

Mayor's State of the City 2015
"One Santa Fe, One City, One Family"

Good evening. To all the members of the Santa Fe family, welcome.

Thank you so much for being here with us at our beautiful Community Convention Center.

How about this beautiful American Flag artwork? I want to recognize the 5th grade class at Acequia Madre and the students of the Santa Fe School for the Arts and Sciences for their incredible artwork which you can see behind me on stage, and highlighting the recycling stations we have set up around the outside the room.

I want to thank the New Mexico School for the Arts and NDI for those performances. And thank you to Chloe Fox, a student at Santa Fe Prep who is part of Santa Fe's Transgendered community, for leading the pledges. Chloe, this may seem like a small thing, but I want you to know I'm introducing a resolution to require every single-stall bathroom in Santa Fe to be gender-neutral. The message I am hearing from the transgendered community is clear, and we will do everything we can to guarantee safe spaces for all Santa Feans.

I'd also like to recognize Santa Fe's veterans' community. Can I ask all the veterans here tonight to stand. Moving forward, Santa Fe will continue our tradition of honoring your service and sacrifice. I am asking the City Council to join me in creating a Veterans' Affairs Commission that will serve as a clearinghouse, connecting veterans to services they need.

And, with the Council's support, we will also make our best discount – the same we give to our seniors – available to all Veterans at all City recreational facilities. For disabled veterans, those facilities will be open free of charge.

And we can go further, making Santa Fe part of a statewide system of free public transportation for veterans who need to get from Santa Fe to the VA Hospital in Albuquerque. Both the Albuquerque buses and the New Mexico Rail Runner are currently free for all veterans, and it's time we made Santa Fe Trails free to every Santa Fe veteran as well.

Thank you, also, to the 1,513 hard-working City of Santa Fe employees who make this city run, and the City Councilors joining us here tonight: Peter Ives, Patti Bushee, Carmichael Dominguez, Joseph Maestas, Sig Lindell, Chris Rivera, and Ron Trujillo. Some of us are old friends.

A few of us have been electoral opponents, and if you trust what you read in the papers, we may be again soon.

But I think I stand with most of Santa Fe when I say I'm glad those days are behind us and should remain there. Our legacy, and our ability to hold on to the trust the voters placed in us, will be based on our willingness to leave old divisions and future rivalries aside and move forward on the vision that voters overwhelmingly endorsed last March.

We've already done some great things together, and I am committed to keeping that momentum going.

Looking out at this crowd tonight, it means so much to me to see so many friends...

40 years ago, it was my father, Mayor George Gonzales, laying out his vision for our city, as so many mayors have. Dad, just so it doesn't go unsaid, I am so proud that I have been able to follow in your footsteps.

My mother, Celine, the rock of our family, my brothers Estevan and Pat, whose hard work allowed me to go out and chase my dreams. I know Anthony is also here, smiling down on us tonight.

And of course my daughters, who lucked out since it's a school night, and couldn't be here to watch their Dad give another boring speech.

They are, in every definition of the word, my family.

But not my only one. We are, all of us, part of a larger family. Sons and daughters and brothers and sisters of Santa Fe.

It can be tempting to find or to focus on things that divide us. South or East side, old roots or new immigrant, Anglo or Hispanic, rich or poor. But I have a different vision, and we will not allow old divisions to keep us from reaching for new horizons.

At our best, we can truly be one Santa Fe. One family, one community. Our fortunes and fates are tied up with one another's. And that's how it has always been here. For 400 years this community has struggled and thrived, bringing cultures together, clashing, growing and adapting to overcome challenge after challenge. Forging the community we inherited and building the family we now share with every Santa Fean.

In thousands of conversations, on the campaign trail, in town hall meetings, at the City Council, in Meet-the-Mayor one-on-ones, that vision of one Santa Fe, where every Santa Fean can unleash their full potential and see the fruits of their labor, has taken shape.

The spirit of one Santa Fe was there when I sat down with executives and nurses from our community hospital in pursuit of common ground. It helped us avoid a strike and find compromise on safe staffing that benefits us all.

It was there this summer as our People to the Plaza initiative brought locals back to the Plaza for music, food and fiestas. To a homegrown Santa Fean like me, it was truly a special time to see so many locals re-connecting to a plaza that has always represented the heart of this community – the place you went to buy new shoes for the start of school, or grab lunch at the Woolworth's counter, or like my grandfathers, catch up with old friends and be reminded of the incredible history of this place.

