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## **TROY v2.0**

*A Mayoral column by City of Troy Mayor Harry Tutunjian*

This past weekend, Americans across the country and globe, took time to celebrate our patriotism for this great nation. As an executive government official, I am reminded of the principles that government runs to serve the people, that government operates because of the people, and that government is accountable to the people. Essentially, our government operates on the belief that the government-citizen relationship is the very soul of American democracy.

This relationship evolved throughout history. During the Revolution, various factions printed pamphlets supporting one cause or another using the technology available to them. The advent of the rotary printing press in the 1800's allowed for printing millions of pages of news paper that were widely disseminated, giving people more opportunity for input and greater access to information. Years passed and technology advances gave us radio then television, both of which governments and citizens employed with extraordinary effect to influence the course of our country's popular conversations.

More recently, the internet revolutionized the government-citizen relationship, perhaps more than any other technology before it. It allows greater access by a populace that is more interconnected than previous generations. It permits government officials to reach out to their constituents and have unfiltered conversations about the policies and programs they support.

As Mayor of Troy, I have a responsibility to not only communicate my vision for this city but to listen to what the people are saying. My office in City Hall and email on the city's website invites ideas Trojans have regarding the direction of their city. However, as technology progressed, so has the internet and its affect on the citizen-government relationship.

Joining this evolution, I created profiles on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. These websites represent the next generation of technology that enhances the relationship between the city's government and the people populating our neighborhoods. Furthermore, each of these websites serves a specific function for the city and its internet presence.

Facebook is at the vanguard of what's known as "social networking". Popular with college kids and young professionals, this website gives you the ability to share with your friends and family all the information you choose to display. We have three colleges within our city limits; college students and

professionals early in their career are moving to Troy in increasing numbers. It's important to me, as Mayor, that I have a pulse on what they're interested in seeing the city become.

In that same vein, LinkedIn is a type of social networking website that is popular with businesspeople. As Mayor, I have fostered a climate of welcoming businesses and jobs to the city. Adding a website of this nature to the city's online presence, I hope to be a conduit for business connections, a kind of online Chamber of Commerce where I can help people locate a business or service in Troy.

Finally, Twitter is a website that allows people to communicate via "short message service". These are messages that can be sent directly from your cell phone to a list of people that sign up to "follow" you. It is a new way for me to give people a heads up on what my thoughts and ideas are or just to let everyone know what's happening in Troy.

If you are already a participant in these websites, please find me and add me to your network. If you aren't, I urge you to join so that you can have your say. The discussion regarding Troy's future using these new technologies is just one more way we can develop our nation's government-citizen relationship.

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