

## **State of the City Keynote Address 2021**

Good morning everyone! I am extremely honored as the 2021 Mayor of the City of Rocklin to be here with all of you today. Thank you for joining us for this special State of the City event and for your continued support of Rocklin.

It's great to see all the familiar faces this morning – in person! – and I hope to have a chance to meet those of you out there I don't recognize very soon.

Before I get into the business of my speech, I'd like to recognize my fellow city council members and, in the Rocklin Chamber tradition, share something you may not know about them.

Please help me recognize Vice-Mayor Bill Halldin, a longtime Rocklin businessman who may have helped you navigate through a public crisis or two using his PR expertise.

I'd also like to recognize council member Ken Broadway. Ken has served on the council since 2016 and has extensive community leadership experience. In his day job, he runs logistics for UPS, which we all know is industry that becomes more complex by the day as we continue to order online. A fact about Ken, In 1984 he represented the State of Nevada as their Academic Olympian and had a group lunch with President Ronald Reagan.

Council member Greg Janda, would you also stand up to be recognized? Greg is our longest serving Council member, elected in 2012, is a business owner in the technology field and is a steady force for Rocklin leadership. When not working or behind the dais, you might find Greg barefoot water skiing, while listening to his favorite band AC/DC. Greg, "For those About to Rock, We Salute You!"

Last but not least help me honor council member Joe Patterson. Joe was also elected in 2016, recently launched his small business Provident Strategies, and is a staunch advocate for transparent and responsive government. Joe and his wife of 11 years Colleen have four children and he shared how they met. Their relationship started 20 years ago (this year!) when she tracked him down in a Jack In The Box parking lot after a fraternity party. It was love at first sight.

This is a great opportunity to also introduce Rocklin City Manager Aly Zimmermann to the business community. Aly joined Rocklin nearly a year ago, but this is her first large-scale Chamber event, due to COVID restrictions. Aly previously served as the assistant city manager for the City of Vista, where she oversaw multiple departments and contracts for the city with a

population of over 100,000 people. We'll be speaking with Aly a little later to learn more about her priorities for Rocklin. A fun fact about Aly, she can write backwards!

I'd also like to recognize and thank the Rocklin Chamber of Commerce for partnering with the City on today's event, as well as for all of the support you provide to our community. The past 19 months have been challenging to say the least, but through it all the Chamber has been a great partner and liaison to the local businesses to help them, literally, keep the lights on.

## **Recovery and COVID-19**

When COVID-19 turned all of our worlds' upside down in March 2020, Rocklin was actually planning the spring 2020 State of the City event.

Instead, the nation shut down.

Without waiting with for direction, Rocklin, the Rocklin Chamber and agencies across the county immediately began planning ways to help businesses stay afloat and reopen safely. Staff from more than 20 agencies met virtually on a weekly basis starting in April 2020 to strategize on assisting residents, businesses and stakeholders.

Through these efforts, our region kept businesses informed, provided training and resources on reopening safely, developed and implemented best-practices. We also helped businesses apply for and secure federal and state pandemic funding, as well as offered direct monetary support from CARES Act funding.

### **"Were Open" Campaign**

The City of Rocklin and the Rocklin Area Chamber of Commerce featured the "Come in Rocklin, we're open!" shop local effort during initial reopenings. This campaign featured online promotional articles, advertising toolkits and other materials to notify residents businesses were open and help communicate safety protocols.

### **Business Assistance Program**

The City also implemented a multi-faceted business support program by suspending the local sign ordinance to assist advertising, waiving fees for late payment of business licenses for nearly 400 organizations, and creating a temporary outdoor dining program allowing restaurants to take advantage of outdoor areas.

### **Restaurant Assistance and Keep the Lights On**

Two large grant programs that evolved included Rocklin's restaurant assistance campaign, and the "Keep the Lights" on general business assistance campaign, both funded by CARES dollars.

The restaurant assistance program provided approximately \$150,000 to nearly 50 local businesses. The “Keep the Lights” program distributed nearly \$170,000 to a total of 175 Rocklin business representing nearly 2,000 employees, paying for energy bills during the pandemic.

One owner said “These grants from the City and Chamber help us to continue serving this beloved Rocklin community we’ve called home since 1997 and look forward to serving for many more years to come.”

### **Business Support Programs**

Now that the California economy has been fully open for a few months, the City and Chamber are focused on recovery and reaching new heights.

### **American Rescue Plan Act Funds**

The City of Rocklin will be awarded just over \$7 million in American Rescue Plan Act funds, half has already been placed in City accounts, to keep front line workers on the job, assist local businesses and non-profits in recovering from the pandemic, maintain vital services, increase the health and safety of residents, and more.

