



2020 ORO VALLEY STATE OF THE TOWN ADDRESS

Mayor Joseph C. Winfield

with special guests Paul Keesler, Peter Abraham, and Chief of Police Kara Riley

It's really a pleasure to be with you today, and I want to express my appreciation for your support. I'm going off a little bit of the script here. I'll get on script here in a moment, so that Joe doesn't worry too much. But I just want to express my appreciation for your support. I appreciate all that's been done to help in terms of protecting each of you. And I believe that that is important. And it's really an important message that we as a Town have been trying to communicate.

On behalf of my colleagues on the Oro Valley Town Council and Town staff, I would like to welcome everyone to the 19th annual State of the Town Address. Whether you are here at The El Conquistador in person, or watching online, thank you for joining us today. Strengthening our connections to each other, to our family and friends, to our local businesses has never been more important, and I am privileged to connect with each of you today.

This has been a challenging year to say the least. As Mayor I have participated in multiple conference calls throughout the pandemic to coordinate with federal, state, and local officials and follow the Governor's Executive Orders. The Town worked with Pima County and neighboring municipalities to address public health and how to protect our residents from COVID-19. The Town also issued its own emergency proclamation and amendments to walk in unison with local government agencies. Town Manager Mary Jacobs and Police Chief Kara Riley were on many of those calls, and keeping our residents healthy and connected has been of great importance to us.

Throughout it all, the Town Council has worked hard for the good of this community, and I would like to acknowledge and thank my fellow Council members. Please join me in recognizing them: Vice Mayor Melanie Barrett and Councilmembers Joyce Jones-Ivey, Josh Nicolson, Rhonda Piña, Bill Rodman and Steve Solomon. Next week, we'll be swearing in two new Councilmembers— Tim Bohlen and Dr. Harry "Mo" Greene, and we welcome them to the Town Council.

At this time, I would ask for a round of applause for Councilmembers Rhonda Piña and Bill Rodman for their service to the Town of Oro Valley. Much appreciated Rhonda and Bill.

I would like to express appreciation to the Greater Oro Valley Chamber of Commerce board of directors, President and CEO Dave Perry, and his resourceful and resilient staff—Martin, Duane and Kristen. Dave and his team have continued to rise to each and every challenge with energy, optimism, and enthusiasm. This is an Oro

Valley Chamber of Commerce event. They have worked tirelessly for the businesses of Oro Valley during the pandemic; played a strong role in creating the Town's business assistance program; and have been excellent partners. Please join me in a hearty round of applause.

I would also like to thank our sponsors for their support. You are making this happen this year. Thank you!

What encourages me, and what I hope to share with you today, is that the fundamentals of the Town of Oro Valley are strong. We have weathered this storm remarkably well. The Council and Town staff are optimistic and hopeful that the hardest parts of this storm are behind us and we can enjoy the sunshine...although the rain this week has been a welcome relief.

2020 has shown us that we can all learn new skills. A year ago, few of us had heard of Zoom video conferencing. And now, it's second nature for most of us. Our Town Manager, department directors, and Information Technology team researched various solutions to keep the Town's operations in business. At the heart of these decisions was the need to keep each of us connected with you, our constituents and our businesses.

One thing that has not changed throughout the pandemic, is the engagement of Oro Valley residents. Collectively, you know how to make your voices heard. When we turned to video to inform and educate several neighborhoods about proposed planning projects, the response was impressive. You embraced these technological changes and stayed informed. The result was a notable increase in involvement and engagement. Over 1,400 people have watched these informational meetings. That increase is not so much a success story about the Town; it's about you, the residents.

I cannot emphasize enough how proud I am of Town staff for their ability to pivot, adjust, and take on the challenges the pandemic has threw at them all year. Thank you to Town Manager Jacobs and the entire staff for keeping the Town Council, Town staff and residents connected this year.

Our Public Works department continued building and maintaining our roads. Our stormwater utility stepped up and worked with our partners, Pima County and ADOT, to clear and clean washes after the Bighorn Fire to prevent post-fire flooding. While our Transit division continued to provide exceptional service, albeit to a smaller number of riders. And a special thank you to the Facilities Maintenance division who cleaned, sanitized, and maintained Town facilities.

