

State of the City Address

31 January 2008

Mayor Roger Tobler

Introduction

Ladies and gentlemen, my fellow Council members and City staff, invited guests, and fellow residents of Boulder City, good evening. It is my honor and my privilege to stand before you tonight to present to you the state of our great City. It is my hope that in the next few minutes, I will be able to share with you my vision for Boulder City—to help you review with me all we have accomplished, examine carefully the challenges we face and look forward with you to all that 2008 has to offer.

More than anything tonight I want to focus on you, the citizens of Boulder City. Just two years ago we celebrated our 75th anniversary. I have been a resident of Boulder City for 38 of those years. The rich history of this City is built upon a strong foundation. A foundation made up of the lives of dedicated men and women who, with vision and hard work and often at great personal sacrifice, have built a City with an outstanding quality of life. By reflecting on their lives and on the dedication of those who currently serve, I believe we can illustrate what's best

about our City and find the resolve we need to address the challenges we face.

They have left us a legacy of selfless service, dedication and giving.

A Strong Community

First, let me say there is no way to recognize every man or woman who has done great things for our City—there are simply far too many, and for that I am grateful. Boulder City is a place where people are involved. Where there is a real sense of community. Let me give you some examples: In an era where most cities feel fortunate to have a 10% voter turnout in a municipal election, Boulder City consistently enjoys well over 40% participation in our elections; In a day and age when most people are simply too busy to involve themselves in local government, Boulder City is blessed by the volunteer service of hundreds of men and women who give of their time and talent to serve on community boards, advisory committees, arts and entertainment boards, sports leagues, parent advisory committees in our schools, community event planning, church service, Scouting and a whole host of other service organizations. We walk our neighborhoods to collect donations for those who fall on hard times. We rally behind our youth as they participate in sports teams and other community activities. We celebrate and worship and work together, and by doing so, we strengthen our sense of community and our pride in this wonderful City we call home.

Council and Staff Recognition

Let me begin by recognizing the efforts of the good men and women who sit behind me tonight. While you may see them twice a month on BCTV or recognize them as they work and serve in the community, a great deal of time is also spent behind the scenes representing the City in a variety of capacities.

Mayor Pro Tem Mike Pacini serves on the Board of Directors for the Nevada League of Cities, the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority, the Work Force Investment Board and the Southern Nevada Criminal Justice Advisory Council.

Council Member Andrea Anderson serves on the Southern Nevada Water Authority Board, the Colorado River Commission, the Southern Nevada Regional Planning Coalition and the Clark County Debt Management group.

Council Member Travis Chandler serves on the Nevada Public Agency Pool Board of Directors, the Public Agency Compensation Trust, the Citizens Advisory Committee of the Regional Flood Control District and the Boulder City Community Educational Advisory Board, and Boulder City's Friends of the Arts.

Council Member Linda Strickland serves on the Clark County School District Oversight Panel, the Southern Nevada Board of Health, and as an alternate to the Legislative Committee of the Nevada League of Cities.

And as your mayor, I am pleased to serve on the executive board of the Civilian Military Council, the Nevada Development Authority, the Regional Transportation Commission and the Regional Flood Control District.

Having our elected officials participate in these boards and community coalitions is important, as it allows us to build relationships, safeguard our interests and look for ways Boulder City can participate in regional decision making.

In addition, we are well-represented at a County and State level by two exceptional leaders, Commissioner Bruce Woodbury and Assemblyman Joe Hardy.

Other Recognition

Let me also recognize those of you who may disagree with us from time to time.

There is great value in having citizens who speak up when they are concerned about something they see in our community that concerns them. Boulder City knows no shortage of involved citizens, and they make sure we examine carefully

the decisions that impact all of us. This is a good thing, and your efforts are appreciated.

During the past year, we've bid farewell to some noteworthy Boulder City residents. Some have passed on and others have simply left our City after decades of service. We have mourned the loss of many, and are very grateful for the dedicated service of so many more. Each has made an indelible mark upon us as a community, and we thank them and their families for their contributions to Boulder City.