On Sept. 28, staff recommended 15 general programs to meet those guidelines and the City Council and I approved staff efforts for continued development and rollout.

### **Assistant City Manager Sherri Conway**

I’m also excited to announce a new champion for Rocklin businesses has also joined the City this week. Sherri Conway, a familiar face to many as the Economic Development Director for Placer County, has taken a position as Rocklin’s Assistant City Manager, starting just this week!

One of Sherri’s main priorities will be creating a City-wide economic development strategy that will facilitate growth for current businesses, help address any public agency pain points they may have, and attract new businesses to provide high wage jobs for our residents. Welcome Sherri!

### **Private Business Incubator in Rocklin**

Businesses within Rocklin have continued to innovate, and I was intrigued to see the activity that has been occurring on Granite Drive. Mark Haney and his partners recently launched the Growth Factory, based right here in Rocklin, a pre-seed accelerator and accompanying venture fund on a mission to scale up companies in the Greater Sacramento region. Mark and his wife Stacey were honored with a City Ruhkala Award late last year for their charity work in the community, and their business ventures match their philanthropy.

## **Downtown Development Activity**

The City has also been hard at work continuing to improve the downtown corridor to facilitate a thriving business hub, a gathering place for residents, and a destination for visitors. Numerous business, residential and infrastructure developments are planned or under construction.

A few projects of note, moving up Pacific, from west to east:

### **Pacific Tech Park**

After approval more than a decade ago, the commercial buildings on Pacific Street, just before Sunset Blvd. near the Kawasaki Dealership still technically known as Roseville Motorsports, are under construction. With three buildings nearly complete and five planned, the total square footage could reach over 48,000 available on the 7.6 acre site, for office, light industrial and mixed use space.

### **Quarry Place**

Just up Pacific St. at the site of the Old K-Mart building, (across from the award winning Moksa Brewing) the City has approved Quarry Place, including 180 workforce housing apartments, 40 single family homes, and two commercial structures. Just few weeks ago, the City received an update from the project developers that housing legislation passed by the State makes them hopeful they can negotiate a project impasse and move forward in earnest.

### **Beer 40**

An outdoor community tap house on the City-owned gravel parking lot at Quarry Park Adventures was also approved, in concept, earlier this year. The outdoor tap house would offer a creative approach to serving independent craft beer and wine, paired with a unique food experience in a family and dog-friendly environment. This would be a simpler version of the very popular “Sac Yard” tap house in Sacramento and a great complement to Quarry Park Adventures and the Amphitheater.

### **Land adjacent to Quarry Park Adventures**

The plans for a public market, retail and residential anchor development for the parcel on the other side of Quarry Park Adventures fell through during the pandemic. Strategies are being considered for the City to kickstart interest in developing this prime piece of real estate that has the potential to be a centerpiece of the Quarry District.

### **Quarry Park Adventures Success**

Before moving away from the Quarry Park area, I'd like to mention the success achieved by our operating partners at Quarry Park Adventures over the past 18 months. Despite the pandemic, the business has started to realize real profits thanks to the great concept imagined by City leaders and the operating savvy of our partners. Loans the City made to help the business grow are being paid back on schedule, and a new profit-sharing agreement was reached this week at the City Council meeting. Here's to continued success!

### **Rocklin Rd. and Pacific St. Roundabout**

Continuing our virtual trip up Pacific St., the City will replace the existing four-way traffic signal at Rocklin Road and Pacific Street intersection with a two-lane roundabout. The City project will improve safety at the current four-way intersection and keep traffic flowing as the area continues to develop. The contract was awarded this week and initial work will begin soon, with heavy construction to begin in spring of 2022, after what we hope is very rainy season.

### **Oak, Pine and Pacific Future Housing**

Just past the roundabout area, the City is also working with workforce housing developers to solicit proposals to build on a piece of downtown property along Pacific, Oak and Pine streets. The city has money specifically to assist development of affordable housing that must be spent, use it or lose it, and this potential project shows our commitment to meeting state mandated housing requirements.

### **Rocklin Rd. and I-80 Interchange Planning**

Detouring from Pacific St. to Rocklin Rd at I-80, it's important everyone is aware of the City is planning major improvements at the Rocklin Road/I-80 Interchange over the next few years.

As the Rocklin community grows, improving the flow of traffic in this area has become more and more important. Many of us already know what it's like to be stuck in traffic after classes let out at Sierra College, and further development is slated for the area surrounding the school.

