



**2016 Henderson State of the City Address
Mayor Andy Hafen
February 3, 2016
Green Valley Ranch Resort**

Well, thank you very much. I think right out of the chute here, we ought to recognize Gail Beckman who sang our Star Spangled Banner. What a great rendition. Wonderful! And I told the Fire Department Honor Guard - I saw them backstage - they really do set the stage for this state of the city. And I appreciate all they do, and, especially, that rendition that they gave us getting us called to order, so to speak.

Welcome to one of the greatest cities in America! How's that?

We're happy to be back at Green Valley Ranch, and extend our thanks for their hospitality hosting us today. It's always a treat to be at one of Henderson's finest resorts, and we're grateful for the way they always roll out the red carpet.

My colleagues on the City Council and I are always happy to be back here for this great event. Mayor Pro Tem March, Councilwoman Schroder, and Councilmen Marz and Bateman are some of the finest public servants I know, and I want to extend my thanks for them, and for all that they do. They truly do make Henderson great.

A big "thank you" as well to Cox Communications. Cox is a great community partner helping film and broadcast our state of the city for many years. Recently, they announced a \$10 million dollar investment, to bring 10-gigabit fiber access to virtually every business in Henderson. Over the next four years, the addition of that fiber-optic technology will provide a great competitive advantage for businesses here. We're excited and grateful for their commitment to invest in Henderson. Just imagine all the businesses that can watch state of the city once that's done!

I'd also like to thank Scott Muelrath and the Henderson Chamber of Commerce for their support in putting on this special Chamber luncheon. We appreciate them and our great business community for all they do to make our city successful!

This is always one of the highlights of our year, and we're grateful you're here today to talk about the state of the city. This is the state of your city. It is the state of our city. And the state of our city is strong! It's just as strong as the thousands of men and women who've made a conscious decision to live, and work, and play here. For them...for us...living in Henderson happens by choice, not by chance.

Henderson isn't a place you visit, enjoy and leave. It's a place where you put down roots. It's a place to create a life for you, your family and your business. It is a place to call home.

As I travel our city, I hear amazing stories: stories of success, stories of triumph, stories from people of all walks of life. People tell us all the time that they love our city. They love living, and working, and playing here. And they say, "Mayor, this is my city, this is My Henderson, and let me tell you why."

People who shared their stories with us in the opening video, like Dr. Matzinger, who recently moved her health care institute to Henderson. People like local business owner and President of our Chamber of Commerce, Tim Brooks. It's people like Karen Kyger, the director of HopeLink and Brooklyn Darmoody, a high school student and member of our Blue Ribbon Commission on Youth.

It's people like Lou La Porta. I've recognized Lou in the past as one of our founding fathers and original city councilmen. In his 90s now, Lou is the President of the Henderson Historical Society. I'm proud of the great work Lou does there, to collect our stories and preserve them for future generations.

We hope you'll share your "My Henderson" story with us as well. We'll be featuring those stories all year long on social media. We want to know what makes Henderson the perfect place for you, your family and for your company.

We know the reasons people love Henderson are diverse and as individual as the people who live here. For some, they love the healthy lifestyle we provide. One of our residents recently shared this with us online. He said, "I've lived in Southern Nevada for 17 years ... you can't beat this town with the amenities - parks, pools, and recreation centers. When I leave Henderson, it will be to leave Nevada!"

I feel the same way!

Just last night, I'm pleased to announce, we received the designation as Nevada's first AARP Age-Friendly Community for creating an active, accessible and healthy environment for people of all ages!

Henderson has twice now been honored as the recipient of the National Gold Medal for Parks and Recreation Excellence. Last year, the Trust for Public Land also recognized the city, ranking Henderson 19th in our debut on the ranking of the best park amenities of America's 75 largest cities.

Adding to our impressive portfolio of world-class amenities, last year we added 43 acres in four new parks, including Aventura, Paradise Pointe, McCullough Vista and Boulder Creek Parks. We opened the fantastic new Whitney Mesa BMX Track and completed the three mile I-215 Trail.

