

Innovation + Integration

A summit on the Economic Impact of Linking Jobs, Housing & Transportation Planning

Speaker Bio

MAYOR GERALD R. BENNETT

Mayor Palos Hills

Mayor Bennett grew up on the Southwest side of Chicago, one of 13 siblings. He attended St. Nicholas of Tolentine Grammar School, Brother Rice High School, Lewis University, and the University of Illinois at Chicago. Jerry and his wife Chris were married in 1970 and lived for a short time in the Beverly neighborhood of Chicago before moving to Palos Hills in 1972. The Bennett's have three daughters: Sara, now Mrs. Ed Amendola, Becky and Kristin.

In 1979 the Mayor was first elected to the office of Alderman from the 2nd Ward. In 1981, at the age of 30, Alderman Bennett was elected to Mayor of the City of Palos Hills and is currently serving his seventh term. Besides the part-time/full-time position of Mayor, Jerry is president of Bennett Dental Labs, Inc. located in Palos Hills. He has been in business for 40 years.

Under Mayor Bennett's leadership for the past 25 years, he has led the City of Palos Hills through a complete transformation into a modern, progressive community that is a model to all southwest suburban towns.

Mayor Bennett has devoted many additional volunteer hours by serving as founder and President of the Southwest Conference of Mayors for the last 24 years. He is co-founder and Chairman of the Board of Southwest Central Dispatch (an intergovernmental police and fire 911 service) for the last 19 years. In 2003 Mayor Bennett was elected Chairman of the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus and continues to serve on the Executive Board Committee. He presently serves as 1st Vice President of the Illinois Municipal League, and is Chairman of the Board of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP).

During Mayor Bennett's 25 years in office, he has been an outspoken advocate for uniting cities and villages to speak as one voice in legislative action with both our congressional and state legislators. He has worked behind the scenes in forming and creating multi-governmental organizations that have benefited cities and villages not only in the southwest suburban area but, in metro and state regions. Besides the many major governmental organizations in both state and regional areas, Mayor Bennett has been asked to serve and has participated in numerous task forces, committees and panels regarding all aspects of governmental services. He has also been a guest lecturer on Public Administration at three major graduate universities in the Chicagoland area. Through his leadership Mayor Bennett has been recognized as a true voice for the mayors across metro Chicago and throughout the State of Illinois.