

Thank you , Columbia, Thanks for being here on this cold January day

Thank you to my wife , Dr. Laura Rickenmann and to my daughters , Carlyle and Ellie thank you for all your support you have given me. Thank you !

You know, when I first moved here, I fell in love with this city. I went to school here. I met my wife here. I raised a family here. We chose to make Columbia our home.

Columbia is great city. All over this Capital City, you find kind and hardworking people. When I graduated from USC right up the road, I saw all the opportunities this city had to offer, the conditions were right for building and growing a business and the people of Columbia were inviting and supportive.

As an entrepreneur, I could not help but notice the inefficiencies in the way our city operated. The experiences I had with the government here that enlightened me to the unintentional barriers our system has created.

So I ran for City Council to make a change. I wanted it to be easier for people, live work and raise a family here.

Before I was even sworn in, I went to work in every department our city government. I wanted to learn about departments , their processes and see what could be improve. I've been on a ride-along and I've driven a garbage truck. I've been down a manhole and I've looked over the books in accounting.

this showed me that there are opportunities growth around every corner.

It did not discourage me but helped me strengthen my sense pride in our city , in our people and gave me hope that Columbia's bright future is just ahead. Working together, we can open up our community and make it a place where opportunities for every person in every corridor and every neighborhood can happen.

In Columbia, we will have open arms for everyone.

We'll be a compassionate city that doesn't just help people get along, but helps every community thrive. We will make sure that the sidewalks , the streets and the schools in every corner of this city are clean and of a quality that make our residents proud.

We will provide a hand up to those in need on our streets so that they can stand up on their own.

We'll increase home ownership , create generational wealth, so that future generations in our city get a head start. We will open our arms to those in danger and make our streets safe to walk in every neighborhood at any hour.

We will be open for business in Columbia.

We'll make it easier to start a business here and invest in our great city and its people. We'll work towards reducing taxes and fees that close the gap between surviving and thriving . It shouldn't take millions of dollars to take advantage of an opportunity in our city, it should only take determination and effort.

We will make our city government modernized and streamlined, so that our systems and processes don't delay a chance at opportunity for our citizens. We will work with our great universities and colleges to showcase their talent in our city. Let's make Columbia a place where students, a massive economic engine, want to stay , build a business and raise a family. We will take advantage of every opportunities to make life better for our citizens.

Columbia's government will be open and transparent.

We will communicate with our citizens, so they have a voice in every action we take. We'll show our people what is working and what isn't working . We will share information with the citizens that will show where our city is succeeding , how and where we can improve . We will work with our partners to ensure that your tax dollars are spent wisely and efficiently for the benefits of all our citizens.

If you live , work or go to school in Columbia, you're invested in our success. This is a Partnership. We want to work with you.

We're going to be in your communities listening to what are your priorities and see how we can help. tell us what you like and what you don't, so we can see how we can improve. We are going to do better because we have to do better, the future of our city is dependent on our shared success.

I want to thank you all for putting your trust in me to be your Mayor. You heard our ideas and our goals and you now have you've given us a chance to go to work for all of you. I appreciate this trust and I won't let you down. We will thrive together!

As the new year begins and we start a new chapter in Columbia, I can't help but be excited. The sense of opportunity seems brighter than ever . The next four years will be exciting and I look forward to getting to work ..

Without the small business in our community , today's event would not have happened. For thank you , we support you, we're glad you are Open!

So, I declare , City of Columbia is now OPEN!

Open For business
Open For Investments
Open For Ideas
Open For Collaboration
An Open Arms for all!