Our Water Utility continued to improve and enhance infrastructure, while also reaching out to customers to improve water conservation. Our collective water conservation efforts will help us reap dividends. Fitch Ratings upgraded the Town's Water Utility bond rating to AA. That speaks to the good stewardship of the Water Utility. I

will be connecting with our Public Works and Water Utility personnel about their departments a bit later in the program.

This past year has been particularly challenging for our Parks & Recreation Department. No one wanted to see our facilities close, least of all our dedicated Parks and Recreation staff. But Parks and Recreation Director Kristy Diaz-Trahan and her team have been diligent about providing pandemic-friendly options and safe facilities. They also received kudos for their work, including the Youth Engagement Award from the Arizona Parks and Recreation Association for a youth camp at Steam Pump Ranch.

When we moved to online meetings and social distancing, our Police Department rose to the occasion to help keep residents and businesses safe and informed. They also provided assistance during the Bighorn Fire. I'll speak with Chief Riley about her first several months as police chief a bit later on. Her tenure as Chief has been eventful, to say the least.

Now I would like to talk about the Town's Strategic Leadership Plan.

Let's start with economic vitality. In the spring, the Town's Finance Department was paying close attention to the Town's finances, monitoring tax revenues and expenses, which come from the state on a delayed basis. They did a remarkable job of providing financial projections to help Council understand what was happening. In the midst of all this, they were compiling the budget for Fiscal Year 20-21. You often hear people speak of complicated situations and say, "We were building the airplane as we were flying it."

I think it's safe to say our Town Manager and Finance Department were building the airplane as they were flying it, *and* they weren't exactly sure where they were going to land. This wasn't a situation unique to Oro Valley, but that's how complicated it was last spring. We appreciate Town Manager Jacobs, Chief Financial Officer Dave Gephart, and the entire staff for making the necessary adjustments to safely land the plane. We don't have audited numbers yet, but the Town's response to the pandemic helped minimize the financial impact of COVID-19. As a result, staff estimates that we have added \$1.8 million to the general fund balance during this time. That's a remarkable accomplishment.

Clearly, the Town's Finance Department is very capable. They recently received their twenty-sixth consecutive award for their Comprehensive Annual Financial Report; their eighth consecutive award for the Popular Annual Financial Report, and the Procurement Division received its thirteenth award for Excellence in Purchasing.

Last year the Town Council created the Budget and Finance Commission. The five members of this commission were appointed to review and analyze the Town's finances and make recommendations to the Town Council related to these matters. They are not elected, nor are they staff, so they provide a different perspective on these topics. Again, it's all about connection.

Our boards and commissions immerse themselves in their individual areas, and help connect the Town Council with those issues. In this case, the Budget and Finance Commission helps connect the Council to the Town's economic vitality.

The Strategic Leadership Plan includes several goals and objectives for economic vitality that have been accomplished. In July the Town Council approved a primary employer incentive policy that is designed to attract and retain primary employers to help expand local job opportunities. Until now, the Town didn't have an incentive program, and that put us at a disadvantage in attracting new businesses to Oro Valley.

There are many bright spots on the horizon. University of Arizona Center for Innovation at Oro Valley will open soon. This is a new incubator focused on supporting bioscience discoveries. We broke ground on this project a little over a year ago, and we are nearing time to start talking about a ribbon cutting. This fall the University of Arizona College of Veterinary Medicine opened its doors. These graduate students will spend three years developing their skills and will be career-ready veterinarians when they graduate in the spring of 2023. I believe that bringing scientists and educators and entrepreneurs together in Oro Valley will help spark an era of innovation that will connect Oro Valley to the next generation.

To assist with these developments, last month the Council approved an amendment to the Zoning Code related to the Economic Expansion Zone – another objective in the Strategic Leadership Plan. This amendment will help attract and retain employers, but more importantly the Council saw the need to add language to allow appropriate pre-grading so the Town has its share of “shovel ready” sites, while also adding requirements so that these sites are re-landscaped in a timely manner if required. This demonstrates that we can develop responsibly.

Annexation is another important topic prioritized in the Strategic Leadership Plan. Last summer the Council adopted a comprehensive annexation strategy to guide the Town's efforts into the future. Oro Valley has been built by multiple annexations since its incorporation in 1974. With this updated annexation plan, the Town can grow and develop responsibly, and maintain its financial health. The Town is currently moving forward with the process of annexing the Westward Look Resort and Spa.

