

Carson City Mayor Bob Crowell presented the Carson City Chamber of Commerce annual State of The City address Wednesday at the Gold Dust West banquet hall. Here is the video presentation and complete transcript, his seventh State of The City address.

An introduction video presentation and the complete speech can be found above or [here](#). Crowell was introduced by Carson City Chamber Executive Director Ronni Hannaman.

The remarks are below:

"After seeing that video there is not much else for me to do but sit down and be quiet. Let me thank the inimitable Rachael Schneider for putting together the video we just saw. She makes a professional presentation look easy but I can tell you she spent many hours putting this together as well as putting up with us. Well done, Rachael.

"Let me also thank the ever-ubiquitous Chamber of Commerce for once again sponsoring our State of the City address. In addition to all the other things the Chamber does, this year's Silver and Snowflakes event that lit up the City was simply wonderful. I was at a function the other night where a couple who had moved here a short time ago remarked to me how impressed they were with the event and our downtown. Well done, Chamber.

And last but not least, let me thank the citizens of Carson City for making last year a tremendous success in any number of ways. We live in a community where its residents are committed to making the city we call home a shining example of what communities can do to make life better for all of us.

So today I am proud to report to you that the state of our City is healthy and fiscally sound.

When I first become Mayor, our country and our communities, including Carson City, were sliding into what many have called the Great Recession. Our unemployment rate in Carson City hit 15 percent, or more than 3,000 wage earners out of work. It was and is not lost on me that unemployment is not just a percentage. For every wage earner out of work, there is the face of a person or family struggling to get by. Today, nearly 24,000 residents have jobs, a number not seen since 2010 and fewer than 1,000 wage earners are looking for work. We haven't seen that number for 11 years, but we should not rest until every resident who wants a job has one.

The demands on our workforce and workforce training are increasing daily so that someday we may be able to report that every wage earner in our community has stable employment. Through the active collaboration of effort by the City, our School District, Western Nevada College, the Northern Nevada Development Authority, JOIN, Inc. and others including our business and manufacturing community, we are showing progress every day in workforce training, job procurement and indeed, economic development in general.

And how about our High School's graduation rate — 92.3 percent? Doesn't get a whole lot better than that!

Families must live within their means and so must local government. In addition to balancing the budget, we have set aside money every year in our rainy-day fund. During my first term as Mayor, we were only able to set aside about 5 percent of our annual expenses in that rainy-day fund. Together with the other Board Members, we have made sound fiscal management a guiding principle and that has shown amazing results. The growth in revenue has far outpaced the growth in expenditures and I am proud to report to you that at the beginning of the State's Fiscal Year, we now have nearly 15 percent of our annual expenses saved in our rainy-day fund.

Like many other communities, our bond rating dropped a tick during the Great Recession. We should now be able to regain not only what we lost, but also to improve beyond where we were during the economic boom of last decade. Bond ratings are critical to the success of a community because, among other things, they have the effect of reducing debt related costs. It also goes without saying that a healthy ending fund balance, or savings account, will help weather future economic downturns should they occur — and if history is any predictor, they will.

For this year, sales tax revenues are running about 10 percent over the prior period last year. Nationally, consumer spending accounts for about two-thirds of economic activity and it's no different in Carson City. We have seen a strong, broad-based economic recovery reflected in consumer spending as both employment and wages trend upwards. In 2010, taxable sales had declined to \$678 million. This past fiscal year, the Carson City economy had its best year ever and exceeded \$1 billion in taxable sales for only the second time in our history. If this trend continues, we may well end up with \$2.1 million in additional revenue for this year, some of which we will save and some we will use to address capital reinvestment.

Speaking of capital reinvestment, we have also taken steps to address the deferred maintenance we sustained during the recession. Last year we issued \$3.8 million in 10-year bonds and contributed another \$2.5 million from the General Fund for our Capital Asset and Improvement Fund.

These are, of course, good things. We have steadily drawn down our capital requirements, funding new ambulances, fire engines, sheriff patrol vehicles and the like. Our Board has made managing our assets for the long-term one of its top priorities.