The spirit of one Santa Fe was there at Fire Station 7 as I stood with Councilor Chris Rivera and a coalition of healthcare partners, introducing the Community Protection Initiative to take care of the most vulnerable Santa Feans.

It was there when George R.R. Martin dedicated new space where MeowWolf will expose a whole new generation of Santa Feans to the arts.

It was there when we unveiled brand new solar installations at the Chavez Center and the Water building, launched the Climate Action Task Force and introduced the first-ever Electric Vehicles in the City's fleet.

It's been there, month after month, as crime in our city has fallen to record lows.

And it's there, will continue to be there, at the grand openings of dozens of small businesses that are moving us down the long road to economic recovery.

That vision, that spirit, will remain at the center of everything we are doing together: bringing our economy into the 21st century and unleashing the full potential of an entrepreneurial Santa Fe. Creating pathways up for our kids that keep their talent, vision and energy here. Re-dedicating ourselves to the vision of a sustainable Santa Fe, a renewable energy future, and a reduced carbon footprint.

We have our challenges, like any community moving forward in new ways. I see them clearly, and I am dedicated to making sure we face them heads high and eyes open. Poverty, especially, is the cloud that darkens even our brightest accomplishments. It impacts all of us, rich and poor alike, a constant reminder that we can do better.

A lot has changed since my Dad was Mayor. You see when I grew up in Santa Fe, we never doubted that this was a place where opportunity was ours for the taking, where we could one day live and work and raise our families and see our dreams come true.

Now in Santa Fe, in our community, there are children going to bed hungry. Every day, there are families working full-time jobs who are still barely able to get by. For too many, the dream of building a better life is out of reach. A child born to low-income parents is ten times more likely to stay low-income, and the gap is widening. Access to education, college graduation rates, wages for the average worker...pick a measure of equality, and we are falling behind.

The idea that a parents' struggles and sacrifices will lead to greater opportunity for their children must be more than just a feel-good notion – it's the cornerstone of the dream that our ancestors - Native, Hispanic, and Anglo alike – have been building for 400 years. Yet this generation is one of the first that expects to be worse off than their parents' – both in education and economic status.

We cannot be a community that lets its most vulnerable citizens fall through the cracks. Looking ahead, the struggle to make one Santa Fe – where poverty is not destiny – is the common thread through every initiative we will prioritize this year – in education, economic development, energy and beyond. It is an incredible challenge, but I said it on the campaign trail, and after one year in office I am more convinced of it than ever.

We are Santa Fe, and like no other city in the world, we have the history, the culture, and the energy to come together and accomplish anything.

Being a part of that fight is the reason I ran for Mayor in the first place.

Santa Fe's legislators, Congressman Ben Ray Lujan, our outstanding Senators Martin Heinrich and Tom Udall, have earned our thanks and appreciation. They are fighting for us at the Roundhouse and in Washington because they know what's at stake, they know we can't afford to wait. Not when New Mexico is ranked 49th in child well-being and 38th in business climate, not when it is often easier for our kids to find jobs out of state. We can't afford to sit on the sidelines. We have the power to set our own course, take our fate into our own hands and improve lives, and we will not wait.

Now it's time for us to lead again, as one Santa Fe, to break the destructive cycle of poverty and unleash the powerful potential of a generation of Santa Feans just waiting for their shot.

One Santa Fe is more than a slogan, more even than a vision for the city. It's a guiding principle that must come first in every decision we make and every policy we introduce, this year and beyond.

It starts, without question, with the way we support our kids in the classroom, the home and the community.

A strong education is the most important investment we can make in the future of our city. Santa Fe's schools are showing strong signs of progress. But education doesn't end when the child leaves the classroom. It starts before and continues after in the community at places like Boys & Girls Club, NDI, Art Smart, and the Opera Youth Program to name a few.

We have all the tools at hand to build a world-class city, with a world-class workforce of citizens who are as comfortable with calculus and computer science as they are with O'Keeffe and the Opera.

Growing up in Santa Fe should be about a good education and a community that creates the opportunity to realize your full potential. That's why I created the Children, Youth and Families Community Cabinet. Under the leadership of chair Councilor Carmichael Dominguez, the cabinet will align community resources behind education that embraces every child. From birth to career, we will empower young Santa Feans like never before.

