

State of the City

Mayor Distler's State of the City 2019; 02/28/19

Good afternoon and thank you all for being here. I first want to start off by thanking the Shawnee Chamber of Commerce for continuing to host the annual State of the City. The strong teamwork that happens between the City and the Chamber is so important to continue to make it evident that “There’s No Place Like Home” and, for that, we are grateful. Did you know after a brief stint in 1921, the modern Shawnee Chamber of Commerce was organized in 1946?

I also want to take a moment to thank Julie, Kandie, and everyone else who work so hard on this event every year.

They say time flies when you’re having fun and believe it or not, this marks my fourth State of the City as Mayor. I am humbled and honored to have had the opportunity to serve this fine community for not only the past four years as Mayor, but for many years before that while serving on the Council and as a lifelong Shawnee resident.

Our theme this year, and I’ve already mentioned it once, is “There’s No Place Like Home”. Yes, part of the Wizard of Oz takes place in Kansas, but the messages from that movie really resonate with me when I think of my hometown. One of the most repeated phrases when people are asked what they like most about Shawnee is that it’s a big City with a small town feel. I couldn’t agree more. Like Dorothy and her aunt and uncle, the people here are friendly, hard-working and have a true community spirit. They are proud of Shawnee. And share a history with Shawnee of life a on the farm. Our City Council, city staff and the local business community all play different roles as well. So many of the decisions made here are *smart, like when the Scarecrow gets his brain. New things require *courage, like when the Cowardly Lion becomes as brave as can be. And the glimmering Emerald City, like many new projects in Shawnee, certainly didn’t

come about without some Great and Powerful decisions, like the Wizard of Oz. Last but not least, *everything done in the City of Shawnee is done with heart, an ever-present nod to the Tin Man.

You'll also see quite a bit of the color green throughout this presentation. When thinking about today's theme and what I wanted to make sure to get across to all of you, the meaning behind the color green started to stand out. It's incorporated into our logo and it stands for things that all play a part in Shawnee. The color green carries meanings of growth, prosperity, harmony, safety and environment. In fact, it's described in many places as the color of life, renewal, nature and energy. When you take a few minutes to think about all those words, they are weaved into the threads of our community.

And you'll also hear some interesting bits of history sprinkled throughout today. I'll explain *why just a little bit later!

But first, I want to recognize my fellow Councilmembers. Their commitment to our community and willingness to make big decisions are key as we all "Follow the Yellow Brick Road" and stay on this family-focused path together. As I read your name, if you could please stand to be recognized.

- Councilmember Mickey Sandifer
- Councilmember Jim Neighbor
- Councilmember Mike Kemmling
- Councilmember Stephanie Meyer
- Councilmember Eric Jenkins
- Councilmember Lindsey Constance
- Councilmember Matt Zimmerman
- Councilmember Lisa Larson-Bunnell

We have other County and state-elected officials here, as well as representatives from

our school districts, so if you all could please also stand for a round of applause so we can recognize you for all the work you do.

We also want to thank Abby Hoepner and Jack Mahoney from Mill Valley High School. They are here shooting video of today's State of the City so we can post it later for those who couldn't make it. We appreciate you taking time out of your day to help us out.

So speaking of "the yellow brick road", While the history goes back to 1945 when the Shawnee Township board presented a plan to taxpayers to create "farm to market" gravel roads for every road in the township at an estimated \$4000 per mile cost, we have our own unique road project happening in Shawnee! Of course I'm talking about Nieman Now, which will transform the look of the Nieman corridor. This is the City's largest project ever launched and we are right in the thick of it. I talked earlier about how new things require courage and the Council had and continues to have a lot of courage to make this major project happen. We know there are frustrations with the inconvenience related to road construction, crews burying power lines and more, but that comes with any kind of progress, and we are all trying to focus on that big picture. There's been a lot of research and heart put behind this project and we truly believe it will become a downtown destination for *all of Shawnee. In just a matter of months, families will be able to come to downtown Shawnee, grab a bite to eat, stop in any of the shops, grab a beer at one of the new breweries and then spend some time outside at the new public areas going in along Nieman or up at Trail Scout Park.

The City has taken on several other large projects including the new Fire Station 74 that just opened last month near 53rd and Woodsonia. This is a prime example of our continued commitment to making our home as safe as possible.

