

INTRODUCTION

Good evening and a very warm welcome to everyone, thank you for coming out tonight for Springfield's 2014 State of the City Address. Everyone here tonight and everyone who works and lives in Springfield has contributed to the successes of 2013, and starting tonight you have an opportunity to contribute to a new year of successes in 2014.

But first I want to reflect on this past year. Wherever I went, whether to make a speech, cut a ribbon, take part in an event, or just running into someone at the store, people would come up to me with comments about how Springfield is on the right track. They would tell me how they are impressed with our accomplishments and have shared with me their kudos for a job well done. People have told me they have moved to Springfield because it is a community that has welcomed them and that they want to be part of this community. They like our attitude. Attitude, as Winston Churchill put it "...is a little thing that makes a big difference."

In 2013 we made strides in defining a new attitude about who we are, how we will approach the future and how that will impact the state of Springfield.

So, what is the state of the City of Springfield... **In 2014 the state of Springfield is Strong and Proud and Diverse and United.**

Yet as we continue to grow as a city, there are still individuals from outside and even inside Springfield that try to define us in ways that just aren't true. These definitions, try to pigeon-hole us into stereotypes that are often negative and unfair. They are based on ignorance, because if these people truly understood Springfield and who we are, they would see Springfield in a very different light.

A University of Oregon student from a foreign country recently said to me that they wouldn't live in Springfield because they heard it isn't safe.

Yet, we have a lower crime rate than where he currently lives. And Springfield taxpayers have made public safety a top priority by continuing to vote for measures that fund our police, courts, and jail.

It can be very frustrating to hear uninformed people comment on who they think we are in Springfield. It's time we put those stereotypes behind us. We have worked hard to embrace diversity, protect our environment, and create a city that nurtures a quality of life that is inviting to individuals and families from all walks of life that want to call Springfield home.

In 2014 my hopes and plans are that the City of Springfield continues to build on our new attitude. I hope that those still clinging to inaccurate and uninformed stereotypes take another look – at Springfield...and at themselves and leave the stereotypes at the door.

In 2014 I hope that Springfield continues moving forward and making positive changes. We have always been able to change and adapt to any new challenges that get in our way.

We have embraced the changes that are occurring and have shown that we are willing to step up and make our community better when we have the opportunity. We don't always take the easy road, and we have great examples among us of those who have dedicated their time and energy to doing something outstanding that benefits us all.

Tonight everyone here can play a part in doing something that will contribute to enriching our new attitude by helping us with our Neighborhood Connect board. The Neighborhood Connect Board is a way for us to team up and take action on issues that are meaningful. This is the beginning of something I hope to see continue on several Springfield projects, a running diary of our hopes and dreams for Springfield.

To get everyone started thinking about what they might want to write let's take a look at a few ideas some folks have come up with for downtown Springfield.

If you haven't had a chance to write your aspirations for Springfield on the Connect Board, I encourage you to do so before you leave tonight.

And if you still need some inspiration, let me give you an example of an important topic – water quality. Water quality has been a priority of Springfield for many years.

We've developed a Clean Water Gardens Program to encourage homeowners to install rain gardens to catch stormwater runoff.

Our popular Canines for Clean water Program distributes educational material in cooperation with local pet supply stores that promote the proper disposal of pet waste.

The City and Springfield School District completed our first demonstration of innovative stormwater treatment designs in 2013 at the Brattain House at 10th and G Streets.

In 2013 approximately 330 fifth graders graduated from Clean Water University, an 8-week program that teaches Springfield's young citizens how to protect our community's beautiful rivers.

Springfield Utility Board continues to upgrade its water and electric system with more than \$10 million in capital investments budgeted for 2014.

Working through The Trust for Public Land, Willamalane purchased more than 130 acres of property and a 4-mile log truck road from Weyerhaeuser Company. The new natural area park will provide habitat for wildlife, protect sensitive natural areas, preserve ridgeline views, and provide new opportunities for hiking, mountain biking, wildlife viewing, and nature appreciation close to home – including protection of our rivers.