This improvement project will include a variety of enhancements to benefit residents and visitors with improved connections between Sierra College and the Quarry District, relief of car congestion on Rocklin Road, additional pedestrian and biking connections, and more.

The improvement project is scheduled to begin construction in 2026. The City is currently in the environmental study phase of the project, followed by a design phase from 2023-2025, and then construction.

### **College Park**

The improvements planned at the interchange will be necessary as plans for development ramp up in the Sierra College area. The school and its partners have submitted plans for development on large parcels of land they own in the area of Rocklin Rd. and Sierra College Blvd.

College Park is proposed to include parks, open space and trails, surrounded by residential, mixed-use villages, retail, office, medical and other uses.

## **Major Projects Across the City**

Many other projects were either completed over the past year or now in the works across the City.

### **Opening of Whitney Ranch Parkway Extension**

The opening of the Whitney Ranch Parkway in extension in May provides an east-west connection in northwest Rocklin, improving access to neighborhoods, local amenities and other major thoroughfares for residents.

### **SWRA Improvements**

The past 19 months have also shown how important the Sunset Whitney Recreation Area is as residents spend more time outside. It's been exciting to see the numbers of people using the trails and I'm looking forward to being able to fund an expansion of this popular amenity.

SWRA currently features 2.5 miles of trails for people and their pets to enjoy (as long the pets are leashed and people pick up after them, we have new pet poop ordinance, you know) with another .75 scheduled to be rehabbed in the spring of 2022 and plans in the works to extend even further.

The City is also looking forward to beginning a master planning process for the entire 184 acres, to help us all bring into focus what this jewel in the middle of Rocklin might be in the long run. Stay tuned for more because when the process begins, we'll need your input.

### **Bike Pump Track at Whitney Community Park**

A design proposal is also being prepared by Park staff that may bring a bike pump track one step closer to becoming a reality at Whitney Community Park.

A pump track is a course designed for bicycles with banked turns and hills where riders travel the course with minimal pedaling. Similar paved pump tracks to the Rocklin concept exist in Temecula, CA, and Leavenworth, WA, with dirt tracks open locally in Auburn and Elk Grove.

The idea was prompted by community interest and Whitney Park was chosen as the best-suited potential site, given its dedicated development funding source (with funds currently available) and existing infrastructure, including surrounding bike trails and connection to storm drains

A professional design will allow the city to realistically estimate the cost of building the course and an RFP is being developed for release.

### **2021 Concert Season**

The 2021 Concert series at Quarry Park Amphitheater concluded two weeks ago, ending the venue's most robust lineup to date. I love live music, attended many of the shows, and had a blast.

The City decided to bring in the professionals to manage booking the acts and shows themselves and if the first season is any indicator, the decision has been a good one. I can't wait for the 2022 lineup to be announced next spring!

### **New Fire Dept. Tiller Truck**

Safety is always a priority in Rocklin, and the City Council and I make sure the fire department is equipped with the tools and training to assist Rocklin residents in emergencies.

The newest, and largest, tool Fire's tool box is a 62-ft tiller truck, designed to provide better angles to attack structure fires, offer improved mobility in tight spaces, and increase Rocklin Fire's rescue capabilities.

It's a little counter-intuitive, but the articulation in the larger truck allows for improved turning radius and better access to some of Rocklin's new developments.

Waive to the truck as you see it go by.

### **Investment Advisory Committee (Use graphic from advertisements)**

Before moving into the final section of my speech today on new businesses in Rocklin, I'd like to mention the Investment Advisory Committee that was recently created by City Council.

The committee is made up of three highly professional residents that will advise the city treasurer in respect to city financial investment activities. They include:

- Karl (Gregg) Smith
- Ronald Dolinsek
- Robert Cook and
- Jeffrey Schnoebelen, who is an alternate

Getting residents involved with helping shape this portion of city finance is empowering and demystifies the process. I look forward to our newest committee members providing sound advice on the City's investment portfolio and opportunities.

### **Fiscal Responsibility**

The investment advisory committee is the latest financial tactic by the City of Rocklin, already known for fiscal responsibility, thanks to prudent planning by leadership and expert execution of financial policies by City staff.

Key management practices have seen the City annually apply surplus funds towards payments for pension and other unfunded liabilities, saving millions in future costs and softening the blow of changing state policies. The City also maintains an operating reserve equal to 25% of budgeted expenditures. These and other sound fiscal planning has Rocklin on solid ground financially, even in a time of uncertainty.

### **New Businesses**

In our last major section today, let's take a look at some of the exciting new businesses that are now open, or have plans to be in business soon. When discussing news businesses, I like to bring up why Rocklin is a preferred destination.