Road maintenance remains a thorny problem. As with many communities and indeed the federal government, our road maintenance is funded through a local tax on gasoline sales. There is no local tax in our City on diesel fuel sales. With the advent of electric and more fuel-efficient vehicles, our revenues from the fuel tax are insufficient to properly maintain our roads. Our Transportation Resource Advisory Forum has been looking at this issue and ways to ameliorate, if possible, the degradation of our local roads and highways.

On the redevelopment side, with the advice of our Redevelopment Authority Citizens Committee the Redevelopment Authority has distributed some \$158,000 in building façade improvement funds. That infrastructure help resulted in more than \$192,000 in private investments for a total of more than \$350,000 in downtown building improvements. This program continues in 2018.

Our downtown continues to improve with more businesses moving into our vacant buildings. We will soon see the opening of the 308 Curry Building — a three story historically themed mixed-use project being built by the Hop and Mae Adams Foundation — you saw and heard the City Manager talk from the top of that building during the video. I am told that nearly all of its space has been spoken for. I am also told that the Foundation's next project will focus on additional living units in downtown Carson City. On that note, there have been several developers looking to develop living units in our downtown area — all of which adds to the economic vibrancy of not just our downtown but our entire community.

Although our residential construction is still somewhat short of pre-recession levels, we are growing at a sustainable pace in both residential and commercial development. We expect to see continued growth this coming year. There are several residential projects queued up to commence in 2018, including Lompa Ranch.

An area where we need help, however, is in workforce and affordable housing. The Nevada Rural Housing Authority found a substantial need for additional affordable housing units,

including affordable apartments. To a large degree, our efforts at workforce development depend upon our community's ability to offer affordable housing.

And speaking of housing, as you heard from our board members on the video, there is also a growing need for transitional housing in our community where individuals can reside in a healthy and secure environment while embracing a positive lifestyle and where recidivism is reduced. We will also continue our work to make our downtown extended-stay motels more livable and appealing.

Also, in the area of housing — Richard's Crossing is full and doing well. Nine units are being occupied by disadvantaged veterans.

As you also saw on the video, this year we will continue with infrastructure improvements in our downtown area with the upgrading of Curry Street between Robinson and Musser. We will also continue with the development of a complete street design for South Carson Street from Fairview to the Highway 580 intersection and hopefully, with the benefit of an approved grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation, from 5th Street to Fairview.

Also, in the area of public works, and indeed elsewhere, we will continue to look for cost effective ways, such as our recent Energy Savings Performance Contract, to lower our energy consumption and reduce our community carbon footprint. As I mentioned in last year's State of the City address, that contract ran about \$4 million dollars for building improvements and is completely paid for by guaranteed energy savings.

2017 was an eventful year for the Parks Department. The flooding of our local rivers and streams significantly impacted our parks, trails and sport complexes. Moffat Open Space Route 6, the Long Ranch and Mexican Ditch trails, together with most of the Riverview Park trails along the Carson River, have been repaired and re-opened. All repairs have been made to our sport complexes such that they will be ready for the upcoming spring sporting activities.

We will continue to work this coming year on other damaged areas with the help of FEMA funds. Priorities that remain are Ash Canyon Road and Upper Kings Canyon.

This year we should also see the opening of our first-ever Disc Golf Course. This course started with the committed input of our local disk golf enthusiasts who will also help to maintain it. I have to say, I really did not know much about disk golf, but from what I have read and heard, it is a growing sport with regional and national recognition. Thanks to our local citizens we are on the forefront of this emerging sport.

A new 3-acre park in the Schulz Ranch development is scheduled to open this year as well. This park will feature a basketball court, walking path and the City's first universally accessible playground for all ages and abilities.

As Supervisor Bagwell noted in the video we will be renovating and upgrading Ross Gold Park this year as well continuing work on upgrading all our parks, of which there are some 30 or more in our community.

This past year we saw the dedication of a wonderful art piece, The Mind of D 'Vinci. This display embodies the artistic and cultural talent by the many artists in our community as well as the efforts of our Arts and Culture director, Mark Salinas. Mark has been a wonderful addition to our community, and I want to especially thank Supervisor Karen Abowd for the vision of what this position could accomplish. Art and culture are integral parts of creating a community with an unparalleled quality of life. In a very real sense, they are the glue that bonds our quality of life.