Tackling the issue of the Town's Public Safety Personnel Retirement System pension has been a priority for the Town, and for me personally. Oro Valley, like other cities and towns, continues to face an increasing unfunded liability in our public safety pension system. This is due to a variety of reasons, most of which are controlled by the decisions of others. We are working to shrink that liability responsibly. These pensions are important to our public safety personnel, who work incredibly hard and put their lives on the line on a regular basis, and we want to ensure they are funded. The Town continues to add money above the minimum required to improve funding.

Thanks to the Governor's distribution of CARES Act funding to local cities and towns, we were able to include another \$500,000 in additional funding toward this liability. The Town's share of the state allocated CARES Act funding was \$5.3 million. These funds were specifically designated for public safety and public health expenses incurred due to the pandemic. Applying that unexpected revenue source to the Town's public safety functions freed up the general fund dollars that were already allocated in the Town's budget for other uses. A portion was used for operational needs brought about as a result of the pandemic, and some was set aside to help bolster the Town's contingency fund, but one million dollars was allocated to help support our local businesses. It was evident early on that many businesses would suffer. The major retailers have fared pretty well, but we knew it would be the small businesses—local restaurants and retailers—that would need our help the most.

That's why the Town Council directed staff to put together a plan and execute it as efficiently as possible. And so, the Town hired a consultant who many of you know, former Chief Operating Officer of the State of Arizona Gilbert Davidson, who helped the Town develop a program that not only provides direct assistance to businesses, but also communicates and advocates for patronage of those businesses. The Town partnered with Dave Perry and his team, and retained communications expert— The Gordley Group—to create OVSafeSteps. OVSafeSteps was created to help our local businesses, and also to recognize that each of us has a role in reducing the spread of COVID-19.

At its core, the program equates a healthy community with a healthy economy. We encourage Oro Valley businesses to enroll and take the pledge to follow public guidance and help prevent the spread of COVID-19. OVSafeSteps also provides financial relief. In fact, we recently increased the dollar amount that eligible businesses can receive. For Personal Protection Equipment reimbursement, we've increased that to \$1,500 dollars. For marketing, we've raised that to \$1,500 dollars per business, and you can still receive \$500 dollars for professional services. We are doing all we can to assist our small business owners. I strongly encourage you to visit OVSafesteps.com after this program and sign up.

And the program isn't just for the businesses, customers can visit the website and look up Oro Valley businesses to see which health guidelines each participating business follows. That can help you make your choice of which businesses you want to support.

Another way the Town supports residents is with infrastructure. Earlier this week, I spent some time with our Public Works Director, Paul Keesler, and our Water Utility Director Peter Abraham to discuss how their departments have continued their efforts during the pandemic.

***** TRANSCRIPT OF MAYOR WINFIELD VIDEO 1 *****

Transcript of Mayor interviewing Public Works Director Paul Keesler

MAYOR WINFIELD: Paul it's great to meet with you.

PAUL KEESLER: Thank you, Mayor.

MAYOR WINFIELD: You probably don't know this, but I have a soft spot in my heart for Public Works as a landscape architect. In the National Park Service landscape architects have responsibility for designing roads.

PAUL KEESLER: Oh, really?

MAYOR WINFIELD: So like I said I have a soft spot for Public Works, and it's a critically important department in our community.

PAUL KEESLER: Yeah.

MAYOR WINFIELD: You know as I do how much people love our roads. Tell us how things are going in your department?

PAUL KEESLER: Busy. Incredibly busy.

MAYOR WINFIELD: You've had some substantial projects that have been completed in the past eight months.

PAUL KEESLER: You know, the biggest one is the La Cholla Improvements. You know, turning that rural two-lane, very difficult to see, pathway into a major arterial. That didn't stop. And frankly, I think the contractor was able to work faster because there was less traffic out there. Coming in on budget and on time. For something that you had to project out two years. Yeah. Nothing really slowed down.

MAYOR WINFIELD: I was with Dave Perry the other morning visiting businesses in the Safeway Shopping Center, and we got a lot of compliments about the new entrance to the shopping center off of Tangerine. Would you like to talk about that?

PAUL KEESLER: Yeah. That's a huge safety improvement. You know, one of our most dangerous intersections in town was actually that northern exit out of Safeway. It was not able to go through the ADOT process to happen. So ultimately the Town took over Tangerine Road in that section. And it was dedicated to the Town. And then once we were able to do that, we were able to implement that entrance, and it only took a couple months to build.

