

Good Evening members of the City Council, residents and business leaders of Murray City, Department Directors, and city staff, as well as City Council staff.

I want to first acknowledge this evening the immense amount of time that each of our city council members dedicate to serving this city, and I extend my appreciation to each of you.

I am pleased to present my first State of the City address to you this evening.

Let me begin by saying the state of Murray City is strong and sound, but not without challenges. I'll mention some of those challenges throughout this address.

First, I want to acknowledge this evening the loss of two prominent and influential individuals in Murray City this past year. Mayor Ted Eyre passed away on August 25 after a courageous battle with cancer. Mayor Eyre loved this city and loved serving as mayor, and we miss him.

Former Mayor Lynn Pett passed away on September 17 after a long battle with pulmonary fibrosis. Lynn's powerful influence on Murray City can never be overstated, from his love for the Boys and Girls Club of Murray, which he was instrumental in developing, to the city parks, the Jordan River Parkway, and of course, the Golf Course that bears his name.

I salute both of these great men this evening.

We were also saddened by the death of our former Chief Building Official Gilbert Gonzales in August who also fought a valiant battle with cancer.

I want to acknowledge my newly assembled team in the Mayor's office. Longtime Public Services Director Doug Hill is now serving as Chief Administrative Officer; Jennifer Heaps as Communications and Public Relations Director; and Traci Walker as Administrative Assistant. These are all outstanding and competent individuals, and I am excited to have them on my team.

Tonight I express my gratitude for the opportunity that I have to serve as Mayor and Chief Executive Officer of this outstanding city. In many ways, Murray City is the envy of other municipalities.

Murray has a unique sense of community, a direct result of many, many individuals and families who, without fanfare, devote their time and energy to our community schools, recreation and sports programs, arts programs, boys and girls club, and other worthwhile causes, not to mention quiet service to their friends and neighbors.

I recognize and express appreciation this evening to the dozens of Murray residents who voluntarily serve on one of our eleven boards and commissions. We all are the benefactors of their hundreds of hours of volunteer service each year. The American short story writer Cynthia Ozack is credited with saying: "We often take for granted the very things that most deserve our gratitude." I'll take the liberty of tweaking that quote just a little by saying "We often take for granted the very people who most deserve our gratitude." Thank you all for your dedicated service.

Tonight I also acknowledge the retirement last summer of Bob Dunn after more than three decades of full time service to the Boys and Girls Club. Of course, Bob hasn't really retired, but continues to work as a "part-time" volunteer. Bob has also accepted the invitation to serve on the Murray City Personnel Advisory Board. I salute Bob this evening and thank him for his many years of selfless service.

Speaking of serving the youth of our community, I want to recognize another important organization that has grown from Boys and Girls Club roots, "KidsEat!" and its remarkable founder, Lynda Brown. Lynda, a Murray resident for 45 years, has been a volunteer at the Murray Boys and Girls club for over 25 years. When Lynda realized that many of the kids did not have food to eat on the weekends when they were not at the club, she did something about it. She created "KidsEat!" a non-profit foundation that provides backpacks filled with food for the children to take home on the weekends. In 2015, KidsEat! fed some 50 children a week. Lynda's foundation has grown to serve the entire Salt Lake County and beyond, providing approximately 2,500 meals and snacks each week for at-risk children. Last September, Lynda was awarded "The Maytag Dependable Leader Award", one of only 10 awarded in the entire nation. That award came with a \$20,000 check from Maytag to provide college scholarships to members of the Boys and Girls Club. I salute Lynda this evening and thank her for her many years of generous service.

I express appreciation this evening to my exceptional Department and Division Directors. We will provide the city council a copy of our 2017 year end summary report, but I wish to highlight just a few notable statistics this evening.

The City Attorney's office is involved in nearly every aspect of our city and provides legal advice and guidance to all departments and to the city council. Our attorney's office is

also responsible for prosecuting cases in the Justice Court. The City is a complex corporation with many legal issues, and I have great confidence in our legal team and complete trust in our new city Attorney, G.L. Critchfield.

I wish to acknowledge our award-winning Finance department, under the leadership of Danyce Steck. The Council has received an overview, and a copy of the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) prepared by the Finance Department staff. The CAFR is also available on our website for public review. This detailed report demonstrates the competency and proficiency of our financial team. Their work has also resulted in a recent upgrade in the city's bond credit rating from AA- to AA, which will save the city money on future bond payments.

Our Human Resources Department under the direction of Mike Terry provides support for the City's 391 full-time employees and 533 part-time and seasonal employees. In 2017, 41 full-time employees resigned or retired from the city, and 40 new full-time employees were hired.

