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## State of the City

One of the responsibilities I have as the mayor of Murray City is to provide an annual state of the city address. The purpose of the address is to share city achievements with the community, identify areas needing improvement, and outline future goals. It is also an opportunity to discuss city finances, capital projects, and our local economy. In prior years, the address has been delivered during public meetings or events. Unfortunately, the pandemic has dramatically impacted in-person gatherings, so this year I delivered the state of the city address via video, which can be accessed at [www.murray.utah.gov](http://www.murray.utah.gov). I want to highlight a few of the things mentioned in my address.

In early 2020, the state of the city address was teeming with great optimism as the outlook for Murray was very exciting. Well, 2020 did turn out to be an exciting year, but not in the way any of us anticipated. While preparing my address for 2021, I took time to reflect on all the ways that 2020 surprised and challenged the city.

On March 13, I issued a Proclamation of Local Emergency in response to the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19. We immediately closed our Senior Recreation Center, Park Center, museum, and library, while temporarily closing other city buildings and providing services online or by telephone. Internal and external meetings were changed to an electronic format. Many of us had never heard of "Zoom" before the pandemic, and now we have become very proficient in its use. City employees adjusted to health department guidelines and found new, creative ways to perform their jobs.

The pandemic also created uncertainty surrounding the fiscal health of the city. Staff was developing the budget for FY 2020-21 when COVID-19 erupted. I requested significant budget reductions with only urgent projects being funded, while continuing to maintain the level of service that our residents expect. The council requested an additional 10% reduction from general fund operating budgets. There was no cost of living adjustment (COLA) included for employees. Thankfully, the revenues were not impacted as much as feared, and some of the capital improvement funds were reinstated at mid-budget year.

On March 18, just five days after the executive order regarding the pandemic, the 5.7 magnitude earthquake hit the Salt Lake Valley. Murray staff and emergency responders immediately went into action assessing the impact of the quake, which I'm happy to report was not substantial. But mother nature wasn't finished. We can't forget the windstorm on September 8 with hurricane force winds that snapped power poles and uprooted trees throughout northern Utah and along the Wasatch Front. Thankfully the impact on Murray City was not significant compared to other communities. In fact, the power department arborists provided aid to other municipal power cities in their cleanup efforts, and Public Works was able to loan some heavy equipment to nearby communities in need.



Throughout 2020, Murray City proved to be adaptable and prepared to respond during every crisis. With uncertain financial conditions created by the pandemic, budgets were reduced while continuing to provide quality municipal services to residents and businesses. I believe the city demonstrated prudent fiscal responsibility as no layoffs were necessary and all financial obligations were met. As natural disasters impacted our state, the city was willing and able to assist neighboring communities. In 2020, Murray City demonstrated once again that it is resilient and self-reliant during trying times.

I am cautiously optimistic as we dive into 2021, knowing that Murray City has not only survived, but thrived even during hard times for the past 118 years. Coretta Scott King once said, "The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members." I thank each of you individually for doing your part in helping to keep Murray City a great place to live, work, shop, and enjoy recreation. I look forward to a great future for Murray City.