

State of the City Speech

Mayor Patrick Hume

March 26, 2009

Thank you for the warm welcome, I can honestly say that is the nicest introduction I've ever received as a mayor about to give a State of the City address. I would also like to thank the Elk Grove Chamber of Commerce for bringing us together tonight and providing this forum. I appreciate the opportunity to be here, and applaud your tireless commitment to the Elk Grove business community.

Before we start, I'd like to thank my fellow dignitaries who are joining us to hear about the state of Elk Grove. I'd also like to welcome folks who are tuning in to the live webcast from home. Thanks to a dedicated wireless connection from Frontier Communications.

Distinguished Chamber members, honorable dignitaries, ladies and gentlemen, let me begin tonight by taking a moment to honor the influence of some people who have helped weave the fabric of Elk Grove for a long time.

First, I'd like to recognize the support of my family. The legacy they began and the commitment for Elk Grove they've shown paved the way for me to be here tonight. My mom, Janet, a longtime chamber and Soroptimist member who also served multiple terms on the Elk Grove Planning and Advisory Council. My uncle, Mike Guttridge, past president of the chamber and a director on the Elk Grove Adult Community Training board. And of course, their father, my grandfather, Jim Guttridge, another past president of the chamber, charter member of the Rotary Club of Elk Grove and two decade trustee of the Elk Grove Unified School District. Public service was also instilled in me from the other side of my family by my Grandfather Harry Hume who served as city manager of Chico in the mid to late thirties. And, of course, my father Harlan who died in the service of his country, the ultimate lesson in sacrifice. Thank you for indulging me for a moment to pay tribute to my heritage.

I'd also like to pay tribute to what has been a beacon in the heritage of Elk Grove.

Please join me in recognizing Roy Herburger, Mary Lewis and their son David tonight. This year marks 50 years of their ownership of the Elk Grove Citizen and the 100 year anniversary of the Citizen chronicling the life and times, people and places of this community.

The Citizen traces its humble beginnings to February of 1909, when a yearly subscription was just two dollars, Teddy Roosevelt was in the White House, and when Elk Grove's hard-working farmers faithfully tended to their row crops and orchards. The nation was searching for recovery from a recession, but in Elk Grove the foundation of our community was taking form, driven by a pioneer spirit. Oh how things change, yet how they remain the same.

For it's a spirit and attitude that is alive and well on the Elk Grove City Council today. I'd like to acknowledge and thank my fellow Council members for their commitment and leadership as Elk Grove ushers in a new era. An era that embraces transparency. One that rewards community partnerships. And fosters public service.

City of Elk Grove
State of the City
March 2009

Just as it was a century ago, we are a community that overcomes adversity with dogged determination. Just as it was a century ago in Elk Grove, we are taking care of the business at hand, while keeping an eye on the horizon of tomorrow.

There is a Chinese curse/blessing that says “may you live in interesting times.” Boy do we.

Tonight I’m proud to share with you the state of our City. What we’ve accomplished. What we’re doing to make our streets safer and our neighborhoods more connected. What we’re doing to grow the economy and help shrink commutes. And what we’re hoping to pass along from this generation to the next.

As we look at each of these issues, we’re mindful of the fact that troubling economic times hang over everything we do and will drive many of the decisions we have to make.

It’s a reality faced by many of our neighbors struggling to pay the bills and put food on the table, as unemployment reaches double digits and words like furlough and layoffs become far too familiar in the vocabulary of our daily lives.

It could go without saying that City Hall is not impervious to this unprecedented economic crisis. Like so many families and businesses throughout this city, we are tightening our belts too, and finding ways to do more with less. But at the same time, we are not compromising our commitments to those we serve.

Just like cities throughout the nation, the City of Elk Grove has certainly felt the impacts of this recession. We’re feeling the pinch of higher unemployment rates and lower sales tax revenues. Rising state taxes and falling home values. Foreclosures have robbed some of our residents of their part of the American dream. Last year, the City issued an average of 22 permits for single-family homes each month. In 2004, that number was over 300. When things turn around, hopefully we can find an equilibrium that accommodates healthy sustained growth, vital to fuel our economic engine.