One is that the City offers two universities within its boundaries, Sierra Community College and William Jessup University. These and other regional schools, including Sacramento State and UC Davis, help Rocklin provide an educated workforce to employers. More than 49 percent of residents 25 or older hold a bachelor's degree or higher, according to the 2019 American Community Survey, the highest rate in Placer County.

The City has also worked to attract a mix of employers to offer jobs in a variety of sectors that have grown over the past decade, including education, health care, the retail/service industry, and technology.

The City is conveniently situated in the suburbs of Sacramento and anecdotally has been a destination for people leaving the bay area looking for more affordable real estate.

### **Terra Outdoor Living, Crumbl Cookie and US Bank**

Terra Outdoor Living is a bay-area based retailer with high quality comfortable furniture. There new 15,000 sq. ft. showroom is located on Granite Drive.

Crumbl Cookie is also now open to help people satisfy their sweet tooth, with what have been billed as “the best cookies in the world!” Be your own judge and visit them in the Common’s Shopping Center.

This summer, US Bank opened what it calls its first next-generation branch in Rocklin, which is also it’s first new branch in the region in a decade. Bank employees have tablet computer for customer support, rather than teller lines, a digital genius bar for accessing accounts online, and more.

### **J and S Asphalt and Pasquetti Engineering Headquarters**

Two other companies are also building their headquarters in Rocklin, J and S Asphalt and Pasquetti Engineering Headquarters. Both will be in the industrial area off Pacific St. and Del Mar Ave. and have main offices, warehouses, equipment storage and more bringing important jobs to the City.

### **Niello Jaguar and Land Rover**

Last year, the Niello Co. expanded their Rocklin Land Rover site on Granite Drive to include a beautiful new Jaguar dealership.

The project included exterior and interior improvements to the existing 13,000-square-foot building, a new 14,000-square-foot addition, and related site work.

During the pandemic, new and used auto sales have exploded, to what the City’s tax consultant has called “previously unheard of quantities.” Rocklin’s “Toy Row” on Granite drive has been no exception generating great sales tax to benefit residents and I’m sure profits for the companies.

The most recent sales tax report shows auto sales up nearly \$500,000 when comparing the second quarter of 2022 to Q2 2021. All sales tax combined was up 32.2%!

### **Tractor Supply Co. and Hobby Lobby**

Two other larger employers making their way to Rocklin include Tractor Supply and Hobby Lobby.

Tractor Supply's entitlement permits were approved by the Rocklin Planning Commission in June, which outlined development of a 22,000 square foot building at 5651 Lonetree Boulevard, in addition to 12,300 square feet of outdoor sales area, and a 4,500 square foot green house!

You may also have noticed that PetCo in the Blue Oaks Town Center has closed, but I'm happy to report that Hobby Lobby has submitted for tenant improvement permits and the City expects the company to fill the space.

### **Trader Joe's**

Finally, in the biggest thing to happen to Rocklin since the opening of Cracker Barrel, Trader Joe's has opened a store at the Rocklin Commons Shopping Center!

The store brings their unique products to Rocklin residents – and residents from the surrounding area bringing their sales tax dollars – just in time for the holiday season. And in what may be the biggest win, in a shopping center that has ample parking!

### **Why do People Live in Rocklin?**

In closing today, I'd like to leave you with a few pieces of a good news and a question.

First, I'd like to congratulate Rocklin's own Logan Webb and the San Francisco Giants on a fantastic season, one that surprised nearly everyone. Logan grew up in Rocklin and played baseball for Rocklin High School before being drafted by the Giants in 2014. He pitched 14.2 innings of post season baseball against the Dodgers, gave up only 1 run and notched 17 strike outs in two great starts. We couldn't have asked for anything more from the hometown hero and we look forward to saying a community thank you when he's available. We'll get 'em next year!

The other piece of good news? Last month, the City of Rocklin was recognized by Money Magazine as one of the Top 50 Best Places to Live in the U.S.

The magazine looked at cities that had a low crime risk, a diverse population between 25,000 and 500,000 people, and affordable cost of living. From there, each city was researched in greater depth, with economic, recreational, educational, and many other factors considered.

Rocklin was one of only two cities in California that made this year's list, and this was Rocklin's second time in the top 100, also being featured in 2019. Rocklin also made the top 30 safest City in Cal, according to the website Safewise.

Accolades like this are a nice feather in our cap, but to me it validates what I'm able to see every day – that people like you give your heart and soul into making our community a great place to live.

The question I have for you is why do you live in Rocklin? What do you think makes our City a great place to live? It's the answer to those questions that drive us and inspire us to make Rocklin even better.

Thank you!