

## 2010 State of the City speech

### City of Santa Fe

October 7, 2010

It's great to be here at the Santa Fe University of Art and Design, to feel the new energy on this 150-year-old campus and to see all of the growth and changes that are taking place. Of course, to many of us—alumni, faculty and residents—this will always be the College of Santa Fe. Without the hard work and perseverance of Governor Richardson, state legislators, City Councilors, College of Santa Fe and Laureate Education officials, and city staff, I wouldn't be here tonight giving my fifth *State of the City* address.

The University's new name brings to mind what the author and environmentalist Henry David Thoreau said: "Things do not change, we change". The change in the name of this university signifies our changing community. The College of Santa Fe continues to build upon its rich history by once again evolving its mission to remain a beacon of educational opportunity for local students and for students arriving from around the world.

The commitment and determination of many different people turned a complex purchase into a sound investment, which re-established this institution on solid ground. As a community, as leaders, as partners, we bought our city's college, found an excellent educator in Laureate, and made a key investment in Santa Fe's future. We not only saved an educational institution, we also saved a critical symbol of our community as well as a couple of hundred local jobs.

This unprecedented public-private partnership, is a good example of how we are finding solutions even when a task seems impossible in today's economy. In the same way that many families have had to adjust their budget and balance their checkbook, the city has had to make changes in order to cope with less money coming in. These days we cannot do things the way they've been done before. We must change. Now, as we did 400 years ago, we have to depend on our friends, our neighbors and our partners to get through the tough times. As Thoreau said, "things do not change". We must continue to work together as a community to make sure the State of our City remains strong.

After 400 years, our priorities haven't changed—they are still our families, our community, our land and our water. Planning and organizing events for the city's 400<sup>th</sup>

anniversary this year are great examples of community members working together. 105 volunteers have served on the board and on various committees, giving thousands of hours of time and energy. It's been a lot of work and a lot of fun, beginning with Viva Santa Fe, a weekend of music, food, art, and performance that celebrated our diverse cultures and history. The 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee made all the right moves that resulted in a visit to Santa Fe by Spain's Crown Prince Felipe and Princessa Letizia.

## **Jobs and Economic Development**

Looking back, we have much to be proud of. Looking forward, we know that getting people back to work is a top priority. This year, we've concentrated our economic development efforts on investment in companies and ventures, and support for programs that create jobs.

For example, CleanAIR Systems is a Santa Fe company that creates and manufactures a green technology that reduces emissions from engines. CleanAIR Systems received a \$200,000 economic development grant and a \$100,000 loan in 2006. With that boost, CleanAIR grew its business; and this year, it was purchased by Caterpillar Incorporated. With the resources of Caterpillar behind it CleanAIR Systems is on track to create over 80 high-wage jobs by the end of 2011—that's on top of the 35 jobs they've already created, and they paid back the loan in full earlier this year.

Just last week, another investment bore fruit when Solar-Logic, a start-up company, received a patent for solar technology they developed with the help of a \$30,000 grant and technical assistance from our Economic Development office.

The clean film industry continues to create high-wage jobs in Santa Fe. This year we've seen two major films in production here that were written by New Mexicans and set in Northern New Mexico, *Bless Me Ultima* and *Tiger Eyes*. These and other productions have created more than 400 jobs this year. That's not counting the money spent at local businesses—the Hotel Santa Fe general manager says that film personnel have been a significant presence in the Hotel for at least six months of this year, and at a local lumber yard film crews have recently spent more than a million dollars on raw lumber.

Masque Entertainment is expected to break ground on a 17,000 square foot, state-of-the-art post-production facility in the Railyard. This project comes from all of the work that's been done for both the film industry and in making the Railyard a new hub of activity in Santa Fe. Building the new facility will create construction jobs, then once open the company expects to hire 25 people and up to 200 will be working there during various productions. Masque's presence here will support more films being made in Santa Fe which will mean more jobs and more spending in Santa Fe.

We're also working on building the crucial broadband infrastructure to support new industries as well as educational, social and economic development in our city and our region. I'm happy to report that Kit Carson Electric Co-op, along with the North Central New Mexico Economic Development District, has recently been awarded almost \$74 million in grants and loans to build a regional fiber-optic network.

This network will create construction jobs while it is being built and permanent jobs for managing its operations. Once in place it will provide broadband access from northern Santa Fe County all the way to Taos. We will make sure that Santa Fe is a part of this network.

The investments into the local economy are continuing. \$165,000 was budgeted this year for great ideas that will create jobs and grow businesses. A total of 38 proposals were submitted which are being reviewed and a portfolio of projects will be selected shortly.

In order to help local businesses understand how to work with the government and what it takes to get a contract, the city, along with the state, the county, the school district and Santa Fe Community College, is hosting a one-day workshop on *Doing Business with Government*. This workshop will create a better working relationship between government and business.

