



State of the City Address
Ronald O. Loveridge, Mayor
January 22, 2009
City of Riverside, California

HOPE AND SOCIAL CAPITAL IN RIVERSIDE

Welcome

Thank you Cindy Roth for hosting this 32nd State of the City.

Superbly organized, this event is a marker of the outstanding work of the Chambers of Commerce.

Renowned American newspaper editor, William Allen White, wrote about his home town, "Those who have lived here put something besides homes and streets and material things. They put practical work in politics, in religion, in education, in business, in the social organizations to make this a good town..." And so it is in Riverside.

Three people stand as examples making this City a good place. First is Gary Rawlings, the son of a Riverside Council member. A nationally successful painting contractor, Gary always committed the best of his time, good will, and resources to Riverside. The memorial service at All Saints reminded all of us that he gave in many and extraordinary ways.

The second is Jim Erickson, retired most recently as CEO/President of the Community Foundation. Since coming to UCR in the mid 1980's as the Vice Chancellor for Advancement, Jim has raised more money, advised more groups, and demonstrated more good will than anyone I know. Jim, we are all appreciative and we are a much better community.

And third is John Gabbert, an extraordinary attorney, judge, and community leader. This year, in 2009, John will celebrate his 100th birthday. For a memorable history lesson on John and the City, see a video which he narrated called Riverside, 1915 to 1925. John continues to lead, inspire, and instruct us all. In recognition of John Gabbert's incomparable life, a 100 year celebration will be held in June at the Courthouse.

Kudos to the social capital of the Pick Group, young professionals, over 200 strong, dedicated and engaged in the life and times of Riverside. Likewise, kudos to the many non profits, who put in practical work to make this community a better place; in particular, I would applaud the striking accomplishments of Habitat for Humanity, the Humane Society, and Land Conservancy. The heavy lifting of our service clubs, the City's signature social capital groups, should also be applauded!

To UCR's eighth Chancellor, Tim White, welcome and thank you for your commitment to the greater Riverside community. Welcome also to the two new K-12 superintendents -- Rick Miller for RUSD and Wendel Tucker for Alvord. Kudos Wendel for your many past civic ventures in Riverside.

And, a personal thank you to Marsha, my best friend, and Nutcracker partner. For 47 years, Marsha has provided the social capital, and hope, for our life together.

City Hall

City Hall is working, and working well. Shared governance is practiced. The Council has effectively focused on big picture policies.

Many people do the good work of City Hall. Let me acknowledge and thank Perry Halterman, recently retired City Fire Marshal, and the best in California. Perry worked 30 years for the City, all in the Fire Department. When first elected as Mayor, the complaints about the Fire Department and the permitting process were harsh and intense, and highlighted at almost every business visit. After Perry's appointment as Fire Marshal, complaints were no more. He brought intelligence and human skills to the fire codes, finding solutions rather than identifying rules. Perry Halterman is one among many heroes at City Hall.

Two quick markers of City Hall success. The Riverside Police Department surely ranks at or near the top of large cities in California. Part One Crimes continue to decline, even in these difficult economic times.

And the City looks good! Praise has come in many conversations, e-mails, and letters. Examples -- I would point to the now green Evergreen Cemetery, the 195 miles of landscaped medians, and the tree canopy of the City. Walk up Mt Rubidoux and take in a 360-degree view.

I agree with Neal Peirce, dean of state and local journalists, "With hard-squeezed municipal budgets, this won't be an easy time for towns and cities, but the 'winners' among them will be those that raise the money (and/or volunteer help) to offer attractive city streets, well-kept parks, convenient libraries, events and festivals celebrating their diverse local cultures."

Riverside is an award-winning city. When compared to cities across the country, Riverside is frequently recognized for its achievements and excellence. Go on the City Web site to see the awards

-- they are indeed impressive, and they range widely.

With pride, I will briefly highlight five national best practices. They illustrate City Hall's high standard of innovation and delivery of services.

Riverside Renaissance, a \$1.8 billion initiative, is by far the most ambitious "bricks and mortar" investment in the City's history. A five-year program, it focuses on vital transportation improvements such as grade separations, a long list of infrastructure upgrades, and a variety of quality of life amenities. So far, the third year dollar tally is \$194 million completed, \$250 million under construction, and \$612 million in design.

All California electric utilities will be required to have 33% renewable energy by 2020. The Public Utilities Department recently signed a contract for geothermal energy which will bring our number to 50% by 2013. This is the highest number of any major utility, public or private,

in the State. We also generate about a megawatt each from grease to energy, biomass fuel cell, and solar power.