We were also named one of the top 10 cities in America for active lifestyles, as well as Nevada's only Silver-Level Bicycle Friendly Community. Bicycling is a great way to get out and experience the 124 miles of trails we provide. Whether by enjoying our fun family Stroll 'n Roll in Inspirada, or signing up as one of our bicycle friendly businesses, we're rapidly becoming known as one of the greatest places to enjoy Nevada on two wheels!

Providing a healthy, vibrant city is important for us, and something that makes us a very attractive place locally, regionally and nationally. This has been a key area of focus in the past, and it's helped make us the incredible city that we are today.

As we go forward, we need to look at what really makes a healthy, vibrant city, and ask ourselves, "What are the key areas of focus for us to remain one of the best places in America to call home?"

We've been grateful for the work of Southern Nevada Strong and Henderson Strong in that regard. They've engaged citizens in Henderson and across the valley, identifying areas to strengthen our valley now and for the future. Things like transit-oriented development and increased transit opportunities that will better traffic flows and decrease congestion.

I saw a picture the other day of what was entitled the "state flower of Nevada." It was a photo of an orange road cone. Hopefully you didn't have to appreciate it too much on your way here today! As you've traveled around Henderson I'm sure you've seen your share of those damn cones. The good thing about them is they mean improvements are on the way.

This year, thanks to the incredibly hard work of our great Public Works, Parks and Recreation staff, the City has completed more than \$33-million-dollars worth of Capital Improvement Projects. These projects included improvements in the Pittman area to sidewalks and streetlights; improvements along Horizon Ridge Parkway; bus stops along Lake Mead Parkway; and rehabilitation work across the city on roadways like Whitney Ranch Drive and Warm Springs Road.

And we have others currently underway like the expansion of the Stephanie Street Bridge. There are also improvements to Volunteer Boulevard in West Henderson and Racetrack Road on the east side.

Several years ago, due to the economic downturn, we identified a \$17 million dollar annual gap in our ability to fund capital projects. That gap remains and we must continue to find ways to address it.

With those continuing needs, funding for these projects has come largely from Fuel Revenue Indexing which is a critical funding mechanism for these types of infrastructure jobs all around the valley. These funds also helped us complete projects last year along Water Street from Lake Mead to Boulder Highway. That area, and the historic Water Street District, are important areas of focus for us.

I'm happy to let you know that over the next few weeks, we'll be planning a workshop there with business owners, residents and others. We hope to have significant discussion about the future of Water Street and the types of projects that fit there: projects like the Lovelady Brewery, projects like South-End on Water Street and Makers and Finders, which have already broken ground, helping bring new excitement to downtown.

I expect that excitement will continue as we see the growth of the \$300 million dollar Cadence project. Cadence will connect Water Street across Boulder Highway, and bring a whole new dynamic to the Water Street District.

The East Side Redevelopment area is an exciting place to see new projects coming in to the city, especially around Union Village, where the 245,000 square-foot Henderson Hospital has broken ground and is under construction. The hospital will feature a wide range of services including emergency medicine, inpatient and outpatient surgery, women's and children's

services, maternity care, cardiology, radiology, respiratory care and other services. We're excited to have this great new addition to our city, and I can't tell you how much we're looking forward to the grand opening this fall.

Las Vegas Athletic Club is also working with us and will soon be prepared to break ground nearby as part of the Union Village complex.

The Gateway Project, adjacent to Union Village and just east of Cowabunga Bay, is working with our great Community Development staff and will soon begin work on a state of the art aging-in-place campus at Boulder Highway and Gibson Road. The project will include a senior housing development, assisted living facility, a skilled nursing facility and retail.

And speaking of Cowabunga Bay, their recent expansion has helped them bring record numbers of guests to the city, with more than a quarter-of-a-million visitors at the park this past summer.

Just north of there, Dignity Health will soon begin construction of a new clinic that will complement their recently completed patient tower at St. Rose Siena. That beautiful new tower increases their capacity to 326 rooms and doubles the size of their emergency room.

