FAREWELL SPEECH

FOR

YELENA AKSELROD

Hello everyone! It’s great to see all of you here to honor someone who, I am sure, is very special to each one of us. As I take a look around this room tonight, I want to acknowledge what a wonderful turnout we have-and although I’m sure the menu is tasty and we’ll all have a great meal, the true star of this evening is our friend, colleague, and “conscience,” Rob \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Although tonight we say farewell to Rob as he moves on from his municipal construction inspector duties, Rob has truly been the backbone of this community and has taken the time, determination, and dedication to really learn his job from the “bottom”...Maybe even below the bottom!! (**Wait for the laugh**) … and up.

As some of you may know, Rob started working for this municipality over thirty years ago. How many of us can say that we have steadfastly served any place for thirty years?? That tenure is a clue to Rob’s loyalty and dedication to his responsibilities and it provides some insight into his character-that he has been here to support our community in so many different aspects for so long. He started as a laborer-hauling garbage onto the back of the garbage truck… (**If appropriate and you want to make a little joke, you can say**) Some may say it’s a dirty job…others may say, “Hmmm…What a toned torso and strong arms Rob has!!!” (**Wait for the laugh**) Rob then worked his way up… or down, as the case may be, as he moved on to work in the sewer section. All of that early experience paid off when, in 1997, Rob finally became municipal construction inspector. He became a dear friend to many colleagues and members of the community, and I am proud to say, he has been a dear friend and mentor to me.

I was an engineering student when I first met Rob \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ years ago. He was the first person to take me to a construction site and show me the ropes… and the masonry… and the electrical layouts (**Name 3 terms that would apply to how and what Rob taught you**). I was at the time, and have always been, so inspired by Rob’s more than thorough knowledge of all phases of construction and his willingness to share that knowledge so that others might learn and grow. If there was a problem during any phase of development, Rob was always able to find a solution. I consistently had confidence in his skills and integrity and I knew that with Rob as an inspector on my projects, the job would be handled thoroughly and carefully. If ever there were a “Superstar” in our department, I think we’d all agree that Rob would be that to all of us.

And now Rob will be moving on to the next chapter in the life he has “engineered” so well. (**Turn to Rob and say**) Rob, take a look around you…survey the crowd…inspect all of the familiar and friendly faces...all here to wish you a fond completion of this chapter of your life and much success as you

move on to the more “Great Adventures in Inspecting.” Your contribution to the foundation of (**name the municipality**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is immeasurable. As an inspector you know the basic principle that tells us that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. With you around, there are no weak links, or if there were, you’d find them and devise a way to strengthen each one!! And you know what? You’ve done the same for all of us. You’ve been a supportive, intelligent, professional friend and colleague and you have certainly left your mark on all of us. The past, present and future is represented in this crowd, and as we acknowledge the “pentimento” of a distinguished career represented here tonight, I want to say hello to and recognize (**Name your former director**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for encouraging Rob to expand his range and experience and for giving him the forum to share his support, ideas and solutions with all of us. I want to say hello to (**Name Rob’s new boss**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Your department is about to gain a real treasure! And to Rob’s wife, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, Congratulations!!! We know the expression goes, “Happy wife, happy life!!” Unfortunately, nothing really rhymes with husband, but let’s just say, that your love, support and sense of humor has allowed Rob to be there for all of us, so thanks for strengthening the infrastructure of our great town!!

Rob, all of us wish you only the best of the best. Tonight might seem like the end of a very important chapter in your life and career, but in truth, it is just the beginning of the next exciting phase of “Project Rob!” We are all very fortunate to know you, work with you, and be able to call you “friend.” May you continue to inspect all things in life and work with the attention, passion, intelligence and care that have distinguished you throughout your career, and may your discoveries be all that you wish for!! Congratulations! Here’s to many more years of personal and professional success!

Thank you!