MAYOR WINFIELD: The roundabout at Moore and La Cañada has been well received. It received an award.

PAUL KEESLER: You know, the community really rallied behind us and allowed us to be able to shut down that entire intersection, which is really kind of unheard in our business. To be able to get an entire workspace in a public road, and then of course from a safety standpoint. I mean that roundabout, even the naysayers have come back and said, "You know. Now I understand. Now I really like that roundabout."

MAYOR WINFIELD: How about Oracle Road? I know that's not our responsibility.

PAUL KEESLER: Right.

MAYOR WINFIELD: It's a state highway, but folks are always interested in being updated.

PAUL KEESLER: This is a critical corridor for us. And for it to be in the condition that it's in, it needs to get fixed. And the ADOT board heard us and they subsequently put the money towards it. It's gone out to bid. And I believe bid opening is happening the end of this week.

MAYOR WINFIELD: Paul, I really appreciate the opportunity to have this brief conversation with you to get an idea of some of the challenges you've had during the pandemic.

PAUL KEESLER: Thank you.

MAYOR WINFIELD: You've clearly worked through those with your staff and we have the products that show for that. La Cholla Boulevard. New entrance to the Safeway Plaza. The Roundabout. The adjustments to transit and other things. Ongoing street maintenance, and signs, and crosswalks and so on and so forth. We appreciate your leadership.

PAUL KEESLER: Thank you.

MAYOR WINFIELD: We appreciate the care that you have for the facilities that make our community what it is, so thank you.

PAUL KEESLER Thank you. Thank you, Mayor.

TRANSITION to Mayor Winfield interviewing Water Utility Director Peter Abraham

MAYOR WINFIELD: Peter, it's good to meet with you and have a conversation about the water department. Tell us about the, you know...admittedly water is somewhat hidden in the sense of what's happening in the water department. Share with us some of the projects of the past eight months or so.

PETER ABRAHAM: We're constructing a new 500,000-gallon reservoir in the La Reserve area. We continue with...

MAYOR WINFIELD: So describe that. Because when I hear reservoir I think of this open body of water like we see on La Cañada. Is that what we're talking about?

PETER ABRAHAM: No, no. This is a potable water reservoir. Our reservoirs are tucked away in the hills and valleys of beautiful Oro Valley. It's an eighteen-foot tall, eighty-foot diameter steel tank, and it's enclosed. Additionally, we're rehabilitating ground water wells, booster stations, and other capital reinvestment projects. And fortunately, we're able to take advantage of doing these projects because of the Council's approval of the 2018 bond money.

MAYOR WINFIELD: Water conservation remains an important initiative for the Town. Could you talk a little bit about that and what we're doing to try to increase water conservation?

PETER ABRAHAM: The Oro Valley Water Utility employs one full-time water conservation specialist. And what this person does is they reach out to the community with educational materials, they go to HOAs and present information on water conservation. One of the services we provide is—customers with high water use—we provide what we call a water audit. And that's where our water conservation specialist goes to the customer's home, looks at their water consumption, and gives them ideas on how to reduce their use. We're still performing these functions, but we're practicing social distancing and the wearing of masks.

MAYOR WINFIELD: This past year we had the lowest rainfall in a number of years. What can you say to our community, Peter, to help reassure them that we're doing everything that we can to assure that we have water now and going into the future?

PETER ABRAHAM: One of the things that's important to remember is even if locally we see less rainfall than normal, what's really important is what's happening in the Upper Basin States. What's happening in the Colorado Mountain range? Because our CAP supply is dependent on what happens in those Upper Basin states. Fortunately, the last two years we've had above average snowfall, above average runoff and it's, you know, preserved the water levels in Lake Mead.

MAYOR WINFIELD: Looking ahead, Peter, are there some projects online that we can anticipate in the coming years?

PETER ABRAHAM: One of the big projects is a partnership project we have with the Metro Water District and the Town of Marana's Water Utility. We call it our Northwest Recharge and Recovery Delivery System. What we've done is partnered with two other water service providers to deliver additional CAP water that we're storing in

Avra Valley to our service area. Had we gone alone at a project like this, the debt we'd have to take on would be incredible – three times what we would have without this partnership.

But because of this we're going to be able bring in up to an additional 4,000 acre feet of year CAP, Colorado River Water, to our service area. This is in addition to the 2,600 acre feet we currently deliver now.