As part of an early effort to improve Shawnee, in what year did the City Council first approve adding parks, tennis courts, and street lights? 1925. And to this day, the

council still supports these types of amenities for our residents. A huge conversation happening is the potential Community Center near 61st and Woodland. The Governing Body recently decided to put this on a special mail-in ballot, to let you all, our residents and taxpayers, decide whether to build it. Our staff has worked hard to make this process as transparent as possible with the costs that are associated and how that would increase property taxes. And if you've seen the 3D fly-through and other designs, YOU get to be the judge as to if you want to see built.

You may have noticed several other renovations around the City including upgrades at the Civic Centre, that was built in 1990, with a newly designed front reception area, new bathrooms that are ADA compliant and able to accommodate *everyone who visits that facility. There's also a newly resurfaced gym floor for all of our pickleball players to enjoy as well as an improved balcony that shows safety is, as always, our highest priority.

And back to the yellow brick road... a stretch of Johnson Drive between 435 and Martindale is quite scenic after crews recently resurfaced it and also made stormwater improvements in the area.

While those are just a few of the City projects happening around Shawnee, the Great and Powerful Oz has also been masterminding a lot of private development as well. Last year was another great year for economic development for Shawnee. Last year's total construction valuation was more than \$101 million and the last few years topped \$268 million of new investment in Shawnee.

You can check out the Wizard of Oz movie or book at the new Monticello Library near Shawnee Mission Parkway and Hilltop. This highly anticipated, beautiful building opened last August, and to say it's a popular place to visit, is an understatement. It's a perfect place for Auntie Em and Uncle Henry, as well as all the "munchkins" in our community who can enjoy a great children's area. The new library also provides

meeting and study rooms and lots of technology for *all ages in our community.

More development has been sparking in Shawnee including a new Dairy Queen, Pink Charming Boutique, Nick and Jake's, VisionCare, ServiceMaster and PBI Gordon. NazDar is expanding in Perimeter Park at 83rd and K7 and a new building is going up in the West Link Business Center area near 43rd and K7. These are just a few of the new and expanded businesses that have helped bring about one thousand new jobs into our community.

Downtown Shawnee is becoming the place to be as the historic Aztec Theater continues to undergo a transformation. Did you know in 1947 the Aztec price for admission was 39 cents for adults and 16 cents for children and servicemen? Did you also know they originally opened in 1927 under the name Mission Theater by Shawnee's third mayor and were the first building in Shawnee with air conditioning? It will open this year for the first time since 1975 and I'm putting in a request now to have "The Wizard of Oz" as one of the movies that shows there... which would be fitting since this is the movie's 80th anniversary!

Two new breweries are calling downtown Shawnee home. Transport Brewery just recently opened across from City Hall and Servaes Brewing is scheduled to open this Spring. The old OK Garage building at Johnson Drive and Nieman has a new owner, and we are looking forward to seeing the plans for what *that will bring to our downtown. The new QuikTrip near Shawnee Mission Parkway and Goddard is constantly buzzing with customers. It fits right in with our other new developments in the area including Raising Cane's, Andy's Frozen Custard and Stag's Creek.

I mentioned earlier the color "green" and how it stands for "growth" and "renewal". So another huge project on tap for 2019 couldn't be more appropriately named. Westbrooke Green will start to take shape later this year at 75th and Quivira. It will feature luxury apartments, new shopping and dining options, a small amphitheater and

plenty of “green” space for trails and parks.

More and more people are discovering “There’s No Place Like Home” when it comes to Shawnee, as we’re seeing new and expanded housing developments pop up all the time. The Kenneth Smith development is underway, and this property includes a home and fence built by Jack Garrett, a stonemason that emigrated from England in 1855. Kenneth Smith purchased the Garrett house and 20 surrounding acres and built his custom golf club making factory from stone quarried from the site. His custom clubs appealed to the rich and famous bringing them to Shawnee including Dwight Eisenhower, Bing Crosby, Mickey Mantle, Sammy Davis Jr, Bob Hope, Johnny Carson, and the king of Morocco and more. Other developments underway include Bristol Highlands, Veterans Park and Calamar Ridge Senior Living. Parts of the older neighborhoods are seeing a bit of renaissance as well, with infill housing projects and unique transformations to existing homes. It means a lot to me personally to see so many different housing options offered in our City, no matter your income.