We have created strong affordable housing programs so that people who work in Santa Fe can also live in Santa Fe. 145 LEED-certified affordable units in the West San Francisco Street civic housing project are being built right now. Residents of these units will live affordably in some of the most environmentally friendly buildings in town. That project put 189 people to work.

Homewise, a long-time affordable housing partner is creating construction jobs while also renovating and building more affordable homes for working people in Santa Fe. Homewise is currently building a new neighborhood on Santa Fe's east side—Old Las Vegas Place—with 50 homes on 15 acres with 6 acres of open space. Homewise projects are responsible for 183 permanent jobs in Santa Fe since 2007, and 244 more are expected to be created from 2010 to 2014.

## **Public Safety**

Even though there is some good news with affordable housing and jobs, tough times can mean more burglaries, and unfortunately we've seen a rise in break-ins. We must make sure that people feel safe in their homes. Chief Wheeler and his Department are working with our partners to close gaps in law enforcement and we will get more police on the streets. The police department has eight new police officers—positions funded by federal American Recovery and Reinvestment monies. Ten more police cadets are being trained at the New Mexico Law Enforcement Academy and should be a part of the Santa Fe Police force by spring.

A burglary task force has been created among our city Police Department, the Santa Fe County Sheriff's Department, the New Mexico State Police and Adult Probation and Parole to share information and collaborate on strategies to target common offenders.

City detectives are working with the District Attorney's Office and the courts to make sure repeat offenders do not slip through the system. The courts are now requiring more GPS monitoring to make sure that offenders can be found at a moment's notice. Our partnership with the Santa Fe New Mexican to publicize the top-ten most wanted list has already led to the arrests of four career criminals.

Even though Santa Fe has a low violent crime rate, we must continue our work in that area. We have a full-time domestic violence and sexual assault prevention coordinator who works with victims and support-service agencies. In the first half of this year, we saw an overall drop of 11% in domestic violence incidents. We've also seen a 15% drop in domestic violence-related arrests.

We mention crime frequently, but I also want to acknowledge our Fire Department. By spring 19 new firefighters will be on board and the department will have a brand new ladder truck. Two new ambulances are already on the road, responding to crises such as the swift water rescue of two people who were trapped on top of their car at the San Isidro crossing during this year's monsoon season.

While we are on the issue of public safety, I'd like to point out that our immigration policy is working for us by respecting the civil rights of every person regardless of immigration status. Our police department stands with officers across the nation who understand that their investigative work cannot be accomplished if people are afraid of being deported and won't contact the police to offer information or report criminal activity. Our policy also protects taxpayers by not requiring Santa Fe Police officers to do the work of the federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement police. The progressive New Mexico Driver's Licenses for Immigrants program brings people out of the shadows and into the main stream and that helps us all. Our approach has resulted in a law-abiding immigrant community that contributes to our economy and participates in our schools and churches.

Keeping Santa Fe safe is a priority for everyone on the City Council and it's a priority for me. Most of all, we need more police on the streets and in neighborhoods. I'm pleased to say that when I took office there were 124 police officers in Santa Fe—today there are 164. Next year I intend to work with the City Council to hire 20 more police officers to make sure that Santa Fe remains a safe city. It may be another tough year for the city budget, but public safety is the rock on which everything else we do in the city depends.

### **The Budget, Audits and Accountability**

The economic downturn is a reality and it has hit all of us from family budgets to business of all sizes and, of course, city, state, and federal government budgets. During this recession, the city has lost more than \$10 million in recurring revenue. In an effort to not waste a crisis, we used this as an opportunity to find ways to work smarter. City staff looked for ideas on how to cut costs and be more efficient. City employees asked the hard questions and uncovered over:

- 2.2 million in salary and contract savings;
- 1.2 million in cost reductions (travel, eliminating some overtime pay, etc.)
- Nearly 1.5 million in increased revenues;

- 1 million remains in reserves and fund balances

The city is currently working with State Auditor Hector Balderras to evaluate and strengthen our procurement policies. We are also creating an audit committee made up of citizens to review and recommend ways to improve city operations. We will continue to make sure that employees are protected from retaliation if they report wrongdoing; and we plan to have an exhaustive public process to ensure transparency and that our ordinances and procedures are strong and worthy of public confidence.

By the first of the year, the City Manager will roll out the ACT program. ACT stands for Accountability, Customer Service and Transparency. All employees, from department directors to blue-collar workers will be trained under this program and will be expected to:

- be Accountable for all of their actions;
- provide the best Customer Service to residents, businesses and visitors; and
- keep all facts and figures easy to understand and available to the public through Transparency.

We want every city employee to assist businesses to ensure their success, to provide top-quality service to locals, and to make visiting Santa Fe a great experience.

