



# ***FORWARD New Orleans***

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## **Community Coalition Announces Election Initiative FORWARD NEW ORLEANS Represents Over 30 Organizations**

*New Orleans (December 2, 2009)*—With qualifying for the 2010 elections next week, a community based coalition today announced an election mandate called **FORWARD NEW ORLEANS**. A diverse, issue-focused community initiative led by the Business Council of New Orleans and the River Region, FORWARD NEW ORLEANS is an inclusive collaboration with more than 30 civic, neighborhood and business organizations, all of which are committed to improving the quality of life in New Orleans. The announcement was made by Gregory Rusovich, chairman of the Business Council, in partnership with an impressive list of community partners. The press conference was held at the Louisiana Memorial Pavilion of the National World War II Museum.

FORWARD NEW ORLEANS identifies seven major issues which are the foundation for recovery and reform: Crime, Blight, City Finance, Economic Development, City Services and Infrastructure, City Contracting and Public Education. Each category has a Task Force representing the most engaged and knowledgeable leaders in those respected fields.

According to Rusovich, “The contributors and endorsers of FORWARD NEW ORLEANS represent the diverse landscape of New Orleans that is unified in expecting city leaders to manage toward, and strive for, excellence in city government.”

Coalition members include: After School Partnership; Beacon of Hope; Bridge House, Broadmoor Improvement Association; Broadmoor Improvement Association; Business Council of New Orleans and the River Region; Carrollton/Riverbend Neighborhood Association; Citizens for 1 Greater New Orleans; Committee for a Better New Orleans/Metropolitan Area Committee; Common Good; Court Watch NOLA; Crimestoppers; Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Louisiana; Horizon Initiative; Idea Village; Living Witness Ministries; Local Initiatives Support Corporation; Metropolitan Crime Commission; Neighborhood Development Foundation; Neighborhood Housing Services; Neighborhoods Partnership Network; New Orleans Board of Trade; New Orleans Chamber of Commerce; New Orleans Convention and Visitors Bureau; New Orleans Neighborhood Development Collaborative; New Orleans Police and Justice Foundation; New Orleans Regional Black Chamber of Commerce; New Orleans Vacant Property Initiative; Puentes, Inc.; Touro Synagogue; Urban League of Greater New Orleans; Vieux Carré Property Owners, Residents, and Associates; and Young Leadership Council.

In his introduction, Rusovich said, “Over four years after Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans’ time is now. It is imperative that we make substantial gains in the major issues which provide significant obstacles to our recovery. No more excuses. No more complaints. No more failures. For New Orleans to become a worldwide city, and for the Region and State to progress, we must overcome compelling challenges. **This time we must** elect leaders who pledge commitment to the most critical issues and are publically accountable for their actions.”

### **Why FORWARD NEW ORLEANS?**

Forward New Orleans imposes an overriding requirement of redirecting city government toward reform. It embodies the cornerstone of effective government: accountability, transparency, efficiency and the appropriate exercise of fiduciary responsibility.

### **How Does FORWARD NEW ORLEANS Work?**

Over the next few weeks, every candidate for Mayor and City Council will be given the opportunity to review and discuss FORWARD NEW ORLEANS in an interview format, and will be asked to sign a written pledge to fulfill each mandate. FORWARD NEW ORLEANS will then publicize a “scorecard” that enables voters to easily assess each candidate’s position on a particular issue. After the first 100 days in office, FORWARD NEW ORLEANS will hold accountability forums with elected officials who pledged support for one or more of the mandates during their campaigns; regular assessment and reporting will follow throughout their terms of office.

### **What Is Being Asked of Candidates?**

Within the framework of the seven issues, candidates, once elected, will:

- Embrace national best practices, peer-city benchmarking and performance metrics, allowing these objective criteria to drive major decisions
- Be aligned with the citizens in searching for better ways to conduct city business; have the courage to introduce and defend reform measures
- Believe in full candor and have zero tolerance for self interests, dishonesty and political gamesmanship
- Exhibit careful, deliberate leadership that improves local morale and public perception, and unites all New Orleanians in their common hope for a better quality OF LIFE.

### **How Can New Organizations and Individuals Become Involved?**

We ask that organizations and citizens join FORWARD NEW ORLEANS and demand that each candidate demonstrate the clear ability to accomplish the FORWARD NEW ORLEANS principles and mandates. For more information on FORWARD NEW ORLEANS or to become involved, visit [www.forwardneworleans.com](http://www.forwardneworleans.com).

Rusovich closed with a challenge to the electorate and to the candidate, “This time we must demand excellence in leadership to deliver excellence in city services. This time we must move our New Orleans forward.”

### **Editor’s Note:**

Details about FORWARD NEW ORLEANS can be found at [www.forwardneworleans.com](http://www.forwardneworleans.com). To request a brochure or schedule an interview, please contact Betsie Gambel at [betsie@gambelcommunications.com](mailto:betsie@gambelcommunications.com).

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