The cabinet is providing the leadership to bring funders and community providers together to leverage our resources with a focus on key outcomes.

Through the cabinet's work we will – increase access to early childhood education – increase out-of-school support for in-school academic achievement – guarantee access to arts education for every child – double the number of students in mentor relationships – and deliver on the promise of a talented, educated and capable workforce for Santa Fe's future.

Our goal is nothing short of birth-to-career support for every child, no matter their background. And we've pegged our policies to real accountability measures, so Santa Fe's families will know that we mean what we say and that we're backing up our words with action and resources.

By the time they get to kindergarten, every child in Santa Fe can be measurably school-ready. From the time they are in the womb until we turn them over to Joel Boyd and company, they will be part of a community focused on their successful growth – mentally, physically, socially and emotionally.

Reading at grade level by third grade is a high stakes indicator of future success. We'll make sure every child, in every school, is either reading at grade level by third grade or receiving extensive extra help to catch up, without exception. To get there we'll utilize public and private funding sources for after school programs to help them catch up, not hold them back.

Even as we increase our community support of the kind of STEM learning in school – Science, Technology, Engineering and Math – that will help us compete economically, we will not make the mistake of abandoning the arts. Low-income students in the arts are four times more likely to have high academic achievement and three times more likely to have high attendance; and high school students with four years of arts behind them do significantly better on their SATs. We're going to give every child in Santa Fe access to arts education, either in school or in the community. The arts are a critical part of Santa Fe's economy and culture. It's time to make sure they are just as critical in every child's development.

The New Mexico School for the Arts is a great example – last year's senior class had an unheard of graduation rate of 96% - and their seniors are going on to college, winning more than \$5 million in scholarships. In just four years it has become clear that the School for the Arts is well on its way to becoming an institution of Santa Fe's culture.

By the end of this year, we will find the New Mexico School for the Arts a permanent home in Santa Fe.

To every child who isn't in school, we will deliver access to programs like YouthWorks!, where they can learn workforce skills that lead to jobs. We cannot afford to give up, and we will never give up on kids in Santa Fe!

Nor will we rest until every graduate of A Santa Fe high school has access to the single most important factor in breaking out of poverty: a post-secondary education that prepares them to enter the workforce. Whether it's an apprenticeship with a local union, a film program at the University of Art and Design, a certification in green tech at Santa Fe Community College, or a 4-year degree, our ability to compete globally demands of us a commitment to making Santa Fe a community of higher education.

And as mentor-mentee relationships continue to prove their value in increasing education outcomes, we will continue to invest our time and our resources in making a mentor available to every child who wants one. Programs like Big Brothers Big Sisters and Inspire Santa Fe, which we launched last year, have already helped us increase the number of students with mentors – a number we will double by year's end.

The Cabinet's commitment to be accountable to a defined, rigorous, and public set of data-driven outcomes is unwavering. Whether its 3rd grade reading levels or the number of mothers getting pre-natal checkups or the percentage of adult Santa Feans with a higher education, we will be data-driven and that data will be accessible to all, so that better, more informed decisions can be made in the allocation of resources.

Accountability isn't just for our schoolkids. The quality of our work at City Hall sets the tone for the entire city. The recent Quality New Mexico Performance Excellence Pinon Award, recognizing the hard work of our City Employees, is an honor. It's also a challenge to improve, one we're answering with smart tools like an employee hotline to catch fraud and a 3-1-1 system to make navigating city government easier than ever.

The dedication to excellence we demand of the city will soon be put to the test. The recession was painful, and as steady recovery is becoming a reality, I want to commend Mayor David Coss and this City Council for their leadership during difficult times. By tapping cautiously into cash reserves and available bond funding, they saved countless jobs and helped hundreds of Santa Fe families navigate a terrible storm.

The measures they took built a bridge across rough water, but were always meant to be temporary. Now we must return to long-term thinking, stop borrowing from future bond proceeds, rebuild our cash reserves, and eliminate a \$2.1 million dollar General Fund deficit.

I believe the Council is united on this critical issue, and I will be working hard with them over the next several months to get the job done. By innovating our finance practices and actively prioritizing mission-critical services, we can and should pass a balanced budget, without layoffs, without across the board cuts, and without further depleting our cash reserves.

