



CITY OF ORANGE

News Release

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Text of the 2018 City of Orange, CA, State of the City Address by Mayor Teresa “Tita” Smith.

State of the City Address
March 22, 2018 1:00pm
Chapman University, Orange, CA

Good afternoon, everyone.

I’m Tita Smith, the Mayor of the City of Orange, my hometown. I would like to thank each of you for being here today. It is my pleasure to present to you the final State of the City report for my 6-year term as your Mayor.

Those amazing voices you heard performing for you earlier belong to the Orange High School Chamber Singers, accompanied by Jacqueline Geyer, under the direction of Mike Short. Please join me in thanking them for their beautiful music.

I’d also like to introduce my good friends and colleagues on the Orange City Council. Council Members, please stand as I call your names.

Mayor Pro Tem Mark Murphy: Our Senior Statesman is an Orange High Panther extraordinaire. Mark serves as our representative on the OCTA and Transportation Corridor Agency Board of Directors. In addition, Mark and our County Supervisor Todd Spitzer led the annual Harley Davidson Toy Drive and Ride for CHOC to bring Christmas toys to the precious patients at CHOC.

Councilman Fred Whitaker: Fred is very involved in many facets of our Orange Community. His volunteerism covers a wide range of charitable works and community projects. His work on behalf of the Community Foundation’s Annual “Field of Valor” at Handy Park is one of the most visible. This display of American Flags, meant to symbolize the service of all Veterans, has a special meaning for Fred, because his Father, Fred Whitaker Sr., like my Father, Gene Smith, is a proud veteran of our United States Armed Forces. Fred is also very active at St. John’s and sits on the Boards of both the Orange Senior Center and Community Foundation of Orange.

Councilman Mike Alvarez: Mike, a Villa Park grad, is an avid bike rider, who very often peddles for the benefit of our non-profits here in Orange. Last year, Mike was part of the organizing team for the first annual “Tour de Orange” Charity ride for the Kiwanis Club. Mike also serves on the Orange County Mosquito and Vector Control District Board and the Orange County Waste Management Commission.

Councilwoman Kimberlee Nichols: Kim is an El Modena High School grad, and former Orange Unified School District Trustee. She also Chairs El Mo's Grad Nite. Kim is Board President of the Orange Public Library Foundation; a work she is passionate about. In addition, Kim is a successful Orange Business owner, and still competes in ballroom dancing. I wish we had that video!

Although each of us has our own favorite thing about our beloved City, what we share is our passion for serving you, our Orange community.

Thank you to our Council for your dedication to our beloved Orange Community.

There is another group that never forgets that "We Work for You." It is an absolute pleasure to work with our City of Orange Staff. I'd like to ask that our City Manager, Rick Otto, and the City of Orange Executive Team please stand and be recognized on behalf of our 750 City employees. A sincere thank you to each and every one of you.

Please allow me to quickly acknowledge some of my family members who are here today.

My husband of nearly 50 years, Bill Smith.

Our sons Luke and Patrick

A shout-out to our daughter Angela in Texas and son Nathan in Dubai.

My sister Maria and Brother-in-law Mark

My sister Monica and Brother-in-law Mike

My niece Kate

My brother, Father Christopher Smith

And finally, a very special thanks to my beloved mom and dad, Gene and Joan Smith, who are with our Lord. They were devoted parents, who met at Orange Union High School, and were small business owners in Orange for 65 years. Their guidance and love will always be with us, and continue to light our paths. Thank you, Dad and Mom.

And thank all of you here today, citizens and guests of the vibrant and engaging community of Orange, California.

After 8 years on the Council and 3 terms as Mayor, I will hand over the baton in December. To me, how fun it is that I will do this during our City's 130th Birthday year.

Many of you know that I helped to establish the Old Towne Preservation Association in 1984. It was originally known as "Voters for Old Towne Preservation." I was also involved in establishing the first Design Guidelines for the Old Towne Historic District. This was back when historic preservation was just becoming a community priority. Even as recently as 2002, it took a community effort to save our original, 1870s Plaza Park fountain. I remember wading in that fountain when it was the Hart Park kiddie pool. The fountain now proudly greets visitors at the Orange Public Library and History Center.

