

Good evening, Santa Fe!

It's good to be back here, one year later, in the same room, looking at some of the same faces.

Councilors Signe Lindell, Carmichael Dominguez, and Chris Rivera. From the Mexican Consulate we have Consul Efren Leyva Acevedo and Helder Lopez. Governor Earl Salazar from Ohkay Owingeh, and a delegation from Tesuque Pueblo.

Matt Miller from Senator Tom Udall's office. Patricia Dominguez representing Senator Martin Heinrich. A representative from Representative Ben Ray Lujan's office is with us. Representative Lucky Varela, County Commission Chairman Miguel Chavez, School Board Member Steven Carrillo, and our Santa Fe Public Schools Superintendent, Dr. Joel Boyd.

There are also some folks who could not be here tonight. Santa Feans to whom, with the greatest sadness, we've said goodbye.

Alicia Miller, a force behind the unbelievable depth of Santa Fe's creative community. Chef Eric DiStefano – an incredible talent putting Santa Fe's culinary scene on the world stage.

My father, Mayor George Gonzales, who last year was sitting right here, so proud his son had followed in his footsteps. George's spirit lives on, and his belief that Santa Fe's greatest days lie ahead drives my work every day.

We also lost paramedic Bryan Conkling, one of the reasons this group is standing with me tonight.

The truth is, nothing of note gets done without a dedicated group of people who refuse to take no for an answer. Our time in office is defined by the coalitions we build, by the people we bring together to set a purpose and see it done.

The core of *this* group had been working on a new way of delivering healthcare that would radically change the level of access in this community. Obamacare made progress, extending care to millions. But for many Santa Feans, at the mercy of a confusing system, 911 was the default option.

That wasn't good enough. So early in the Mayoral race, Bryan took a chance on the new guy, and reached out to talk about a wild new idea. What if, instead of waiting for those 911 calls, we brought preventative service to them, solving the problem at its source and correcting the cause of these emergency room visits before it ever rose to that level.

Bryan's knowledge and his passion were so compelling. He struck a chord with something I'd been talking about a lot on the campaign trail and have been talking about ever since. How do we make sure that in Santa Fe, every person matters, and has real access to the benefits of living in this place?

I was convinced, and since that day I've come to know that the passion I saw in Bryan is something everyone standing here shares. Thanks to their hard work, less than two years later, the first buses in the Mobile Integrated Health Office program, or as we call it – MIHO – were rolling out to their first patients!

It is an honor tonight to introduce them to all of you, and present the first class of Santa Fe Fire Department EMTs to step up and answer the call to bring true, community-based healthcare to Santa Fe.

From the Santa Fe Fire Department: Chief Erik Litzenberg, Andres Mercado, Eric Hickey, Rollin Jones, Ramos Tsotsie, William Squib, and Dustin Ballew and Sten Johnson who are on duty right now, as well as Faith Applewhite who is in training.

From the community: Kristin Carmichael, from Christus St. Vincent, Jeff Thomas from Southwest CARE Center, Larry Martinez from PMS, Daniel Slavin from SVH Support, and Kate Morton from Southwest CARE.

Ladies and gentlemen can you give these folks a round of applause! (***THEY EXIT***)

So here we are, one year later, at a time dedicated to taking stock of our journey and laying out the road ahead. And what a year it has been in Santa Fe!

We saw some incredible things find their beginnings, like MIHO. We also saw some things come to an end. Like homelessness among veterans.

Can I ask all the veterans here with us tonight to stand...

Thank you so much for your service.

Early on in my term, I signed on to an initiative called Zero:2016. It's part of First Lady Michelle Obama's push to end homelessness, using local and federal resources, tracking data toward benchmarks, and adopting proven strategies.

We started with veterans, and through a partnership with our Housing Division, the New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness, the VA, St. Elizabeth's Shelter, the Interfaith Shelter, Santa Fe County, LifeLink, and Goodwill, we can promise you tonight as of Veterans' Day, any veteran who becomes homeless in Santa Fe will be housed within 30 days.