MAYOR WINFIELD: You know, that's wonderful, Peter. I know on behalf of the Council; we appreciate your leadership. We appreciate the staff of the Water Department. All of us as residents of Oro Valley are grateful that we can simply just turn on the tap and have water that's safe and good to drink. So, thank you for all that you do.

PETER ABRAHAM: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. I'm happy to do it. Rest assured, we wouldn't be as successful as we are if it hadn't been for the leadership and support of Council and the support of our community. Thank you.

***** END VIDEO *****

I appreciate Paul and Peter very much. I have to say Dave mentioned that this was his first time using teleprompters. It's my second time in my life. And this right teleprompter's incredibly hard to read because of the sun, so I'm favoring this one. I'm just going to put that out there. But I want to thank Paul and Peter for connecting with me about infrastructure and the challenges they have faced during the pandemic. They've done a remarkable job.

Maintaining an active lifestyle during the pandemic has been a challenge for many people. One of the things I enjoy most is to head out on a trail and go hiking with my wife, Mariann. I look up at the Catalinas behind us, and it just makes me want to get out into nature. Connecting to our environment and nature is equally important, and it's one of the reasons the Town's Parks and Recreation Department has the motto "***Inspire Connection Through Recreation***".

Oro Valley is a great place to call home, and these mountains are such a wonderful backdrop to our community. We have some of the best hiking and biking trails in the area. Those trails, along with our multi-use pathways, have been heavily utilized by our residents as many gyms and athletic facilities have been closed. The Parks and Recreation Department has been taking a comprehensive look at all of our facilities and assembling a Parks and Recreation Master Plan. This was identified as a goal in the Strategic Leadership Plan. The first step of this process was a needs assessment, which was done through community input. The results of the needs assessment have been compiled, and for the next step, we will need you, our residents, to provide your insights and comments on the concept plans. The Town will announce how you can get involved in November. Your feedback is necessary for our Parks and Recreation staff to solidify master plans for our parks and facilities, and also for the Town Council to prioritize how we will address the culture and recreation needs of our community in the coming years.

You may recall that last October, the Town Council voted to continue operating the two 18-hole golf courses, with some caveats regarding the level of tax subsidy the Council felt was appropriate. Earlier this year the Town competitively solicited proposals for the operator of the Town's golf courses. That process led to the selection of Antares Golf, formerly Billy Casper Golf, to manage the Town's 36 holes of golf. Early returns are positive for Antares and the golf courses, and we expect the management company to be able to operate within the subsidy level the Council established. Memberships and revenues are increasing, and we're thankful to have Antares Golf aboard and wish them continued success...and we ask for your support by considering purchasing a membership.

Earlier this year the Town notified HSL that it would discontinue operation of the nine holes of golf, known as the Pusch Ridge 9, here at the El Conquistador. Recently the Council extended the deadline for a Memorandum of Understanding with HSL to exercise the lease of the nine holes. For the benefit of the residents and the hotel, we're hopeful a resolution for this property can be reached.

And I am excited to announce that in a few weeks, the Town will host the grand opening of the Naranja Park Playground. This playground was another objective of the Strategic Leadership Plan. Town staff have worked diligently throughout the pandemic to complete this project. I know it will bring enjoyment, and some shade, to future generations of children, and their parents and grandparents.

Another service that is important to all the generations in Oro Valley is public safety. Earlier this year, the Council selected Kara Riley as our new Police Chief after the retirement of Chief Danny Sharp. Community Policing is at the core of our police department's mission. It's been an eventful few months for Chief Riley to say the least. I sat down with Chief Riley to discuss her first several months as police chief.

***** TRANSCRIPT OF MAYOR WINFIELD INTERVIEW VIDEO 2 *****

JW: Chief, it's a thrill to meet with you. And you've been in your position now several months. Share with us, how are things going?

KR: Well, as you can imagine, thank you for allowing me a few minutes with you, but as you can imagine the first several months were very busy. It seemed like every day something new direction. You would start in one thing in the morning and by noon it had changed. And so, it has been a challenging first year as the Police Chief, but certainly very rewarding in the sense that it's humbled me to realize the leadership that we have at this agency. But also the staff, the officers, telecommunicators, records, everybody. And we've been able to come together as a team. Even more so than in the past, I think, to really continue to serve this community. Every day I would walk in and ask the question, "Am I serving this community well?" and "Am I keeping my officers safe?" And if I could answer those two things by the end of the day, I was happy.