We’re excited to see businesses and developments like these choosing Shawnee. They will breathe new life into many parts of our City and draw in even more visitors to see what we have to offer. We imagine they’ll soon see, as we do, that “There’s no place like home”.

You all can rest assured that all of our City Departments are working hard every single day to ensure the safety of our “home”. And when you think about “courage” and “bravery”, our Public Safety divisions are truly the “Lions” of our community.

Our Police Department has been a whirlwind, or some might say, a “tornado”, of activity. Did you know in 1956 the Shawnee police department had one car, number two, and two guns and in 1960 the police department consisted of a part-time chief, three full time officers, seven reserve officers, and was located on the west side of city hall? They recently revised the Department’s mission statement to “Serving Our Community with

Purpose and Care". This mission shines through in *all parts of the Department. It's evident in the fact that they were able to grow the Community Outreach and Engagement Unit by adding staff to that area. Since then, you may have noticed they've been able to host and take part in even *more community events like free self-defense classes, Coffee with a Cop, food drives, National Night Out and Lunch with Law Enforcement, when officers visit our local schools to grab a bite to eat with the kids. We hope you had a chance to see all the "Shawnee Secret Santa" stories and articles that stormed the media in December. We are so fortunate that the local, anonymous donor once again gifted our Police Department \$10,000 to allow officers to randomly hand out cash while helping build and strengthen relationships in our community. Many of those heartwarming stories were featured on the Police Department's Facebook and Twitter pages, so make sure to give them a like and a follow, if you haven't already!

The Department brought on seven new officers and continues to keep the focus on how they can best serve and protect our neighborhoods. Our Police Department is committed to adapting to the ever-changing needs of our residents. As a reflection of that, they have been able to move the mental health co-responder to full-time instead of part-time. This position has been a valuable asset to both our officers and our residents. Several other programs are also seeing growth including a new internal Peer Support Program coupled with mental wellness awareness training for the entire Department.

Our first K9 officer was added in 1968 and the first Shawnee Police Department k9 was a German Shepherd. We have also had blood hounds, and Doberman pinschers and now utilize Belgian Malinois. One of our K9 officers recently went through an extensive certification process to train canines in house, which will save the Department money over the long haul. And a new K9 training course that is being developed at the Police Department will become one of the premiere places to train dogs in the metro.

Our officers are getting equipped with some new technology, including a new scanner that will more efficiently help to map crime and crash scenes. They've added a drone as

well, to boost their abilities during investigations.

And we're proud to announce that, for the third consecutive year, the City experienced a decrease in total crime numbers.

All of those things I just talked about and a ton more that I don't have time to address, all play into one of the biggest things going on at the Police Department right now. They have been working hard for months now to gain accreditation, so we can hopefully soon add our Police Department to our list of already accredited departments that includes Public Works and the Fire Department. This is no small feat, and one that requires a lot of hard work, cooperation and feedback. As our Departments work toward these accomplishments, it shows that the entire City is focused on "One Shawnee" and being the best home we can be to our residents and businesses. So by this Spring, we hope to be able to let you know that the Shawnee Police Department *has joined the ranks of our other accredited departments.

Now to our Fire Department, that achieved accreditation in 2017. Our newest Fire Station 74 opened just last month near 53rd and Woodsonia. A dozen *new firefighters have joined the ranks to help staff this new fire station. Shawnee's first fire truck was a Ford Model T purchased in 1924 and the department charged \$5 to go on a call outside city limits. The Fire Department rolled out a new fire truck late last year and a new ladder truck will be coming soon. We are adding another fire inspector in response to all the development unfolding in Shawnee, so we'll be able to inspect *more buildings *more often to ensure their safety for *you. And inspecting more buildings means making sure none of them suddenly start flying through the air and landing on anyone, right?

The Fire Department also recently worked to update and replace several of our outdoor warning sirens. We obviously need to know when those tornadoes are coming that might end up sending us all to Munchkinland!

We are happy to continue to invest in our Fire Department and Public Safety overall,

because it only means better things for our *entire community. It means better response times City-wide, better coverage and better preparation for the hundreds of new homes being built in Shawnee. It's more proof of our commitment to "One Shawnee" and doing what's best for *all of our residents and businesses.

Our firefighters and City leaders are teaming up to lay out the vision for our Fire Department headquarters, and all Fire Department facilities, to make sure we are meeting the overall, changing needs of our community.