Fortunately, the City of Elk Grove is well-positioned in the long run to rebound from this downturn, thanks to keen market foresight and prudent financial planning. As I’ll talk about later tonight, our budget is balanced and over the past several years we have been building healthy rainy day funds. Funds we will try our best not to tap, though we realize these are rainy days.

If there’s any silver lining to this economic crisis it’s this: as a government, the slowdown presents opportunities alongside its challenges. We are finding new efficiencies and tracking successes and possibilities for improvement. While we tackle the problems of today, we’re also using this reprieve to catch our breath after a period of extraordinary growth to carefully and thoroughly plan for the future. It is a time to look inward. And onward.

This is a real chance to reflect on the past eight years as a City, and begin to plan for the future generations who will live here. And if we do it right, generations who will work and play here, too.

Like those farmers who founded this amazing community, we will collectively continue to plant seeds and invest here, because we know that we too will weather this storm. April showers do bring May flowers and when the storm has passed, we’ll be ready to blossom again as the vibrant community we are.

Recovery is already underway.

It has just been announced that we will receive over \$7.6 million in Federal stimulus funds. These monies will be used to replace aging buses, repair damaged roads, improve highway access and upgrade our ability to move traffic throughout the city. It will continue a practice of putting money to work.

As a Mayor, I'm very proud of some of our recent infrastructure improvements. But as a resident, and someone who also benefits from them, I am truly thankful.

Last year, the City finished the reconstruction of the Grant Line Interchange. And Sheldon Interchange will be completed this year. Both are incredible accomplishments for a city of our size.

The City invested more than 160 million dollars combined in these projects – an investment that will pay substantial short term and long term dividends.

As a frequent user of the Grant Line Interchange, I know first-hand the frustration of undersized and outdated bottlenecks. I know that for the folks who use the Sheldon Interchange they can relate all too well. But trust me; relief is just around the corner.

Currently one of the region's largest active capital improvement projects, the much-needed, overdue improvements on Sheldon Road will improve the flow of traffic while enhancing safety for motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians. It will also function as a vital lifeline to support planned growth in the area, and meet the existing needs of the residents who use it. I'm proud to tell you that currently the project is coming in under budget and ahead of schedule.

It took just two short years to finish the new-and-improved Grant Line Interchange... a capital improvement project that transformed one of the oldest and most antiquated interchanges on Highway 99 into a showpiece of modern transportation planning.

Complete with six lanes and the capacity to add more in the future, the interchange serves as an attractive landmark at the southern entry point to our city. And it offers limitless economic development opportunities given the planned future development in the adjacent area.

Which naturally begs the question about plans for the Elk Grove Promenade mall. Unfortunately today, we don't have an answer. Developers have given us notice that the project will be delayed again, with an opening date yet to be determined.

But we do know that given the level of investment already made, there is good assurance that a mall will one day grace the site. And, fortunately, there is a development agreement in place that rides with the property which determines that we will get a mall substantially similar to what we have been promised. We look forward to one day enjoying that opportunity to keep sales tax dollars in our City and provide more jobs in our community.

However, the delay in the mall does not mean the area is lifeless. Quite the opposite is true. We're seeing other developers continue to make investments around the mall site, including plans for two hotels and more than 100,000 square feet of future retail use.

City of Elk Grove
State of the City
March 2009

Kaiser Permanente, for one, has big plans for the area. Elk Grove's largest health care provider recently purchased property near the future Promenade mall development— a big first step toward the expansion of its health care system in our city.

Catholic Healthcare West is also making a commitment to Elk Grove, and has finalized the purchase of 30 acres of land that will one day be transformed into a full service medical campus.

I can also share that a significant investment by Sutter Health is underway on land adjacent to their current complex. This project will add medical office buildings and another new hospital.

During these trying economic times, healthcare remains a bright spot in Elk Grove's future. It's an industry that offers high paying employment opportunities, improves our jobs-housing balance... all the while providing vital services for the quality of life for our residents.

It's that high quality of life that defines Elk Grove.

Even with an uncertain economy, we're welcoming new amenities in our city limits that are geared toward our family-oriented community.