From now on, every time a Santa Fe veteran takes that vow to defend the Constitution, Santa Fe is taking a vow to make sure that, at the very least, they have a roof over their head when they come home. It's done, and it feels damn good to say it!

Those were special moments, moments when Santa Fe lived up to the promise it has always held. But those weren't the only times this past year we could come together and celebrate as a community.

We came together this year to do some amazing things. Santa Fe Rising is about unleashing the potential of every citizen in our community.

To do that, we have to invest – in economic development, in education, in our culture, in a sustainable and resilient future for our city.

So this year, after gathering input from hundreds of local business owners, we listened, and launched the Office for Business Growth – the single largest retention and business expansion effort in Santa Fe’s history.

We began the process of exploring a Public Bank, and our study found it both feasible for Santa Fe and valuable as a way to get our City Treasury working for us! We will continue moving forward in a methodical way, working with banking, business, and the community to determine the best way to get this done.

We launched the Film Commission to make our efforts in growing our film and digital media industry – already a point of pride – more targeted and effective than ever before.

We are so excited to see a new generation of entrepreneurs diversifying Santa Fe’s economy – from MeowWolf to Descartes Labs to SkratchWorks and more – and we’re building an entrepreneurial framework that brings to bear every resource we have to

help these young companies succeed.

We brought gigabit broadband internet speed to the Railyard – and we're going to build out city-owned square footage with direct access to that high-speed network, into a dedicated center for entrepreneurs that features affordable co-working space and resources for new businesses.

We launched Startup Santa Fe and MAKE Santa Fe, which is opening a permanent makers space, with access to the manufacturing tools of tomorrow, in the Siler Road innovation corridor. And we announced the inaugural cohort of startups to join SFid – Santa Fe's newest startup accelerator.

We are proud that fully one third of our businesses are owned by women, and that Forbes named us the number one city for women-owned businesses in the country!

When you have a strong hand, you play it. That's why last year I asked the City Council for more than a fifty percent increase in the marketing budget for TOURISM Santa Fe – not just because we want more tourists, but because we want more opportunity for local people in this vital sector of the economy, more local income, and more local jobs. And our investment is paying off!

While statewide numbers stayed flat we saw a nearly 10 percent increase in GRT for food and accommodations and an increase in occupancy rates.

We were named Condé Nast's second best small city and fourth best Ski Resort in North America; Travel and Leisure's fourth best city in North America; Popular Photography's World's Best Place to Photograph; and USA Today's number one destination in Culture, the Outdoors, and Fine Shopping. That same USA Today list put two of our major art festivals among the world's best, and we are Kiplinger's number four best city to live in the country!

New Mexico's economy is stagnating – the statewide unemployment rate is the highest in the nation. But here in Santa Fe, we are holding steady with unemployment at five percent - almost two points lower than the statewide average.

But the future isn't just about low unemployment rates.

Investing in our city's long-term sustainability also means fighting back against Climate Change, taking action even when Congress is still stuck debating whether or not it even exists. So we convened a task force on Climate Action that brought together more than 70 people, led Mayor David Coss and Mayor Pro Tem Peter Ives, who came up with a set of concrete recommendations, based not on conjecture but on hard data, to make our community sustainable far into the future.

Out of their work, we declared it our goal to be Carbon Neutral by 2040 – and through the Sustainable Santa Fe Commission, we will deliver a detailed and concrete 25-year plan to reach that goal, accountable to public data that will drive our work.

We introduced Santa Fe's first-ever Green Bike Lanes, launched 600 KiloWatts of Solar Power at the Chavez Center, expanded recycling to record levels, significantly reduced the number of plastic bags in our waste stream, began the transition to Electric Vehicles in the City's fleet and began installing public, solar-powered charging stations throughout the city.

