

Good morning, I'm Mayor Curt Emick. Welcome to the 2013 State of the Town address.

Like an annual physical, the State of the Town gives us a snapshot of the health of our community. And a healthy community, like a healthy body, is greater than the sum of its parts.

A sharp mind ensures wise decisions. Strong bones keep you standing tall. Exercise builds powerful legs and arms that do the work of the body. And a healthy diet of compassion and partnerships ensures the heart beats strong.

In Apple Valley, each part works in a cohesive partnership, providing "A Better Way of Life" for our citizens.

Let's start at the top, with THE HEAD

The nation's economy has been sick. No organization, public or private, has fully escaped the effects. However the Town of Apple Valley has a long-standing history of healthy practices – of preventive medicine – which has inoculated us against the worst of the epidemic.

(VIDEO segment – Councilman Scott Nassif. Conservative budgeting, fiscal responsibility and long-range planning.)

At the head of our healthy body, the Town Council just adopted a balanced budget. Most revenues are showing a slow and steady rebound. Sales tax revenue has increased 11 of the last 12 quarters. Property tax revenue is even showing some slight growth, and accounts for 33% of our general fund budget.

The way we keep our head on straight – and our budget on track – is the exercise of common sense. We use the same basic principles you use to balance your checkbook. We don't spend more than we have. We are doing more with less. Adding a program or service in one area requires cutting elsewhere. Pretty simple.

Next, it's THE SKELETON that connects everything together.

If conservative fiscal practices are the brains of the operation, our capital improvement projects and infrastructure are the muscles and bones that keep us together. And we must invest in proper care and maintenance to grow and thrive.

(VIDEO segment – Art Bishop. Better roads as main incorporation focus.)

The town has invested an average of \$11.7 million a year for the past 10 years in projects such as streets, storm drains and parks. We've added more than 35 miles of bike lanes since 2005.

This year we will spend nearly \$30 million dollars on 27 different projects. Funding sources include the Measure I sales tax, as well as traffic and development impact fees.

Some of the projects include to:

- Repave Navajo from Bear Valley to Highway 18
- Reconstruct Rancherias Road from Highway 18 to Zuni, adding bike lanes and a center turn lane
- Improve student safety at Rancho Verde and Yucca Loma schools with “Safe Routes to School” grants
- Repair and upgrade dry wells to reduce future storm damage

And now...the one you have all been waiting for... I can say with more confidence than any mayor that has come before me that **THIS** is the YEAR of the **YUCCA LOMA BRIDGE**.

The stars have aligned! The pieces of the puzzle have fallen into place! The neck bone’s connected to the head bone! [Hell may have frozen over!]

In partnership with as many as 20 federal, state and local agencies, this important part of our skeletal system will become a reality this fiscal year.

In June, after **TWO YEARS** of delays, a parkland conversion was finally approved, granting the right of entry. A week later the California Transportation Commission approved \$9.7 million dollars of State Local Partnership Funding to the Yucca Loma Bridge.

We expect to:

- Issue a notice to bidders in August
- Award a construction contract in November
- Mobilize over the winter
- And start heavy construction in March 2014.

The Mojave River is not the end of the road anymore.

Next, it’s THE LEGS that hold us up and move us forward.

For Apple Valley, a strong economy provides the firm foundation we need for a healthy community. As the commercial real estate market shows signs of recovery, Apple Valley is ready to capture industries entering the high desert region.

(VIDEO segment – Larry Cusack. Business support and retention efforts in the Village)

The business climate is looking better, but we need to be aggressive in our recruiting efforts, and develop tools and methods that give us a leg up on the competition.

We currently manage more than 25 active leads with key business prospects considering the Apple Valley market. And we don't wait for them to come to us. By attending, exhibiting, hosting and speaking at more than 10 conferences and events this year, the Apple Valley brand has really grown legs among brokers, site selectors and developers.

A number of Apple Valley businesses have expanded this year including

- The Wine Seller
- Telexca
- And Fresenius Tru Blu.

We welcomed new businesses such as

- Kelley's Underground
- Denny's
- Apple Valley Autoworks
- And Ulta Beauty Supply is opening soon at the Jess Ranch Marketplace.

On July 1, **Sierra Golf** took over management of the Apple Valley Golf Course, joining a new food and beverage operator who started in May. According to the staff there is a golf revolution headed our way. All new golf carts and new pro shop merchandise are in place, and will be followed by new rates and programs August 1st. As the new ads say, "Golf Apple Valley a day and keep the doctor away!"

Like the Yucca Loma Bridge, we have been discussing the **Walmart Super Center** for years. We are pleased to announce it is on track for a November voter initiative. Walmart officials submitted 8800 signatures on June 27, which are currently being validated by the Registrar of Voters.

The Council approved this project in January 2011, and it will be our citizens – not special interest groups – which will at last decide the issue. If the initiative passes, look for construction to begin in the spring with the store opening by fall 2014.

Economic development is not a sprint. Sometimes the best approach is a relay team, with each participant exercising a unique strength in the race. And this is what we have done by forming **Opportunity High Desert (OHD)** in conjunction with Adelanto, Barstow, Hesperia and Victorville.