This winter, the City of Elk Grove celebrated the grand opening of the new Elk Grove Library at the corner of Elk Grove Boulevard and Elk Grove-Florin Road. Many people came together to make this library happen, and I'd like to take a moment to thank the Sacramento Public Library Authority for their commitment and dedication to this project.

This beautiful, state-of-the-art facility offers countless resources and activities for our residents. It stands as a reminder that oftentimes, the best things in life are free but knowledge is truly priceless. The building represents community. And affords quality time.

It's a place where you'll find a group of friends discussing the latest novel in their book club. Or students cramming for a test in a quiet corner. Or even Elk Grove's youngest residents huddling in a circle for a favorite story-time book.

In fact it's been so successful that the only room for improvement is to somehow provide more parking. A good problem to have. And one that we will try and solve.

On the other side of town, people of all ages are enjoying one of the newest and biggest active sports centers in the region. Last year, Olympic Barrington Partnership masterfully converted nearly 200,000 square feet of empty warehouse space on Laguna Boulevard into Strikes Family Entertainment, home to billiards and arcades, 44 bowling lanes and a restaurant, offering active healthy refuge for Elk Grove families. This great addition will continue to grow as a sports and fitness destination.

So while development has no doubt slowed down, we're still seeing investment.

But we know that in order to continue attracting new activity, we must make City Hall a friendly place to do business.

Today we're cutting the red tape, and indeed making customer service a priority. We're searching for new ways to reduce fees and streamline processes. Because we get it. These are hard times for many of our businesses, and you need strong support from your local government.

Last year, the City commissioned a comprehensive review of its Development Services Department. This thorough study led to a blueprint for making Elk Grove more user-friendly, efficient and accountable.

One of the first— and one of the most important— steps was to bring three critical positions inside the Development Services department. This year we welcomed the City's first in-house Planning Director, Public Works Director and Building Official.

We have dedicated staff running a comprehensive customer service program, meeting monthly with the development community to discuss ways the City can better support job creators.

We implemented a single point of contact dedicated to walking customers through our application process and remains available to help them every step of the way. I'd like to take just a moment to mention Heather Ross, who fills that position, as she was recognized at our annual Appreciation Dinner as the City's current employee of the year

We're also rolling out new enterprise software that will allow plans to be submitted and reviewed electronically with just the click of a mouse, saving both time and money.

In addition to making the process easier, the city is committed to finding cost savings for our customers too. We're offering fee deferrals that are interest-free for three years. We're taking a hard look at lowering our impact fees. We're introducing economic development incentive programs. We're doing everything possible to ensure that we are competitive and fair. To ensure that we reward those who would bring new jobs and new sources of revenue to our City.

Yes, we are preparing our community for economic recovery, with doors wide open to the new jobs that will be created when a bad economy makes way for the good.

It is imperative that we do so.

Each day, tens of thousands of Elk Grove residents pile onto Interstate 5 and Highway 99 to make their way to jobs outside of our community. In fact, for every two workers who live in Elk Grove, right now there's only one available job.

For example, 10 percent of state employees in the Sacramento region live in Elk Grove. Yet only a few hundred state jobs exist within our current city limits. It's an imbalance of housing to jobs that only leads to traffic congestion, poor air quality, and time away from family.

We need to address this problem not just for Elk Grove, but for the good of the entire Sacramento region. And we understand that simply wanting jobs here is not enough to make it happen.

That's why the City Council has made it a top priority to correct our jobs/housing imbalance.

City of Elk Grove
State of the City
March 2009

The City of Elk Grove has made a significant financial contribution toward and wholeheartedly supports the efforts of the Economic Development Corporation. We share the goal of bringing 1,500 new high quality jobs to this city in the next five years, while helping retain and grow existing businesses.

Targeting medical, clean tech and education providers, as well as state offices, the EDC has been stepping up efforts to market Elk Grove as an outstanding place to locate and grow your business.

But even with the most intense infill development, we know that correcting the imbalance of jobs to housing within our current borders will prove to be very difficult.