At a time when places like Fresno are literally running out of water, Santa Fe's water system, our utility's financial health, our secure water sources, and our innovative and effective conservation rate structure are without question the envy of every city in America.

Thanks to the hard work of this community, after hitting a dangerous high of 165 gallons of water used per person in the 90s, we are now well below 100 gallons per person, per day, the lowest rate in the west by far and one of the key reasons our water future is secure and bright!

We will continue to make progress in the community, but change starts from within. So we're going to take a long, hard look in the mirror, organizing existing city resources into an Office of Sustainability, which will both coordinate our citywide push to Carbon Neutral ***and*** lead the charge in making resiliency a part of the culture of your City Government. They will work with every City Division to ensure that every feasible project includes aspects of sustainability.

Our culture is one of our greatest assets, and we are taking steps to protect our legacy as a destination for fine, performing, and culinary arts, access to the outdoors, and traditions created by 400 years of diverse people coming together.

For a thousand years, this has been a place where culture has been valued and has thrived. It's what makes us Santa Fe, and we will protect it. That's why we will introduce a strong new ordinance to protect the livelihood of Native American artists and the authenticity of their work, a foundation of our artistic identity, but also one of the most frequently counterfeited genres.

Building on federal and state law, this ordinance will ensure sound business practices requiring disclosure of artist name, tribal affiliation, and materials for every item offered for sale in downtown businesses as Native American art.

On our Plaza, the cultural heart of our community, we've seen something that started out as a simple idea to bring Santa Feans back downtown turn into something truly magical.

The People to the Plaza initiative has been an unqualified success. And we've grown it, adding more tables, expanding the plaza vendor program, adding food trucks, music, a farmer's market, and an absolutely incredible New Year's Eve celebration that has become an instant Santa Fe tradition.

Under the leadership of our Arts Commission – we are finding innovative ways to expand our cultural legacy. We reinvented our grant-making to foster community collaboration in ways we never have before. We are making targeted investments in public art projects that support local artists and extend access to to everyone.

And this month we will launch a community-wide planning process, a new initiative to map and invest in the transformative power of culture and the opportunities it presents for Santa Fe.

We will convene inclusive conversations that build a clear picture of the tremendous cultural assets within our community – where we are strong, and where we can do better.

If these conversations reveal un-tapped potential – as I believe they will – we will move toward announcing a dedicated Office of Cultural Affairs that will support that promise, strengthen the things that make us a global destination, and leverage our ability to address community-wide challenges and create local opportunities through our cultural assets.

I am still blown away, almost daily, by the incredible energy and brilliant people working on childhood and youth issues in Santa Fe.

And thank God for them, because in two years as Mayor one thing that is clear to me is that we can't wait on anyone else to come to the rescue. If we're going to make progress, we're going to have to do it ourselves.

We consistently rank at the bottom in child well-being. If this isn't a rainy day – I don't know what is. But the will does not exist at the Roundhouse to make the kind of investment necessary to create change, and this issue is too important – there is too much at stake – for us to do nothing.

So we aren't waiting.

We convened New Mexico's first ever Children, Youth and Families Community Cabinet, and in just two years, under the leadership of Councilor Carmichael Dominguez, we have every major player – educational institutions, community non-profits, funding foundations – at the table and united behind an action plan for progress.

Focusing on four categories – Early Childhood, K-12, Re-Engagement for Disconnected Youth, and Career Pathways – the Cabinet reached out to community partners, parents, and the kids themselves, and consulted the best available data to pull together plans for progress and benchmarks to measure our success or failure in each area. Now, in partnership with the Corporation for National and Community Service, we won an AmeriCorps VISTA grant that will help us dedicate six new full-time staff whose sole focus is delivering results.

And, importantly, we are working to identify funding for a data hub where our plans, our data, and our benchmarks will be publicly available, so we can hold each other accountable to progress in ways we never have before.