### **Services, Workers and Programs—the Heart of this City**

An example of city employees providing great customer service came during last years record snowfall. The snowfall was wonderful for making our city parks green, but it was tough on our streets and on the staff who clear the snow so that we can all get to work and businesses can stay open. Streets and Drainage crews had to do more with less. This past winter they were joined by workers from other departments and divisions who came forward to do the hard and sometimes dangerous work of clearing our streets. This spring they were busy sealing cracks and filling potholes.

The Governing Body and I truly appreciate all city employees and thank them all for their hard work and for a job well done.

### **Community Services**

Even as the economy struggles, we've worked hard to keep direct services to people intact. Our libraries have maintained their hours and continue to offer after-school programs

for young people, reading programs for parents and babies and library computers are being used for writing resumes and searching for jobs. Families are using our recreation facilities for exercise and health. Our senior centers offer creative, social, and physical activities as well as meals and transportation for our elders. At-risk youth have access to several Juvenile Justice programs that give them parenting help; offer them shelter and help get them back on their feet. Just last week, the city purchased a building to accommodate the overflow from the other homeless shelters so no one will have to sleep outdoors this winter and beyond.

The Arts Commission partners with artists, arts organizations and the public to keep building and supporting Santa Fe's creative economy and also uses the UNESCO Creative Cities designation to market Santa Fe as one of the best cultural destinations in the country. We would not be the outstanding city that we are without Santa Fe's artists and we recognize that by continuing to dedicate city funds and programming. From the tree sculpture bus stop on Airport Road to the fish outside of City Hall, art makes us a far richer community.

The Land Use Department now has authority over all new areas of the city. Even while doing more with less, staff made improvements to the building permit process. The process has been streamlined and inspectors are being cross-trained so that they can work more efficiently. Already, customers are reporting positive interactions with Land Use staff. One builder recently told me that when he walked into the land use office, three different people offered to assist him.

The Children and Youth Commission has developed and strengthened a 21-year partnership with local nonprofit organizations by funding over 30 programs at local organizations and schools.

The city brings young people together to work on issues through the Mayor's Youth Advisory Board. This Board is working with the police department to address violence and improve the relationship between young people and police officers. Right now, they are sponsoring a Food Drive: youth are challenged to collect as much food as they can between October 1 and October 21 so please drop off non-perishable items at City Hall, Warehouse 21 or at the Santa Fe New Mexican before October 21<sup>st</sup>.

Our Public Utilities Department continues to provide the services we all take for granted—trash and recycling is picked up every week without fail, clean water is available in our homes and business also without fail and wastewater is treated and processed without us ever knowing the complexity and hardwork involved in getting those critical jobs done.

A recent major accomplishment of Public Works is the Siler Road bridge. This bridge provides a much-needed connection in the middle of our city. Also significant is that Santa Fe Trails' bus ridership is at an all-time high; and for the first time in many years there's a surplus of parking at the Railyard and downtown garages.

### **Parks, Trails, and the River**

Our city's Parks Division crews and contractors have been hard at work all spring and summer—reseeding, resodding, replanting, replacing worn playground and park equipment, or even refurbishing some of the 57 city parks.

Franklin E. Miles Park has been completely renovated and has new ball fields, concession stands, new playground equipment, and a bigger skateboard park. Ragle Park is undergoing a similar renovation and will be open by the start of softball season next year. Also, a state-of-the-art park is being designed for Tierra Contenta. Two new parks were added last year—the Power Plant Park on Upper Canyon Road; and Valentine Park in Tierra Contenta.

Have you noticed the beautiful hanging plants on the Plaza's perimeter? Our crews are tirelessly working to make the heart of our city a beautiful place to meet, listen to free music in the summer and enjoy all that Santa Fe has to offer. We can be proud of the total of 311 acres of green space throughout Santa Fe.

### **Urban Trails**

Our trail system is better than ever, supporting healthy ways to get around. We have a total of 14 miles of paved hike and bike trails, and 30 miles of unpaved trails including the 22 miles of Dale Ball trails.

Just today I received word that Santa Fe received an Honorable Mention as a Bicycle Friendly Community from the League of American Bicyclists.



That's all part of a comprehensive Parks Master Plan, and because you passed a 30-million-dollar Parks Bond in 2008. We've kept our promise—that this bond money be spent only on parks and urban trails.

### **The Santa Fe River**

Talking about making our city more beautiful and green, my favorite project continues to be restoring the Santa Fe River. This year's snow was a welcome relief from past years of drought. One of the best things about it was the water that flowed in the river throughout most of the summer. Kayakers maneuvered the falls of the Santa Fe River and local families were seen dotting the river banks with fishing poles in hand at the annual Children's Fishing Derby and River Festival, thanks to city staff, the state Game and Fish Department and the Santa Fe Watershed Association. It gave us a sense of what having a living river could really feel like in Santa Fe.