Another focus of the Fire Department is community engagement. They are preparing to launch the first ever "Citizen Fire Academy" in April. This nine week program will be a multi-faceted class that will give people an in-depth understanding about the vital role the Shawnee Fire Department serves in our community. The Citizen Fire Academy will also train people in disaster preparedness and basic first aid, something I am very passionate about and have been very involved in myself. I believe this is knowledge and training that every resident would benefit from. So be on the lookout for that, because we are sure it will fill up fast, just like the Police Department's Citizen Police Academy does... so much so that they've now added a second class!

The firefighters are, of course, a hit at local schools when they go out to educate kids about fire safety. They are at all of our community events and they are always happy to show off their cool trucks. They're also behind important community efforts like CPR classes, blood drives and much more. Did you know it was Dr. Henry Sullivan that delivered the first lecture to the Shawnee Fire Department in 1929 on First Aid. All of this plays into the Department's overall Strategic Plan, which is something they are actively working on day in and day out. It shows how committed they are to our community now and how hard they are working to prepare for the future.

And now comes the point in the speech that represents the magical feeling of the Wizard of the Oz. The employees who descend on our City in times of need and make everything ok again, just like Glenda the Good Witch does in the movie. Of course we're

referring to our tried and true Public Works Department... the FIRST Department to achieve accreditation.

They are the ones truly paving the way on our yellow brick roads in Shawnee! Did you know the pioneer trail California Road crossed Quivira Road at approximately 61st Street? In fact, in 2018 they resurfaced nearly 50 lane miles, replaced 7,200 feet of curb and 4,000 feet of sidewalk. Crews upgraded nearly eight lane miles from chip seal surface to asphalt. They are constantly researching and testing out new products and new technology in an effort to stretch our resources and, in turn, save taxpayers money.

We know road conditions and traffic are always priorities to the public when it comes to quality of life. About one quarter of all of the City's traffic signals are now connected and we are working to get all of them online. That will allow us to study traffic flow even more and make adjustments to make sure your drive to and from work is as smooth as possible.

Our Public Works snow removal system is top notch. The work they've put in this Winter has been outstanding. The drivers are all working 12 hour shifts around the clock and I've lost count as to how many snow storms we've had... just in the past couple weeks! In fact, let's give them a round of applause for their efforts.

Our social media feeds have been flooded with positive messages about how Shawnee is so much better at getting streets treated and cleared than other cities. They were also out working hard late last summer when a storm knocked down quite a few trees in one area. Our crews helped clear those to the relief of many homeowners. Our Public Works Department is full of a lot of unsung heroes who are involved in every facet of our City. So we really want to make sure they are recognized for the daily efforts.

Stormwater has been another huge undertaking from our Public Works Department.

Our employees completed over \$2.5 million dollars of stormwater pipe repairs last year, totaling over 11,000 feet. This is all thanks to the Governing Body's decision in 2016 to double the Stormwater Utility Fee, which has allowed us to upgrade much of our infrastructure that was failing.

From building permits to development engineering to planning to Codes enforcement, our Community Development department is one of the busiest areas of the City. They issued nearly 1,500 building permits in 2018. That shows how development is happening all over the city and I am proud to hear so often how we are so easy to do business with and our development process is superior to the surrounding cities and that is why they chose our city. In 1930 R.O. Larsen's promotional brochure, "Shawnee, The Gateway of Kansas" stated "Shawnee is the ideal community, affording all the comforts of the country , combined with all the advantages of the city. In 1930! We have a new director, Doug Allmon, who with the help of his amazing team, is working hand in hand with businesses and developers to bring new projects to our City. Our engineers are the people keeping the big picture in mind, as if overlooking the community in a hot air balloon, helping to map out the future of Shawnee, while our Codes Enforcement Officers are making sure the beloved community we live in *now stays just as great, if not better, than it is now.

Now don't take this the wrong way, but our Parks and Recreation Department sort of symbolizes the munchkins. Let me explain. They are the Department that works hard to bring us all a lot of fun and education. When Dorothy landed in Munchkinland, they immediately entertained her, provided some pretty awesome lollipops like you see at your tables, and told her to get to steppin' down that yellow brick road. Fun, entertainment, guidance, treats and fitness! What more could you ask for? In 1992 is when the Shawnee Parks and Recreation Department evolved from the Public Works Department.