That doesn't mean we turn inward, put up walls, or start saying "no" to new ideas. Instead, let's embrace More innovation, not less, and build at City Hall the same entrepreneurial spirit we advocate for in our economy.

One way we do that is by prioritizing initiatives that help us look after our most vulnerable citizens in creative, pioneering ways. Ideas like our Fire Department's Community Protection Initiative. As a concept, CPI has already won unanimous Council approval, and enables Santa Fe Fire Fighters to provide preventative health care services *before* they require a 911 call. It's creative. It's smart – an entrepreneurial solution to an issue that impacts an over-looked community, and we should make it one of our top priorities.

That entrepreneurial spirit is nothing new to Santa Fe. For hundreds of years, men and women have been coming here to build families, chase dreams, and leave behind the legacy that we all share in today. It is that spirit that will help us build the economy of Santa Fe's future.

It's a spirit that needs nurturing and investment to take root. In the long-term vision for Santa Fe's economic future, the culture of entrepreneurship is critical to diversity, resiliency, and strength. We have to start building the foundation for future success today. That's why we've launched the Ignite Entrepreneurship Project to kick-start a better environment for entrepreneurs. And the two projects we've selected for initial funding through Ignite will have a powerful impact.

Startup Santa Fe is a public-private collaboration with Creative Santa Fe and Silicon Valley veteran Shawn Patrick that will help local entrepreneurs move their project from idea to innovation to reality. They say five in ten businesses fail within the first few years. Well this project is the start of a dedicated infrastructure of support to help make sure Startups in Santa Fe, are the exception to the rule.

Make Santa Fe will be a bridge to take people from being artists and craftspeople to entrepreneurs. The maker movement is nothing new to Santa Fe, this is a town built on artists and craftspeople – but the connection to a global economy will transform creative entrepreneurs into the next wave of American business, and we want Santa Fe to be at the heart of it.

Startup Santa Fe and Make Santa Fe will bring together two things we have in abundance but don't always connect – innovation driven by ideas and capital from private investors.

A strong, sustainable Santa Fe economy is not an end in itself. It is a means to guaranteeing that we are one Santa Fe, a community that gives every single person access to the middle class. The living wage was a strong start, and we are proud of that Santa Fe tradition. But that's the beginning, not the end, of our journey.

As we work to lay the long-term groundwork for a vibrant startup economy, there is much we can do in the short-term to see immediate impact. When someone like Damian Taggart opens a business, they add jobs, grow our GDP and contribute to the unique culture and spirit of Santa Fe. Mindshare Studios is a full service web development company and the City of Santa Fe's 2014 small business of the year. They represent almost perfectly the entrepreneurial spirit and potential we want to grow in this community. Damian started the company in 2006 because he couldn't find a good, interesting job as a web developer in Santa Fe. Now he employs six people, including at least one graduate of St. John's, and has designed hundreds of websites for clients all over the country. We've got to do everything we can to help entrepreneurs succeed.

That's why I've asked the administration to work with Councilor Sig Lindell's Business & Quality of Life Committee to develop a "Front of the Line" program that makes streamlining the business license and permitting process a top priority. We're also improving customer service, and I will be asking Councilor Lindell and her fellow Councilors to help create the Office of Business Development – from existing resources in the Economic Development Division. This will be a team of 3-5 City Employees to work alongside existing and startup businesses to navigate regulations and identify opportunities from grant funding to tax incentives and more.

To connect companies to a ready workforce, we're expanding the Young Professionals Project - a successful pilot we started last year – which creates a direct pipeline for recent New Mexico college graduates to local employers. When someone like Damian comes to see us, their city will be an ally, not an obstacle to starting a business.

Remember, too, that entrepreneurs don't always fit the Silicon Valley stereotype. Just ask George R.R. Martin. The successful author is making a new name for himself – as a startup specialist in another one of Santa Fe's brightest economic arenas: the arts and culture. His faith in the revival of the Jean Cocteau has led to the creation of one of the most vibrant arthouse cinemas in the Southwest. As if that weren't enough, he's now working with local arts collective MeowWolf to bring new life to Silva Lanes and, in the process, create the opportunity and the creative space for a vibrant Arts District in the heart of our City.

