



Mayor Whaley offers remarks on recent national media coverage

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During a media event on Wednesday, Sept. 12, at Dayton City Hall, Mayor Nan Whaley offered the following remarks on recent national news programming focused on Dayton.

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From the pictures you saw last night on Frontline and recently on NBC News, you might think that it's never sunny here in Dayton. But guess what - we have sunny days too, and cloudy ones, and we've had some stormy ones lately. In Dayton, we have always been real about our challenges. And we appreciate the spotlight being shown on the very real issues of unequal investment and wages in small and mid-sized cities across the country, as well as the effects of automation and globalization on Americans and cities like Dayton. We need responsive state and federal policies and regulations that encourage responsible investment in our cities. And over the past few years, that has been non-existent.

Dayton is so much more than doom and gloom, and we feel that the recent national press attention has missed the more interesting story: how our community has responded to these challenges with creativity and determination. We recognized years ago that we were going to have to take on these challenges alone, and I'm proud of the effort partners all across Dayton have made to find a way forward for our city and our region.

One example of that is what we're here to celebrate today. Gem City Market and the Greater Dayton Union Cooperative Initiative are working hard to create access to fresh, healthy food in Dayton's neighborhoods while also building businesses that will stay in Dayton for the long haul. We know that corporations headquartered somewhere else do not have a vested interest in our community, and are not going to provide the long-term solution to make sure Dayton residents have access to the jobs and services they need. Gem City Market and the Greater Dayton Union Cooperative Initiative provide an answer to that. As Amaha Sellasie said in the

Frontline documentary last night - they're not waiting for others to do it, they're doing it themselves.

And there is so much more that we're doing:

- Daytonians are contributing to the tech economy in a multitude of ways. In just one example, the University of Dayton Research Institute employs 600 highly-educated scientists and researchers - in fact, Dayton has the 4th highest concentration of engineers, scientists and PhDs in the nation for a city of our size.

- Our community is working together to address the opioid crisis. Dozens of organizations are helping to facilitate recovery from addiction - helping our community to move past the stigma, into recognizing addiction as the disease that it is.

- Dedicated Daytonians are breathing life back into our downtown and our neighborhoods. Levitt Pavilion is hosting four free concerts every single week that bring our diverse community into downtown to hear great artists from our city and around the country. And hundreds of people - young, and old and in-between - have moved downtown and into Dayton's neighborhoods. Dayton has the largest share of homebuyers under 35 - more than anywhere else in the country - as more people are recognizing that they can have great quality of life in Dayton with a reasonable cost of living.

- And every day, countless people who receive little recognition dedicate their time and energy to make their neighborhoods better by picking up trash, reporting problems, and engaging with their neighbors. These things may seem small, but everyday people looking out for their neighbors and their neighborhoods are what keep the fabric of this community stitched together.

Dayton is not defined by the picture painted by outside reporters - we are defined by the people that choose to live here, choose to work here, and choose to contribute to this community. We learned painfully during the Great Recession how much hard work and determination it was going to take for Daytonians to move our city and our region forward. And we know that no one else is going to come in and save us. But we persevere, and we make gains - not for national attention, but for our neighbors and for generations of Daytonians to come. That's why I'm confident in Dayton's future, and that's why I'm proud to be the mayor of this city.

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