



Mayor Rick Baker

From the earliest days of his first campaign to the middle of his second four-year term, Mayor Rick Baker has carefully steered Florida's fourth largest city on a path to "Make St. Petersburg Best."

Five cornerstones of his administration, known as "The Baker Plan," (supporting schools, encouraging economic development particularly in the urban core, improving the city's neighborhoods, ensuring public safety, and enhancing the overall efficiency of city government) have all contrib-

uted to what the *Tampa Tribune* termed a "thunderstorm of revitalization." Many of Mayor Baker's initiatives have become national models. And despite downturns in the economy, new programs were successfully implemented while the mayor continued to lower tax rates. In the past few years, St. Petersburg was one of only two Florida cities to be named "America's Most Livable Community" and the city once noted as a retirement destination was honored as "One of the America's Best Communities for Young People," by Colin Powell's America Promise.

Realizing that the quality of the education of our youth is linked to building a quality community, Mayor Baker has been personally involved in motivating corporate leaders and city staff alike to partner and participate in making St. Petersburg's schools the best. He has recruited corporate partners for each of St. Petersburg's 44 public schools. He has raised funds to pay for more than 1,000 Doorways college scholarships for at-risk middle school students and more scholarships for technical training. Through his "Top Apple" program, St. Petersburg has become the only city in Florida to offer principals of A graded or improving schools cash bonuses. He created an administrative policy that allows city staff to mentor on paid time, and has himself mentored a student for the past six years. Under his direction, the city has begun the A+ Housing program, which provides financial assistance for St. Petersburg teachers who buy a home in the city. Underscoring his commitment to youth, Mayor Baker has also launched "Playing Close to Home," a program that is close to its goal of providing a playground within a half mile walk of every child in the city.



The same energy Mayor Baker has devoted to youth and education can be seen in his progress in revitalizing the city's urban core, both Downtown and Midtown, the city's area in the most need of economic development. Mayor Rick Baker is committed to creating a seamless city where all neighborhoods enjoy a high quality of life with basic services, sound infrastructure, safe streets and opportunities to succeed. Midtown historically lagged behind other areas of the city in terms of median income, graduation rates, jobs, housing values and the most basic of services – such as a post office, grocery store and bank. Mayor Baker through his relentless efforts at state and federal levels, worked to bring a full service post office to the area. The first full-service grocery store, a new Sweetbay, opened in the heart of Midtown, while across the street, construction has begun on the

neighborhood's first bank. On 22nd Street South, historic landmarks sparkle after recent renovations. The Manhattan Casino will offer retail, office and banquet space; the Royal Theater is now a Boys & Girls Club for performing arts; the Seaboard train station is now home to the largest clay company in the United States and a new health clinic opened in the former segregation era Mercy Hospital. Improvements throughout Midtown include new and renovated recreation centers, a library, athletic fields, a swimming pool, playgrounds, street landscaping, and some of the school system's newest and best school facilities. While work remains to be done, Mayor Baker and the entire community remain committed on the future of Midtown and a seamless community.

Mayor Baker is also committed to strengthening the neighborhoods in the City of St. Petersburg. With more than 100 active neighborhood associations in the city, St. Petersburg neighbors are coming together and improving their community. Always looking for ways to improve and enhance the city's neighborhoods, Mayor Baker has led the effort to add more popular dog parks and skate parks to the city. The city now has five dog parks where canines can run free, play, and meet new friends. Skateboarders in the city are thrilled with their new facilities where they can hone their skills on ramps and jumps designed for beginner, intermediate, or advanced moves.

Mayor Baker is committed to the continued momentum of the city of St. Petersburg. This commitment can be seen in the city's many improvements under Mayor Baker's careful direction, and the list of goals to be achieved in his second term.

First elected in 2001, Mayor Rick Baker was re-elected by an unprecedented 70 percent margin in 2005, carrying every precinct in the city. He serves on the board of Tampa Bay Water, has chaired Florida Governor Jeb Bush's Mentoring Initiative, and is chair of the state's Century Commission for a Sustainable Florida.

Mayor Rick Baker is author of "Mangroves to Major Leagues," a historical account of St. Petersburg from 23,000 B.C. to the start of the millennium. Before his role as mayor, he practiced corporate and business law for 20 years, serving as president of Fisher and Sauls, P.A., a law firm in St. Petersburg founded in 1936. He holds his bachelor's, M.B.A. and Juris Doctor degrees with honors from Florida State University and studied comparative law at Oxford University. He also served as a law intern with Florida Supreme Court Justice Ben Overton. He is married and has two children.