At every step, the City Council has embraced this approach to improving childhood development in Santa Fe, voting unanimously to make Santa Fe a My Brother's Keeper Community, a move that focuses our education policies on key benchmarks like the number of kids who enter school ready to learn, reading at an early age, and graduating from school college or career-ready.

We're also doing more than ever to engage young people in Santa Fe - doubling the number of mentor/mentee relationships through the Inspire Santa Fe initiative, convening a first-of-its-kind Youth Summit and a ground-breaking youth community survey which gave kids a voice at the table in shaping their city, and launching the Mayors Campaign to End Bullying to make our neighborhoods and schools safer places to grow up.

I believe in the service that Joel Boyd and the Santa Fe Public Schools, and the leaders of our private and charter schools, are providing to our community every day. And I know that parents can trust that from the time they drop their child off until the moment they pick them up – they can know that their loved ones are safe, they are learning, and they are constantly finding new ways to grow.

But successful education involves the whole community – not just the schools.

And we have a role to play in supporting the work that is happening in the classroom every day.

In all the outreach to young people and their families, we've gained insight we never had before, and identified opportunities to invest in ways that fill crucial gaps for kids in our community.

So, with the help of the Food Depot, Appleseed, Adelante, the Boys and Girls Club, and more than fifty other community-based non-profits, we are prepared to launch a groundbreaking new initiative that will help us live up to our commitment to invest in Santa Fe's kids.

Beginning with the new school year this fall, every child in school in Santa Fe will have the option to be part of a Homework Diner, at any one of three sites, where we will provide a hot meal and wraparound academic support services, to every child, every single day.

No child in Santa Fe should ever go to bed hungry. And no child in Santa Fe should ever fail in school because they don't get the help they need. We can do something about it, and it's time to act.

Of everything we accomplished this year, and will accomplish in the year to come, no one thing stands alone. Much like us, each separate piece relies in some way on the others.

And each is important in its own right.

Our goal, our destination is clear. A Santa Fe Rising, and every Santa Fean rising with us – the promise of Santa Fe a reality for every person – the greatest opportunity at success for every child, and a pathway out of poverty for those left behind – an economy that welcomes people not just into jobs, but into careers – a culture that brings us together, makes us more resilient.

Even after 400 years of incredible history, our city is still a city on the rise, a city with purpose that values equality, full participation, growth, and sustainability. But we can't sit back on our heels. We have to make the smart, strategic investments, right now, in our city and in our people, that will ensure another 400 years of ever more inclusive prosperity.

Closing the \$15 million budget deficit is the thing we have to do first, and have to do right,

before anything else. So the first promise I will make you is that nothing I propose tonight will move forward until we have a plan in place that puts us once again on solid financial ground.

We didn't get here overnight. For years, as we struggled through the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression, our city made the difficult decision to avoid tax increases or layoffs by allocating cash reserves to cover revenue shortfalls. Over the long term this is unsustainable – eventually the cash will run out – so it is up to us to make a change.

I won't stand here and second-guess decisions I was never forced, under incredibly difficult circumstances, to make. Instead, we're looking forward, finding solutions that right the city's financial ship and keep us moving toward the goals that matter most.

I knew this had to be a transparent and public discussion. So five months ago, in a speech to Santa Fe's Rotary Club, I began laying out what we knew and what options we have.

In presentations to business and civic groups, in conversations with union leaders and rank and file members, in public meetings of the finance committee and the City Council, in two public community conversations, and in long hours of meetings, calls, and strategy conversations, senior city staff, City Councilors, and myself have worked tirelessly to find a balanced solution.

This moment presents no easy answers. Cutting programs this community has worked hard to build up means breaking promises we've made to one another about what makes us the City Different and puts at risk programs that are improving people's lives.

Laying off hundreds of city workers is no better option. These aren't abstract columns in some budget spreadsheet, they are men and women who deliver clean water to our taps, teach our kids in affordable summer programs, and protect our neighborhoods. A solution that balances the budget on the backs of working families is no solution at all.