311, "one call does it all," answered over 150,000 calls in 2008. It is a direct, 24 hour a day connection between residents and City Hall. There is follow up, and requests are tracked. There is timely information. It is an exceptional service.

In 2008 we opened the City's Emergency Operations Center. This state-of-the-art facility serves as the centralized point of coordination during times of crisis. Chief Tedd Laycock says there is no better city emergency center in Southern California.

Last, Riverside is an award winning high tech City Hall. There is no better IT Director than Steve Reneker. Go to the SmartRiverside website. Projects include wireless connectivity everywhere in our City, free wireless computers for low-income families, and video security in our parks, intersections, and City facilities. With a cup of Starbucks coffee, the Information Technology Strategic Plan is even a good read.

Bad News Trumps Good News

Unfortunately, in 2009, bad economic news trumps good news at City Hall. This is the nation's worst economic time since the Great Depression.

The Inland Empire is in the center ring. With unemployment near ten percent, we have the highest rate of any major metropolitan region in the country.

Here is an NBC interview....

Foreclosures rank near the top in the nation -- and in Riverside they total over 3,600 since July 1, 2007. John Husing, our economic analyst, champion, and friend, says "2009 will be the worst year in the modern history of the Inland Empire."

The local economy is likewise burdened by the uncertainty of the State's budget and its economy. Mac Taylor, newly appointed State Legislative Analyst -- and former Poli Sci major at UCR -- says, "The state's revenue collapse is so dramatic and the underlying economic factors so weak that we forecast huge budget shortfalls." The shortfall now is \$42 billion, and counting for the 2009-10 budget.

There is real economic pain, at the kitchen table, your next door neighbor, businesses -- large and small. Effects vary, but economic pain is everywhere we look in Riverside.

At City Hall, we would be cheering a \$240-250 million dollar budget if good times were here. Instead our budget for 2008-09 went from \$228 million to \$214. Given latest revenue reports, we must meet a new budget of \$200 million. Sales taxes are down, property taxes are flat, and fewer fees are being collected. Still, the City has a rainy day surplus of \$44 million, a high reserve percentage found in few other cities, large or small, in California. We will continue to deliver high quality city services, but we must also seriously "tighten our belts."

Economic Steps Toward Recovery

In 2009, we must take economic steps toward recovery. We should be a driver rather than a passenger along for the ride.

Economic development efforts should be focused, smarter, and more inventive. Economic success is an imperative for Riverside. We compete, and seriously so, with other cities and other regions. Economic recovery will not happen at the same time or in every place. The big picture call is for vision, leadership, commitment, and a pro-business attitude. It includes building capacity and assets, such as workforce, infrastructure, technical support, and sites.

How does this big picture call translate into economic development efforts for 2009? Here are my recommendations for Riverside.

The City needs a forward-looking economic strategy. What are our aspirations, our economic priorities? We are working with Dave Stewart, Dean of the Graduate School of Management at UCR, to prepare such a strategy.

There are immediate steps that are underway, and others that should happen.

-- Most important is to SHOP Riverside. Kudos to Frank Schiavone for his singular leadership in proposing the campaign to shop in Riverside dealerships and stores.

-- The Council adopted a three-tier foreclosure strategy. The first is to protect our neighborhoods by requiring that abandoned homes be maintained. The second is to encourage at risk homeowners to talk with counselors about how to adjust their mortgages. Fair Housing has been our partner. And the third is a targeted program to buy and refurbish foreclosed homes, and then offer them for sale to prospective homeowners. This strategy will be enhanced by \$6 million from HUD's national funding to cities to buy foreclosed homes.

As Mayor, I would propose a major "BUY" Riverside campaign. Many foreclosed homes are up for sale. We should market Riverside as a good place to live. We should partner with Riverside realtors. We should partner with RUSD and Alvord to restructure At Home in Riverside, an initiative to highlight K-12 success stories. New homeowners bring their own good will, income, families, and a stake in the neighborhoods of Riverside.

-- Major development projects should be supported, such as Surado Corporate Center and Turner's Riverwalk. And proposed development projects should be facilitated and fast-tracked. Attraction, expansion, and recruitment must be top priorities for 2009. The message is that Riverside is the best location for your business!

