

State of the City Address

Text of the State of the City Address given by Canby Mayor Melody Thompson Tuesday

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Welcome to 2010 – significant because it marks the passing of another decade and time to pause and take stock of events occurring on Canby’s landscape. I’ve been privileged to witness many of the events of the decade first hand, and in reflecting back have to say sometimes I’m stunned by the progress. For example in 2003 the state of the city speech focused on the need to diversify a tax base that relied heavily upon residential properties and the backlog of declining street maintenance. Both of these problems were aggressively pursued and now we have a 2/3 full Industrial park and a mechanism for tackling street maintenance on the 52 mile city street system.

In 2006 we acted to address graffiti and more alarmingly rising gang activity, by enacting a graffiti ordinance and adding a dedicated gang officer and program. More recently it was passage of a county wide library district which stabilized library operations and of course our successful recruitment of Canby Cinema 8 with city funded parking and street improvements.



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I share the historical perspective because I wanted to remind you of what we've done together in the past. Today's message is one of optimism and confidence during this

economic recovery, of the ability of this organization and community to get behind what they believe they need to do to make things happen. I have seen and experienced the visible, tangible will of Canby at work and it's an awesome sight.

Here are some of the notable projects and accomplishments of 2009:

1. Citizens passed charter amendments that bring us into conformance with State law and allow us to operate more efficiently with changes in management structure.
2. The finance department again received the Certificate for Financial Excellence, reporting and presentation of our financial programs.
3. We utilized approximately a half million dollars in grants for South Walnut Street in the Canby Pioneer Industrial Park and for purchase of new buses for CAT, the City Transit System.
4. We implemented the combination gas tax and street maintenance fee to complete \$500,000 in street maintenance projects and were able to complete nearly 1 million dollars in other new and reconstructed street projects.
5. Legacy Park was completed with two soccer fields, two playgrounds, a walking path, magnolia grove, picnic shelter, restrooms and parking.
6. The Logging Road pedestrian Trail was paved connecting North & South Canby and along with parking lot improvements, moves us further along toward opening up the entire 80 acres of natural space on the North side.
7. In progress are master plan updates to the:
 - City Transportation System Plan – which forecasts needs to 20 years
 - Parks Master plan – which includes a financial assessment for a community center and sports complex
 - Storm water master plan to meet stricter state and federal regulations is in the works.
8. We actively participated in the three County (Washington, Multnomah and Clackamas)/Metro planning process – which is still underway – and worked with Clackamas County to site potential rural designations around our city.

Public Safety

Canby Police has become a part of the On-line Crime Alerting and Mapping Service, "CrimeReports.com". It delivers free, easy to read crime maps by address and automated alerts using the latest technology and is available through a link at the City website or by going directly to CrimeReports.com. Also, take advantage of "Nixle", a community information service that alerts you to everything from public safety threats and traffic snarls, all accessible by cell phone, e-mail or on the Web.

For the second consecutive year, gang related crime is down by 16%. We continue to partner with the Canby School District to share funding of the high school Resource Officer which we consider essential to proactive policing practices among the youth. A big thank you to the outpouring of community support for the K9 program, donations totaling \$15,000 welcoming our newest police department member, "Doerak". Grants totaling \$27,000 were awarded to the department for Traffic Safety Enforcement, laptops for Vehicles and to assist children at the holidays as they "shop with a cop".

We welcome Bret Smith as police chief this month who brings 28 years of law enforcement experience to our community. I know Bret personally - he will be an outstanding addition to our agency. Special thanks go to the advisory committee comprised of citizens, staff, other community leaders who were instrumental in the recruitment process, the first of its kind in the history of Canby.

Parks and Recreation

The City Council continues to pursue a goal to improve and stabilize funding and governance issues around recreation services. We continue to provide professional staff support to Canby Area Parks and Recreation District Board; they are now focusing on a feasibility study for a possible community center, new pool and upgraded sports fields. Working in conjunction with our Parks advisory board and stakeholder partners (Canby School District, Canby Kids, Clackamas County Parks, the YMCA, the Gators Swim Club, Canby Community Education, and Canby Adult Center), CAPRD will probably submit a concept proposal to voters in the near future. As a reminder, this special voter approved district surrounds the city and is independent of the city government. It was intended to provide future amenities and program needs for the at large area. So why is the City staking a claim in the process?

1. Presently, the volunteer group Canby Kids operates the area parks and recreation program utilizing a variety of fields and gyms owned by the City and School District. But facility and field development is virtually non-existent for the future.
2. The 2000 census revealed that the median age for residents in Canby is 32.9 (younger than average age in the U.S.). In addition families (non-single residences) represent 75% of the population, giving Canby a higher than average concentration of families and Canby's population has grown 19.89% since 2000.
3. A current levy that supports the Canby Swim Center is set to expire in June 2012, making this a timely opportunity to gauge the need of the community to sustain this or future facilities. By the way, let us all say Happy Birthday as the swim center turns 40 this year. They'll be celebrating as well with events throughout 2010.

LIBRARY

Countywide passage of the library district in 2008 ensured stable library funding for our community. Last year, we added hours, improved the book budget and hired a fulltime professional library director for the first time in a decade, Penny Hummel. As part of the LINCC library consortium, our library online catalog is upgraded and it's even easier to find the books, CDs, DVDs and other materials you need.

Financial Forecast

We still hear much about the recession, more specifically questions on when to expect the recovery. In April 09's quarterly report, State economist Tom Potiowsky cautiously noted that Oregon's financial free fall may be over. December 2009's quarterly report suggests that the recession in Oregon is either over or close to being over. As we all know, the recovery is sometimes slow but nevertheless it is before us.