We also benefit from the services of those who work for our City government. These men and women work tirelessly behind the scenes. When they do their job well, as is most often the case, there is little recognition or thanks for their efforts. But on the rare occasion when they fall short of the expectations of an individual or handful of citizens, they are sure to hear about it. Yes, these people are paid for the jobs they perform, but I also hope you know that for many of them, their job is also their passion, their purpose in life. They care deeply about the work they do, the City they serve, and the lives they effect. Because of their service, we enjoy a small town lifestyle with beautiful parks, clean streets, attractive neighborhoods and reliable services. We have a strong community recreation program, with many options for people of all ages. We enjoy vibrant senior

programs and a flourishing senior center balanced with excellent schools, youth programs and family activities. To all of you who serve so well, thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

The Road Ahead

Now for some important facts about the fiscal state of our City, and a look at the challenges we face in the coming year:

Revenue for Fiscal Year 2007 in the General Fund was approximately 23 million. Only 4.8% came from property taxes. We have worked hard to keep property taxes at one of the lowest rates in the State of Nevada. The largest portion of our revenue— approximately 38%—was generated through the consolidated revenue taxes. This is one portion of our revenues that is particularly vulnerable to the state of the area's economy. If a slow-down occurred in Las Vegas, this tax could be heavily affected. This has clearly been demonstrated during the past year. Another revenue source of note is the money the City receives from leases. This is important because it is the only variable in our revenue that is not dependent upon growth, and is also stable and predictable. The remainder of the revenue is generated through a mixture of charges, taxes and fees.

How is this money spent? Boulder City spends its funding on needed services such as Public Safety, Capital Projects, Administration, Recreation and Public Works. This past year the City upgraded the existing sewer treatment lagoons and expanded our treatment capacity. This \$4 million project was completed in October of 2007, and 75% of the funds came from an agreement with the Army Corps of Engineers. The remaining 25% comes from our Utility Fund. Though not a very exciting project to most of us, we all will benefit from the improved water quality leaving the plant, and from the fact that the odor problems we had been experiencing in recent years have been addressed.

Money from our annual budget is also spent on programs that enhance our quality of life such as Culture and Recreation and Community Support. Each year we go through a process of examining budgets to make sure our expenditures are responsible and wise.

To assist in this, I am pleased to recognize the formation of a new Finance Committee, made up of volunteer citizens with talents or interest in the area of finance, who will add yet another level of community participation, financial responsibility, transparency and oversight to our budgetary and financial processes. They will look carefully at City projects like the Boulder Creek Golf Course to provide direction and perspective on what the course's impacts really

are on our budget. They will also be asked to review increasing expenses and the ability of our General Fund to cover those expenses, and if it cannot, what alternative funding sources we should consider. Overall, I am very confident in our financial position. This group will help make sure it stays that way.

As your Mayor and Council, we bear the ultimate responsibility in keeping our City's budget balanced and finding funding solutions when the needs arise.

Projects like the third water intake present a real challenge. This is a project that on its own costs as much as our annual general fund budget. Do we look for land sales, leases or rate increases? Recently the City council unanimously approved a ballot question for commercial land sales instead of residential land sales. I believe all of these solutions need to be considered, and we will continue forward in this effort.

Bridge and Bypass

There are changes on the horizon for Boulder City that will require our very best in planning, ingenuity and effort. The completion of the new bridge at Hoover Dam will bring a renewed flow of traffic through the heart of our city. It's anticipated that several thousand vehicles per day will use this new route, with more than 2,000 large trucks among them. The problems presented by this change are numerous: Congestion and slowing along Nevada Highway, safety and

emergency response for thousands of vehicles and around-the-clock noise and pollution through the Hemenway valley.

Because of this, I believe we need to work more, not less, on the development of the Boulder City Bypass. Let me explain.

