

Dear Fellow Citizens,

I am pleased to present the first budget for a new government – Louisville-Jefferson County Metro Government. In 2000, the community voted to merge our two governments so we could come together for the first time as one. Overnight, we became the 16th largest city in America. Now, we must all work together to ensure that we're one of the best communities as well.

To that end, this first budget – the budget for the 2003-2004 fiscal year – represents an important foundation, the building blocks for a new government and a new community. Although our country, state and community face difficult economic times, we have put together a budget that keeps the fundamental promises of merger.

Basic services to our community are being maintained and, in some key areas, services are being expanded and enhanced. Taxes do not increase.

We are making strategic investments in neighborhoods, housing, parks and the environment, downtown, libraries and the major transportation corridors into and out of our community.

We are investing in the safety and security of the entire community by earmarking \$10 million to help purchase a fully integrated communications system linking the police, fire, EMS, health department, other emergency responders and hospitals.

Reaching our goals requires a fundamental change in the way we run government. That means doing more with less. It means right sizing our workforce and our work places to create a more effective, efficient and responsive government to serve the needs of a larger community. It means building a government that's smaller and smarter.

We're eliminating hundreds of positions to reduce duplication and streamline delivery of services. We're changing the way we work – from the buildings we own or lease to the vehicles we drive and operate – to find greater savings and economies. We also are making strategic investments in technology, designed to make us more efficient and, ultimately, produce further savings.

We are fortunate that the citizens of this community had the vision to embrace merger in 2000. Because of merger, we are better equipped than most cities to manage through a challenging economy.

By using our resources wisely, re-engineering our government to be more responsive, and making needed investments in basic services, we are building the foundation that will make our hometown one of the leading cities in America.

This budget is an important first step. I look forward to working with all of you to help Louisville reach its full potential.

Sincerely,

Jerry E. Abramson
Mayor