I want to share just a few brief generalities of the City's financial budget message given last June, 2009:

- Property tax is stable with a slight increase.
- State gas taxes are down.

- Cable franchise fees are down.
- Planning and Building revenue is down significantly as one might anticipate given the lack of new construction.
- Conversely System Development charges – those funds provided by new development that pay for future capital improvements in our utilities are down because new construction has decreased.
- General fund expenses were reduced 9%.
- We'll be watching for the outcome of the State's budgetary direction and decisions should the January tax measures fail. There is much dialogue about both sides of this question and even the impacts to programs or revenue utilized by city government. The impacts to our revenue stream and conversely to services we provide – or to programs our citizenry utilize currently provided by others may be severely affected. We'll wait until the legislature convenes to see which direction they take and respond as needed. Look for more information when the City reviews early budget data in March.

Revitalization Historic Downtown

Early in 2009, the Canby Economic Business Summit initiated by the Canby Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors attracted more than 100 people. One by one local business people stood up and talked about their business and the economy. They told of struggles they are encountering, issues they're trying to overcome and what would help them move forward positively.

One important thing materialized from the summit: the focus and commitment of the Council toward reinvesting in historic downtown and businesses generally. In the short term, here are some of the programs and projects that came out of the summit:

- A "shop local" campaign to keeping customers in town.
- Canby the Garden Spot signs at key gateway points, one piece of a branding program that seeks to create Canby as a destination.
- A one-stop resource center for businesses to locate information about small business loans and grants.
- Support for businesses like Canby Telcom in their efforts to provide fiber optics to the downtown core with broadband and Internet to open up ways to promote and sell Canby products and services worldwide.
- We became a Main Street program member and will be enacting a variety of initiatives from this national program including Hiring of a Downtown manager who will
 - Actively recruiting commercial businesses,
 - Work to retain existing businesses,
 - Integrate promotions and activities to bring in customers,
 - Assist businesses with existing city programs such as the interest free loan for façade improvements.

We can't talk about downtown commitment without heralding the Canby Cinema 8, a public/private partnership designed to bring entertainment to Canby but also to draw customer traffic to downtown. It's a start – a superb beginning - and we can do more:

Such as the Railroad project

Here's a bit of history - prior to 1920, the "Road of 100 Wonders", now NW First Avenue, was the main route through Canby, running northeast to Oregon City and west to Barlow and up the valley. The city is working now to redevelop this historic roadway with sidewalk café style business fronts and high profile pedestrian appeal, bringing the depot museum back as a tourist draw, enhance the Saturday market in that area.

We can do more, like the new library downtown

Working with the new Canby Cinema 8 theater complex the Urban Renewal Agency has been pursuing plans to build a new library facility that meets both the OLA standards and community needs. We're on schedule to receive the final gift from Clackamas County - a \$1 million grant for capital purposes at the library and gearing up with ideas on how the library can be a vital part of revitalizing downtown. Library Director Penny Hummel has said "This is clearly a community that loves its library, and every community needs a strong library that meets its needs." And I couldn't agree more.

If you were to ask the experts to select the #1 key to success, most would say clearly

defined goals. Achieving them is like opening a combination lock. You need the correct numbers in the correct right, left, right sequence. There are thousands of possible combinations; and if you are aware of the settings but not the sequence, your efforts will prove futile. Success is the ability first, to recognize opportunity; second, to form plans and strategies that leverage opportunity; and third, to develop the necessary skills needed to execute those strategies.

We employed these strategies in the Industrial Park and attracted some outstanding companies. The business development and mix in the park is certainly an example of dialing in the right numbers to success. In turn, this tax revenue "fuels" or powers a variety of other Urban Renewal projects. We need to continue to dial in the right combination for success for historic downtown and commercial businesses using these urban renewal tax income.

The right combination most likely will include Main Street initiatives, private investments and some form of public investment strategy that I like to call the wow factor. The specific shape and form of the strategy is still on the drawing board but I can tell you from the conversations lately among the Council and staff – it is on the way. My confidence in this statement arises from what I know of the will and leadership contained within this council and city organization. It also comes from the demonstration of the success of our actions to date. The Urban Renewal Agency will be taking the next step, meeting in the weeks and months ahead to develop that strategy - so stay tuned.

One of the most inspirational things I have learned as Mayor is how truly fortunate we are in this city to have many civically engaged citizens and volunteers involved in all of the boards and committees. I want to personally thank all of them for their dedication and service to this community. Without these people, Canby would not be quite so extraordinary.

No state of the city would be complete without a sincere and resounding thank you to the Canby city staff who are the bricks and mortar, the foundation upon which the city builds its vision. Particularly we owe a huge thank you to Amanda Klock, HR director and interim City Administrator; John Kelley City, Attorney; Kim Scheafer, City Recorder; and Jorge Tro, Acting Police Chief. These people have been instrumental in supporting their fellow employees and exhibiting exceptional leadership to the Council and I through some very challenging months.

Last but not least, my sincerest thanks to the Canby Area Chamber and Board of Directors for consistently providing the forum in which the City, the School District and others can reach out to engage the business community and citizens. On behalf of the Council, we appreciate the partnerships we share, your support of the community and the many ways in which you demonstrate your commitment to making each year in Canby even better.

Thanks to you all for sharing the City of Canby's story this year, and I wish you and your families all the best in this New Year.