We're also pleased that the Seven Hills Hospital behavioral health facility is expanding. They are adding 40 new beds and a new outpatient services center, in addition to creating 80 to 90 new positions.

Healthcare is a critical component for the future in Henderson, and I'm happy to tell you we're continuing our efforts to develop world-class healthcare opportunities for our residents. We have great educational programs at the College of Southern Nevada and Nevada State College helping prepare individuals to enter a variety of healthcare professions.

We were thrilled with the approval for a new UNLV Medical School to be built in Southern Nevada. This is a critical component in our effort to build medical infrastructure that will make Henderson a world-class healthcare destination. I've personally met with UNLV President Len Jessup and Dr. Barbara Atkinson. And I can assure you, we're working hard to guarantee Henderson is in line to have some of those new, medical school resources located within our borders to complement so many of the great private schools already here, like Roseman and Touro.

It is our goal, and we are working harder than ever toward the day when people will be coming to Henderson for cutting edge medical treatment, instead of flying out of McCarran to find it.

Along with access to quality healthcare, quality education is another critical area of focus for our city. As I look back over past speeches I've given here, I have talked about the importance of education every single year. We have a long and successful history helping support education in this city, and it's our intention to strengthen our involvement and our ability to influence the direction and quality of education in Henderson.

We already have outstanding schools here. In fact, recently three schools in Nevada were named as National Blue Ribbon Schools. Two of those schools – Sue H. Morrow and Glenn C. Taylor – are located right here in Henderson. With us today is Principal Michelle Adams from Sue Morrow Elementary and Principal Nicole Coloma from Glenn Taylor. Will you please stand so we can recognize you?

What a great honor to have these two nationally recognized elementary schools right here in Henderson! We are grateful for the outstanding teachers, administrators, parents and students at Morrow and Taylor, and at all our outstanding Henderson schools.

We know how critical education is, and we're actively engaged making our voice heard to make our schools better. I've met with Governor Sandoval, and we're grateful to him for the many great education reforms he put forward at the last legislative session. We are going to take full advantage of those reforms to help ensure that if you are a Henderson resident, you and your children are going to have the best educational opportunities.

Our parents are engaged; our community is supportive. Whether in one of the many great charter or private schools that call Henderson home, or in any of our outstanding public schools, we will continue to fight, to make sure Henderson parents have a voice in the education of their children.

We've been particularly pleased working with Inspirada and Cadence for their commitment to education, allowing new and exciting charter schools to locate within those communities.

We're working with Senator Roberson and Senator Harris on the AB394 committees to give input and help promote the reorganization of the Clark County School District into smaller, more responsive precincts. And through those efforts, it is our goal to help see the creation of the first Henderson precinct that will give us all - give all of you - a better voice in the education of our children.

As part of the evolution of that effort, we recently held an open house to discuss equity in funding for our schools. At that open house we had several hundred residents who shared their thoughts with us with many hundreds more who shared their input in surveys online. Their message, and ours, is clear. We support education. And we want to have more input into how our kids are taught and how our schools are run. We have great Henderson schools, both public and private, elementary, middle, high school and higher education. Henderson has it all, and it's only going to get better.

I was happy a couple of weeks ago to attend a press conference with Governor Sandoval and other elected officials from around the valley. That press conference was about an event that will put the spotlight squarely on another of Southern Nevada's great educational institutions. You may have seen on the news that UNLV was selected as the site for the final Presidential Debate of 2016. The entire world will be watching as the nominees for President of the United States come to our valley one last time before the November election. We're excited for the attention that brings to UNLV, to our region and to our city.

We all know that education is critical for our success. New businesses looking to locate here, look not only for access to an educated workforce, they're also looking for quality opportunities for their employees and families.

Businesses like Barrick Gold. We couldn't be more pleased that Barrick has joined our Henderson family, and we were excited to learn they'll be bringing dozens more corporate jobs, as they expand their operations.

Barclaycard has also announced expansions for their Henderson operations. Having celebrated their one-year anniversary with us in November, Barclaycard plans to add 150 new jobs here this year.

