NOBLE COUNTY ANNUAL DINNER SPEECH

FOR

TERRY RATAICZAK

(**SLIDE 1**) Hello everyone! It is both a pleasure and a privilege to be here tonight to acknowledge the achievements of Noble County and its resident commerce for the past year and to chart our course for the coming year. (**If there is anyone in particular you would like to thank, do so here**) I’d like to take a moment and thank \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for doing a wonderful job in organizing and coordinating all of the details for this special event. I am gratified to be a part this community and I thank you all for embracing me and my family, and the ideas and plans we have proposed and implemented to make this piece of heaven on earth even more idyllic. I have had the privilege to get to really know many of the residents and business owners in and around Noble County and you are a wonderful group of people who are hard working, resilient, proud of your heritage and history, and excellent examples of the benefits of living a life in the heartland. (**Name some of the milestones and achievements accomplished regarding the commerce of Noble County for the past year**). 2011 was the year we made strides in several areas, some of the highlights of last year’s accomplishments are:

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These are thrilling times for our hometown and there is a bright future on the horizon. (**SLIDE 2**) We live in a community filled with history and abundant gifts from nature, and most importantly, all of **YOU,** its citizens, are the most treasured resource. (**SLIDE 3**) It is my intention to both honor the past and embrace the future with respect and consideration, as we all work to make Noble County’s future rich on many levels. A man named Mark Yost said, ‘History, although sometimes made up of the few acts of the great, is more often shaped by the many acts of the small.” Ladies and gentlemen, citizens and friends of Noble County, although we are rather small in population, and although we may have been one of the last counties to have been formed in Ohio, nature has blessed our home county with magnificent natural resources-above the ground, in the air, and underground and the time has come for this community to reap the rewards of those resources.

Henry Ford once said, “I don’t know much about history. History is more or less bunk. ….It is **tradition**. We want to live in the present, and the only history that’s worth a tinker’s damn is the history **WE** make.” (**SLIDE 4**) Well, Mr. Ford had some strong ideas, didn’t he? But he’s a perfect example of someone who made his **own** history. Although Henry Ford was born on a farm in a small town in Michigan, his agile mind and infinite curiosity can be credited with innovations that served to make peoples’ lives easier, more efficient, and productive. Ford went from living in a small farm town to being one of the richest men in the world while he was alive. (**SLIDE 5**) He introduced the assembly line process to the manufacturing of automobiles, thus making cars affordable and more accessible to more people than ever before. He believed in paying his employees a decent wage in order to maximize the retention of respected and worthwhile workers, and he also instituted the franchise system when setting up his Ford dealerships throughout the country. He was a staunch supporter of consumerism in the pure sense of the word. He believed in value; selling products for the masses, insuring that everyone had the chance to participate with regard to commerce. I guess we can say that Henry Ford was a “**maverick**.” Pardon the pun, but how many classic car enthusiasts remember **THAT** sweet ride from the 1970’s? (**Say this with a little exaggeration and wait for the laugh**).

I bring Henry Ford up for a reason. I bet that back in the day, plenty of people in and around Greenfield Township, Michigan thought that Mr. Ford was a trouble making upstart, and you know what? He was! And if it weren’t for people like him who dared to dream and innovate and “think outside the box, or the farm, or the town, who knows where **we’d** all be?

Change is good. Change is exciting. Things change, but people don’t have to. Respect for tradition and heritage is an important element in all of our lives. A legacy has been passed down to us and we are the custodians of that legacy for the next generation. (**SLIDE 6**) Noble County has been blessed with abundant natural resources, as I said, and soon, those resources will be tapped to support each one of us and these are very exciting times, indeed. It is now up to all of us, the citizens and children of Noble County, to step up, survey our bounty, and embrace the change that is imminent while honoring the heritage we all cherish.

