

State of the City 2014

(Delivered at January 24, 2014 Chamber of Commerce 'Share the Magic')

It's my pleasure to be with you tonight at the Chamber's annual 'Share the Magic' fundraiser. This group includes a variety of people who contribute to the well-being of our city. I see representatives from our business community, city staff, Council Members, and many others who care about West Jordan and work to make it better.

I am excited to serve as West Jordan's mayor and am looking forward to building on the many good things happening in our city. Like all cities, we have challenges to overcome. But overall, West Jordan is moving forward, and I'm ready to keep the momentum going. Let me share a brief report on the state of our city, and our goals for the coming year.

Last spring, a volunteer group presented a Community Strategic Plan to the City Council. This plan was the result of a many months of researching and surveying our residents and business owners to determine the things that are important to them. This plan helps the City Council better target funding on citizen priorities so that every citizen dollar is spent on elevating the quality of life in our community.

The City of West Jordan's prime directive is "to provide our citizens with the opportunity to live and enjoy an exceptional quality of life." The Strategic Plan identifies six factors that citizens believe define quality of life in West Jordan. I'm going to focus on three areas that illustrate the progress we have made and also talk briefly about our efforts to continue to improve.

First: Economic Development. Our residents said "**I want to live in a place where commercial establishments are modern, convenient, and always improving, and where good jobs are plentiful.**"

During the past year, we have welcomed **Boeing** to our city. They are in the process of converting the former KraftMaid building into a manufacturing facility for component parts for the 787 Dreamliner and will be operational later this year. **Snugz**, a promotional products supplier, is opening a 120,000 square-foot distribution warehouse that will be operating at full capacity by the end of the year. **Smith's Marketplace** broke ground on a new store on the corner of 7800 South and 5600 West, which will anchor a

planned major commercial center. This project is made possible in part by a new section of road that will connect 5600 West from 7000 South to 6200 South. Smith's is the first of many new shopping and dining options that will be coming to the area as a result of this new road.

At the Council's Strategic Planning Session last week, we gave direction to hire an Economic Development director to focus on commercial and industrial development, and economic growth. Currently staff shares these duties, and it's time for a targeted approach. Strengthening our business community is a top priority for me because of the many benefits business diversity brings to our city including employment opportunities, additional shopping and dining choices, and the tax dollars that help support key services like public safety, roads, parks and more. We are fortunate to have more than 3,000 businesses in our city. Many also give back to the community in a variety of ways ranging from donating products, services, time or even cash to support many worthy causes. I've been a small business owner since 1974 and understand the importance of fostering a business friendly community. If you have ideas for improvement, I'd love to hear them.

Second: Public Safety. Our residents said, **“I want to live in a place where my family feels safe.”**

As a result of that directive, we have allocated additional resources to improving public safety. We are more aggressively targeting graffiti and are working hard to let criminals know that they are not welcome in our city. In fact, according to a 2013 Crime Rankings Report, West Jordan is the 89th safest city in America. It is a Council goal to make sure our city stays safe.

Third: Quality of Life. Our residents said: **“I want to live in a place with a strong sense of community.”**

This directive speaks to the need to promote a strong sense of community that promotes an environment where we can work, live, play, and serve together, and encourages a sense of ownership for creating our future together.

I may be new to the office of mayor, but I'm not new to West Jordan and have been a resident for over 37 years. I know we have great people here who love this community. Last year our volunteers donated thousands of hours serving on various committees, helping at different events, and giving back to our community.

In April, we have the opportunity to give back and make a difference during our annual I Love West Jordan Day of Service. This year we are privileged to partner with Comcast for this event. On April 26th, our city will be the site of two Comcast Cares events: one at city parks, and one at Sunset Ridge Middle School. This event is a great opportunity to spend a morning beautifying our community. Not only will we give our city a spring cleaning, but Comcast will also make a cash donation for each volunteer who signs up and helps. In 2011, Comcast donated over \$10,000 on behalf of the volunteers who participated which benefited the South Valley Sanctuary and the Children's Justice Center. We want a record-breaking number of volunteers to participate in this city-wide clean-up. People of all ages are invited to participate, even small children can help pick up trash from a city park or trail. Please help us spread the word on this event. I'd like to see the number of volunteers exceed anything Comcast has ever seen before ... and I'd like to see Comcast write the biggest check they've ever written before for this event.

I appreciate the many people who donate their time and talents on behalf of our community. We have volunteers on our Arts Council and Western Stampede committees who have volunteered for over 20 years! They help make our city great and keep traditions alive. This year our Western Stampede rodeo celebrates its 60th anniversary! Volunteers are at the heart of this event and have been since the first amateur rodeo was held as a fundraiser in 1954. There are many ways to get involved, and I'd be happy to talk one-on-one with you to find something that fits your interests and schedule.

Since I became a resident of the great City of West Jordan, I have seen the city grow and change from a rural community with about 15,000 residents to almost 110,000 people today. West Jordan's future looks bright. Anyone who knows me will tell you I'm not a talker but a do-er. I promise to work hard to face the challenges that come and keep West Jordan on a path that ensures a bright future. I don't pretend to have all the answers, but by working together we can make great things happen.