



INDIANAPOLIS
COMMUNITY OF THE YEAR

As a global audience looked on, Indianapolis emerged the big winner in early 2012 as host of the “biggest” athletic event in this country and one of the largest in the world.

(Biggest refers to attention. When we’re talking largest in terms of single-day size, the Indianapolis 500 and its 100-year-plus history quickly enters the conversation).

Super Bowl XLVI “changed the game for the NFL,” says Indianapolis Mayor Greg Ballard. “There were so many firsts. It was the first time they ever had a village concept. Future Super Bowl cities have to look at what they (the league) called a pedestrian gathering spot.”

People, from near and far, came, saw and thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Four years of preparation culminated in 10 days of showcasing the city to the country and the world. It wasn’t a surprise that Indianapolis shined on the grandest stage, but the intensity and impact of that outstanding achievement is one reason why the state capital is being recognized as the 2012 Community of the Year.

Unprecedented infrastructure improvements, a business climate that continues to dramatically outperform compared to others and strong leadership from the public and private sectors are among the many attributes for the city.

Charging ahead

Ballard came into office in January 2008, shortly after the city had been defeated by Dallas in the bid to host the 2011 Super Bowl. He quickly determined that the “iron was hot,” telling both Jim Irsay (“the unsung hero in all this is Jim Irsay and his relationship with the other owners”) of the Colts and Mark Miles (chair of the Super Bowl Host Committee) that, “I think we need to go for it again.”

The outcome was no shocker.

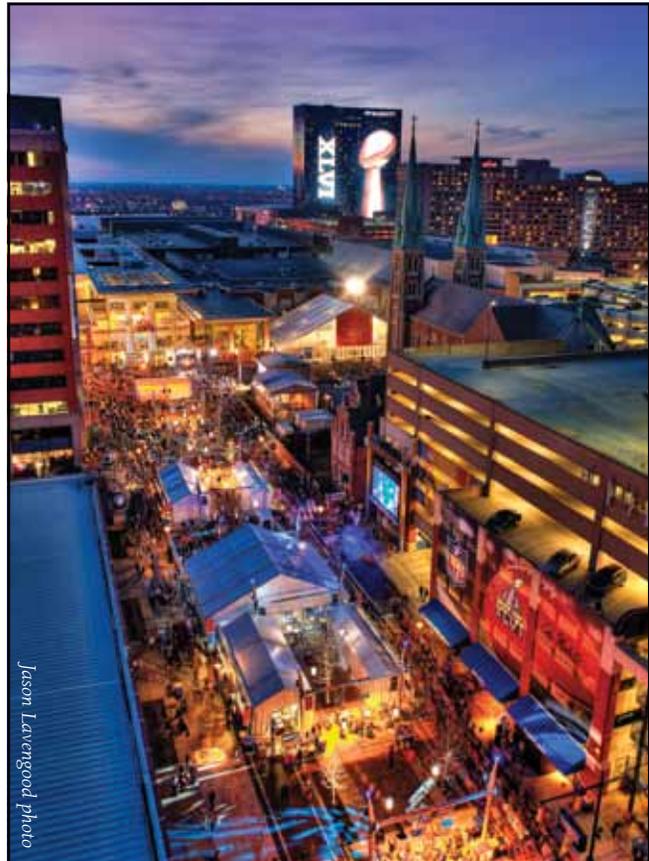
“Indianapolis always takes these big events and does something special with them. That is the DNA of the city and that goes back well before I was mayor,” Ballard relays.

It goes back to people like Jim Morris, current president of the Indiana Pacers, a longtime community leader and one of the early advocates of the amateur sports initiative that has had a lasting impact on the city.

“It seems that now for 45, 50 years, Indianapolis has had a great spirit, a can-do mentality that it wanted to be a really good place,” Morris claims. “Leaders of both parties have wanted to build a community that is competitive, attractive, a good place for families, a good place for young people.”