I mention this because our Community Development Department is about to release an update to the Old Towne Design Standards. It is so gratifying to see how the preservation of Orange's history and

architecture by a large and dedicated group of residents has taken firm root in Orange. Truly this is a legacy I am very proud of.

So much of our community identity is about legacy. That legacy is not just in the historic buildings in Old Towne, either. It lives and breathes in the equestrian lifestyle and ranches of our Orange Park Acres residents, in the generations of families that have called El Modena their home, and in the mid-20th century developments of our Presidential tracts.

Mayor Pro Tem Murphy and I both grew-up in west Orange, near where Chapman Ave. meets Main St. He lived in what was known as the ABC streets, Alpine, Bedford, Crest, and Devon. Back then there were orange groves on the other side of Main as far west as the eye could see. It's also where the Portola expedition of 1769 blazed the "El Camino Real" trail, which connected San Diego to Sonoma. You can still find one of the monument trail markers on Chapman Ave. just west of Main. You can also find another Portola marker in the Orange-Olive neighborhood area.

This legacy continues to be built all around us. Structures from the 70s, which many of us can remember being built, are approaching 50-years old. Our City Hall, designed by world renowned architect Welton Becket and built in 1964, is now historically significant.

I firmly believe that it is this commitment to Orange's history, culture, and traditions that makes Orange so cherished. Don't believe me? How many times has Old Towne Orange been named, "Best Downtown" by the readers of the Orange County Register? They did it again last year.

And I want to especially thank Chapman University for their contribution to our local culture. If you have not yet been to the Musco Center for the Arts at Chapman University, you are truly missing out. I knew that Musco had added something special to our community the night I watch world famous tenor, Placido Domingo perform...IN ORANGE!

The California Chapter of the American Planning Association recognized the Plaza as one of California's five "Great Places." The Plaza was chosen for the role it plays as a community gathering place- Orange's living room, so to speak- the stewardship we show for our historic resources, and the variety of businesses in the Plaza. 35 places in California were nominated, and Orange was chosen to be one of the five winners.

They also named the Orange Homegrown Artisan and Farmer's Market, operated by Orange Homegrown, an Award of Excellence in the "Grassroots Initiative" category. Thank you, Orange Homegrown Executive Director, Megan Penn, and your creative hardworking board.

The Association of California Cities - Orange County Chapter- honored us last year with a Golden Hub Award for our Community Services summer program, "Teens-4-Team Orange." It teaches leadership skills, and serves as school community service hours.

"Teens-4-Team Orange" is presented by our Community Services staff called "blue shirts." They work directly with the kids, and we recognize them for this accomplishment. My public service career spans nearly three decades. That also includes the three years I spent as a "blue shirt." As a teen I worked for the City, taking of our most precious resource: Our children of Orange.

While I'm proud of my time as a Blue Shirt, I'm even more proud of having followed in the footsteps of two women who blazed the trail for all who came after them.

In 1986, Mayor Joanne Coontz became the first woman elected to the City Council of Orange. Joanne served as a Councilmember until 1994, when she was elected Mayor, and went on to serve three full terms. She finished with another four years on Council, ending with a total of 18-years of elected service to our community. Afterwards, Joanne remained active in the community as a resident's advocate to City Hall. Joanne passed away last year after a short illness, and I offer her the highest praise any servant-leader could ask for: She left our Orange community better than when she found it.

Following Joanne's trail, Carolyn Cavveche was elected to the City Council in 2001, and then in 2006 she was elected Mayor for her first of three terms. Carolyn loved public works projects, and during her term in office was determined to quiet the train horns. But I think her greatest legacy was her leadership of our City during the recent economic crises we now call "The Great Recession." As Mayor, she made sure that our service levels remained high, and that our budget returned to balance before the end of her last term in office.

I would like to thank both Joanne and Carolyn for their service. I hope that my legacy, too, is one that inspires future civic leaders.