Government agencies have been working on water quality for years, but for an individual citizen to tackle a large issue like water quality, it takes passion, determination and hard work. People like this, those that see a need that is unfulfilled, or a project that could improve our lives, are the very essence of my yearly Spirit of Springfield Award.

That is true of this year's award winner, who is well known in our community. As a broker and appraiser this person has made numerous contributions to our community mainly through helping to facilitate development. But it is his work – on his off time – cleaning up the Willamette River that has earned him this recognition. So, it is my great honor to introduce this year's Spirit of Springfield award winner, Mr. John Brown.

John, before I recognize you, I have a short video that will show our community the great things you have done to preserve the water quality of the Willamette River in Springfield

John's many civic interests have led him to serve as a EWEB Commissioner, on the Willamette Family Treatment Services Board of Directors, the McKenzie River Watershed Council, Southtowne Rotary; the HIV Alliance Board of Advisors; Lane Metro Partnership Board and the Public Lands Advisory Committee.

As you saw, John's passion is the outdoors and he has dedicated much of his time to protecting the local environment and he has worked tirelessly year after year.

John, thank you for your commitment and your just get it done attitude. Congratulations on receiving the 2014 Spirit of Springfield Award.

2013 SUCCESSES

So, let's talk about the successes of 2013

Downtown:

2013 was a year of doing - and of taking successful steps forward in our downtown. New businesses like Haven, Art Stuff, Castle of Games, Noodle N Thai, Chow and a host of others have helped heighten the awareness that downtown Springfield is thriving.

Remodeled store fronts and a proud open for business attitude can be seen at our cornerstone businesses that have been part of downtown for many years. The Art Walk continues to bring new people to shop and browse on main street, while SPROUT fills our downtown with shoppers every Friday. This is proof that the work of a dedicated group of people can make a positive difference to the community.

The Springfield Chamber of Commerce continues to champion businesses downtown and throughout Springfield. Their partnership is a valuable part of downtown's turnaround. All of our businesses have worked hard to make our community better; however, there is one that I would like to give a special recognition tonight. Each year, I have the honor of presenting the mayor's business award to an outstanding business in Springfield.

This year's award goes to a downtown business that over the last year has helped change the perception of our community while becoming the most popular downtown spot we have seen in years. From the day it was announced, Planktown Brewing Company has been the undeniable buzz of downtown.

And so, it is my pleasure to announce the 2014 Mayor's Business of the Year to Bart Caridio and Planktown. Bart, please come to the front and accept your award. Thank you Bart!

And, now the future of downtown is even brighter. I mean, literally it will be brighter, thanks to 220 thousand dollars of new lighting set to go in this summer! Merchants and visitors have put lighting right at the top of their wish list. I'm happy to say that the City took this wish and with that positive, we can do this attitude, figured out a way to make it a reality, sooner rather than later. Lighting will add a sense of vitality, safety and enhance the new attitude about our downtown.

Downtown isn't the only area that is seeing an influx of redevelopment dollars. The Gateway area, home to the most hotel rooms between Portland and San Francisco, is flourishing with visitors who have a growing number of restaurant and entertainment options to choose from.

And very soon the owners of the longtime cornerstone of Gateway will begin work on a massive redevelopment of the Gateway Mall – updating and refining this incredible resource.

Glenwood Refinement Plan

Along our border with the Willamette River, development in Glenwood has taken off. Since the adoption of the Glenwood Refinement Plan in 2012, momentum has continued to build in this area that for so long we have called our “diamond in the rough.” In 2013 the council annexed Franklin Boulevard – opening up options for redevelopment that we'd never had in the past.

Also, the City has moved forward with the federal approval process and initial designs for an entirely redesigned Franklin Boulevard; and although not a glamorous project, but all the same, a key part of future development, we've initiated the capital improvement project that extends sewer along McVay Highway.