As far as the Super Bowl, “it built on everything that had happened before,” adds Morris, citing the 1982 Sports Festival, 1987 Pan American Games, numerous U.S. and world championship events, NCAA Final Four tournaments and more. “Politics hasn’t been a barrier (to the big events). We set parochial interests aside. We’ve done that better than most places.”

The Super Bowl was much more than a four-hour football game or a 10-day fan extravaganza, with numerous projects benefitting the community long term. But during that week and a half, Ballard reflects, “I’ve never seen so many happy people in one place in my life. I walked the village almost every night. People were saying, ‘I never saw my city like this before. Wow, what a great event.’ In my mind, three distinct crowds (local, followed by regional and national) came in at different times and



Jason Leverage photo

Super Impact by the Numbers

A few of the facts and figures as a result of Indianapolis serving as host of Super Bowl 46:

- \$324 million gross spending economic impact (Rockport Analytics report)
- \$154 million investment in the Near Eastside Legacy Project
- \$3.2 million value of social media efforts
- 1.1 million Super Bowl Village visitors
- 282,000 pounds of recyclables recovered
- 265,039 NFL Experience attendees
- 150,000 volunteer hours
- 100,000 unique web site visitors a day between January 31 and February 5
- 36,300 Super Kids, Super Welcome cards placed in hotel rooms to greet guests
- 10,429 zip line riders
- 7,000 Super Baskets of Hope packed by 900 volunteers and sent to critically ill children in hospitals in all 32 NFL cities
- 700 healthy breast tissue donations collected in two days as part of the Super Cure big weekend

everyone was just so happy.”

For the newcomers, Ballard says the event “brought in a lot of people to the city that mimicked the phrase, ‘I never knew.’ Once you get here you say, ‘Wow, I never knew about all this.’ ”

Nate Feltman, former Indiana Secretary of Commerce and current president of rapidly growing Home Health Depot, doesn’t doubt that reaction but clarifies that he heard similar comments in his previous role.

“Everybody around the world knew the Indy 500 and Indiana basketball,” he recalls. “I was always amazed how many people (discussing an earlier visit to Indianapolis) would say, ‘I had no idea how wonderful a city you have, how much rejuvenation there’s been downtown’ and they would say all that the city has to offer in the life sciences, the quality of life. These were things that we would hear constantly.”

Favorable impressions

Add Larry Dewey (chairman and CEO of Allison Transmission) and Allison Melangton (president of the Super Bowl Host Committee and now, as of September 1, leader of the Indiana Sports Corporation) to the proponents of an already strong city reputation that is only going to improve.

Dewey says executives were already pleasantly surprised during their visits prior to February’s success. The reasons:

“There are many features of what I would call a mega city, whether it’s the professional sports teams or some of the concert performances. We do have those upsides, and to the same extent we don’t have some of the downsides – whether it’s overcongestion, security issues or even some of the financial problems of some of the bigger cities. We have our challenges, but not to the extent that some others have.”

For Melangton, the Indianapolis accolades have been pouring in since February. That includes during late July and early August when she served as an associate gymnastics

producer for NBC’s Olympics coverage from London.

“A number of CEOs have said to me that since the Super Bowl they have had an easier job recruiting employees from the East Coast to come to the Midwest,” she shares, “because of all the Super Bowl coverage and Indianapolis looking so fun and so vibrant. That’s been great.”

As for the global reaction: “I was in the media center several times and reporters came up to me and said, ‘We remember you from the Super Bowl. Indianapolis did a great job. We want to come back again.’ I was staying in the hotel where all the NBC executives were. A number of folks came up to me, including Dick Ebersol, the former head of NBC Sports, and said we had a blast and you made covering the Super Bowl easy. I’ll never get sick of hearing that stuff.”

While Dewey notes that Indianapolis may not get the “high-profile magazine spreads” of some of the larger areas in the country, more people are finding out about the city. He was at a national security program at the U.S. War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, where one of the judges was “talking about coming to Indianapolis and was talking about the children’s museum, the zoo, the Indy 500 museum. There are a number of things that are rather unique and pretty special.”