Henderson did get a little chicken last year with our economic development efforts ... but not in the timid way. We were all excited to hear the news that Chick-fil-A is finally making an entrance into the Southern Nevada market. Their two new restaurants, the first in the valley, are scheduled to start construction soon at locations on Stephanie and on Eastern.

And I think everyone on the west side was really excited to learn Costco would be expanding their presence here, adding a much-needed new superstore in west Henderson. Gotta love those Costco dogs!

On the industrial side of things, there's been excitement statewide with announcements like Tesla in the North, and Mayor John Lee's success with Faraday in North Las Vegas.

I'm pleased to say that we're also working hard to attract and build a stronger industrial presence in the state. Companies like Xtreme Manufacturing are expanding and relocating to Henderson. Xtreme will be bringing 200 new jobs to their 170,000 square foot manufacturing, assembly and administration site on Eastgate Road.

Also on Eastgate, Panattoni's Henderson Freeway Crossing project recently broke ground on an incredible new industrial site that should be ready for occupancy this year. That project alone will add nearly half-a-million square feet of industrial space near Lake Mead and Eastgate.

On the other side of U.S. 95, at Wigwam and Gibson, the Prologis Black Mountain Distribution Center is under construction and will add nearly 250,000 additional square feet of industrial space there.

The regional delivery company OnTrac opened a new 130,000 square foot facility on Courier Way, bringing with it an additional 175 jobs as part of their regional expansion.

Levi Strauss, a longtime member of our Henderson business family, also recently announced a major achievement. Their facility was recently named the largest of its kind - - in the world - - to receive the LEED Platinum Certification for Existing Buildings from the U.S. Green Building Council.

Located in west Henderson, Levi's is situated in an area of real interest and importance to the city. Seven Hills, Sun City Anthem, Inspirada and the land in west Henderson and south towards Sloan is a very important part of the future for our city. Along with the thriving businesses and homes that are built, and are being built, come the requisite need for services.

Of all the services we provide as a city, public safety is perhaps the most important thing we do, and we do it well in Henderson. In an article on MSN in November, Henderson was highlighted as one of the top 50 cities in America to live in. In the description of our city, one of the important reasons we received that ranking was because of public safety.

We need to continue to invest in this critical area.

Both our police and fire departments hold prestigious national accreditations. And, I'm happy to tell you, just a couple of months ago our Communications Center underwent the rigorous process to become nationally accredited as well. Our hats are off to Chief Moers and all of our great Dispatch Center Staff for that accomplishment.

This past year we implemented another first in Nevada, becoming the first city to begin receiving text-to-911 calls. This is our first step to be able to receive other data, including photos and video into the city's 9-1-1 system, to aid public safety personnel in responding to critical

incidents. That's in addition to our new Henderson Police app for mobile devices to report crime and help keep you informed about important public safety information in your neighborhood.

Just a few months ago, the City was recognized by FEMA for our "Get READY! Stay READY!" campaign. The agency awarded Henderson the national "Individual and Community Preparedness Award" at a ceremony in Washington D.C.

Henderson was also recognized with the 2015 International Association of Emergency Managers "USA Public Awareness Award" for our efforts to educate the community about emergency preparedness.

In our Fire Department, innovative cardiac survival protocols have increased the number of patients who survive cardiac arrest with normal outcomes by 25 percent, with a cardiac survival rate two-and-a-half times the national average.

Our new Fire Chief Matt Morris and the Fire Department are also working to improve our City's critical response capabilities through a grant from Homeland Security to purchase a hazmat response unit. That Homeland Security funding is critical for Henderson, and for our region.

I appreciate Mayor Goodman and all the elected officials who've helped express the critical need for our valley to continue as part of the major cities funding initiative for homeland security.

No one can argue that we don't have one of the safest cities around. If there is a crime or a fire or a medical emergency, if you live or work in Henderson, you know you're going to get some of the best service in the entire country.

If that is going to continue, we have to be willing to pay for it.

The last time we built a police station in the city was 2009. And the last time we opened a fire station was in 2002. To put that into perspective, in 2002 our population was 195,373. We've grown by 30,000 since we last opened a police station, and by almost 100,000 people since we last opened a fire station.