Along with support from County Supervisor Robert Lovingood and former Supervisor Brad Mitzelfelt, each city contributes staff and resources to strengthen our regional identity and marketing efforts.

We recognize that new business and new jobs in **ANY** city benefit **EVERY** city. This economic development collaboration was recently honored with the Vision in Action award by San Bernardino County Associated Governments.

I would like to acknowledge the key role that our Town Manager, Frank Robinson, played in pulling together the advisory team that has made this happen.

Now, we look at THE ARMS

OHD is an example of the arms of our healthy community - arms that reach out and embrace public and private partnerships at all levels.

(VIDEO segment – Curt Emick. Personal history in Apple Valley. Importance of partnerships)

Here are a few examples of partnerships we have embraced:

- When **Congressman Paul Cook** was elected last November, we were able to move a few people around and provide an office suite to lease right here at Town Hall. This is the first time a Congressman has established his primary office anywhere in the High Desert.
- In January we began providing animal **shelter services** for the unincorporated areas in the Victor Valley through a contract with San Bernardino County. Built in 2008, our shelter included room for expansion, and the plan to seek contracts to share the extra space and costs.

I know many of you have enjoyed **special events** in Apple Valley. The Freedom Festival, Sunset Concerts, the Paws and Claws Pet Fair and Heart Games are just a few of the opportunities we provide to gather with family, friends and neighbors.

What you may not know is how close we have come to cutting some of these programs. We already have fewer concerts, and we did away with the Fall Festival. When faced with cuts, we have to look to Vision 2020, and prioritize public safety and infrastructure over events.

Thankfully, **community partners** have responded with open arms, helping to offset some of the costs. We produce the highest quality events in the High Desert, and our partners get their business name in front of tens of thousands of people each season.

Heritage Victor Valley Medical Group is our top sponsor this year, and there are too many others to list. But you can see many of them on the screen. We hope you'll be part of the success next year.

Our **Healthy Apple Valley** programs have also benefited from partnerships. This year we received \$49,000 from the First Five Commission, a program that funds and provides services to benefit

children ages birth to five. We were just notified that they will be giving us another \$343,000 through 2015!

This money has been used to start **Vantastic Fun**, the first mobile recreation program in the high desert. Other services we will add or expand include early introduction to fitness and sports, nutrition, prenatal education and work place health and wellness.

We also look forward to installing fitness stations at Civic Center Park, in cooperation with Kaiser, and new water-saving pool covers thanks to a \$15 thousand dollar grant from Mojave Water Agency.

Finally, THE HEART

Smart budgeting, sturdy infrastructure, strong legs, and the warm embrace of partnerships add up to a Town that has survived the worst of times with a clean bill of health. Now let's add the lifeblood of programs and services pumping into the community.

(VIDEO segment – Barb Stanton. Events, public safety, citizens, more make up a Better Way of Life)

Services are where citizens and government intersect – where we make a tangible difference in the quality of life in Apple Valley. Here are a few examples from the past year:

- 51 police officers responded to 50,000 calls for service in 2012
- And total crimes decreased by 16%.
- Our recreation department processed more than 14 thousand program registrations
- 22,000 participants dove into the aquatics center
- 3200 residents disposed of household hazardous waste at our collection center, including the safe disposal of prescription drugs
- More than 11,000 dogs were licensed and we opened the only off-leash dog park in the high desert
- Graffiti was reduced by 48% through Code Enforcement efforts
- 140,000 pounds of trash and debris was removed by our community enhancement crew.

Professional staff, effective programs, award winning events, top notch amenities, an active online community – these are just a few of the ways we build a “Better Way of Life” in Apple Valley – and our citizens agree.

For the second year in a row, the Town of Apple Valley is the best high desert city to live in, according to a Daily Press reader's poll.

Dr. Harry J. Johnson said, "The human body has been designed to resist an infinite number of changes and attacks. The secret of good health lies in successful adjustment to changing stresses."

The same can be said for the Town of Apple Valley. A healthy community doesn't happen by accident. **You must anticipate and adjust, prepare and prevent.**

Our best prescription for health is **Vision 2020**, a living, breathing strategic plan that guides our fiscal and policy decisions. Public safety tops the list of eight priorities, followed by infrastructure, economy, transportation and recreation.

The next two are about people. **Our staff and our partners.** I'd like to acknowledge the Town staff present in the audience today, including Town Manager Frank Robinson, and Assistant Town Managers Marc Puckett and Dennis Cron, along with many others who truly are the lifeblood of our agency. Would the Town staff here today stand up?

Thank you also to the Town Council. Please join me on stage at this time.

Please welcome Mayor Pro Tem Art Bishop. Councilwoman Barb Stanton. And Councilman Larry Cusack. Councilman Scott Nassif sends his regrets that he couldn't join us today.

On behalf of the Town Council, we thank you for YOUR partnership in fostering a healthy, balanced community. And many thanks to the Chamber of Commerce staff and Board of Directors for hosting the State of the Town.

Before you go I extend an invitation to join me at the next Mayor's **Business Roundtable** on Friday, August 9, from 7:30 – 9:30 am at the Apple Valley Golf Course. Learn what programs and services the Town offers in support of local business, and bring your questions and ideas on how we can continue to improve the business climate in Apple Valley.

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