That's a primary driving force behind the City of Elk Grove's effort to expand our geographic sphere of influence. We need to thoughtfully study and carefully consider every possible option for creating more jobs that are closer to home, while permanently protecting prime agricultural land and open space for future generations.

Think for a moment. Will Elk Grove's young people be able to find jobs close to home? How can our community identify space for major new employment centers in mixed-use office campuses? Is there room in our future for a four-year university?

All of these critical questions and more can be addressed as part of a comprehensive regional planning process. Through our application for an expanded sphere of influence, we've begun the dialogue. We are taking the time now to look with as long of a lens as possible and to consider broadly as to what the future landscape will be. It is time to start thinking with the end in mind, rather than 10, 15 or even 50 year segments.

I know this isn't a popular notion with some communities, and I know there have been rumors spreading about the City developing in rural areas.

So let me be crystal clear.

The city of Elk Grove is committed to preserving unique rural communities. Our Sheldon area is a rare example in California of a city recognizing the importance of a rural lifestyle within city limits and putting together the tools and policies to protect it. We are dedicated to maintaining the natural beauty and habitat of surrounding open spaces. And we respect our farming heritage and the importance of the agricultural industry.

Working together, we can preserve our surroundings, sustain our communities and create the jobs we so desperately need and provide amenities we really deserve. None of these things are mutually exclusive, and we shouldn't wait.

We owe it to those future generations to solve the problems of today, so we can focus more of our time and energy on what Elk Grove will look like tomorrow.

We can't ever stop planning for the future. Right now, we're in the early stages of planning a state-of-the-art, city-defining icon: the Elk Grove Civic Center.

City of Elk Grove
State of the City
March 2009

More than 75 acres of land on the south side of Elk Grove Blvd. will one day be home to a new Civic Center and community park. With public participation at the heart of the process, the City has surveyed thousands of our residents to determine what types of uses and amenities should be included. Cultural amenities, recreational amenities and business amenities.

Following the community's lead, we'll be working with internationally renowned architect Zaha Hadid to begin design studies. Having a virtual "who's who" on board as designer positions this as a project that may someday draw visitors to our city.

We're also looking at strategic and creative funding options through public-private partnerships.

This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to plan an iconic, cutting-edge landmark for Elk Grove. A center that promises economic development and tourism opportunities; that will serve as a hub for our cultural life. Literally in the geographic heart of our City.

Also on the topic of planning for the future, the Elk Grove City Council established an important commission charged with creating a blueprint for the future of our city government.

The Charter Commission is in the process of drafting the City's potential new governing charter; a new "constitution" of sorts, that offers us more freedom from state influence over how we govern ourselves.

Right now, the Commission is exploring a wide variety of issues ranging from selection of the mayor and election reform, to the number of council districts and how public works projects go out for bid. After diligent work by the commission and further consideration by the City Council, we expect to have this charter on a ballot before voters next year.

While the Charter Commission takes a long look at the City Hall of tomorrow, I'd like to share with you what we're working on today. I can guarantee you there is no moss growing at City Hall.

As we've discussed tonight, the crew at City Hall is working tirelessly to weather this economic storm. I applaud our city staff for their hard work, commitment and diligence; for their creative approaches to stretching dollars and cutting costs without cutting corners. And I couldn't be more confident in our City Manager Laura Gill to lead the charge, with her extensive background in finance and unparalleled ability to develop and manage budgets and maintain fiscal stability.

True, our City has a relatively healthy budget – especially compared to the economic hardships so many other municipalities are facing. Thanks to a hybrid contract model and prudent fiscal planning, we've been able to stay out of the red.

Two years ago, our City Council and staff saw that rainy days were ahead. So we got to work. We took a zero-based approach to setting our budget. We reviewed project expenses line by line and dollar by dollar. We slashed wasteful spending, while making sure that essential City programs and services were not compromised.

We've taken a few temperature checks throughout the year and managed to stay on budget, while holding onto a small surplus to last us through June.

City of Elk Grove
State of the City
March 2009

While there are certainly tough budgetary times ahead, the residents of Elk Grove should take comfort in knowing their tax dollars are in good hands, and that bright minds are watching over every dime of the taxpayers' money. We are taking fiduciary responsibility seriously.