The water was perhaps the most important factor in having a vibrant ecosystem along the river this summer, but the work of many of our partners was crucial too. Members of WildEarth Guardians planted hundreds of river willows and cottonwoods; and YouthWorks! and Earth Works Institute did some small-scale storm-water demonstrations that showed how we can slow run-off; deter erosion and support trees and shrubs for a healthier watershed.

Speaking of water, the long-awaited, multi-million-dollar Buckman Direct Diversion project is scheduled to be online by May 2011 with initial testing taking place last week. This project will assure safe drinking water for our citizens now and for generations to come. Like other infrastructure projects the BDD has been an engine of job creation putting close to 300 people to work designing and building it, and employing 31 people to operate and maintain it.

### **Environment and Energy Initiatives**

We've made good progress in other environmental efforts and are taking the lead nationally in some key initiatives. Our green building code is one of the most progressive in the country and goes straight to the heart of one of the most significant causes of global warming, new home construction. Again, we couldn't have done it without our community partners. The Santa Fe Area Homebuilders Association is one of the most progressive

groups in the country. They worked hard alongside city staff to draft the code and educate builders on how it works. Now we're working green building codes for commercial buildings, remodels, additions, and historic buildings.

Our partnership with the Santa Fe Community College makes us leaders in having a workforce to support green building. The Green Building program at SFCC will provide us with skilled graduates who are informed and ready to work.

We recently celebrated a first-in-the-country event: three of our city parks went off the grid with solar-powered lighting. The partnerships among the city, a private company and an award-winning metal worker means that our leadership in this area will be remembered because the fixtures are named after Santa Fe for inspiring their creation and design. These lights will save money and reduce greenhouse gases.

Ground is broken for a one-megawatt photovoltaic system at the wastewater treatment plant, which is being built at no cost. The Wastewater Division will be the recipient of the energy and pay a fixed price for the next 20 years. The system will generate over 2.3 million kW hours per year, which means that over a one third (1/3) of the power for the wastewater treatment plant will come from renewable energy. It also means the city will save money on electric bills and reduce its carbon footprint.

The little things can really add up for the environment and for the budget. 170 LED lights in the Sandoval parking garage will save ten-thousand dollars a year and reduce emissions. Also, we're retrofitting 23 city buildings with lighting that is as much as 50% more efficient and installing high-efficiency boilers, and LED streetlights at 15 intersections. All these and our other energy-efficiency measures will reduce the city's greenhouse gas production by more than 2000 tons per year. Most importantly these projects create jobs, because all of these changes need people to make them happen.

## **The Future**

As Santa Fe completes its 401<sup>st</sup> year, we have many assets in place that will continue to make this a great place to live and a world-class destination for visitors. We continue to be identified across the world as one of the most interesting, beautiful, and friendly places to

visit. This past summer brought more visitors back to Santa Fe and we continue to hold a top spot in Conde Nast's top-ten best cities to visit.

Santa Fe has experienced centuries of change. That experience prepares us for this time in history. We know that we must commit our resources, our time and our energy to preparing our young people for their own futures. Our partnerships with this University, with the public schools, with the Santa Fe Community College, and the soon to be "higher learning center" are all examples of how Santa Fe is building for the future.

Our partnership with YouthWorks! is one of my favorite examples. Most recently, we worked with the public schools to find a home for YouthWorks! for the next five to ten years. This will give YouthWorks! a stable place to grow their programs which connect young people to job training and improve their education. Recently a young man from YouthWorks! talked about how he has learned to not take away from the community but to add to it instead, to make this a better place for everyone. This strengthens our future.

Going forward Santa Fe remains committed to restoring a living Santa Fe River including the dedication of 1000 acre-feet of water. This coming year we will complete work on restoring river banks and completing the bike and pedestrian trails between Camino Alire and Frenchy's Field but, we will not stop there. Santa Feans will have a living river and a green city.

This is going to be another tough year for the city budget. We will continue to look for innovative ways to save money and make every public dollar go even farther. It won't be easy and there will be some hard choices, so we will have to work together as a City Council and as a community to set priorities and find solutions.

We will continue to be a leader in environmental responsibility and work to be a cleaner and greener city. We will continue to lead as a progressive city, where everyone is safe and valued. We will also continue to push the boundaries of creating a new economy full of rich ideas and creative problem solving for real-world issues. We will continue to build, strengthen and create partnerships with educators, workers, artists, scientists, businesses and others in the community; because none of us can do it alone.

As President Barack Obama said: *“Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we have been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.”* We must all work together to continue to improve the quality of life for all Santa Feans. We must all work together to increase the educational and job opportunities right here in our community. It’s this environment of cooperation, of partnership, of responsibility for members of our community that will continue to carry us through these difficult financial times; and it’s why I am proud, honored and humbled to have the opportunity to be the Mayor of Santa Fe. Thank you.