(**SLIDE 7**) Our Noble County was founded in 1851 and named for James Noble, an early settler. Noble is the last of 85 counties formed in Ohio and clearly; they saved the best for last! The perimeter of the county is said to have about 30 corners within its boundary line. Some may say the county line is a full of zig zags, but I say, it makes us sharp! Each turn and twist of our county’s outline gives us a metaphorical vantage point in many directions. The bends and curves offer us choice in how we look at circumstances and situations, and each step we take provides more clarity and vision for the future. (**SLIDE 8**) In 1814, oil was discovered by a man named Mr. Thorley, and it was not entirely appreciated at the time, since his objective was to drill for salt brine. Ironically and apparently, even though Mr. Thorley wanted nothing more than to be the “**salt of the earth**,” he wound up with “**black gold**.” It took a bit of convincing …he REALLY, really wanted that darn salt! Mr. Thorley went back a couple of years later, erected a 2nd well while working with his father, brother and another man named Hughey Jackson, and struck oil again, this time it was a briny oil mixed with salt. Pedlars gathered the crude by soaking blankets in the oil and then wringing out the blankets, catching the unctuous brew in bottles and selling it to farmers’ wives, thus beginning the probable inspiration for the first vestiges of a Noble County Chamber of Commerce just about 200 years ago!

(**SLIDE 9**) Yes folks, our history with oil and drilling and mining is as old as our common heritage, and we are on the verge of fulfilling the destiny and legacy incumbent on this next generation of Noble County citizens. This land, with its rolling hills, rich crops and beautiful, open sky, is also sitting on the ‘**sweet spot**,” some of the richest areas of the Marcellus Shale found in eastern Ohio. Talk about a game changer! With all that we see at the gas pump and read in the newspapers, the resources to be reaped from the Marcellus shale is a gift to our community, our citizens, and ultimately to the entire country. The potential benefits on every level, of harvesting the lode, is astounding …actually, it’s almost unimaginable, and all of this presents the opportunity for an **unprecedented** commercial and industrial expansion and a greater sense of prosperity, community and growth.

None other than Barbra Streisand once said, “It’s like an American tradition. A person gets successful and then he’s supposed to change for the worse. It’s silly.” Yes. With growth and success comes change-but it doesn’t have to be for the worse. This is a tight-knit community with generations worth of heritage, unimpeachable morals, admirable values and tremendous pride in who we are, what we do and where we live, and I have to say, **My money is on all of you**!!!

(**SLIDE 10**) A man named John Richardson once told the world, “When it comes to the future, there are three kinds of people: those who let it happen, those who make it happen, and those who wonder what happened.” With every step we take in life, the future looms and before we know it, it’s present. Knowing what we know about the bountiful resources that are about to be tapped, we know that it is essential to be prepared. There will be an influx of industry, retail, and commerce, and services and segments that support the new infrastructure will be needed. New choices will have to be considered and we know that we will all need to be vigilant as we grow, create and strengthen our new heritage together.

(**SLIDE 11**) As the youngest president in the 80-year history of the Noble County Chamber of Commerce, I want you all to know that I am honored and humbled by your demonstration of faith in me. (**SLIDE 12**) I believe in the values and traditions of the people of Noble County and I also believe in facing the future with pride, poise and preparation. To that end, I am very thrilled to make an announcement tonight. We have a new executive director for the Noble County Chamber of Commerce, and we’d like to introduce her to you tonight. (**SLIDE 13)** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ comes to us from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ , brings with her experience, success in the area of chambers of commerce, and a passion to build and support prosperity in communities just like this one. With \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ as executive director of the Noble County Chamber of Commerce, we will have a highly capable person dedicated and responsible for developing, implementing and maintaining programs specifically designed to support and expand our membership and its collective voice within the county and extending to our vendors and commercial partners throughout the area. We know with more development opportunities on all levels-industrial, commercial, agricultural, come more questions and issues and it is our intention to have the means to support the exciting and imminent growth that is about to illuminate our community’s horizon.

We are all aware of the challenging times we live in. We’ve witnessed worldwide economic crises that have affected each one of us. We have seen entire countries go bankrupt. We’ve heard reports in some parts of America that warn us of “the new middle class poverty.” And in the midst of all of the doom and gloom, Noble County has been blessed with riches beyond comprehension. (**SLIDE 14**) The next few years will see us tap into those riches and we will learn and grow and reap those riches as a community with a legacy to be proud of and a bountiful contribution to share with the rest of this great community and nation. I am confident that the fine citizens of Noble County will honor the past as we respect each other and eagerly anticipate our future. Our doors at the Noble County Chamber of Commerce are always open for you. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ will be here to direct progress and guide each one of us as we inherit our future and create new legacies.

(**SLIDE 15**)

Thank you all again and here’s to the future of Noble County! It’s rich, it’s bountiful, and it’s YOURS! Thank you!