I mentioned the potential Community Center earlier and that is something that you and

all the registered voters in Shawnee will be asked to make a decision about on the mail-in ballot that will be coming out in May. If you've been on the Clear Creek Parkway trail out by the site near 61st and Woodland, you've probably seen the ever-changing cyclocross track that is on part of the property. Even if you aren't into cyclocross, it is worth going to see. It draws in HUNDREDS of cyclists, young and old, and allows them an area to exercise, socialize and spend time outdoors. It is a unique community of people and a growing sport that we are happy to support in Shawnee.

I talked earlier about how growth and vitality are some of the meanings behind the color green. That plays into what our Parks Department does daily, including how they planted native grasses and wildflowers in 20 acres of parkland throughout the City. They once again helped achieve "Tree City USA" status for the 21st consecutive year. Our crews are always busy placing and maintaining beautiful landscaping that helps make our City a community of choice.

From Christkindlmarkt to PARKED to our summer concert series and, obviously the SCARECROW festival (didn't think we'd miss THAT opportunity, did you?), the wide variety of events our Parks Department helps pull off in our community is unmatched. These events help paint vivid memories for people in our community, like Dorothy has of Munchkinland and the Emerald City. These events are what truly makes people think and *feel, that "There's No Place Like Home". Someone once commented to me that these Shawnee events are like a Hallmark movie.

Did you know our first swimming pool in Shawnee was built in 1961?! That pool is now under the farmstead at Shawnee Town but our two existing aquatic centers continue to be "the place to be" in the summertime. In fact, more than 115,000 people went through the gates at both Splash Cove and the Soetaert Aquatic Center last year, marking a 15 percent hike in attendance over the previous summer. Our employees also completed a successful "Learn to Swim" outreach program and took part in the "World's Largest Swim Lesson". Both of those are designed to help teach kids to swim who might not

have the luxury of being able to attend or afford regular swim lessons. As always, the safety of our community is the priority for our employees, no matter what department they are in. That priority of safety rings true throughout many of our other classes and programs including CPR certification, self-defense and personal safety. It's also a great example of how our departments collaborate to provide the best possible service, like Parks did with Police and Fire for those classes and programs. See? We are just like Dorothy and her friends!

You'll continue to see new, unique programming for *all ages. The Princess Tea provides a place for all the littles to live out their fairy tales while our Tri-City trips, that are geared towards the older crowd, saw a 44 percent growth over the past year. Our Parks and Rec staff is always working to come up with creative classes and programming to provide to our community.

Shawnee Town 1929 continues to be our own personal Emerald City. As you walked in today, you may have noticed the construction going on. Our "Wizards" have been busy designing and building the new O.W. Fisher Chevrolet dealership and the Murphy Service Station. We are excited for these to open up and provide another "step back in time" (like the part that's in black and white in the Wizard of Oz!) to all the visitors who know and love Shawnee Town 1929. And we should probably pause to give a shout out to the *other Mayor.... Not of Shawnee, not of Munchkinland, but the Mayor of Shawnee *Town, Royal Krueger. The Shawnee Town staff are some of the most fun, unique, informed people in our City and we truly are thankful for what they bring to our community day in and day out. They don't have a "Toto" necessarily... but they certainly have some chickens!

Our amazing employees are the people who keep our City running day in and day out. Recruiting and retaining good employees are HUGE parts of why we are successful. Our Human Resources Department is the front line for folks coming to work for the City of Shawnee and we truly couldn't ask for better people to interact with. That department

is growing as our City and City services grow. They've racked up a number of awards in 2018 including the Cigna Well-Being award. And the "Shape Up Shawnee" program is putting nutrition, fitness and overall well-being on the forefront of our employees' minds. The amount of work within the HR Department is high and they manage to do it with a smile on their faces and positive attitudes.

Perhaps the Department that best matches to the Great and Powerful Oz is our Information Technology Department! They are the brains behind *all the inner workings of our City. In 2018, they worked on replacing the City's networking switch hardware. Probably most of you have no idea what that means but we can assure you, it's a lot of work! The IT Department also continues to invest in the City's Fiber Optics Master Plan, which helps keep the community connected. We are also honored to once again be recognized as a 2018 Digital Cities Survey Winner by the Center for Digital Government.