Alpesh Patel has started construction of a 5-story Candlewood Suites hotel – the first in Glenwood – that will be ready for visitors in 2014. And three additional property owners have initiated annexation requests as a first step in redeveloping. Springfield saw the potential that Glenwood had to offer and with a positive attitude and some really hard work Glenwood is poised to be that polished diamond that so many of us have dreamed of for so long.

Inside the City there were several significant accomplishments.

On December 18 we swore in our new police Chief Tim Doney. Chief Doney takes over a department that has consistently been providing excellent service and has been maintaining some of the lowest crime levels we have seen in many years.

We moved to a new computer system that will allow better and faster police service. In 2013, the Police Department Volunteer program provided over 6000 hours of support to Police operations and community outreach. The Volunteer program includes the Police Reserve Officers, student internships, police fleet maintenance, animal control support, graffiti abatement, the “Buster” speed trailer, public event staffing and support, business and residential security inspections and the Lock Out Crime project.

Library successes

In the library we set a new record for Summer Readers – More than 2000 children, teens, and adults made this our most successful Summer Reading season ever. And, more than 12,000 e-books & audio books were downloaded to kindles, I-pads and other devices last year. And, just this past Monday we recognized winners of the children's bookmark contest. This year there were 2000 entries all promoting reading books.

Balanced budget

As we anticipated and hoped for, the budget situation is beginning to stabilize due to very modest increases in revenue and savings from the passage of PERS reforms by the state legislature. Keeping the budget in balance will continue to be a challenge. Yet, I am confident that the City Council and the citizen budget committee will meet the challenge and once again produce a budget that reflects the needs of the citizens of Springfield.

With our new budgeting tool that allows us to link our expenditures to the service priorities of the City Council and the community we should be able to make strategic decisions about our finances that ensures our budget stays balanced and services maintained.

Accomplishments with Partners

So much of what we have accomplished we did in cooperation with our public and community partners.

Economic Summit:

On November 14, 2013, more than 160 local business leaders and public officials gathered for the Regional Prosperity Summit.

It was enlightening to hear from business leaders on strategies to attract new businesses, develop our workforce and put Springfield and Lane County on the map for future economic growth. The information did not fall on deaf ears. We continue to work on ways to ensure we support our current businesses and improve our prospects to entice new businesses to locate here by providing adequate land, manageable regulations and costs, and a well trained workforce.

Fire Department merger

This past year the Springfield Fire & Life Safety Department and the Eugene Fire & Emergency Medical Services Department assumed a new name and logo as the merger of the two departments took another step. Work is progressing towards integration of the two departments into a single Fire Service agency that will continue to deliver high quality

emergency services while producing annual savings in excess of \$1.5 million for the two cities. An integrated records management and computer aided dispatch system, now aids in service delivery and efficiencies provided for by the merger.

The integration of our two ambulance billing offices, which are essential to the sustainability of our ambulance transport system, is currently in progress.

In partnership with Springfield Public Schools and area Rotary clubs more than 460 special Gift of Literacy cards were issued to all Springfield 1st graders – who live outside the Springfield city limits – but can now be part of our library.

The Martin Luther King March and event celebrated another great year in Springfield and we invite you to participate in this year's event on January 20.

We also filled the year with successful Springfield events.

The Biggest Loser Run/Walk drew more than 5,000 participants.

Nick Symmonds Springfield 800 enjoyed its second year as the only 800 meter road race in the world.

We also started a new event in Springfield in 2013, El Grito – the celebration of the independence of Mexico and all countries. We will celebrate El Grito again this year with a bigger and better format and this time it will include my Mayor's Soccer tournament. We hope to see you there this September.

The Lane County Veteran's Day parade was once again held in Springfield.

And as always, the Springfield Christmas parade drew throngs of smiling children and adults to this time honored event.

Even the bad weather that pushed the parade back a week could not suppress the enthusiasm and can do attitude of organizers, participants and parade watchers.

