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The Top Three Challenges

In my opinion, the major challenges of our city that spring to most people's minds are mainly symptoms of one overriding problem – Peoria's economy is not growing. If we had a more welcoming economic climate, which is the main responsibility of City Hall, we would see more investment, both local and from the outside, more employment, especially high-wage employment, and a better quality of life. We would also see less crime, better schools, better infrastructure and better opportunity for all of our citizens.

We have seen many sincere attempts to address our challenges over the past few decades and most have come to naught. In fact, many of our problems have become worse, even as we've tried very hard to deal with them.

I feel that a true growth agenda, applied citywide, would diminish the severity of many of our challenges. Tax abatement for older neighborhoods and businesses, fewer fees and licenses, eliminating the need for building permits for rehabbing and upgrading existing structures, building codes no more stringent than those of rapidly growing cities, restructuring our tax system to lessen or eliminate the penalties for doing the right thing, and, in general, putting City Hall on the same side of the table with those who wish to build, employ, and live in our city, would cause us to become a more attractive place.

It is very much within our ability to make Peoria's economic climate much more welcoming. That's what I mean by *A Whole New Approach*.