



# Citizens for 1 Greater New Orleans

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### *Times-Picayune*

#### **Coalition of New Orleans leaders sets the agenda for the mayor's race**

December 03, 2009

By Michelle Krupa

One week before mayoral and City Council hopefuls officially sign up to run in the Feb. 6 municipal elections, a coalition of business, civic and community leaders put prospective candidates on notice: Agree to support their detailed proposals to overhaul how City Hall operates or face the music.

"City officials must perform, execute, implement and deliver city services with a sense of urgency and vigor -- period," said businessman Greg Rusovich, spokesman for Forward New Orleans, an alliance of 30 organizations that unveiled its mandate for change at a Wednesday news conference.

Beginning Dec. 14, coalition leaders said, they will be available to brief willing candidates on the reform blueprint for addressing crime, blight, city finances, city services and infrastructure, economic development, city contracting and public education. Partners in the effort include the Urban League, Common Good, the Young Leadership Council, the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the Regional Black Chamber of Commerce, Idea Village and Beacon of Hope.

Mayoral and council candidates will be able to choose which planks to endorse and their choices will be posted in a "scorecard" on the coalition's Web site, [www.forwardneworleans.com](http://www.forwardneworleans.com).

Rusovich, who chairs the New Orleans Business Council, said winners will be monitored closely to ensure they deliver.

"We'll be on you, we'll be on you relentlessly," Rusovich said, "Because this city can't afford for just some things to be done. We're so far behind, that we need a lot to be done."

Some of the "reform principles" espoused by the coalition could be viewed as high-minded to the point of fuzziness. For example, the group says the next generation of City Hall leaders "must believe in full candor and have zero tolerance for self-interest, dishonesty and political gamesmanship."

How a politician's commitment to those lofty ideals will be measured is unclear. But Rusovich said he and his colleagues believe their demands are both doable and measurable.

"If you look at what we're calling for, if you break it down by issue "; on crime, you want a police chief to come in here that the community helps to choose, who implements community policing "; in blight, what you're looking for is tighter code enforcement and consolidation of the departments. In education, you're saying keep the charter school movement going.

"So in each one of these as you go through it, when you define it, there are really one or two critical components on each."

Rusovich said the authors of the platform don't consider any of their demands to be radical.

"These are issues that really should have been done," he said. "And if you look around the nation, you can take best practices on each one of these and figure out a best way to do it."

"So I think it is very realistic. It really is."

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