Building the base

Indianapolis defined innovative in its approach to serving as Super Bowl host. The city has also used innovation to build its infrastructure, save taxpayers money and improve elements that are important to economic development efforts.

The most widely publicized transaction was transferring the water utility to Citizens Energy Group. Ballard believes it was not only the right move for the future, but one that was able to provide funding for an unprecedented RebuildIndy program. The need for that effort was made clear early on by city residents who participated in numerous neighborhood Mayor’s Night



The Indianapolis Cultural Trail and a significant expansion of bike lanes and trails are among the city’s quality-of-life enhancements.

Out events.

“People wanted sidewalks and roads and alleys redone. Could we get it all done?” Ballard questions. “No, not even with the \$400 to \$500 million (from the utility transfer). Was it done on a scale they had never seen before and will never see again in a generation? I’d say yes. People tell me, ‘No one had resurfaced my street in 40 years. I’ve been begging for sidewalks for 40 years.’”

“It’s still going on (the 2012 plan was for spending \$140 million to resurface 100 lane miles, repair 16 bridges and improve more than 100,000 linear feet of curbs and sidewalks). It’s a huge economic driver,” the mayor continues. “I’ve been to a lot of other cities in recent years and no one has the combination of roads and sidewalks that we have. That’s what people wanted. We were able to deliver it without raising taxes.”

As for the move of the utility, “I said pretty bluntly that I wanted to take the politics out of water. We already trusted Citizens with three other utilities. We just put two more in there. They will look at it, both water and wastewater, as what’s the right thing to do for the long-term health of the city and region.”

Feltman also cites a far less publicized action. Indianapolis was the first city to modify its combined sewer overflow consent decree with the Department of Justice to address raw sewage overflows and failing septic tanks. Not only is the city expected to save approximately \$750 million over 20 years, but more than 100 organizations are part of a Reconnecting to Our Waterways initiative.

“Indiana in general is on the (site selection) map in a big way,” Feltman observes. “The city has its act in shape in terms of its budget situation. They’ve closed some pretty unique transactions that got the notice of a lot of folks.”

He terms the infrastructure investments the “biggest thing they could have done to promote further economic development. If the infrastructure is not there, or not in good shape, then it’s much harder for a company to make a ‘go’ decision.” If a city (or state) doesn’t have its own financial house in order, they (prospective companies) can expect a tax increase at some point.

“When you see innovative transactions that bring cash to the city and create investments in infrastructure and other areas that impact a business, that’s a very positive sign to the outside world.”

Business diversity

Whether at a city or state level, business attraction must be balanced with retaining existing companies and growing small businesses. Dewey says Indianapolis and Indiana have been successful in “managing the duality” of blending long-term community stalwarts (Eli Lilly and Company, OneAmerica



Various dining options – Ralston’s Draffhouse is a recent Mass Avenue addition – continue to call the downtown area home.

Financial Partners, Allison Transmission, etc.) with newcomers to the economic mix.

“From the standpoint of the community, it’s like a stock portfolio. If you’re invested in a number of different industries, you’re hedged a little bit,” he theorizes. “If one runs into a little bit of trouble, you’ve got others to maintain the strength of the overall portfolio. There is a positive climate for business. In some areas in this country, businesses are kind of demagogued. You don’t see that here.”

And there are the additional quality of life and workforce benefits. “When you run into someone who is in a totally different field, to me that’s just fascinating,” Dewey adds. “It brings different perspectives on business, education, culture; it makes things a whole lot more enjoyable. That plays back into our ability to attract and retain talent in a very diverse community.”

Ballard is quick to cite the importance of existing corporate leaders and the growing businesses. For the newcomers, he points to the example of Kronos, a Boston-based information technology firm that was looking to base a new operation in

Continued on page 47



“I walked the village almost every night. People were saying, ‘I never saw my city like this before. Wow, what a great event.’”