It's this type of foresight and prudence that earned our City's Finance Department two prestigious awards last year – in fact the highest national recognition offered in the area of governmental accounting and reporting.

Transparency, especially with respect to taxpayer accountability is very important, but we understand that not everyone has the time to pore over hundreds of pages of spreadsheets. That's why this year we made it easier than ever for residents to understand the City's annual budget by issuing our first ever "Financial Report to the Community."

Because it's critical that our taxpayers understand our budgets, and that they are involved in the process. It's their money. And their City. And needs to reflect their priorities.

Recognizing this, the City of Elk Grove held a series of budget town hall meetings this winter. It's even more important in times like these, that the voices of our community have a say in where their tax dollars go. Because more than ever, every dollar counts.

And if there's one thing we can all do to make our dollars work for this community, it's to shop local, shop Elk Grove. Gas up here before you leave. Grab your groceries in Elk Grove on your way home. Think local before shopping online. You'd be surprised what a difference that can make.

Shopping locally benefits the entire community – it keeps tax dollars here, funding important services. It keeps businesses here, provides jobs and benefits community schools and non-profits. That's why the City is joining forces with the Elk Grove Chamber of Commerce, the Herburgers, Frontier Communications and the entire Elk Grove business community in launching a community-wide shop local campaign, coming soon to an economy near you.

This year, sales tax revenue will account for about \$17.5 million – roughly 36% of the City's General Fund budget. That money goes directly toward essential programs and services like public safety... our government's most critical responsibility to the residents and businesses we serve.

Elk Grove is home to some of the finest law enforcement professionals, representing the "best of the best" in public safety. We are so fortunate to have Elk Grove's new Police Chief Robert Lehner at the helm, bringing an impressive blend of experience and education to his post.

Believe me, he has the tools to take the Elk Grove Police Department to the next level.

It's remarkable to think the department was formed just three short years ago. Today, we have more officers on our streets than ever before, and a citywide decrease of major crimes like burglary and car thefts.

And in the event of a major emergency, the Elk Grove Police Department is prepared. We hope and pray we never have to experience an event like Columbine or Virginia Tech in this community. But it is prudent and responsible that we prepare for the worst.

Last year, the Elk Grove Police Department teamed up with the Elk Grove Unified School District and law enforcement agencies throughout the region to stage Elk Grove's first full-scale exercise, testing our local first responders' ability to react to a large scale crisis.

More than 800 volunteers joined us in simulating an active shooter scenario at Laguna Creek High School, demonstrating that Elk Grove is a community that cares about our youth and the safety of this city.

In fact, partnering with the community is the bedrock principle for the Elk Grove Police Department in how it carries out its mission.

The EGPD wholeheartedly embraces community policing strategies, and works in tandem with the public to address public safety. This grassroots approach to policing allows our officers to get to know the unique needs of the diverse neighborhoods throughout Elk Grove, and allows our residents to help be our eyes and ears.

The PD recently put in place a powerful new tool that will significantly impact the safety of our young people. Four new speed-calming radar signs near local schools will dramatically increase driver awareness and compliance with posted speed limits. Coupled with our red light cameras, we're helping promote safer driving on our City's streets.

We've also implemented a program whereby residents can contact the City if they have a dangerous situation they think can be cured by some sort of traffic calming measure. We can't know the hazards in every neighborhood, so we're making it easier for the neighborhoods to come to us.

Yes, the Elk Grove Police Department is in the community.

The Police Department also has more than 50 dedicated volunteers serving our community in partnership and pride. Since the program began, the volunteers have logged more than 95 thousand hours of their own time in helping the department with everything from vacation checks to public education. They are to be commended for their dedication to our community.

Those volunteers are such a powerful resource for us. In fact, this year, the Community Enhancement Department is calling on volunteers to help maintain the appearance of our City. Staff will team up with volunteers to educate residents about the City's nuisance code, and to help keep the City free of blight – an unfortunate, but very real byproduct of foreclosures.

That's another topic on everyone's mind these days, and an issue that without a doubt has had an impact on our community.