The Parks and Recreation Department is headed by Kim Sorensen. In Murray City, our parks, recreation, and arts programs continue to be very popular and successful. Swim lessons was our biggest youth program with approximately 3,600 participants. The recreation staff offered 62 recreation programs in 2017. Daily admissions to the outdoor swimming pool totaled nearly 39,000 patrons. The new Pickle Ball courts were opened for use in October, and we are close to a resolution with the contractor's bonding company to finish the last details, including the lighting.

The Murray Park amphitheater remodel was completed and hosted a Grand Opening in August. Although delayed by a near catastrophic construction accident, the finished product is magnificent, and will host arts events for many years to come. We appreciate the Murray School District for assisting with hosting of five Arts in the Park productions that otherwise may have been cancelled due to the amphitheater construction delay.

A public art piece was installed in front of the amphitheater in October with 71 private donors providing the complete funding of \$15,000.

Our parks continue to be very heavily used by the public. There are a number of capital projects that we will once again be discussing during the upcoming budget process. I will also be asking the Council to fund a new Murray City Parks and Recreation Master Plan in the upcoming budget to replace our current outdated plan, which was completed in 1994.

One of the very popular treasures of the Parks and Recreation Department is our Heritage Center. I always enjoy the opportunities that I have to visit the Center. Just last week Councilmember Dale Cox and I had the experience of leading the YMCA song to the lunchtime crowd. I'm grateful that there was no video (at least not that I'm aware of)! The Heritage Center provides so many programs for our seniors from cooking, to painting, to recreation programs, to Bingo, and so on. There were nearly 11,000 meals served at the Heritage Center in 2017. Over 100 volunteers assist in providing programs and services. Those who visit the center love the great staff and enjoy being a part of the activities there. There is truly something for everyone.

Our Power Department under the leadership of General Manager Blaine Haacke, continues to do an outstanding job of providing reliable and reasonably priced power to approximately 2/3 of our city's geographical area. The power department is currently out of debt, and is implementing plans to upgrade the 4800 South sub-station, which is built on the old Murray City landfill, and has some settling issues that need to be resolved.

It's important to note that all residents of Murray benefit from the city-owned utility, even those who are not receiving electricity from Murray Power. The Power Department pays an annual dividend to the city General Fund, provides trimming of street trees, and subsidizes street lighting in the entire city, which benefits all residents.

I am proud that our power department management team is environmentally conscious as well. Approximately 40% of our power portfolio is from renewable resources, and we are continually looking at and planning for additional "green" generation, such as large-scale solar.

The Public Works Department, under the direction of Danny Astill, has completed its Water Master Plan, and has been working to complete the first phase of our well sustainability and capacity study. The rate study is complete, and reflects a number of capital improvements needed, including replacement of two wells, replacement of deficient pipes, addition of backup power to two wells, and other necessary improvements. The study also addressed the Legislature imposed requirement for a "tiered rate" to encourage conservation through higher rates for larger water users. The new rates were presented and discussed at the Committee of the Whole meeting on January 16, and are still pending final action by the city council.

Public Works has completed a long list of road construction and maintenance projects this past year from general maintenance to crack seals, overlays, and complete rebuilds. Funding for road maintenance, repair, and replacement continues to be a difficult challenge. Each year, the long list of projects exceeds the available funding. Our Public Works Department stretches our road maintenance funds each year to cover as many projects as possible.

This recent snow storm serves as a reminder of the outstanding job by our city personnel in responding to snow removal on our public streets. I appreciate their dedication and amazing response.

The Administrative and Development Service Department under the direction of Tim Tingey provides a wide range of services. In 2017 there were 445 new Commercial Business Licenses issued and 144 new Home-Based Business Licenses. The total number of licensed businesses in Murray City in 2017 was 3,951, an increase of 227 from 2016.

The Information Technology Division provides support for every city department plus the city council. This includes support for all types of devices and software, including (but not limited to) mobile phones, tablets, desktop computers, the public safety records systems, server support, and Tyler Munis modules. The Wi-Fi in Murray Park project was completed by the IT Division in 2017. The IT Division is a critical component of our day to day city operations.

A very popular service provided by our city is that of Passport processing. In 2017 the City Recorder's office processed 4,363 new passport applications, up from 2,506 the previous year, and 460 renewals, up from 63 in 2016.

The Building Division issued 2,010 building permits in 2017, an increase of 282 over 2016. I am enthusiastic about developments that are happening in Murray. The expansion of Fashion Place Mall with a number of new stores and restaurants continues to draw shoppers from around the region.

All cities, including Murray are under increased pressure for the development of additional high density housing. Our most recent master plan adopted last year identifies areas in our city, particularly near public transportation hubs, that are appropriate for these types of housing developments.