The Finance Department continues to be the true "checks and balances" for our City. Their tireless work of making sure we are not overextending our expenses and have plenty of money in reserves helped earn us the Double "A" Bond rating by Moody's, which makes it easier for us as a City to get access to lower interest rates, which saves money for taxpayers. The Finance Department is also launching a new financial management software system designed to help the City operate more efficiently.

Safety continues to be a priority for our Municipal Court. If you've been by, you've probably noticed two Court Security Officers are now there to man metal detectors that were installed early last year. Employees have added more dockets, which means people don't have to wait as long and they can get through our court process quicker. We also joined forces with our Municipal Courts throughout Johnson County for a Warrant Amnesty Event, that was successful in Shawnee, helping clear 27 cases in one day.

We launched a new branch of our website designed to make it easier for residents to find what they are looking for in all of our agendas for City Council, Boards and Commissions. We continue to work hard to make sure what we are doing at the City is as transparent as possible. Our website has a wealth of information, as do our social media platforms. We are so fortunate to have Julie and with that;

- More than 11,000 likes on Facebook
- 8,200 followers on Twitter
- Nearly 2,100 followers on Instagram
- We're able to reach 15,400 of you on Nextdoor
- Nearly 2,000 people are signed up for our monthly e-mail newsletters called "A Few Good Words"
- And we send our CityLine newsletter to every home in the City four times a year

We continue to work closely with local media to get out stories about the City so we can inform our residents on a variety of platforms including print, radio, TV and online. I spend a lot of my time working to get information out about our community to our residents in a variety of ways including Third Thursdays, Quarterly Q&A's and a number of other places including local schools, churches, HOA meetings, City and Chamber events. If you were at last year's Open House, you may have noticed our new "The Mayor is In" chalet! And one of my favorite projects to be a part of is the Mayor's Christmas Tree Fund. We worked together to raise nearly \$24,000 for Shawnee Community Services this year.

I'd be remiss not to also quickly mention our band of dedicated volunteers at the City of Shawnee. In 2018, they put in nearly 5,000 hours of work into our community. The different programs like Neighbors Helping Neighbors and Adopt-A-Spot make a major impact and keep our community spirit alive.

2018 marked a season of change in leadership for the City of Shawnee. We had several retirements including Community Development Director Paul Chaffee, who served the

City for 30 years. Deputy City Manager Vicki Charlesworth, who also spent part of her last months at the City as Interim City Manager, retired in December after serving our community for 30 years. We could keep you all here for much longer explaining the impact of their work and history of knowledge of the City. Safe to say, we all owe them a lot of gratitude for their service to our community for three decades.

We are lucky to have the 2018 City Clerk of the Year Stephen Powell, who was promoted to Deputy City Manager last year. Another big promotion to recognize is Caitlin Gard, who went from Assistant Public Works Director to Assistant City Manager.

And last but not least, a nod to our new Wizard. In June of 2018, the Governing Body announced Nolan Sunderman would be our new City Manager. Nolan brings a fresh perspective, a wealth of knowledge and a new energy to the City. We are excited to see how his community-oriented approach will lead us into the future as we continue to see Shawnee shape and grow.

There are so many more names to mention and department highlights to showcase, so please know that even if I didn't have time to mention you today, we see the work you are doing every day to make Shawnee the place we are proud to call home. I take such pride in being born and raised in Shawnee. I know there's no place like home and I know anyone who comes here knows that as well.

You may wonder why the random tidbits of history sprinkled throughout today's message. Everything I talked about today has a history, a beginning. Those who know me know I am incredibly passionate about Shawnee's history and have been since my first third grade field trip to Old Shawnee Town. Shawnee has a unique and rich history and is a strong foundation to our present and future. Actually, to say I am passionate about it is putting it mildly. I have had a long time dream of putting together a Shawnee Trivia game and with the support of City Manager Sunderman and help of Shannon Hsu, Paul Chaffee, Charlie Pautler, Kevin Fern, Kandie Manchion, and my father, my

dream has become a reality and I am SO excited to announce we now have a Shawnee Trivia game with 750 fact based questions! To go along with that, another dream is the geocaching of our historical sites and points of interest. Which would also be another fun thing to do while visiting our new downtown!