Foreclosures have threatened families' dream of homeownership and have increased nuisances like abandoned homes and unmaintained yards. But we're finding new ways to help families through these hardships, and now have more tools to address foreclosures and crack down on blight.

The City recently received 2.3 million dollars from HUD's Neighborhood Stabilization Program to buy, fix and sell foreclosure properties, and to help low and moderate income buyers with down payment

assistance. This program should stabilize neighborhoods and stem any decline of surrounding home values.

We've also partnered with the State of California to offer tools and resources on our Website to help residents facing foreclosure. Obviously, we'd rather help a family stay in a home, than be faced with the task of filling it with a new one.

Throughout Elk Grove, volunteers and leaders are joining forces with community enhancement and police to tackle these issues head on.

This year, we've dedicated a full time staff person to address illegal dumping and protect the quality of our neighborhoods. We've also increased our street sweeping schedule from monthly to weekly, keeping our streets and drains cleaner than ever before.

And our Community Enhancement Department will be hitting Elk Grove streets this spring, turning up the heat on blight and eyesores throughout the City during the Spring Cleaning Program. Inspectors will comb every street in the city looking for violations like abandoned vehicles, abandoned homes, unmaintained yards or junk and debris.

If we all work together – residents and businesses, staff and volunteers – we can stave off blight, and let our community pride come through.

As a longtime resident, and now Mayor, I know firsthand the strength of Elk Grove as a community.

It's that tight-knit sense of community that continues to make Elk Grove a great place to call home. We continue to see neighbors joining forces with the City, coming together to address the issues that matter most to our community.

Last year, the City held the first-of-its-kind Neighborhood Leaders Summits, where dozens of community leaders representing thousands of Elk Grove residents joined for one common purpose – connecting our community for the betterment of our community.

From foreclosures to police and code enforcement issues, neighborhood leaders from all parts of the city exchanged ideas with Elk Grove City Council members and City staff – sharing resources, and discussing ways to improve our quality of life.

Getting in the trenches at the grassroots level is a key to strengthening communities. And it's imperative the City tap the many abilities of our residents to rally with their neighbors. Because a safer and stronger Elk Grove is built on the foundation of strong neighborhoods.

That's why the City recently introduced an interactive tool on our website that connects residents with local homeowners associations and neighborhood groups. By simply entering a street address on the easy-to-use Web page, residents can get connected to their local group with a click of the mouse. And it didn't cost the City a cent to produce. An example of doing more with less, and using existing resources wisely – creatively – to better serve our community.

Thanks to new technology it's easier than ever to offer new tools for residents and businesses to connect with City Hall. All at little or no cost to our bottom line... a phrase everyone likes to hear these days.

From online utility bill pay to interactive, real-time maps we're finding quick and easy ways to do business with City Hall... from the convenience of a computer or cell phone, 24-7-365.

Indeed, our Online City Hall offers a toolbox chock full of economic development resources. You can now search for available commercial properties and find demographic information around potential sites.

Apply for a new business license. Monitor your building permits and inspections online. Track the status of your planning and engineering projects.

We're using the Web to enhance public safety, providing up-to-date information from the Police Department to check traffic, search for sex offenders, and monitor crime in our neighborhoods. And cell phone users can now text message the EGPD to anonymously report a crime.

You can also use our website to stay up to speed on our local government... Sign up for email alerts and text message alerts to hear the latest from City Hall. Watch our Council and Planning meetings streaming on our Web site. Or even this speech.

Our priority is making it as easy as possible to get informed— and stay informed— in our local government.

And more online information translates into less paper and waste... helping to reduce Elk Grove's carbon footprint... another priority of our City Council.

We're stepping up efforts to become energy efficient... benefitting the environment and our bottom line.

The City is a proud partner of the Sacramento Area Green Partnership – examining our greenhouse gas emissions.

And we're partnering with SMUD to offer free building permits for solar energy systems... Our City was the first City in the region to participate in this environmentally-friendly program.

Meanwhile, we're looking at our own City Hall to ensure that our facilities are running as efficiently as possible, and we've dedicated staff to green technology and environmentally sustainable construction, like the City's new library.