THANK YOU

None of the successes could happen without a tremendous team. First, I would like to thank my partners on the City Council. They consistently show every day their dedication to Springfield by keeping the best interests of the community at the heart of all our decisions.

It is truly an honor and a pleasure to serve with Councilors Sean VanGordan, Hillary Wylie, Sheri Moore, Dave Ralston, Marilee Woodrow and Bob Brew. Please stand and be recognized.

I want to thank both our state delegation and our federal partners for working so hard to ensure that the policies and projects important to our community move forward at the state and federal level. Thank you Senator Lee Beyer, Representative John Lively, Representative Peter DeFazio, and Senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley. I look forward to working with you again this coming year.

I want to thank our partners on the Springfield school board, The Willamalane Board and SUB's board.

And a special welcome to our new school Superintendent Hertica Martin!

We have all done so much together. There is a lot on each of our plates, but we continue to put the best interests of the community at the heart of our decisions.

Thank you to our partners at Lane County and the City of Eugene. Over this past year I have seen us work together better than ever. I look forward to continuing to make progress on issues that concern us all.

Specifically, thank you Springfield Commissioner Leiken for your continued support of Springfield projects.

Mayor Piercy, we've become quite a pair at local presentations and events. I enjoy and appreciate our partnership.

Of course I want to thank City Manager Gino Grimaldi and all of the City of Springfield staff. To everyone working for the City, thank you for helping make Springfield such a great place to call home. Please stand and be recognized.

AND WHAT'S AHEAD FOR NEXT YEAR

This summer, the City will sponsor a graffiti clean-up event. It will be an opportunity for anyone and everyone to grab some paint and make a real difference in a short period of time. So be watching for more information coming out later this year.

Main Street Projects Overview

In 2014, the City has a great opportunity to look at and think about the future of the seven miles that make up the Main Street corridor, and to identify and discuss potential changes along the corridor that will transform Main Street for decades to come. The City of Springfield, in partnership with Oregon Department of Transportation and Lane Transit District, is coordinating a process that will determine a community vision for future development along the length of Main Street that will include:

- Giving businesses more ways to be visible and accessible
- Creating opportunities for new businesses to locate along Main Street
- Improving neighborhood access and development along the corridor
- Creating more and better transportation and safety improvements for truckers, motorists, bus riders, bicyclists and pedestrians.

Main Street Safety Improvements -

And, following several months of meetings with citizens, businesses and property owners, we have come to agreement on pedestrian safety crossing locations and are in the design phase for crossings at both 41st and 35th streets. We will be looking to install the crossings in early to mid-summer – making Main Street as safe as we can.

Citywide, an updated citizen survey is in development – giving us a chance to refocus on what our residents want.

The Springfield SNIPS program, a program we started last year in partnership with WAGS offers low cost spay and neuter services for cats with owners. This year the program will expand to include spay and neutering of feral cats and with help from the community we hope to see the program keep growing.

A new art project will be heading to downtown Springfield. This one-of-a-kind piece is being designed by world renowned artist. Although we can't make an announcement tonight more details will be coming soon.

And, the City is supporting the design of a new art installation in the Gateway Area of Springfield, a beacon to get drivers off the freeway and into Springfield. Again, more information will be coming soon, so keep your eyes open...and up!

CONCLUSION

To conclude I thought I would take a moment to define some of the ways that I feel that we exhibit Springfield's new attitude and to do it like this:

We are Springfield because; we don't back away from the work that needs to be done.

We are Springfield because; we choose to listen to ideas and opinions and still make decisions in a respectful timely fashion.

We are Springfield because; we care about the environment, and we temper our care with practical solutions.

We are Springfield because; we are family friendly, appreciate our friends and neighbors and welcome newcomers.

We are Springfield because; we manage to maintain our hometown feel, and it is important to us to do that.

We are Springfield because; we are working class people and professionals, we are young and old, and we are a multitude of heritages with a rich diversity.

We are Springfield - strong, and proud, and diverse and united.

Thank you.