So now that we've talked about the history, it only makes sense to address our future (the crystal ball....). I'm often asked what my vision for One Shawnee is. As I have always said, it's about us, as a community, not thinking alike, but thinking together. That means as Mayor, it is my job to operate in three distinct "lands". In the land of the community of dialogue and discussion, accessible and present to listen to the dreams of the residents. In the land of the Governing Body, guiding decisions and policy that are best for our community. And in the land of administration in which those policy decisions are turned into action, with the help of the City Manager. It is my job to connect all three lands, but to control none of them. It is my job to listen respectfully to diverse perspectives, identify common ground, and inspire people to come together to pursue common purposes. It is my job to work effectively with others, bridge divides, and lead on difficult and complex issues. As a community we have made great progress in the land of Shawnee. As a community we have worked openly, transparently, and together to do what is best for Shawnee. As the steward of our community I am motivated by the responsibility to carry the torch for my hometown's founding spirit with pride and progress. Pride in what makes Shawnee's unique and exceptional small town feeling place to live, work, play, and progress toward an even brighter future.

These past few years have been focused on public safety, infrastructure, quality of life, communications, and economic development and I am committed to continue putting resources where the needs are greatest. It has been a great privilege to serve the people of this community as Mayor and together, in three years, we have made important progress on business growth and better jobs, more responsive and transparent government and improved sustainability and quality of life. I am committed to keep fighting for Shawnee's future and to further enhance the special quality of life

that makes Shawnee so precious and unique. I will continue our momentum to build a Shawnee that works for all. It is essential to safeguard the community in ways that reflect the wants and needs of the people who live, work and visit Shawnee. We have also pursued opportunities to make it easier to do business in Shawnee, in turn accelerating and expanding the economic vitality. Shawnee has a special balance of tradition and innovation. Despite differences in age, background, or circumstances, Shawnee is home to all of us. An affordable community for every generation. We are thriving. We are defying gravity.

As the leader of this city my vision is a lifelong one. It's that...

- We will have stewardship and operate in a way that enhances public value and produces a sense of community, while seeking to earn each resident's trust through honesty and transparency. Responsible stewardship is selfless, service-oriented and beneficial to the taxpayer.
- Our community needs to be a clean, safe, welcoming place to live so our community will have world class services including; police, fire, public works, and great Parks and Recreation.
- We will work collaboratively to create optimum efficiency and display in our service a value for the residents we serve which includes proper two-way communication and listening to our critics.
- We will operate in a manner of continuous improvement in that we will never be satisfied with the status quo but still seek to personally and collectively enhance our skills and business practices that would set us apart and enhance public value and trust while propelling Shawnee into the future. We will not "compete" with our neighboring cities, but will do what is best for Shawnee.
- We will have collaboration of all and decisions will not be made unilaterally. We

seek to balance our resident input in a way that guards against “group think”. The more a group is monolithic, the more they tend to think the same and be trapped in inertia. We as a City benefit from diversity.

- We will have credibility and will operate in a manner that will treat people well, fair, firm, and equal. There will be no favoritism or partiality to one entity over another and while the Governing Body may not always agree on the assets, decisions will be made in the right way for the right reasons.
- We will operate in a manner where we “serve” our constituents. We will seek out, listen to, and be responsive and sensitive to our residents, even if we disagree. Every inquiry will be responded to in a respectful manner.

And with letting these principles guide us:

- We will continue to partner with our EDC to encourage new growth and development of all businesses from the small family owned to the large global companies and actively strengthen the workforce available to support them. A downtown bustling with activity.
- We will continue to encourage revitalization with new businesses and families in our historical buildings preserving history and marrying our past with our future.
- We will seek to continue to bring more family focused fun including dining, sports, entertainment, and shopping options. To have the amenities our residents want and need. And while still focused on the family, we will continue to encourage tourism and welcome visitors to our great city.
- We will seek to have different and creative housing options in every area of the city with an increased focus for affordable housing for young families and senior citizens

to fill that under met need within our community.

- And of course, continue to be the clean, safe, sustainable, welcoming community with solid infrastructure, where businesses and residents want to be!

That is MY vision and I feel we are on the right path, the yellow brick road to OS, One Shawnee.

Every resident and business in Shawnee deserves to build from the prosperity of this great City. I can assure you, as Mayor, I will continue to work hard day in and day out to make sure this vision benefits YOU, the most important part of our community.

And like the movie, it wasn't a dream. Shawnee is a real place and you, and you, and you were there. This is a real, true, live place that's beautiful. This place is Shawnee, and there is no place like home.