Keeping cars off streets and increasing the use of public transportation is another nod to the environment and a testament to the City's award winning transit system.

Last year, more than 1.3 million passengers used e-tran, with more than 20 thousand taking advantage of e-van, setting records and raising the bar for transit. We added 14 new commuter routes, all the while maintaining our 98 percent on time performance.

City of Elk Grove
State of the City
March 2009

With one eye on customer service and another on the City's bottom line, we will restructure operations to close a structural budget deficit, and start a new transit services contract to make sure we're getting the most bang for our buck.

We're also exploring potential public-private partnerships for a permanent Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) fueling facility... allowing our drivers to gas up locally, while reducing emissions and improving air quality.

Also contributing to a greener Elk Grove is our City's Integrated Waste Department. This past year alone, we collected more than 12 thousand tons of recyclable materials; 60 thousand pounds of electronic waste and kept more than 1.3 billion batteries out of landfills.

Our efforts pay real dividends. The City earned a grant for nearly a quarter million dollars from the California Integrated Waste Management Board to develop facilities that promote recycling and help protect the environment. We've also received grants to fund a free curbside Used Oil Collection program and other recycling programs for businesses and school sites.

Our staff really is committed to maintaining and launching new, innovative programs that promote recycling.

On tap for the year ahead are forward-thinking programs that will increase recycling at local businesses and construction sites. Plus, curbside collection of e-waste and medical sharps makes it easier than ever to dispose of waste that doesn't belong in our landfills.

After collecting two tons of athletic shoes last year in a citywide recycling program, we're back at it again. This year, we'll once again collect old athletic shoes for recycling and reincarnation into basketball and tennis courts, soccer fields and running tracks. This program not only turns trash into treasure, it creates a very real buzz about recycling.

I want to thank the CSD and Elk Grove Unified School District for being such solid partners in this program.

We can do amazing things when organizations unite for one common cause.

And think about that as it relates to Elk Grove. We are a passionate community – if you don't believe me, come to a Council meeting some time.

We're home to organizations with powerful resources. And during these troubled economic times, there's a real opportunity to leverage those resources, and do more with less, through partnerships.

We've done amazing things when we come together for the betterment of this City.

Last year, nearly 30 nonprofits and community organizations gathered at City Hall to educate residents about the many free programs and services available to the community.

The Elk Grove Police Department recently teamed up with volunteers from the community to form a Police Activities League. This youth crime prevention program gives Elk Grove's young people an

City of Elk Grove
State of the City
March 2009

opportunity to get involved with local law enforcement, provides positive alternatives and shows them their true potential.

And ten exceptional teens serve as appointees to the newly created Youth Commission, looking for new ways to improve the quality of life for Elk Grove's young people. Because improving the quality of life for our youth is truly an investment in the future of this community.

And that's exactly what we should be talking about. The future.

When we market Elk Grove we let folks know that we're a nursery for the entrepreneurial spirit. That we're dreamers, pioneers and risk takers who grow jobs and economies from kernels of ideas.

We invest in our infrastructure. In public safety. And in our quality of life.

We're known for our award-winning schools and our first rate parks. Our small town feel and our first class amenities. We celebrate our diversity. We embrace our history.

Just as those who came before us, we continue to build a solid foundation for the future, mindful of the irons we have in the fire.

Obviously, we can't ignore the economic realities that we currently face. We have some very real challenges to overcome. But our City is strong. Our community is resilient. I am confident that these times and these challenges will demonstrate the hearty resolve of Elk Grove. It will test our mettle and show us what we're made of.

Yes, we will tackle the challenges of today and the opportunities of tomorrow with equal vigor.

We will renew that pioneer spirit. And we'll plant seeds for the future. Because that's just who we are and where we've come from.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I can't express to you in words what an honor it is to serve as Mayor of my hometown. Thank you for being here this evening or for tuning in at home. And thank you for everything you do to make Elk Grove the special place that it is. The clouds will part eventually, the sun will again shine and we will harvest the fruits of our labor.

The state of our city is perseverant.

Thank you again, goodnight.

(Partial text)