And yes, legacy in Orange is one of the topics I want to touch on today. But this is also about our service to our community. That is why today's theme is "Working for You Across the Generations" in Orange. As City Council and City Staff, we really do work for you, We've done so since 1888, and for the past 130 years we have continued to do so.

With that, let's start by talking about living within our means. Here is the fiscal state of our City of Orange: Our City of Orange is in the black. Our business community is thriving. We remain a great place to live, work, and shop.

Orange has always been a place for businesses to introduce new concepts. The very first Marie Callendar's restaurant was right here, in Orange. Bruxie, too, is an Orange success story. This year saw the opening of one of the nation's first "Baby Targets" at Yorba and Chapman Ave.

The long awaited Urth Café is finally approaching completion, with an anticipated opening sometime this spring, complete with the restoration of a large business building, originally constructed in...you guessed it, 1888!

Our two major shopping malls did well. The Outlets at Orange generated \$2.73 million dollars in sales tax revenue, and the Village at Orange generated \$1.63 million dollars in tax revenue.

Our Old Towne District, which draws visitors from across the county, and is another good indicator of our financial health, brought us tax revenues of \$678,000 dollars.

Our Auto Dealers, major tax contributors, generated \$5.71 million dollars in sales tax revenue from new car sales.

I'd also like to acknowledge SC Fuels, and MS International, both of whom are among our top tax revenue producing businesses. SC Fuels is one of the largest fuel distribution companies in the U.S., and MS International is one of the country's foremost importers and wholesalers of marble, granite, and other construction grade stone. We thank you both for choosing to make Orange your home.

Overall, while our Property Tax growth has been healthy due to increasing housing prices, our Sales Tax revenue has continued to show slow gains. Our local economic picture shows us continuing to grow at a slow, steady pace. While this is always good news, there are challenges ahead.

Although our Employees have been paying their full share of retirement costs for some time, our City's contribution to CalPERS will be increasing over the next few years. While those payments will eventually level off, this will be an issue that your current City Council, and future Councils, will focus on. In the meantime, our Finance Department assures us that we are able to meet our obligations.

For our current Fiscal Year, we are projecting our revenues to be \$108.9 million dollars, With Sales Tax revenues at \$41.6 million dollars and Property tax revenues at \$40.1 million dollars. This is \$1 million dollars above our original budget estimates.

As always, maintaining a balanced budget has been one of the top priorities of your City Council. While there are challenges ahead, our City of Orange remains strong. Every one of us at the City of Orange considers ourselves a steward of your city, and your tax dollars. In a very real sense, "We Work for You."

How does our 130-year old City age so gracefully? Through the relentless care and renewal of our public infrastructure. Think about that: Sewer lines, water lines, asphalt, concrete, sidewalks, streetlights, traffic lights, and more. The plastic-to-copper pipe replacement project you saw in the video, over in the Olive Heights neighborhood, has been underway for the better part of a year.

Just during my time in Office, Public Works has replaced nearly all of the 90-year old underground pipes in Old Towne. These new lines will work for generations before future Public Works teams- perhaps in 2070?- will need to plan the replacement projects.

Good infrastructure truly does work for us across the generations. For example: You might not know that our City gets 75% of its water from underground aquifers. In 2016, Mayor Pro Tem Mark Murphy and I, helped to open water well 27, which replaced 3, nearly 100-year old wells, and will provide many, many generations to come with 4.3 million gallons of clean, safe water per day.

For our street maintenance crews, keeping our roads in a drivable condition is a constant process. Last year alone over 1.26 million square feet of roadway were resurfaced by our crews, including major street rehab projects on Tustin, Chapman, Katella, and The City Drive. We also look for ways to improve what we replace. For example: Ground-up tires are now used in the asphalt mix to repave our major streets. This increases the lifespan and durability of the surface, and even reduces noise pollution.

You might not know that we try, as much as possible, to schedule street rehabs when we plan underground service replacements. This saves us from having to dig up a street twice, which in turn saves a lot of time, labor, and money.

I'm pleased to share the great news from our Public Works Department. More parking is finally coming to Old Towne.