In addition to these high density developments, I am very excited to have several new low density single-family housing developments underway in Murray, ranging from 6,000 square foot minimum lot size up to 10,000 square foot minimum lots. These will

be wonderful new neighborhoods that will allow those in the market to purchase a new single family home in Murray. In addition, there will be approximately 40 additional pre-manufactured home sites added to the Winchester Estates which provides affordable housing opportunity to those over the age of 55.

In his state of the city address last year, Mayor Eyre stated “The redevelopment of the Murray City Center District, including preparations for a new city hall continues to be a top priority.” The redevelopment of the Murray City Center District is also a top priority of my administration. I am happy to report that despite the many challenges that have been presented, we are on the verge of that redevelopment becoming a reality. Environmental issues that have been an obstacle are on the brink of resolution, along with the property acquisition challenges that have slowed our progress. In the very near future we will be inviting the public to attend an open house to review our progress and make comments.

In May of 1978, the Murray Eagle Newspaper published an article titled “City Points to Downtown For Location of New City Center.” In the article, Mayor LaRell Muir discussed the building of a new city hall in the downtown redevelopment area west of State Street. After 40 years, it is time to stop the discussing and start the building. I believe that the construction of the new city hall in the redevelopment area will spawn new interest in private development on the remaining property, including the State Street frontage. Downtown Murray needs revitalization. The Desert Star Theater brings hundreds of people to the downtown area each week, and we need to compliment that outstanding amenity with other downtown attractions.

Construction plans for a new headquarters fire station are currently being reviewed by the Building Department. We are ready to begin construction as soon as the environmental concerns are mitigated and the purchase of the property from Utah Transit Authority is finalized. We believe we are getting close. Relocating the Fire Department Headquarters station to the corner of 4800 South and Box Elder Street will allow for the extension of Hanauer Street from 4800 South to Vine Street, which has been in the planning phase for many years. The city has acquired the Murray Mansion, the Murray Baptist Chapel (also known as the Murray Wedding Chapel), and the Murray Theater. We are hopeful that future funding sources will become available to restore these structures.

I recognize the emotional issue of historic preservation and support preservation efforts. However, I believe that we cannot sustain disinvestment in our downtown area.

Such disinvestment leads to blight. There may be fine lines between historic preservation, disinvestment, and private property rights, but all need due consideration as we proceed with redevelopment.

The Murray Library has had a year of accolades and challenges. For the first time, the library, under the supervision of Library Director Kim Fong, has been designated as a nationally starred library by Library Journal. This ranking is given to libraries, based on their annual budget and key statistical measures. But our library is so much more than mere statistics. Their mission of being your friendly, hometown library sets them apart. Last year nearly 355,000 patrons visited the library. The library presented 921 In-Library programs attended by nearly 32,000 patrons. There were over 1.5 million views of the Library's YouTube channel for children, "StoryTube."

But the library is bursting at the seams, and has no place to expand, largely due to the fact that it is located on School District property on the Hillcrest Jr. High campus. The Library Board recently voted to set aside funds for a library bond payment to facilitate a new library building in the future to be located near the new city hall. Of course, the budget will be subject to approval by the city council.

The Wasatch Front is currently enjoying a robust economy. The unemployment rate is hovering around 3.1 percent, a full 1 percent lower than the national rate. According to the Utah Department of Workforce Services, 38,800 jobs were added to the State's economy since December 2016. This trend has not only resulted in a labor shortage, but it has also pushed wages upward in some jobs. As a city, we are only as good as our employees, and it is imperative that our employees are compensated fairly within the market. The council approved funding in the current budget to conduct a city-wide compensation study. The final study results have been submitted by the consultant, and will be discussed with the city council as part of the preparation for the upcoming budget cycle.

One area of particular concern is in the Police Department. We have an outstanding police department, led by Chief Craig Burnett. I am extremely proud of our police department. However, our compensation for our officers is lagging behind other agencies around us. There is already a shortage of qualified candidates for police officers, and this issue is being amplified by the addition of 40 officers in Salt Lake City hired last month. One news outlet reported that 17 of the officers hired were lateral transfers from other police agencies. Murray City cannot afford to lose trained officers

to other departments over compensation issues. It is important to the health of our Police department to have a good mix of experienced officers to mentor and train our newer members. Good officers are in demand, and we need to respond to the market conditions to keep our officers. We are beginning to see a similar trend in the Fire Department as well.

Just to be clear, I want to make sure that all of our employees are fairly compensated for the job they do, but I'm highlighting the situation in the police department tonight because I believe it is a critical issue that needs our immediate attention.

Our police have seen an increase in homeless and transient-related calls throughout the year. This was due to a focused effort, known as Operation Rio Grande, which began in the downtown Salt Lake City area homeless shelters where most of the population was displaced, consequently moving those homeless into the surrounding cities. Our Police Department has begun tracking statistics and documenting homeless individuals, which they are continually encountering during calls for service. They have identified transient and homeless camps within the city and have noted a substantial increase. They continue to work to patrol and clean up these areas along with Code Enforcement personnel, Special Investigations and Community Services.