Santa Fe's reputation for the arts is international. We are home to the greatest concentration of professional artists in the country, and we're 7th in the nation in art dealers – in the company of cities 30 times our size. Our cultural institutions are unparalleled, and by maintaining our investments in these institutions, along with new seed investments we're introducing this year, we're building that reputation and growing the 25% of tourism that depends on the arts.

It's a community-wide economic opportunity - 1 in 10 Santa Fe jobs comes from the arts economy. Working artists are entrepreneurs and small business owners, supported by programs like our Art Commission's Community Gallery – a hub for the cultural community. Through professional development training, we're making sure our visionary artists are grounded in solid business skills to help them succeed.

Every day, I talk to Santa Feans with exciting new ideas for cultural programs. Sometimes all these groups need is a little help getting started.

I'm amazed when I think about the institutions – the pillars of our arts culture today – that got their start with a little help from a grant from the City of Santa Fe: The O'Keeffe museum, the Folk Art Market, SITE Santa Fe – our next big cultural offering could be out there right now just searching for seed funding. So I've asked the Arts Commission to develop specific programming to support the creation of new markets, events and collaborations to build the Santa Fe Arts brand. We will stand by our long-term cultural investments, but we've also got to take some calculated risks on new ventures if we're going to grow the Arts.

We're also getting serious about making Santa Fe an easier place for artists to live and work. Working with the City Council and through a partnership with Creative Santa Fe, we will make an Arts and Creativity Center a reality – an affordable space for artists to live and to work.

We're taking a lesson from George, investing in Santa Fe's future as a center for the arts in all shapes and sizes – including, and especially, film.

Moviemaker magazine named us one of the top 3 places to shoot in the country, and 2014 was a banner year for film: House of Cards, the Bachelor, Longmire, Manhattan, A Valley of Violence, and Cosmos all spent time here, cementing our reputation in the industry and opening opportunities to make 2015 even better. As we speak, right outside, there is a major film in production on Griffin Street. We shoot more film per capita than anywhere in the country, thanks not just to the state's film incentives but also to the best and most straightforward permitting process in the country that is currently run through TOURISM Santa. But film can be about more than bringing in outside productions.

So I am moving forward, starting tonight, and asking the City Council to make a full-time, in-house Film Office at the City of Santa Fe, with a dedicated Film Commission, working on a permanent basis to continue bringing the best productions in America to Santa Fe and accelerate the growth of an already vibrant local industry.

Our Film Office has been an incredible success, just imagine what they can do with the full weight of the city behind them. We will maximize our existing resources and partnerships to make this growing industry a

hallmark of an economy that creates permanent local jobs, is more diverse, and therefore stronger than it has ever been.

Making Santa Fe a leader in renewable energy and sustainability can contribute to our economic development while at the same time securing our future. What's more, it will help us answer the global imperative of climate change, making our city more resilient in the face of the single most important challenge we will ever face.

The city has made tremendous progress in energy efficiency, and I'm proud to say that 25% of our facilities are run on solar power. We are excited about how far we've come, but aware that we must do more.

It is a challenge that demands the involvement of the entire community. That's why I created Santa Fe's first Climate Action Task Force to identify new and innovative ways to tackle the challenges of climate. The task force works with over 70 stakeholders throughout the Santa Fe community who work in the environmental, energy, water, land management, transportation, and finance fields. PNM also has a seat at that table.

It's a comprehensive public effort, and it is delivering results.

The Task Force is led by Mayor Pro Tem Peter Ives and former Mayor David Coss, and has developed concrete proposals to increase energy efficiency and grow the use of renewable energy; better manage our land, our watershed and our water use; make Santa Fe a place where we walk, bike or take the bus before we get in the car; recycle more, and waste less – a comprehensive climate strategy that will help us achieve our goal of being carbon neutral by the year 2040.

The task force has wasted no time in its work. At next week's council meeting, Mayor Coss will deliver a report focused on scaling-up energy efficiency programs and increasing renewable energy use this year.

Their recommendations include measuring and increasing energy-efficiency at all city buildings; tracking annual energy use and environmental impact; scaling-up the use of solar energy at city and community sites; community-wide education on the benefits and strategies of saving energy and using renewables; and identifying creative, innovative financing for renewable and efficiency projects

These projects go a long way to our goal of being carbon neutral by 2040. But it's a community goal and it will take contributions from all community members to achieve it.

