

BIOGRAPHY

Mayor Thomas J. Weisner

Tom Weisner recently announced that he will be stepping down as Mayor of Aurora, Illinois, on November 1, 2016 in order to focus on his health. Weisner is currently serving his third term as Mayor of the state's second largest city, with a population of nearly 202,000, after running unopposed in the April, 2013 election.

Prior to being elected as Mayor, Tom served the City of Aurora in a variety of management capacities for 17 years. His experience led to a progressive agenda for Aurora that included a focus on downtown riverfront renewal, enhanced public safety, and the development of a top-notch telecommunications infrastructure. In his 11+ years as Aurora's Mayor, he propelled this former "blue collar town" into the 21st century as a high performing, progressive city. This past summer, Aurora was recognized as one of the Top 20 Best-Run Cities in a national study, which ranked the 150 largest cities in the U.S.

During Mayor Weisner's tenure, a new LEED Gold police facility was constructed and crime dropped to record lows, a trend highlighted by national media attention in 2012, when Aurora experienced zero homicides and again, in early 2014, when a national survey recognized Aurora as one of the nation's top ten safest mid-size cities.

By supporting arts and culture and partnering with the private sector to spur revitalization, Mayor Weisner has successfully cleaned up polluted riverfront areas and breathed new life into Aurora's downtown urban core. Today, Aurora's rapidly changing downtown features a mixed-use residential and commercial center, a new 135,000 square-foot Waubensee Community College and a now active Paramount Theatre, whose critically acclaimed Broadway Series has boosted yearly attendance by 600% - attracting more than 300,000 patrons downtown annually.

Downtown Aurora also welcomed RiverEdge Park in 2013, a spectacular music venue on the banks of the Fox River that has hosted performances by artists such as Buddy Guy, Idina Menzel, Earth, Wind and Fire and Lady Antebellum. Under Mayor's Weisner's leadership the park, which was once an environmentally-contaminated brownfield property, was cleaned up and today hosts more than 100,000 concert goers annually.

Mayor Weisner aggressively worked to attract new jobs and economic development to Aurora. As of August 2016, Aurora's unemployment stood at only 5.3%, well below the state average and lower than all other large and diverse Illinois cities. In 2015, Aurora set a new record for single year construction valuation city-wide of more than a half-billion dollars – an increase of 21% over the previous year. And this year, Simon Premium Outlets completed a 60% expansion to its successful mall – adding 50 more stores.

Additionally, Weisner made the development of a skilled workforce a priority for Aurora in order to ensure a growing economy and plentiful job opportunities. He took a strong leadership role in creating new educational structures in this multi-district city, from early education (SPARK) to STEM education (Aurora University's STEM Academy), to high school skills training (Pathways to Prosperity). West Aurora District 129 recognized Weisner's commitment to education last year when it announced plans to construct a new technical training center, which will bear the Mayor's name.

Under Mayor Weisner's leadership, Aurora has earned a reputation as a technology leader and was recognized by The Intelligent Community Forum in 2015 as one of the world's Smart21 Communities. The City greatly enhanced its telecommunications infrastructure, building a 60-mile fiber optic network and creating OnLight Aurora, a not-for-profit corporation with a separate L3C arm, which brings affordable high-speed bandwidth and internet connectivity to schools, health facilities and the private sector. Aurora's investment in the network allowed the City to secure federal grants in an amount twice that of the initial \$6 million investment to reduce commute times and lower carbon emissions by interconnecting traffic lights. Aurora

Weisner has been extremely aggressive in modernizing Aurora's aging road and bridge infrastructure. Not only has Weisner successfully reconstructing twelve major bridges in twelve years, while leveraging 80% state and federal funding, he also secured the opening of the Eola Road interchange and successfully advocated for the newly constructed railroad overpass at Illinois Route 34.

As a former board member of the Illinois Toll Highway Authority, Mayor Weisner is a strong advocate of the "Move Illinois" program, which includes construction of the O'Hare Western Bypass. He is also served as co-chair of the Tollway's Strategic Planning and Customer Service Committee.

Mayor Weisner is an oft-quoted spokesperson on rail safety and the DOT- 111 tank car issue. Following the merger of Canadian National Railway and EJ&E in 2008, Weisner and Mayor Karen Darch of Barrington joined forces to create The Regional Answer to Canadian National (TRAC), a coalition of communities focused on implementing additional mandatory safety precautions and standards in the railway industry.

Early on, Weisner prioritized fixing Aurora's aging underground infrastructure completing millions of dollars in water and sewer improvements in order to spur economic development, prevent basement back-ups and reduce overflows into the Fox River. Aurora has utilized targeted and innovative approaches to improve Aurora's infrastructure, often using "green" infrastructure, an example of which is the ongoing project to install more than 100 Rain Gardens in the downtown and nearby residential neighborhoods in order to reduce flows to combined sewer systems. Rain gardens also reduce basement backups, beautify neighborhoods, calm traffic and have an overall reduced cost of construction.

Mayor Weisner has also been a leader on the regional, state and national level, having recently served as the Chairman of the Chicago Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, where he helped bring greater focus and statewide cooperation to Public Safety Pension Reform, while strengthening the organization's finances. In recognition of his leadership on regional issues, The DuPage Mayor's and Manager's Conference selected Weisner as the Governmental Leader of the Year in 2014.

Tom also served as the Kane/Kendall representative to the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), an Executive Board member of the Illinois Municipal League, member of the Pension Fairness for Illinois Communities Coalition and Past President of Metro West Council of Governments.

Additionally, he is founding Chairman of the Northwest Water Planning Alliance, one of only two regional water planning organizations in Illinois, which includes municipalities and counties in a five-county area of the Chicago suburbs.

Tom also has a long history of contributing to Aurora on a volunteer level. He worked to create educational, recreational and career opportunities for young people, serving as an officer or board member with: Quad County Urban League, Family Counseling Services, Boy Scouts, Study Circles and United Way. He is also the founding chair of the Aurora East Educational Foundation and a founding member of Aurora Cares.

Prior to joining Aurora City staff in 1986, Tom and his wife, Marilyn, served in the Peace Corps, assisting Melanesian rainforest dwellers in the highlands of Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands.

Tom attended Marmion Academy, Marquette University and holds a Bachelor of Science Degree, Summa Cum Laude, in Organizational Management, from Aurora University.

Born and raised in Batavia, Tom and his wife Marilyn moved to Aurora in 1973. Prior to their tour with the U.S. Peace Corps, Tom was employed by Western Electric, while Marilyn served as a teacher at Allen Elementary School on Aurora's east side.