

July 6, 2006

Dear Bluff City Citizens:

Due to unforeseen circumstances, the Bluff City July Fourth fireworks show Red, White, & Bang was changed to a participatory event where all attendees received a single sparkler to share in our celebration. This was not the city's original plan. This contingency plan was devised by a city manager after the city Purchasing Department failed to retain a fireworks contractor for the event. The Purchasing Department could not find a fireworks contractor who wasn't a "sole source provider" and there was concern over the city being sued yet again for "discriminatory purchasing".

Red, White, & Bang has been an incredible source of pride for Bluff City during my tenure as Mayor. That makes this year's fiasco all the more inexcusable. As Mayor of Bluff City, I formally apologize to the citizens of our fine city for this year's ill-conceived July Fourth event. I also apologize to the owners of the downtown storefronts that caught fire and burned due to inappropriate handling of sparklers by the revelers. I also sincerely apologize to the twenty-seven people who received second-degree burns as a result of the merrymaking and to the seventy-three people injured by the rubber bullets and tear gas.

On a positive note, our Fire Department did a fantastic job of containing the blaze to only one square block of historic buildings, saving the city's other historic building. And now that those old decrepit buildings are gone, the city has plans to pave the entire block and build another sorely needed parking lot. The Mayor's Office of Tourism is preparing a travel ad campaign to promote our fair city to tourists throughout the state. We envision hundreds of people visiting our museum, park, and historic building, so parking is crucial. The timing of this incident couldn't be better.

Let's also commend our EMS personnel for tending to the wounded under treacherous conditions and to the Police Department for effectively dealing with the crowd in a non-lethal manner. For the record, I fully support the Police Chief's decision to use tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse the crowds looting after the fire. Though it should go without saying, there will be no alcohol sold during next year's event.

In an attempt to make up for this year's July Fourth incident, I have arranged for the Bluff City government to throw an "End of July" festival in the city park. Food and entertainment will be provided by the city. All you need to bring are your family members and friends to this fun, safe event. We hope this makes up for the fiasco that was this year's Red, White, & Bang.

We'll get it right next year. I promise.

Sincerely,  
**Percy J. Brown**

Your Honorable Mayor  
Of Bluff City