Our entire community has unfortunately seen an increase in petty crime over the past years, and Murray is no exception. I call upon all residents of Murray to do your part in discouraging these crimes in our neighborhoods by installing security lighting, watching out for your neighbors, and reporting suspicious activity to the police department. I believe we can cut down on the crimes if we will be diligent in helping the police.

We are fortunate to enjoy outstanding fire protection in Murray City, under the direction of Chief Gil Rodriguez. Emergency calls to our fire department continue to increase with nearly 7000 calls in 2017. Approximately 80% of these calls were for emergency medical response, with approximately 44% requiring ambulance transport. Our firefighters and paramedics are some of the best trained anywhere. Our contract Medical Director, Dr. Adam Balls is the Chairman of the IMC Emergency Department. Under his direction, our fire personnel receive on-going medical training and nationally recognized certifications.

This past December, when the State of California declared a state of emergency due to the raging wildfires, a request was sent out by Utah's governor to all Utah fire

departments asking for resources to assist California. Murray City deployed four firefighters and a wildland engine to aid in fighting the Thomas fire in southern California. There were approximately 80 firefighters who responded from Utah. The Thomas fire ended up being the largest fire in modern California history, growing to nearly 282,000 acres, destroying over 1000 structures and damaging another 280. This fire also resulted in the loss of life of a California firefighter, Cory Iverson.

Our Murray City Justice Court is led by Judge Paul Thompson and Court Administrator Mike Williams, and is touted as being a “model court.” The court is now nearly completely paperless. Filings from citations to motions are done by e-filing. Everything the judge needs to read or sign is electronic. Their case disposition time is well within the target period set by the State. Our court is ahead of schedule with compliance to the “6th Amendment” Commission’s recommendation for courts across the nation. In 2017, our Murray Justice Court disposed 10,519 cases. We are looking forward to the Court relocating in the new city hall building, as there have been numerous challenging maintenance issues with the court building.

It’s a little known fact that Murray City had its own professional baseball team in 1914, the Murray Infants, part of the Union Association League. The team folded after one season when the league collapsed. It may also be a little known fact that Murray City is currently home to a professional women’s football team, the Utah Falcoz. The two-time defending national champions of the International Women’s Football League (IWFL) make their home field here in Murray at Cottonwood High School. This is real, full contact, tackle football! These women athletes are dedicated, amazing, and fun to watch. I invite you to join me in attending their home opener vs. the Seattle Majestics on Saturday April 14 at 3:00 pm at Cottonwood High School.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this address, the state of the city of Murray City is strong and sound, but not without challenges. The Utah Legislature is currently in session, and we are fortunate to have a very good relationship with our legislators who represent Murray. But every year there is a push from some lawmakers to limit or take away local control from cities. As a city, we must fundamentally oppose such attempts at changes to the state laws that weaken the ability of local government to make local decisions, particularly zoning and land use issues. We must also oppose the continued attempts at redistribution of sales tax dollars. Also, there are good intentioned

attempts to exempt an increasing number of properties from the tax roles with their unintended consequences. One of our significant challenges is that a full third of the properties in Murray City are tax exempt, yet require police protection, fire protection, road maintenance, and other city services. Our revenues are not keeping pace with the costs of providing services. These are issues that we will be tackling together over the coming months and years.

I'm proud of the fact that Murray is a transparent city. We conduct our public business in the light of day. Last June the Salt Lake Tribune reported that Murray City closed only 4% of council meetings in 2016, the lowest in the County. The live streaming of council meetings initiated in October of 2015 has been a success in my opinion, and I intend to extend that access and transparency to Planning and Zoning Commission meetings this year, subject to council approval of funding.

I want to state this evening that I support a more walkable and rideable community. We will be adding bicycle lanes to 700 West from 5400 South to Winchester Street this coming year. We will be adding sidewalks and bike lanes on east Vine Street over the next two years. We are nearing completion of the Canal Trail improvements from Fontaine Bleu to Wheeler Farm.

Also tonight I announce my intent to bring the Green Bike program to Murray City, particularly around transit stops, Fashion Place Mall, and Intermountain Medical Center.

Many of you may have noticed areas around our city that are consistently cluttered with trash and debris, particularly along public streets. I intend to roll out a Murray City Adopt-A-Street program to enable organizations, businesses, and individuals to volunteer to help maintain and beautify the streets of Murray. There are also certain gateways to our city that can be aesthetically improved. I want Murray to be a place we can all be proud to call home!

In conclusion, I am optimistic about the future of Murray City, and I hope you are too. I look forward to many changes and improvements in the coming years as we all work together.