Contributions like the one from Eliza Harrison, a senior at Santa Fe Prep. Where's Eliza? There she is. Back when she was a sophomore, Eliza recognized the importance of helping people save energy in their homes. So she started a project called "Changing Households, Changing Communities."

She set out to change people's behavior when it comes to consuming energy by literally showing them, in real time, exactly how much electricity they use in their homes, how much that electricity costs, and how much carbon dioxide they're adding to the atmosphere.

She raised a few thousand dollars through a Kickstarter campaign – enough to buy 30 real-time electricity monitors, and installed them in homes throughout Santa Fe. Sure enough, the electricity use in those homes has gone down, simply because Eliza showed those homeowners the real-time savings they could achieve by turning out some lights or turning down their thermostats. In one case the participant saw a decrease of 42%! Imagine, that kind of change on a city-wide scale! Sometimes, creating progress is as simple as raising awareness.

As you probably expect, Eliza is going to college in the fall, so she'll be focused on her studies, leaving the future of her project an open question. Until she leaves, I've asked Eliza to join my Climate Action Task Force, and we're going to find a way to keep her project moving forward on an even larger scale, to reduce our city's energy use and benefit more people throughout Santa Fe.

So, thank you, Eliza, for being here tonight, and for your powerful contribution to this community.

These are programs that can be implemented almost immediately and have relatively immediate impacts. But what about the bigger picture? Where do we go from here?

Creating long-term change is an issue that spans generations. That's why I'm asking city staff, working hand-in-hand with the seventy-plus members of the Climate Action Task Force and utilizing open, public meetings, to draft a 25 year Sustainability Plan that will achieve our goal of being Carbon Neutral by 2040 by reducing carbon emissions; conserving natural resources; increasing environmental protections; implementing energy efficiency programs; increasing use of renewable energy; growing the green jobs economy; educating our children about the environment; and measuring our progress, year-after-year, to hold us accountable to future generations.

Before I continue, I want to recognize the contributions of the Global Warming Express...

It is with their future in mind that I am asking the City Council to help us leverage federal funding by formally designating Santa Fe as a federally recognized "Green Community." Doing so can open doors to a host of sustainable energy programs to help Santa Fe make better choices in energy use.

There is no doubt, Climate Change will hit working class Santa Feans harder than anyone. But we have the expertise, at the city and in the community, to develop programs that will help those Santa Feans save on energy costs and improve the environment, and we're going to act.

One of my top priorities is creating a true Community Solar program that delivers real economic and environmental benefits, particularly for low-income people already struggling to provide for their families and small businesses out there creating jobs.

To provide every Santa Fean equal access to solar power, regardless of income or home-ownership, we must find a way for the City to own and operate its own Community Solar program. So I am asking the City Council to join me in delivering true Community Solar to Santa Fe before the year is out. It is critical that we provide some relief, for the environment, and for the pocketbooks of the 46% of Santa Feans who are currently cost-burdened by housing and utility prices.

It's not just about our environment anymore. Climate Change, for generations to come, will impact every decision we make - economically, socially, in our schools – every dream we hope to achieve for this community will succeed or fail on our ability to mitigate the disastrous effects of Climate Change.

As we survey the ground we have covered in the last year, and look to the work that lies ahead, we must always be guided by the vision and the idea that, at the end of the day, we are all in this together. One family, one community, one Santa Fe.

We are seeing incredible progress. Tourism is up, crime is down. The economy continues to slowly but steadily recover and grow. Our schools are breaking new ground in student achievement and we are a national leader on worker and immigrant rights, renewable energy, water management and conservation, and so much more.

As a city, we have so much to be proud of. Our culture, our history, the very architecture of our city that reminds us every day of the roots that tie us all together.

But it is a hallmark of Santa Fe to never stop striving to do better. Five, fifteen, fifty years from tonight, knowing that we stand at a point of incredible promise and opportunity, I want our families to look back and know we chose to act, to be bold and to have courage in our efforts to make sure the State of our City, our Santa Fe, is strong, united and committed to progress.

I have every faith, in our people, our leaders, our ability to move forward together, and I am sure that our brightest days are yet to come.

Thank you, Santa Fe, and let's get to work.