



MAYOR PHIL HARDBERGER

Dear Friends:

I am happy to say that 2008 was a remarkable year for San Antonio. Our city continued to grow at a healthy pace, our financial position is strong and our quality of life has continued to improve steadily.

Always an international city, San Antonio expanded its relationships overseas in 2008 with the signing of the city's 8th Sister City Agreement. The agreement with Chennai, India, has ushered in several economic and professional ties and is evidence that we continue to be global in our perspective.

A quality community is one that takes care of its citizens most in need. San Antonio is doing that with Haven for Hope, a transformational campus that brings together services and resources for the homeless. We opened the detoxification center in May and will continue to open other parts of the campus in the months to come. The spirit of San Antonio also came through this year as we provided refuge for thousands of people fleeing the Gulf Coast from hurricanes Gustav and Ike.

We continue to be proud of our commitment to the military presence in our community. By working together with Bexar County, military leaders and other stakeholders, we crafted policies that will preserve the critical missions around Camp Bullis while simultaneously protecting environmentally sensitive lands over the Edwards Aquifer. This year, we also began the design process for a Medal of Honor Memorial that will pay tribute to more than two dozen recipients who have close ties with San Antonio.

When it comes to the arts, San Antonio proved itself with the hugely successful Luminaria Arts Night in March. More than 100,000 people turned out to enjoy an evening of painting, music, performances and cultural expression. With the help of generous corporate sponsors, Luminaria is sure to be an annual success.

In the important area of education, my office worked with the San Antonio Independent School District to pilot a program called Reach Out to Dropouts. I, along with many other volunteers, visited the homes of students identified as dropouts, or at-risk for dropping out. We will continue to follow these students in their educational journey in the hopes that they will remain enrolled and learning.

Under the leadership of City Manager Sheryl Sculley, we have continued to improve our financial health and increase our budget reserves, all of which contributed to our city receiving an "AAA" bond rating for the first time in San Antonio history!

I am also proud to report that we are making great strides in the area of sustainability. By examining our building codes and our transportation infrastructure, we are working towards becoming a more self-reliant and responsible city.

I have been proud to serve as Mayor of this dynamic city. The dedication of our staff is impressive, our corporate partners consistently come through, and the spirit and determination of our citizens continue to be the foundation for our success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Phil Hardberger". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mayor