And raising taxes or fees only takes more money out of the pockets of working people already carrying more than their share of funding city services.

Every solution asks sacrifice from someone. But we refuse to shy away from hard choices simply because they are hard. That's not leadership, and it would be a disservice to every one of you. We are committed to taking action that solves the problem, and invests in this community's priorities in ways that make our city stronger for it.

Earlier tonight at a special meeting of the Finance Committee we laid out the framework for that solution, and we have a path forward.

It won't be painless, but it is a plan that keeps our promise to end the water fund transfers, heavily emphasizes cuts and efficiency over tax increases, and sets fees closer to the actual cost of services. Critically, we close the gap in year one, something I believe is important to put the pain of this process behind us and move forward with our finances in order.

This crisis also gives us a rare chance to change forever the way your city does business and inject greater transparency and accountability into the process.

For every dollar we spend, the public should know exactly what our priorities are, what performance measures we will track, and what results we expect.

Safe neighborhoods, transparent government, economic opportunity, long-term sustainability, and an end to poverty and inequality. Our budget will be the blueprint to our values, tied directly to the results we want for our community.

The budget deficit has tested us. And we know without question it is a problem we must solve before we do anything else. But now that the framework of a solution is clear, we have to keep moving forward.

In the last year we've made incredible progress, and in the year ahead we will continue marching on, toward a Santa Fe Rising that lifts all boats.

We will start with key investments across our city – in our Airport, in our Fiber Network, and in our Housing, that are critical to shaping the Santa Fe of the future.

To start, we need to complete our renovation and pursue expansion of our airport. Recent studies suggest that 80% of people who live in Santa Fe or Northern New Mexico choose to fly out of Albuquerque.

Investing in a stronger airport will make traveling to Santa Fe easier than ever before, but can

also help in our efforts to recruit new businesses, and, crucially, can help make it easier for our existing small businesses to connect to the world outside of Santa Fe.

Investing in the Airport will allow Santa Fe to pursue proven markets for air service like Los Angeles, Phoenix, Silicon Valley and Chicago, Austin, and Houston. We won't do this alone. We can and will pursue a coalition of private sector partners throughout Northern New Mexico to help make this a reality.

Now we live in one of the most creative and innovative city on the planet, and I would put our entrepreneurs up against the best in the world.

But we can't grow small business the way we want to without creating the capacity for Santa Fe to connect and conduct commerce with the same speed and dexterity as Silicon Valley, New York City, and Austin, Texas. Investing in fiber expansion beyond the Railyard will put every person and every business on a level playing field with the world. The potential is there.

We've already been named by Google as a top City for E-Commerce. Having fiber infrastructure allows existing companies like Descartes Labs, and new businesses in film pre- and post production editing and digital media to access the fiber infrastructure to grow, without having to relocate. Just imagine the clean, sustainable, high-quality jobs that can be created with a fiber infrastructure that connects our entire community.

A city with purpose, a city rising, must also be a city where the people you count on to grow and

participate in your economy can afford to live in your community. For too many working families, living in Santa Fe is simply not an option. In fact only 39% of our workforce lives in the city.

The lost opportunity, for small businesses alone, of the purchasing power of the people who spend their dollars in Rio Rancho or Espanola instead of in Santa Fe is huge. The hit to our local economy, when we have a budget where more than 70% of our revenues come from sales taxes, is even more damaging to our long-term stability.

It says great things about our economy that people know they can build a career in our town. Now it is time for us to come together and support a meaningful housing strategy that means they can live here, too. I've already introduced measures that incentivize more housing and generate more revenue for our affordable housing fund by allowing developers to pay a fee-in-lieu of building their own units.

This spring I will unveil a new effort, to create incentives using overlay zoning that will accelerate the development of rental housing and economic development in areas in the demographic heart of Santa Fe that are ripe for revitalization. Like the St. Michael's Corridor, and the new and exciting Rufina Arts District.