The 611-space Old Towne Metrolink Parking structure is finally under construction. The concrete foundation has been completed for the 2 level basement, and the steelwork for the three aboveground levels is underway. Our funding partner and project manager, OCTA, anticipates a grand opening before the end of this year. This project was nearly 10 years in the making, and I think it's important to recognize the work of Carolyn Cavecche, Jon Dumitru, and Denis Bilodeau, along with our current Council members for bringing to completion a project that sometimes had a very doubtful future.

During my first term on the City Council, Mayor Cavecche and I worked closely with OCTA to enact the very first Railroad Safety Quiet Zone in Orange County. After years of hearing almost daily from the residents of our Sunset neighborhood, behind Olive Heights, to "stop the constant 'blankety-blank' train horns," Orange was the starting point for a County-wide quiet zone initiative. This project was also concurrent with the Old Towne Depot river rock undercrossing project, which some Metrolink fans have called the "most attractive" undercrossing on the entire 409-mile system.

As I look back on my time on the City Council, it's always impressed me just how important both collaboration and communication are to almost everything we've accomplished over the past 30 years. Nowhere was this more evident than last October 9, when the east side of Orange found itself in the path of the largest fire event in our area in 10 years.

The Canyon 2 Fire began on a blustery morning, and in just a few short hours, it became obvious that it was headed right for Anaheim and Orange.

It had been 10-years since our Emergency Operations Center had been needed. Inside the EOC, our Fire and Police Departments coordinated our firefighting efforts, while other departments handled communications, public information, equipment logistics, IT, and traffic flow. Meanwhile, our Orange Police and Fire units, along with Orange City staff, were also out in the community helping to get Red Cross shelters up-and-running, directing traffic, closing off streets, and making sure that critical equipment got to the fire lines.

As you know, our Serrano Heights, Orange Park Acres, and Santiago Hills neighborhoods were soon right in the fire's path, and mandatory evacuations had to be issued.

This order mobilized nearly the entire cohort of our Orange Police, Fire, Public Works, and Community Services Departments. Supporting them, at the Emergency Operations Center or back at City Hall, were the staffs of our City Clerk, City Attorney, Finance, Community Development, Human Resources, IT, and Library Departments. The mission statement for our entire organization that day became: "Protect our residents, protect our City, protect our Community."

After the fire, our mission turned to providing comfort, aid, and support to our City of Orange Community. Our Building officials personally met with each and every resident with property affected by the fire. Our Finance Department began the process necessary for us to receive reimbursement for our fire response expenses. Thankfully, the full cost will not be borne by Orange taxpayers.

I also want to mention the local agencies and non-profits who gave us their support, including the Red Cross, who operated our evacuation shelters, and both the Orange County Fairgrounds and Los Alamitos Racetrack, which provided similar refuge to the animals owned by our OPA residents. And a special thanks to the Orange Police Department for their handling of the residential evacuations while our Orange Firefighters battled the flames.

And for one resident in Orange, a special helping hand was extended.

To say that our Orange Fire Department was busy this past year would be an understatement. In fact, our Canyon 2 Fire was the culmination of a year where responding to disasters across our State, and the Country, was becoming sadly common.

Our Firefighters rendered aid to other Departments battling blazes in Los Angeles, Tulare, Mono, and Siskiyou Counties. This was in addition to our water rescue crews who were sent to Texas in August, where they made hundreds of rescues in the floodwaters left by Hurricane Harvey.

All of these were a prelude to our own fire emergency, which saw over 1000 Firefighters and Public Safety personnel render aid to us.

When not battling raging wildfires, or pulling people from rushing floodwaters, our Firefighters can be found out in the community performing their normal duty alongside our Orange Police Department officers : Protecting the life and property of our City of Orange residents and businesses.

They also find time to lend a hand in less obvious ways. For example, after responding multiple times to a call for aid by one of our residents, a pattern began to emerge of a man suffering with Multiple Sclerosis. He was living on his own, taking a bus to work in Newport Beach, and would not call for aid until it was absolutely necessary. He would sometimes lie on the floor for hours before deciding he needed outside help. Even so, our staff got to know him well.