Many of you probably saw in the news, that Henderson is again being called one of America's top cities for growth. More people have moved to Henderson in the last several years than live in most good-sized American cities, yet we haven't added a single new police or fire station in all that time.

I'm happy to share with you that we have plans to build a new fire station in Inspirada in the next year or so, and we appreciate the developer partnering with us to build that facility. However, given our population increases and ongoing capital needs, we need to continue our efforts and find the needed resources to sufficiently equip and operate that station.

We need to be committed, as a community, to maintaining the critical levels of service necessary to serve all our residents. Whether in providing fire or police, public works, parks, utilities or the many other services we offer, our reason for being is to make sure you, your families and your businesses have the resources you need to be successful, healthy and happy.

At the head of that effort are some individuals who take their jobs very seriously.

I want to thank City Manager Bob Murnane, City Attorney Josh Reid, and City Clerk Sabrina Mercadante, and their outstanding staffs, for the job they do, day in and day out, to take care of our city. They are 100 percent committed to your success.

I'm sure many City employees are watching online, and several others are here today. I know many of them actually gave up their seats in this ballroom to help make more space for our guests, so I'd really like to ask all of them, wherever you are, please stand so we can tell you "thank you" for all you do.

We have a great City staff!

Through their efforts, I'm happy to announce today that Henderson has been awarded a 4-STAR designation from STAR Communities, the national organization that recognizes municipalities for excellence in sustainability. Henderson is only the 17th city in the nation to receive that designation. The STAR Rating System is the first national certification program to recognize communities for incorporating sustainability into their business practices and operations. The program looks at hundreds of metrics including parks and open space, housing, water conservation, infrastructure, public safety and community engagement. This designation confirms that the City's efforts to make our community and our organization more sustainable have been successful.

I'm pleased today to also announce that we've launched the Henderson Data Explorer on our City website. The Henderson Data Explorer is a new feature that gives you access to demographic, socioeconomic and other valuable data about our city. You can instantly find information on the graduation rates in Henderson schools, employment and labor statistics, or many other important economic indicators.

In addition, our open data portal includes information about business licensing and building permits, crime statistics, parks and trails, and will update and include other data as we expand it into the future.

Data helps us make decisions. It's a tool to help us make choices. And the more we know, the better decisions we can make. As a city, we want to do all we can to give you the tools and resources to make the best life possible. Whether it's better access to data, world class parks and recreation amenities, sustainable development or outstanding emergency services, we want you to have what you, your businesses and your families need to succeed and to be happy.

At the end of the day, when you look at the city we've built, and what we've become, it's clear to see that Henderson hasn't happened by chance; it's by choice. As you leave here today, I hope that you'll ask yourself, "Why did I choose to be here? Why did I choose to live here, or work here?" I hope that as you ask yourself those questions, you can reflect on your own story and say, "You know, I really love living here!" "I love raising my kids here." Or, "I love working here." "I love that I can go home at night, and feel safe in my neighborhood."

People here know who they are, and they know where they are. And they take pride in being able to share their story.

In closing, I just want to share with you that this is my story. For those here last year, I shared with you about my granddaughter, Aly. Attacked by a deadly virus in her heart, Aly clung to life as doctors and nurses struggled to find a way to save her. She and her family were sustained by the prayers, well wishes, and true kindness of this community. I'm grateful to tell you today that Aly is now two-and-a-half years old and almost entirely better, with hardly any lingering effects from that deadly disease.

But during that time, I've become acquainted with many individuals - - young people, families and seniors - who are going through similar situations.

My job, our job, is to make sure we continue to provide that same incredible, healthy, caring, safe, community for them and for everyone who calls Henderson home.

That is what Henderson is. That's why Henderson isn't a place you just visit, enjoy and leave. It is a place where you put down roots. It's a place where you come to create and enjoy the best life possible for you, your family and your businesses.

It is a place to call home, and that makes all the difference in the world.

Thank you very much.

God bless Henderson and the United States!