-- The City and the Chamber should continue to work together to help small businesses, such as telling the story on how to contract with the City, or other major employers. As Mayor, I will join with the Chamber in hosting a Small Business Summit, framed by the Governor's Conference on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

-- John Tavaglione and I co-chair a Western Riverside County Red Team, made up of 30 stake holders. The purpose of the Red Team is to propose policies to start immediate improvement in our local economy. John Husing provided the best of his research and

offered major recommendations. I will present the Husing Report and the Red Team recommendations to the Council on February 10.

-- The three universities and RCC distinguish Riverside from other cities in Southern California.

Combined, they are the City's largest employer. We should work together so that they will be campuses of choice. Let's undertake a joint Charrette with UCR premised on student choices for entertainment and recreation surrounding the campus. The City/UCR Charrette for University Avenue was an outstanding success -- take a look at the many improvements. And in 2009, community friends and residents need to step up and complete the funding for the "world class" Aquatics Complex at RCC.

In many cities, universities are becoming the economic engine that big corporations used to be. UCR's medical school invites such an economic future. Kudos to such economic initiatives as the UCR Solar Innovation Center. Noteworthy also, in 2008, California Baptist University cut the ribbons for Schools of Engineering and Nursing. And RCC's TriTech continues to nurture start-up tech companies.

The City, in collaboration with the Higher Education Business Council, created Riverside EDvantage. This citywide internship program connects local businesses with university students. So far over 50 intern connections are in place. I invite your participation.

-- Thomas Friedman, in The World is Flat, explains that the striking advances in technology and communication challenge us to run even faster just to stay in place. Our economy competes, and succeeds, in a global marketplace. In the Inland Empire, Riverside is the leading international city -- it is one of our economic strengths. It is time to revisit the City's International Strategic Plan. We need to flourish in this flattening world. Also, kudos to our seventh Sister City in 2008, Obuasi, Ghana.

-- Riverside is a leading Clean & Green City. Most of the 38 goals in our Green Action Plan have been met or are in progress. At the February 3 Council meeting, the State's Department of Conservation will propose that Riverside become California's first Emerald City. They will work with us for grants and partnerships. It is also time to connect our green accomplishments with the emerging green economy. Let's look for green jobs for Riverside.

-- Riverside is the City of Arts and Culture in the Inland Empire. Arts help build a strong local economy. Kim Welsh, Chief Strategist for San Jose, explains, "...communities that cultivate this emerging connection between the creative arts and economic success should have brighter prospects, even in tough economic times." The Riverside Cultural Plan will identify important steps in 2009 that may increase attendance, and revenues. And before the next State of the City, in January 2010, the Fox Theater will open.

While the City is taking forward economic steps, President Obama has proposed and the Congress will pass in February the largest economic stimulus package in the history of the

United States, over 825 billion dollars. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Plan is premised on creating over 4 million jobs. It presents extraordinary opportunities, short and long term, for cities, and for Riverside.

As 1st Vice President of the National League of Cities, I strongly advocated that the NLC frame the Economic Recovery -- A Call to Action. It is an Agenda for the Nation. It asks all cities to call on the Obama Administration and the Congressional leadership to include infrastructure investment, support to individuals, and access to financial markets. Direct investment in ready-to-go infrastructure projects creates jobs, stimulates the economy, and has long term benefits.

As Mayor, I will organize all possible efforts so that key Riverside projects and programs are funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Plan.

Steps taken in 2009 will set the stage for economic recovery. We can prepare to compete, and more importantly succeed, as a major regional economic center in Southern California.

Time for Social Capital

Hand-in-hand with economic steps, social capital is critically important in 2009.

Now more than ever, it is time to come together. Nearly 50 years ago, John F. Kennedy offered a call in his inaugural address that we all remember. Let me rephrase it for today, "Ask not what City Hall can do for you, but what you can do for the community."

It is a time for a barn-raising approach in Riverside. One of my favorite images is from the movie "Witness," seeing the Amish men and women work to frame a barn. And do you remember when the father rang his farm house bell and so many neighbors answered his call for help?

It is time to answer the call for service to our neighbors and to the community. Tuesday's inauguration ushered in "the new era of responsibility." It is time to take responsibility, to do what's right. There are so many things we can do.

Let me recognize Jerry Louder as someone who has committed himself to help others, again and again, in this community. Forty-year pastor of the New Jerusalem Christian Center, Jerry also founded the Riverside Opportunity Center in 1979. The Center feeds the homeless, finds housing and jobs, and provides counseling. Thanks Jerry for a lifetime commitment to good works in Riverside!

To expand our civic infrastructure in 2009, let me highlight possible directions and opportunities. They are pivoted around the approach of barn-raising and service.