Our Firefighters, out of their own pocket, decided to make sure this resident had food in his refrigerator, a working air conditioner, and helped him get out of his apartment for some needed recreation. While this story is not unique, it is "Uniquely Orange."

And this is also a good segue to another vulnerable population that has been a big concern of the past year: The homeless men, women, and families who sought safety in Orange.

During my 5-years on the Orange County Commission to End Homelessness, we worked to find housing solutions. This was not only a City of Orange problem, and we are finally seeing hundreds of people with a roof finally over their heads.

Here in Orange, we have spent many years addressing homelessness within our borders in cooperation with many of our local nonprofit groups.

For example: Orange is the first city in the County with a successful Senate Bill 2 project. SB2, also known as the "Building Homes and Jobs" Act, allows cities to designate zones where shelters can be built. The Orange County Home Aid Family Care Center opened last summer to house homeless

families overnight for up-to 45 nights. This beautiful shelter is the first successful SB2 project in Orange County, and is supported daily by Home Aide and local non-profits.

Mary's Kitchen, an all-volunteer non-profit which provides three meals a day, 6-days a week to over 200 people, has served homeless guests for 34 years on City property- First at Hart Park, and now near our Police Headquarters.

25 Churches in Orange are providing assistance with food, clothing, hygiene products, and friendly conversation as part of their weekly outreach...quietly, and with dignity.

Every day in Orange, 3 additional non-profit shelters in safe neighborhoods house about 150 women and children as they have for decades, with the support of many volunteers and generous donors.

And over the past 40 years, Orange has built nearly 2,000 units of Work Force housing for low income families and seniors. This is something that we are very proud of, and we challenge any other city in Orange County to match this accomplishment.

Five years ago, the Orange Police Department created the Homeless Engagement Assistance and Resource Team. We call it HEART, for short.

We've also done even more over the past year. We added two new Police Officer positions to specifically address these types of calls for service. We also increased the private security patrols at our city parks and the Main Library by 40%.

City Attorney Wayne Winthers also brought forward for consideration by our City Council a strengthening of our current Ordinances to prohibit Aggressive Solicitation by members of the public, and it was adopted immediately.

Wayne and his staff also spent countless hours working with the County and Judge David Carter to humanely address the encampments along the Santa Ana River Trail. In fact, they are still involved with that work as we speak.

I also think it's important to talk about some of the other major accomplishments by our Orange Police Department.

In 2015, we graduated our first Community Emergency Response Team Class. CERT was a project that I had spent eight years advocating. CERT is presented by the Orange Police and Fire Departments, and I consider it an honor to have been the first graduate. CERT volunteers are trained to serve in the Emergency Operations Center and in the field, freeing-up Public Safety and City Staff Members to perform other critical functions.

In just three years we are over 300 strong, with 50 more volunteers being added this June. Our goal is to reach 2,500 CERT ready volunteers! If you are interested, please call the Orange Police Department at (714) 744-7477. Tell them the Mayor sent you.

Our Crime Prevention Bureau shows our citizens how they can help "Take a bite out of crime." The 3-person Bureau coordinates more than 290 different neighborhood watch groups throughout Orange.

One such meeting, in the Serrano Heights neighborhood, was held to a packed room. They also organized the very first Orange Police Department Community Open House in 13 years. Even though it was scheduled on a Saturday only a few days after the Canyon 2 Fire, it was still a great success. We thank them for their dedication to our community's safety.

We are so proud of our brand new Mounted Police Unit. That's right, recently our Orange Police Department became the eighth Agency to join the Orange County Regional Mounted Unit. By the way, the horses are personally owned and boarded by the officers in the unit.

This past year, MADD- Mothers Against Drunk Driving- recognized two of our Orange Police Officers. Officer Daniel O'Neil-Tennant was honored with the "Top DUI Officer" award for his 273 DUI arrests last year. Officer Sharif Muzayen, who was struck by a DUI driver in late 2016, was recognized with MADD's "Community Hero of the Year Award."

The Community Foundation of Orange also honored the Orange Police Department, and Police Chief Tom Kisela as "Community Champions" at this year's Gala.

