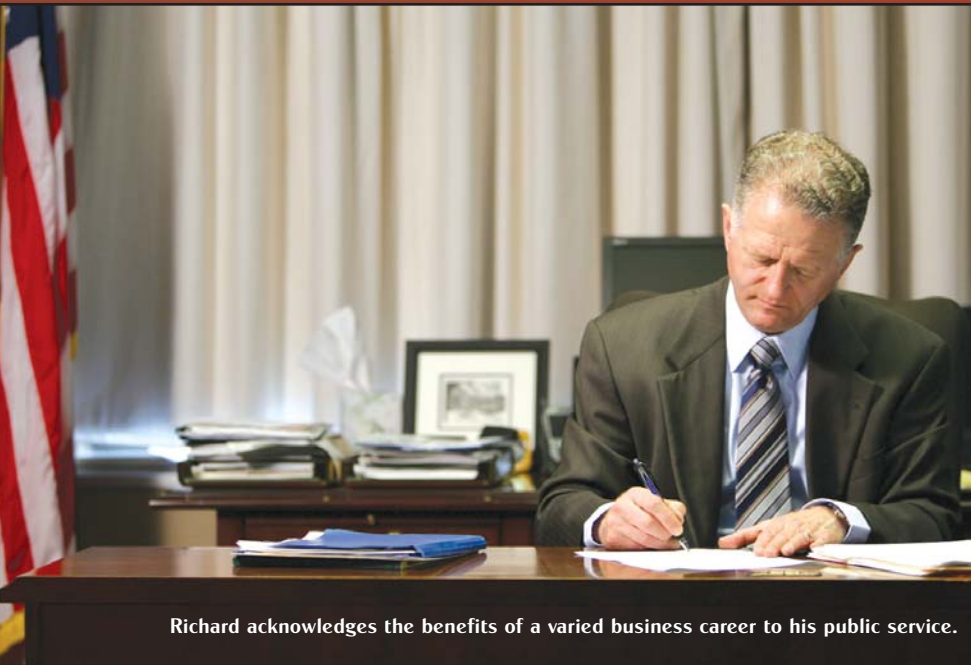
(Or moved on. Recently, Greg Meszaros, director of public works and city utilities, was hired away to run the municipally-owned sewer, water and utility operations in Austin, Texas).

The results have been well documented. Just a few examples:

- The time to fill potholes reduced from two days to less than three hours
- Lost workdays due to accidents decreased from more than 1,900 in 2000 to less than 100 in 2006
- Cutting in half the number of missed garbage pickups, resulting in happier customers and nearly \$1 million in savings over five years



Communication has been essential for Richard in gaining public input and support.



Richard acknowledges the benefits of a varied business career to his public service.

power” that proves useful, but that Fort Wayne companies and their leaders have given of their time and resources to help build a better community. Richard often quotes the phrase: “None of us is as smart as all of us.”

Scott Glaze, CEO of Fort Wayne Metals, undoubtedly speaks for many others when he proclaims, “When you are around the mayor and you see his enthusiasm and focus, it’s easy to get caught up in the vision. After he first came into office, he got the community involved in helping create the downtown blueprint. That was the first downtown planning – not just tearing down buildings in blight – the city had done in my memory.”

No task or project was too small for aggressive analysis and improvement plans to be implemented. On a larger scale, many community and economic development initiatives were made

possible by the unmatched high-speed broadband network put in place by Verizon (new jobs in the community with the technology reaching 128,000 homes and businesses). Company officials credit the mayor’s vision; he cites their first-in-the-Midwest investment in fiber to the premises technology as setting the stage for community iTeams focused on specific programs and solutions.

Richard’s communication efforts and willingness to share information and gather input also helped in gaining public support for many of his initiatives.

“Fort Wayne polls as one of the most conservative cities in the country and it is. That requires collaborative leadership,” he explains. “A healthy community has a healthy degree of skepticism, but when it’s time to move forward, it will. When it does count, the partisanship ebbs, if not falls away.”

Harrison Square is a \$160 million downtown development that includes a new minor league baseball stadium (Fort Wayne was recently named the No.1 minor league sports city in the country), hotels, condominiums, retail and restaurants. Private sector partners from Fort Wayne and beyond have helped move the project from the drawing board to reality. The mayor and his staff conducted an estimated 50 to 60 community meetings to obtain feedback and provide updates. No general fund property tax money has been used and, in fact, the city’s 2007 property tax rate reached its lowest level since 1964.