Community of the Year: Indianapolis

Continued from page 38



Expanding cultural amenities include a new major exhibit being developed at the Indianapolis Zoo.

The former Bush Stadium home of the Indianapolis Indians is at the heart of a 16 Tech district that will seek a “vibrant environment” for residents to work, play and learn.

that complements existing academic, medical and clinical practices. The goal: Provide a setting where residents can live, work, play and learn in a vibrant environment. Biotechnology, health information technology and motorsports are the primary target sectors for business development.

CityWay (spanning north of the Eli Lilly campus to the central part of downtown) includes a world-class hotel, luxury residences (the first phase of 100 apartments were all “sold” earlier this year), restaurants, retail shops and a state-of-the-art YMCA. The sale of municipal bonds are paying for most of the construction expenses.

Ballard notes that CityWay “is a pretty creative project that I think is going to pay off in the long run. The community was appreciative of the fact that we kept going, didn’t say we couldn’t do this right now (because of the economic downturn). It’s going to be a connecting point to lots of different areas of downtown.”

Morris, who has been at the center of so many important city developments throughout his career, asserts that the downtown focus has been essential.

“There has been this general commitment to do things in the center of the city, realizing that the downtown is the most important part of any community. The liveliness, the vitality, the spirit, the enthusiasm; we’ve had an enormous commitment to do things in the center of the city,” he emphasizes, noting that at different times supporters wanted new sports facilities, the zoo, museums to be placed closer to the Interstate 465 perimeter. “With the discipline we’ve had, we’ve got one of the most exciting, dynamic downtowns of any city in the country. There

the eastern half of the United States. Ballard believes the company visited Indianapolis as a courtesy.

“They came here and said, ‘Wow, we didn’t know about this.’ We got into the final 10, the final four and then the final two. What sold them,” the mayor continues, “is they went out and talked to IUPUI students (in IT) and they realized they could get the quality of the workforce they wanted. So they brought 250 high-paying IT jobs to Indianapolis when originally we were not even on their radar screen. That’s an impressive story and one I hope to replicate.”

Taking it down(town)

Helping stimulate downtown development have been several innovative partnerships. Among them:

16 Tech, a district (near northwest area of downtown) focusing on high-technology businesses and research





Creative financing was needed to help the CityWay development become a reality.

are thousands of people who come here every week to enjoy it.”

In addition to the business giants and growing residential opportunities, Morris adds that you have IUPUI, “which is really the most exciting educational experiment in higher ed in the country. And who would have ever thought that the largest hotel under construction in North America in the last two or three years (the JW Marriott that opened in early 2011) would have been built in downtown Indianapolis?”

Ballard calls downtown not only the economic engine for the city, “but the region and some would say the state. We have to keep that core vibrant.” At the same time, while critics were claiming that downtown was receiving all the infrastructure attention, 90% of the RebuildIndy money has been going for neighborhood projects.

Charging ahead

No matter the endeavor, people and priorities help make Indianapolis what it is today and carry the promise for additional success.

Feltman points to outstanding public sector leadership over the decades from mayors, chiefs of staff, economic development officials and others. Morris throws in the entrepreneurial spirit of business leaders and the opportunity to be part of the solution.

“We know people all over the world are working hard to make their cities more competitive,” Morris offers. “Everybody just has to do a little more. You’ve got to find your niche and be involved with your passion.”

For Melangton, who has worked and lived in a variety of locations, a separating factor for Indianapolis is that it “keeps reinvesting in itself across the board – government, corporate partnerships, civic organizations. The community wants to make this community an even better place all the time, so everyone just works so well together. It’s all collaborative and it’s incredibly rewarding.”

Congratulations Indianapolis!

Allison Transmission salutes the City of Indianapolis as a great place to live and work – recognized as the 2012 Community of the Year.