We are in a better position to see the bypass succeed than we were just a few years ago. For a project of this size to proceed, there are several major steps that must occur. An Environmental Impact Statement must be completed. That is done. A right of way must be identified, researched and procured. This is done. Federal funding must be obtained. With the help of our local, state and national officials, we are working to reach this milestone. Approximately \$30 million in federal funding has already been appropriated with the help of Senator Reid and Congressman Porter. Finally, State funds must be secured to begin construction. This is an area we are still working on. But the Bypass, as you can see, has already cleared some major hurdles, and is nearly ready to go. So when State funding does finally become available, we are in an excellent position to move forward immediately. And the Federal funds we are hoping to secure must be spent within a limited time frame. The Bypass is much closer than most other major State transportation projects to being ready to proceed, which again strengthens our position.

We have worked very hard with our partners at the Nevada Department of Transportation and with local, State and Federal officials at every level on this project. Seeing this project through to its completion is something I believe we must do to maintain our quality of life and preserve our small-town feel. If we give up or choose other options at this point, the State will work to build up the existing route so it will become a permanent part of Boulder City.

Eldorado Valley

In the Eldorado Valley, change is always imminent, and the course of that change can be influenced by us. The strip of County land within the Eldorado Valley will very likely be developed, either by Clark County, Henderson or Boulder City. An annexation study will be completed in the coming year that will give us the answers about what annexation would mean to us. I believe we should remain active, engaged and serve as leaders in determining what is developed adjacent to our borders.

Water

Boulder City continues to address challenges related to water. As I mentioned before, the third intake project will have a significant impact on our budget. Last June, you as voters chose to support using Capital Improvement Funds, when available, to help pay for the City's portion of this project. Again, the question on

the ballot in November concerning commercial land sales will give us direction on where to obtain the funds needed for this project.

Conservation and wise water use must remain priorities for our City and its citizens. We are continuing to evaluate water-saving projects at our golf courses and park facilities, and we are pleased to see many of our residents taking similar steps at their homes to conserve this precious natural resource.

Energy

Though Boulder City is a relatively small town, there are some areas where we are leaders in Nevada. Energy is one of these areas. We are leading the State in green energy resource production with the new solar facility in the Eldorado Valley, and we are attempting to do even more there with new technology. I believe we must position Boulder City so that when our long-standing hydroelectric contracts end in 2017 we have a reliable, low-cost source of energy.

Under the leadership of Ned Shamo, Boulder City's Electric Utilities Director, Boulder City, the Southern Nevada Water Authority, Moapa Valley Energy and Lincoln County have joined together for the first time as the Silver State Energy Association in a unified and cooperative approach to seeking out energy resources.

Doing this allows us to be competitive and successful in procuring low-cost energy sources.

The decisions and energy plan we develop now will determine for decades what our rates will be. We must do like the Mayor, Council and City staff of many years ago when planning for the future of energy. For more than 20 years, every resident of Boulder City has been the beneficiary of their vision, diligence and hard work in establishing energy contracts. Part of our solution must be renewable energy, and we are well on our way. We owe it to the generations that follow to continue this course—to put in place a structure that will keep energy rates affordable and use wisely the resources we've been given.

Public Safety

Public safety is a priority that remains at the forefront of our efforts as a City.

Within the past two years, our City Manager hired new leadership at both our Fire Department and Police Department, and I am pleased with the new vision and added insight brought by these leaders.

In March of 2006, Thomas Finn was sworn in as Boulder City's Chief of Police. Since that time, Chief Finn has hired six new officers through the "More Cops"

funds and also purchased six new patrol cars. Five officers are assigned to the newly-created Traffic Safety Bureau, which was formed this past July.

Chief Finn has also obtained extensive training for our officers at no cost to the City as a result of partnerships he has developed with his law enforcement counterparts throughout Southern Nevada. Those relationships continue to provide assistance with traffic enforcement, narcotics enforcement and criminal investigations.

The Chief has also addressed personnel shortages with the department's new lateral entry program. This allows fully-trained officers from other law enforcement agencies to be hired using a streamlined testing process. Because academy training is not needed and field training is reduced by half in this program, the City saves approximately \$35,000 to \$45,000 per officer in salary and benefit costs.