Richard and Deputy Mayor Mark Becker are among many who have worked hard on putting the Harrison Square downtown renovation on the right track.

While the city population and service demands were increasing through annexation, the number of government employees remained steady.

Business lesson

Six Sigma is generally defined as imposing higher quality standards on performance with people designated to lead specific improvement projects. Lean is focused on speed, generally achieved by eliminating waste and removing inefficiency. That brief explanation does not do justice to the concepts – both long-time staples in business and industry. Richard pioneered their use in city government.

While employees were willing to embrace the revolutionary change, more help was needed. Six Sigma and Lean experts were called upon, as well as business community representatives. No matter the project or the purpose, when Richard called, they listened.

“The public and private partnerships are the hallmark of everything we’ve done,” adding that the mayor has a certain “convening

Keeping it safe

Public safety – specifically the goal of becoming the safest city of its size in the country – was another early emphasis. Technology (through a comprehensive public safety broadband network) and cooperation (a strong Safe City Alliance) have paved the way for the dramatic decrease in crime and set the stage for the safety academy that also addresses workforce challenges and opportunities.

The alliance brought together local, regional, state and federal law enforcement officials, judges, corrections personnel, neighborhood leaders and more. Crime data and last known addresses of leading offenders, information available but not

compiled previously, were used to reduce crime, establish a special re-entry court and cut the recidivism rate by more than 50%.

As many as 30 to 40 people came together on a weekly basis, an unprecedented “spirit of collaborative action” in Richard’s words. “These are used around the country, but our people took it to another level. There was a sharing of information, techniques and leads. What happened that was so critical is that it built trust and got people out of silos.”

When police and fire officials both approached Richard about enhanced training needs, the Regional Public Safety Academy idea was launched. The mayor notes that while the pending Baby Boomer impact on the workforce has been well documented, little attention has been given to the effect on safety and homeland security.

“The academy is not just about training firefighters, police and first responders. It’s a very important workforce development initiative, to help meet the tremendous shortages of trained personnel that will be occurring,” Richard comments.

Six colleges and universities are partners, bringing emergency medical, fire safety and criminal justice programs to the academy. Leading-edge technology that will provide a direct link to the Department of Defense, a green build design that will highlight energy efficiency, and incorporation of safety and security personnel from the business community are among the highlights.

Jobs and the community

The third priority upon being elected was gaining and retaining quality jobs. As in other communities, partnerships are proving essential. The city is actively at the table in funding and supporting the Northeast Indiana Innovation Center (a place for technology-related businesses and others to start and grow) and the

The Smart/Green Home is part of the neighborhood redevelopment at Renaissance Pointe.



Richard was able to establish a new culture and deliver improved efficiency to the operation of Fort Wayne city government.

Northeast Indiana Regional Marketing Partnership. The city also established its own strategic economic development plan.

While there have been achievements to celebrate, Richard admits, “Have we been as successful as we would have liked? No. Too many high-paying manufacturing jobs are leaving. We do, however, have a much higher percentage of adults 25 and over who are pursuing higher education and training.”

Related to the Harrison Square project and job additions is downtown development. Richard recently announced that the city had reached its goal of \$1 billion in private investment in the urban core area in the past three years. One example is the Renaissance Pointe neighborhood redevelopment, featuring the Smart/Green Home. From building materials to appliances and technology, it has been transformed into a high-technology showcase that is also environmentally friendly.

“Economic development and community development, in my mind, are very closely related,” Richard says. He shares examples of the declining former Southtown Mall property that was acquired and redeveloped and now features retail, housing and restaurants in addition to the safety academy, and Rae Magnet Wire working with the city on creating a park near its urban core facility that benefits the entire community.

Vital experience

A Fort Wayne native, Richard left his hometown only to gain his bachelor’s degree from Princeton University. He served in the Indiana Senate from 1974 to 1978 before embarking on a successful business career that included turnaround efforts for struggling companies, working with entrepreneurs and start-ups and being exposed to best practices from a variety of organizations.

He chaired a joint General Assembly commission in 1977-78 that created the first sunset legislation to evaluate more than 300 state agencies. He served in various commission and volunteer board roles at the local and state levels.