Take part in the life of the City. Support local arts, restaurants, and stores. Complete the 101 Things to Do in Arts and Culture -- it is a great inventory of the City's arts venues and cultural assets. Eat at the 25 Best Restaurants in Riverside. SHOP Riverside. I strongly recommend the first-ever SHOP Riverside Community Cards. They promote SHOP Riverside, while giving back to local schools and organizations.

Volunteer. Sign up. Sign up with the Chamber. Sign up with the City. Just sign up. Kudos to the Volunteer Center's new Executive Director, Bobbie Neff, for finding volunteer opportunities. By June, the Volunteer Center will identify 30 agencies and then recruit 300 volunteers and match them with agency needs.

The Youth Council recently launched a community service campaign, beginning on Martin Luther King Day in January and ending on Earth Day in April. It introduces and creates a season of service for youth in Riverside.

For further involvement of high school students, Rusty Bailey and I will shortly propose to RUSD and Alvord the introduction of Community Service or Service Learning.

In collaboration with the Mayor's Commission on Aging, I will initiate the first Riverside Senior Corps. It will focus on the Corps' Retired and Senior Volunteer Program.

Value the community of faith. In Riverside, it is extraordinary in number, participants, and breadth. Our greatest amount of social capital is found in the community of faith. Outreach, or bridging, takes many forms and programs. I cannot overstate my thanks to the community of faith for their commitment in good works to lessen the pain, economic and social, in our City.

Last year the Peninsula Clergy Network, a highly successful model of clergy engagement, was introduced, and explained. It is an interactive clergy network that hosts dialogues between clergy and civic leaders. There was widespread interest in moving toward an active clergy network in Riverside. In 2009, we will encourage such a network and begin regular clergy dialogues with civic leaders.

Support Neighborhoods. A good city is made up of good neighborhoods. Neighborhoods are the litmus tests of the quality of life for the residents of Riverside.

I take pride in Mayor's Night Out, numbering over 130. Almost every month, City Hall goes to one of the City's 26 community neighborhoods. We listen, and then directly respond!

The City needs a regular and systematic assessment of its neighborhoods. We need to know when and how we can help. Kudos to Robert Parker and UCR's Presley Center for undertaking the first comprehensive look at the City's neighborhoods. Thank you Nancy Hart for leading the efforts to undertake a 2009 Neighborhood Assessment Program.

Good neighborhoods are enhanced and improved when they are organized. We have taken many steps; however, the step we have not taken is to strengthen neighborhood governance. In early spring, I will revisit, and rework, the 2004 Neighborhood Governance Report. The purpose is to encourage voluntary councils in each of the 26 community neighborhoods. Kudos to Andy Melendrez for his exceptional attention and involvement with the neighborhoods of the Eastside.

Support children and families. Led by the National League of Cities, the 2008 Mayors' Action Challenge for Children and Families focuses on four priorities every child needs: "Opportunities to learn and grow; a safe neighborhood to call home; a healthy lifestyle and

environment; and a financially fit family in which to thrive.” We need to identify actions to get us there. I will refer the Challenge to the Human Relations Commission with a review by the Youth Council.

Celebrate social capital. As a City, we should recognize and celebrate our community heroes, particularly in these very difficult economic times.

2008 was the Year of the Grier Pavilion -- it is an iconic place and statement of Riverside as an inclusive city. During the holiday season, Anderson Cooper hosted CNN Heroes, celebrating ordinary people who have made extraordinary differences in the lives of others. We should do likewise. Working with the Human Relations Commission, we will host a Riverside Heroes event next December at the Grier Pavilion. There are compelling and extraordinary stories to tell about social capital in Riverside.

Hope for 2009

We have just seen, and experienced, the inauguration of Barack Obama. It is the hope of Americans --no matter what party -- that we have witnessed the beginning of a historic and transformational time for our country.

In a New York Times column, Thomas Friedman writes convincingly that it is “Time to Reboot America:”

“That’s why we don’t just need a bailout. We need a build out. We need a build up. We need a national makeover.

That is why the next few months are among the most important in U.S. history. Because of the financial crisis, Barack Obama has the bipartisan support to spend \$1 trillion in stimulus funding.

John Kennedy led us on a journey to discover the moon. Obama needs to lead us on a journey to rediscover, rebuild, and reinvent our own backyard.”

Change, hope, and community go together in Riverside. There is hope with economic steps and social capital. There is hope when we work together. Let’s discover, build, and invent our future.

Hope is here for Riverside in 2009, and beyond!

Thank you.