Communication is the key to effective police work. The Orange Police Department now directly communicates to our community through several Social Media channels. You'll now find them on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Follow them for the latest information on our Police Department's public safety efforts.

Now, let's talk about Orange football! Specifically, our El Modena Vanguards and Orange High School Panthers football teams. In December, both teams won their divisions, and represented Orange at the CIF Division Championships.

This was the first time in 33 years that El Modena High made it to the Championships, with the Vanguards defeating Don Lugo of Chino 35-7.

Orange High School defeated the Silver Valley Trojans 12-2 for their first Championship title since 1929.

In honor of the pride we have for both teams, the City created a very special pen that bears our City of Orange logo, along with the words "City of Champions." One was given to each team member and coach at a recent City Council meeting.

Please join me in welcoming the ones that led our teams to victory, Coach Matt Mitchell from El Modena, and Coach Robert Pedroza from Orange High School. Congratulations to you, and your teams. A big hand, please, for our City Champions!

Orange has 22 beautiful parks, some of which go all the way back to the very beginning. Our very first park, Plaza Park, traces its roots to 1886, while our newest park, Steve Ambriz park over in the Riverbend Community, is only 7 years old.

Hart Park is also home to our Robert Hoyt Municipal Orange Grove, which turns 41 this year. Many years ago, the grove had fallen into bad neglect, and I had to pass it every day as I went to-and-from work. Mayor Hoyt, for whom the grove was named, happened to be a good friend of my Father's, and

was still very much alive at that time. I thought it was shocking to see his namesake grove left to wither, so when first elected, I urged our City Hall staff to give the grove some extra attention. Today, the grove is healthy, and the oranges grown are picked by, and offered to, non-profit groups and charitable organizations.

Parks are some of our City's most visible legacies. Two of our parks, Yorba Park and Shaffer Park, are undergoing major renovations right now.

Shaffer Park, located off of Orange-Olive and E. Grove, is currently closed to have the landscape, irrigation, infrastructure, and buildings completely replaced. This project is currently at the midpoint, and we anticipate reopening sometime in late 2018.

More City Park good news!

Yorba Park, and the Dog Park at Yorba Park, closed in late 2016 for an extensive overhaul that included remediation of the site, which used to be a County landfill. On April 7, just one day after Orange's official birthday of April 6th, our City will host the Grand-Reopening of Yorba Park and Dog Park, along with a 130th Birthday Celebration. There will be children's activities, community booths, and of course, birthday cake. The event begins at 9:30 am, with the Celebration at 10 am. That's Saturday, April 7th! Our thanks to Councilmembers Mark Murphy and Fred Whitaker for their leadership on the Yorba renewal project, and we recognize our Orange County Supervisor Todd Spitzer for his help.

In May of 1992, I was appointed to the Orange Planning Commission by Mayor Gene Beyer as Councilman Mike Spurgeon's Commissioner. Our Commissioners deserve a lot of credit for balancing the requirements of our codes with the needs of our residents and businesses.

One of the things my nearly 13-years serving on the planning commission taught me was how important it is to have dedicated people behind the counter of our Community Development Department. These are the people who keep our General and Specific plans, check the blueprints and projects of our developers, inspect construction, and make sure our codes are followed.

They are also the people who listened when residents led an effort to establish our three Eichler neighborhoods- Fairhaven, Fairhills, and Fairmeadow- as Historic Preservation Districts. These would be the first Eichler districts anywhere in the Country. The Eichler neighborhoods represent a Mid-Century Modern design style that is also reflected in our own City Hall.

By the end of this year, I hope that the City Council will have the opportunity to consider adopting the proposed Design Standards for the Eichlers, and add them to our precious roster of historic districts.

If it happens, it will be due to the enthusiasm of our residents, and the hard work of our Historic Planners. It's our Historic Preservation Planners who "work for you" to preserve our City's architectural legacy. Orange owes so much to our Historic Preservation Planners and their expertise. Thank you!