And speaking of the bonds that hold a community together — our library will open shortly with a new floor and other renovations. The library has done a great job of keeping library services going through this renovation. Well done!

I have learned over the years that successful communities are those where there are no silos — successful communities are those based on the concept of one community where each of our demographic, ethnic and economic sectors work in concert to raise the quality of life for all of us — communities where mutual respect abides for all our fellow travelers in this wonderful world and nation we call home.

To that end, let me spend a moment talking about our Senior Center. With the economic diversification going on in Northern Nevada and the commensurate changing dynamics of our businesses and work force, we are seeing an influx into our community of younger individuals and families. That is a good thing and something we should embrace as it is the key to our community's long-term sustainability for all of us. With that said, we need to remember that we have a sizeable senior population in our community and it is important that we have an infrastructure in place that provides our seniors with a safe and healthy environment in which to live and enjoy life.

Thanks to the foresight of our residents, Carson City long ago passed a tax to support the creation and operation of the Senior Center. That was an extremely prescient effort as the Senior Center has been the hub in our community for our seniors. It continues to be that hub today and I believe should and will continue in the future. It is, however, starting to outgrow its ability to care for those in need. This past year, the Senior Center provided some 123,577 meals with nearly 80,000 serving our most vulnerable Meals on Wheels recipients.

If you are interested in volunteering or making a charitable contribution to the Senior Center---now would be a good time.

My fellow Carsonites, let me close by reiterating what we all know — we are fortunate to live in one of the most beautiful cities in America. Our boundaries extend from the shores of the "eighth wonder of the world", Lake Tahoe, on the West to the high desert on the East.

We have over 11 square miles of open space and some 30 local parks — all of which are laced with walkable and bikeable trails. We are the only state capital I know of where in one moment you can be in the heart of Nevada's political environment with all the hubbub of urban life and the next moment on top of a mountain or sitting under the Flag on C-Hill where you can enjoy hearing only the sounds of nature. We are rapidly becoming the "go to" place in northern Nevada with our outdoor music, restaurants, first class sports and swimming venues, landscaped walkable downtown and the inviting McFadden Plaza to name but a few of our amenities.

I could of course go on, but my message to you with is that our unparalleled quality of life — our collective sense of place — exists as a result of you, the people in our community and the pride you have in calling Carson City home.

We are not just a collection of neighborhoods but ONE community.

Let me touch on just a couple of the many examples of what that means.

The other night at the joint school board meeting I mentioned the plight of a mother, one of our Circles graduates, and her then 11-year old son. He had dropped out of school and ceased going to the Boys and Girls Club. He was being bullied in school and was rapidly in danger of making some terrible choices in life.

Beside herself, his mother called her Circles Ally who in turn contacted the Sheriff, a Circles board member. Within 24 hours, the school principal, our school superintendent, our school

resource officer, the juvenile authorities, the Boys and Girls Club representatives and our local health department all saw to it that the boy was back in school and back with the Boys and Girls Club — indeed, he was even armed with the Sheriff's personal cell phone number. To this day his school resource officer — Jared Adams — routinely checks in on this young man.

Where else but Carson City would you find all those resources coming to aid of one 11-year old child and his mother?

Or take Randy Gaa and Muscle Powered. This past year Randy and Muscle Powered led efforts to replace bikes for people who needed them as their only source of transportation, started a Go Fund Me Page for the Parks Department Movers and Doers Program, led the effort to help staff the Library's Pedal Library, cleared numerous trails around the City and region, started the Meals on Two Wheels program to help our existing program provide meals and companionship for homebound seniors and greatly assisted Muscle Powered in being named a finalist in the Governor's 2017 Points of Light Program.

All that in just this past year — and yes, he has a day job, too. Randy, you're what make Carson City a great place to live. You're also one heckuva Marine, although the City Manager thinks you need a shave — but don't worry — he reports to the Navy!

Thank you for the honor of serving as Mayor of the greatest city in Nevada — indeed our nation."