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Mayor's message: Pawtucket's evolution continues in 2018

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Donald Grebien,
Mayor of Pawtucket

Looking back throughout the seven years I have served as mayor of the City of Pawtucket, there have been a lot of ups and down. When I came into office in January 2011, the city was facing bankruptcy and the potential of state take over. There had been little investment in infrastructure such as roads, schools, or public safety. Taxes had increased year after year with minimal investment in the quality of life issues. Our city was struggling financially and the bond rating dropped to just above junk status.

But, as we enter the New Year, the city has a strong bond rating and the city reserves are over \$12 million. More than 80 miles of roads (almost half of our streets) have been repaired along with continuing reinvestment in our assets such as public safety and repairing its aging city buildings, including a full renovation of Potter Burns Elementary School. And, there has been a decrease in crime and an increase in investment in public safety. This doesn't happen by chance. This happens through leadership making tough decisions that best impact the residents and business community, as well as through the support of the many hard working women and men who serve our community on a daily basis.

The city was very excited to welcome more new businesses like the Matlet Group, BankNewport, Kitchen and Countertops of New England, the Isle Brewers Guild, Sara Bella Jewelry, Burbage Theatre Co., Wage House Comedy, Fully Rooted Juice and so many others. Our existing businesses are continuing to invest and expand, like the Hampton Inn, Rand-Whitney, Collette Tours, Pawtucket Credit Union, Narragansett Insurance, Farm Fresh and the Revel Factory. The great thing is, I could keep going!

One of the most significant investments has been, and will continue to be in the years to come, the city's educational system. Creating a healthy learning environment means supporting our hard working teachers and administrators as we invest in the school facilities. Well over \$30 million has been invested citywide including the current renovations at the Nathanael Greene School and the newly-renovated Potter Burns. Our graduation rates also continue to improve, and Tolman High School principal Christopher Savastano was named Rhode Island Secondary Principal of the Year. Pawtucket's schools are making real progress thanks to the hard work of students, teachers, and

the school administration led by superintendent Patti DiCenso, supported by the reinvestment that has been prioritized by our community, our school committee and our city council.

There is so much promise for Pawtucket in 2018. Continued reinvestment in our city streets, schools and infrastructure is our ongoing commitment so that residents and businesses alike have the quality of life improvements they deserve. There are many potential economic development opportunities on the horizon, especially around the commuter rail project. Through the new development throughout the city, combined with the arts community and breweries, Pawtucket is starting to become a destination. There is still a lot of work ahead of us to move Pawtucket forward. Pawtucket's evolution continues, and now is Pawtucket's time. I invite you to come join the evolution!

For details, contact Jeanne Boyle, Pawtucket's commerce director at Jboyle@pawtucketri.com.

Donald Grebien is mayor of the City of Pawtucket, R.I.

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