I also want to mention Chapman University's new student housing projects. A few years ago, a Neighborhood Advisory Committee was formed to collaborate on issues that were creating friction between the University and the local community. Student housing was the top priority concern, and Chapman has been working hard to address it. They are currently building a new dorm complex at the

historic Villa Park Orchards Packing House site on Palm and Cypress. At the same time, Chapman also has another 900-bed housing project in Anaheim. When both are completed, the University will have invested \$220 million dollars, and approximately 1300 students will be living in Chapman "On Campus" housing.

Community Development has also been working with developers on several projects throughout the City. Over in Uptown Orange, Town and Country, and Orange-Olive, many new housing projects are either under construction, or have received permits for construction.

Our Community Development Staff has also been busy giving back to the community. Last year, Code Enforcement was called out to a residence where debris and overgrown vegetation were scattered across the front yard. The owner had been away for a long time, caring for an ill parent, and had no money or time to maintain the property.

Our staff contacted Doug Willits and Lisa Blanc from Seven Gables Realty to see if they could rally volunteers to help. Our City Waste Contractor, CR&R, also pitched-in, donating a dumpster and hauling away the trash. Thanks to their efforts, the owner was able to keep the house, and our City of Orange once again maintained a beautiful neighborhood. Thank you to all who worked on this project.

Speaking of beauty, it seems like only yesterday that the old Main Library facility was closed to make way for the Orange Public Library and History Center. I'd like to thank Mark Murphy and Carolyn Cavecche for securing the grants that allowed us to build our new Library and History Center.

But even a fairly new Library has to change and grow in order to provide excellent service to our community. This past year, the Main Library installed state-of-the-art digital check out kiosks, and launched expanded online services. We call the new web-based content our "E" branch. To visit it, use the web address on the screen behind me: < www.cityoforange.org/443/eBranch>

I have often said that our Libraries are critical to the free and open access of information, which in turn, is necessary for our functioning democracy. I truly believe this, and so I am very happy to announce that our Library now offers an Adult Literacy program. Being unable to read is not a sin. Lacking the opportunity to learn to read is a crime.

I've always said that our Human Resources Department is one of the best. They have always ensured that we hire the highest caliber employees possible. For the past 22 years, these efforts have been led by our HR Director, Steven Pham. I am sorry to say that Steven will be leaving us, after 31-year career in Orange. I'd like to personally thank him for all of his work on our behalf, and we wish you all the best.

As Mayor I sign hundreds of documents a year. The job of keeping track of them falls to the City Clerk's office. You know you can get your passport there without hassle, but you might not know that the City Clerks are also the keepers of our Orange governmental history. In fact, they still have a copy of the original, hand written minutes from the very first City Council Meeting on April 6, 1888.

Someday, I hope that our future residents will look back at the minutes of our meetings with the same feeling of history and connection that I feel with the Council of 1888.

Our Clerk's Office also maintains the records of our Committees and Commissions. These are made up of our Orange Citizens who volunteer their own time to make Orange a better place. There are 28 resident volunteers on 9 different City entities, which include the Traffic Commission and the Design Review Committee. We depend on them to help us keep our City moving forward., and I thank each and every one of them for their service.

Before I end my final State of the City as the 43rd Mayor of Orange, I want to make one last plea to you to always: "Shop Orange." Remember: Every dollar you spend in Orange returns tax revenue back to our schools, libraries, infrastructure, and job creation.

I would like to close on a personal note, and give special recognition to the City Council Members I have served with over the years: Mark Murphy, Fred Whitaker, Mike Alvarez, Kim Nichols, Jon Dumitru, Denis Bilodeau, Mayor Carolyn Cavecche, and the late Steve Ambriz. A special thank you as well to our City staff for their love and support on my journey.

When I pass the office to my successor, they will inherit a community that is well cared for, and that knows how to care for others. My chapter will come to a close, but the story of our Orange community will continue.

My sincere thanks to Orange Chamber of Commerce for hosting today's event, and to the City team in the back of the room who have worked so hard to make my last State of the City presentation successful: Jessica Herrera, Aaron Schulze, Val Chavez, and Paul Sitkoff.

It has been the honor of a lifetime, and a privilege to serve you as the Mayor of my hometown, Orange California.

Thank you all for being here today. God Bless you, and God Bless our United States of America.

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