Since 2010 rent has increased more than 19%, thanks in large part to a shortage of supply on the market.

We tout the living wage as an example of our stand for working people. But if that is truly one of our values, we have to pair it with an honest effort to make it possible for those workers to live their lives in the city they support with their labor.

From these basic investments in infrastructure, we have to turn to investments in our people, in our resiliency. When we talk about resiliency for this city, we are talking about Santa Fe's ability, both in the short and the long-term, to persevere in the face of environmental, social, and economic threats. Our ability, in spite of everything we face, to continue to be a city of purpose, where culture, innovation and creativity thrive, for the mutual benefit of all.

That means pairing our investments in this city's infrastructure with investments in this city's people that make us stronger, more prepared, and more likely to be successful. This is a fight, as I see it, that will be defined by our ability to make progress against two of the biggest threats this city will ever face: the disastrous effects of climate change, and the ongoing poverty and inequality that divides us against one another.

We talk a lot about the climate, we talk a lot about the environment, but those ideas can feel vague and un-relatable to the average Santa Fean, living in our city, constantly hustling to make ends meet and provide for their family.

But the truth is, Climate Change is much more than a vague environmental cause.

This is about dealing with the biggest threat to our way of life that we have faced in generations.

It's about protecting who we are, how we live, our values as a community – even about protecting the community itself.

Because Climate Change, for generations to come, will impact every decision we make about our future. Economically, socially, in our schools – every dream we hope to achieve for this community will succeed or fail based on our ability to mitigate Climate Change.

And we have the power to act. We can become the most sustainable city in America. We can coordinate our efforts, put real resources behind them, and see real results.

We can ensure the long-term health and security of our food and water supplies, massively grow our use of renewable energy, retro-fit buildings and homes to conserve more and waste less, invest in micro-grid technology, and train and put to work a generation of workers in high-wage jobs in a sector poised for growth. And that's only the beginning.

But, if fighting Climate Change is the key to making sure our children still have a city to live in, then ending the poverty and economic inequality that divides our community is the key to making sure ours is a city worth living in.

Poverty in Santa Fe is real. Nearly half of Santa Fe families go without a secure source of income. One in every four Santa Fe children goes to bed hungry.

The threat of climate change that looms over our entire community will hit those in poverty harder than anyone else.

Poverty impacts school performance, long-term health and wellness, future earnings potential, access to higher education – you name a metric by which we measure a successful community, and I will show you how poverty undermines progress.

Poverty threatens not only the quality of life of the entire community, both rich, and poor, it threatens to rob the promise at the heart of our identity – that in Santa Fe, every person matters, no matter what neighborhood they grow up in, and every person has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Our success, our identity, depends on our ability to end poverty once and for all.

The twin challenges of Climate Change and Poverty go hand-in-hand. Address one, but not the other, you fail at both. And the sheer size and severity of these systemic threats demands bold action and new ideas – backed by revenue, not just rhetoric.

Now, I've been clear about our City's financial challenges and the plan to overcome them.

The revenue we need to tackle this problem doesn't exist right now. But the capacity for us to create it is real – if we can find the political will to be smarter in how we manage our city's cash

reserves.

We promised to end the practice of transferring cash from the Water Fund, and we have to keep it. But it is a mistake to think that preserving the Water Fund is the same as not putting it to work, and where it sits right now it is earning next to nothing. We have to be smarter than that. With minimal risk, and without removing that money from the Water Fund, we can invest it with the State Investment Council in a way that ensures it is there when the water fund's infrastructure and debt requirements need it.

But just as important, we could see it generate anywhere from 3 to 5 percent in real revenue, money that we can invest back into Santa Fe at a time when it is desperately needed, to back up our commitment to sustainability, and our fight against poverty, with real investment.

That is why tonight I am proposing, and will do everything in my power to win the support of the Council, to invest \$50 million of current cash reserves in a new initiative called the Santa Fe Verde Fund.