Chief Finn has also recognized the need for our officers to be a more visible presence, and has instructed his officers accordingly. Their goal is to be particularly visible in all areas of the City, including the shopping and business districts. There will soon be one patrol officer specifically assigned to each

geographic district in the City, and part of their role will be to get to know the residents and business owners in their district.

The police department also had a unique success in December that many of you may have heard about. In a traffic stop following a tip from some concerned citizens, our officers seized \$540,000 in drug money. Approximately 80% of this money will be returned to Boulder City to be used for officer training, specialized equipment and community outreach programs.

In October, Kevin Nicholson was appointed as Boulder City's Fire Chief. One of his first tasks is to evaluate the department's operational effectiveness and efficiency. With this goal came the development of several committees tasked to review and revise the department's rules and regulations and standard operating guidelines.

To put in perspective the important role our Fire Department plays in our community, consider the following: In 2007 the Boulder City Fire Department responded to 2,262 emergency calls, an average of just over 6 calls per day. Their average response time was four minutes and 12 seconds. Finally, 261 of those calls were back-to-back calls, requiring multiple responses at one time.

The Fire Department will soon be developing a strategic planning document.

During its development, the department will identify short and long-term service needs of the community, evaluate current resources and establish operational performance measures. Once identified, the City can implement a plan to maintain a well-trained, well-equipped and motivated workforce to protect the life and property of the citizens and visitors of Boulder City.

To help both of these departments, we are fortunate to have received grant funds for projects that include the City's new \$1.8 million Motorola 800MHz system. This system, which is now fully operational, was paid for by a grant from the Department of Homeland Security, and will provide improved communications and coverage throughout the City and provide interagency connectivity.

Mayor Pro Tem Mike Pacini and I recently participated in some training at the Clark County burn tower, where we experienced why the needed equipment and training must be in place when they arrive at a scene. If they are underprepared or underequipped, lives and property cannot be adequately protected.

We need to be ready when the bridge opens with the equipment and manpower to meet demands both on the road and whatever happens within our town at the same time.

I am proud of both our police officers and fire fighters. We have fresh ideas and perspective, and we've already begun to see significant improvements and changes. Their planning efforts will require that we complete a needs assessment study to ensure we have a solid public safety program in place before the bridge is completed. This may also require us to reprioritize our budget to some degree.

Other Changes

As you look around Boulder City, you will notice there are some changes from the way it looked a year ago. The downtown area continues to renew itself, attractive art and sculptures are in place and parking is getting better. We are far from finished. More changes will be seen along Nevada Way. Several City buildings will receive needed renovations and repairs. Public restrooms are planned, and more incentives will be provided for businesses to improve their storefronts. Many of these projects are being funded through the Redevelopment Agency. Our goal is to provide an attractive, efficient business corridor through the City that serves our residents and welcomes our guests.

More Good News

One final piece of good news: In August of 2007, the Boulder City Animal Shelter opened its doors after several years of planning and hard work. This was truly a community effort. A Public Works maintenance staff member volunteered to prepare the landscape plan. A local contractor was used to install the irrigation

system. And on June 16th, over 30 City employees, Council Members and other volunteers gathered to complete the landscaping. With this level of participation, the project was completed within the \$1.5 million budget established by the voters.

Conclusion

My friends, Boulder City is a wonderful place. Families like yours and like mine are raising the first, second and third generations. They are working and serving right here in Boulder City. I call upon each of us to carry on this legacy. Some of the stalwart examples of service I have mentioned tonight have moved on, and many more will soon follow. Make theirs a legacy that will continue. Look around you for opportunities to participate and serve. Run for political office, volunteer at Emergency Aid or the Senior Center, attend a concert or parade, participate in a community service project, tutor a child.

Though I have no aspirations to hold this office for 31 years as did my good predecessor, I want you to know that my vision extends well beyond that horizon in planning for Boulder City. I truly believe that what we do today will set a course for this great City that will guide it through the years when my children and grandchildren will live, work and worship—with you and your family—right here in Boulder City. I hope you will join me in making that vision succeed.

Thank you.