“Early on in my career I was always interested in

'how do you make government work better.' My blend of work," he surmises, "gave me a different perspective than most people who get to serve as mayor of a city."

Moran-Townsend offers that it's what Richard has done with that experience is what has made the difference.

"Having the opportunity to work up close and personal with Graham, I'm absolutely convinced that someone who comes from a small business background has a set of unique qualifications that makes that person an excellent mayor," she contends. "He really gets it – what it takes for excellent constituent services, what it takes to motivate employees, what it takes to create a successful enterprise. In so many ways, local government is like a business."

On the move

Caution is not really in Richard's vocabulary. After winning his first election by 76 votes and surviving a recount and lawsuit, most advisers warned that it wasn't time to stir things up. But facing a major sanitary overflow problem, he instituted a 40% rate increase to avoid passing the burden on to future generations. He says it was the right thing to do to clean up the water and improve the system, and the impact to homeowners was spread out over five years.

The terms "agile," "innovative," "fast to market" and "customer focused" are not buzzwords, according to the mayor. They must be part of the plan to succeed in today's global economy.

Richard had the opportunity to ask Thomas Friedman a question at a seminar. The columnist and author of "The World is Flat" responded that ports, airports and broadband are the future.

"We don't have a port, but we have a \$150 million investment planned for the airport and we have the best broadband of any city our size." Addressing the need for speed in a thoughtful

Government Leader of the Year Winners

2006: Gov. Mitch Daniels
2005: Sen. Earline Rogers & Rep. Jerry Torr
2004: Sen. David Ford & Rep. Brian Hasler
2003: Rep. B. Patrick Bauer & Rep. Brian Bosma
2002: Sen. Larry Borst
2001: Gov. Frank O'Bannon & Dr. Suellen Reed
2000: Rep. Jeff Linder
1999: Rep. Bob Behning
1998: Sen. Teresa Lubbers
1997: Rep. Lee Hamilton
1996: Rep. David McIntosh
1995: Rep. Michael Smith & Sen. Thomas Weatherwax
1994: Rep. Paul Mannweiler
1993: Sen. Morris Mills
1992: Hon. Thomas Barnes
1991: Sen. Joseph Harrison
1990: Sen. Richard Lugar

manner, he adds, "I have a real sense of urgency about what we want to do. You can't sit back and wait for something to come to you."

Glaze calls it looking down the road – a long way. "It's refreshing to have the business acumen he brought to the city. The ideas, the seeds you plant now, will continue to bear fruit in a decade or two decades. Harrison Square is something that will fit right into the future of our downtown. The mayor has that vision."

While some of the projects the mayor championed will be felt for years to come, what about the revolutionary

approach to how city government operates? Will Six Sigma and Lean practices give way to the red tape and inefficiency that plague so many government entities?

"I think it will carry on," Richard predicts. "We have performance-based contracts with seven of our nine unions, which offer incredible opportunities for improvement. It will be very difficult for the next mayor to take that away.

"We've sent 280 people through the Mayor's Leadership Development Roundtable. They understand the opportunities to get more tools in their toolkit. I don't think people will put the nails back in the toolkit and not use them again."

Richard, as he has done during his two terms in office, will be sharing his experiences and what he has learned with other local government officials through the High Performance Government Network. Indianapolis Mayor Bart Peterson is one who has already seen what Richard accomplished in Fort Wayne and hopes to bring increased local government efficiency to the state's capital city.

The outreach to others will be the focus for Richard beginning early next year. Until then, he's certain to build on his already long list of accomplishments in Fort Wayne.

Lawmakers to Offer Legislative Insights

It's no secret that property taxes will be the focal point of the 2008 legislative session. Less than 24 hours before the General Assembly officially reconvenes, find out what lawmakers have to say on the topic, as well as learn what other issues will be on the horizon.

The Indiana Chamber's 2008 Central Indiana Legislative Preview on November 19 will provide insight on the upcoming session – from the legislators' perspective. Key members of each caucus will provide their thoughts, along with the Indiana Chamber offering its breakdown of the top business issues.

The luncheon, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., will take place at the Hyatt Regency Indianapolis. Tickets are \$49 per person. To register, contact Ann or Lisa at (800) 824-6885 or go to www.indianachamber.com/specialevents.