The Verde Fund will operate essentially as an endowment, generating annual revenue between \$1.5 to \$2 million, which we can put back into the community in transparent, strategic, data-driven investments.

50 percent into the fight against climate change, and 50 percent into the fight against poverty.

These investments will be made in the most open and transparent possible way – through a competitive and transparent grant process overseen by the Sustainable Santa Fe Commission and the Youth and Human Services Commission.

This is how we rise to the challenge of securing our community's future.

One final note, about what it means to truly live up to our values, to truly be a community where every person can reach their full potential. Where we invest in the people of Santa Fe. There is one more thing we can do, right now, to give children in Santa Fe a real opportunity.

More than 85% of a child's brain development happens before the age of five.

A community's early childhood system matters more than anything else in ensuring the best possible start in life, and is by far and away our best chance at ending New Mexico's long losing streak in the national child well-being ranks.

I can't, and won't, let this opportunity pass us by. So this year, after we have put forward a plan to eliminate the budget deficit, I will be asking the City Council to approve the creation of an Early Childhood Commission, which will have one mission and one mission only: delivering universal access to early childhood care – including full-day Pre-K – to every child in Santa Fe.

The community is ready to make this a reality – funders and service providers, from the Brindle Foundation to the Santa Fe Baby Fund to the United Way to Head Start and more stand ready to answer the call.

And if there was every a cause worthy of our community investment, it is this one.

That's why, after we solve the budget deficit, and if, through the course of their work, the Commission identifies a need for a dedicated source of revenue and can put forward a detailed plan that shows exactly what we would be getting for our investment, I will ask the City Council to enact a portion of our property tax mil levy to back it up.

This city hasn't raised property taxes in more than a generation.

I think that's because we've never been given a compelling reason to invest in something, as a community, that was bigger than ourselves. But I believe that reason is here, I believe that day has come.

President Teddy Roosevelt said that "In any moment of decision, the best thing you can do is the right thing, the next best thing you can do is the wrong thing, and the worst thing you can do is nothing at all." I don't anticipate that this will be easy, but I have never felt so certain it was right.

We should do this, because it's one of the most important investments we will ever make.

Every dollar we put in generates clear returns, not just in the form of better education, although that is reason enough, but also in lower costs for remedial and special education, higher future earnings for every child, a better-educated workforce for local businesses, lower crime, and less demand for social services.

We should do this, not just for kids, but for families. For every parent who can't work, or is struggling to balance the demands of work and family. Better yet, for every parent who can't afford to pay more for quality childcare than they pay for their mortgage. We cannot be a place where being born into wealth, or not, determines your future.

We should do this, for an economy that is struggling, and would unquestionably benefit from dozens of new businesses and thousands of new jobs delivering early childhood care to this community. For businesses in any sector, for that matter, looking for a way to attract and retain the kind of talented young parents for whom this might be the incentive that gets them packing the moving truck for Santa Fe.

We should do this, because we can't afford not to. Considering all we get in return, that every child in Santa Fe will start out with an honest chance to reach their full potential, it really is a small price to pay.

The sense of urgency is real, the need for action could not be more clear. Let's make Santa Fe a city of purpose, that promises to value children more than anything else, and that backs that

promise up with real investment.

These are not small ideas, and I have no illusions about how difficult they will be to deliver. But if they are big, it is only because they match the scale of the problems.

We have already come so far. I've never seen a Santa Fe so willing to embrace new ideas. Santa Fe has shown us a side of itself that many on the campaign trail told me didn't exist.

Unwilling to just let the future come, we are chasing it down. Unsatisfied with simply seeing what it hold in store for us, we are taking it in our own two hands and shaping it for ourselves.

We are becoming a City of Purpose, a City on the Rise, and this is no time to let up now.

The state of our city is stronger than ever. But the nature of our people, our better selves, will never let strong be strong enough, and that is exactly the way it should always be.

Thank you, God bless you, and God bless Santa Fe!