JW: How is the pandemic? What adjustments has the department made and is continuing to make as a result of the pandemic?

KR: I tell people you and I got to know each other very quickly. Unexpectedly, I think. Because it was a very busy time back in March and into April. And some of the things that we did adjust is really how we ask a lot of different questions when the emergency calls come in. So that our telecommunicators know, is somebody at the call? Are they feeling sick? Are there any signs of flu-like symptoms? Things like that. And we still will probably continue those questions for many, many, many more months. And it may be indefinite, because those police officers are the ones that are going to be the first ones responding and getting potentially exposed. So that's some of the information we want to know. We also would encourage officers at times, instead of where we would normally go into a residence, we might ask them to step out and talk to us instead. We did encourage, and still are encouraging, phone reports. However, if the person calling in wants to see us in person then certainly we are going in person. So it's those type of things that we just had to adjust a little bit. And then there are calls for service you just didn't have a choice. You just had to go, and we had to make sure that the officers had all their protective gear updated. Making sure that we provided easy protection gear that was quick to put on. So, you'll see a lot of them walking around with what we call gators, and it's kind of like a scarf they'll just pull up and it keeps them safe. It's those type of things that we just had to adjust during these times. Certainly some of our deployment was a little bit different as well. We were called to businesses for unexpected things that we never have been called for before. Patrolling more in the businesses and then also patrolling in closed businesses as well.

JW: How about the testing protocols? What's in place to help protect our officers in regard to testing?

KR: We have a full protocol that we work with HR on if there is an exposure of some kind. And you have to remember that a lot of this is common practice for first responders. Just because we end up getting exposed to things like hepatitis, MRSA, things like that. So it's that process that we've already had in place. It's just one of those that we're working a lot closer with HR on right now.

JW: Our community has always had a high regard for public safety and for law enforcement. We've seen throughout the community, some unfortunate tension between law enforcement and communities. What do you attribute to the good rapport that our community has with law enforcement in the Town of Oro Valley?

KR: It's a lot of different things, but it is a passion of mine to talk about it. Which is community policing, has been the core of this agency since its inception. I think that's where we are different than everyone else in law enforcement, in my opinion. Where we respond to calls for service because it's important to that person at that time. And so, it's that core engagement that we have with our community. Our outreach to the schools. Our outreach to the businesses. We engage them ahead of time, so if there is a critical situation, like a pandemic, we're already engaged and they're comfortable coming to us and telling us hey, we need this of this is the

direction we need to go. And so I think it's very helpful to have that already pre-established relationship. And certainly, I could not thank our community enough with their support of law enforcement and all of the members of our agency. And frankly, the Town. They've been amazing to work with, and the public has just been so generous with all of us.

JW: Chief, as you look back, over the past nearly eight months. Is there something that stands out, a particular highlight or something that you're proud of, whether it's an event or a program?

KR: You know, two things come to mind. First off, and I say this often, it has reminded me that we have the finest men and women in the law enforcement profession right here in Oro Valley. And every day that I get the opportunity to lead them I am so fortunate. And through this pandemic and all this emergency it really has brought that to light again, and a reminder to all of us—in particular in command staff. I have several pillars of leadership that I stand by, and one of them is surround yourself with good people. And I can tell you that after this past nine months of leading the agency through this very difficult time, the command staff that has guided me, and I refer to it as a roadmap of leadership that has occurred. And I could not be sitting here today with you and being successful to where we're at if it weren't for them. So the team effort that we've put together and continuing to serve this community has just been...I'm so fortunate. I'm so lucky that I have them there.

JW: And looking ahead for a moment. What are your hopes for the department going forward?

KR: Well we're starting to settle down, it seems like, where I'm starting to be able to get some projects done that I spoke about. But one of my biggest pushes that we're really wanting to focus on is wellness for law enforcement. This is a very stressful job, as you know, and so we really want to focus on talking about physical fitness and nutrition and things like that. So we're starting to work on that proposal. And I'd like to really start to focus on some of our statistics and analyzing crime trends a little bit better. It's those type of things that we're starting to be able to do. It seemed the first few months it was just panic mode constantly, versus now we actually have some time to kind of sit back and really focus and push forward.

JW: I appreciate the time that we've had to have this conversation. Your selection was a several month process. I can certainly affirm that we chose the very best of the best. And we are very fortunate as a community to have you as our Chief of Police, Chief Riley. Our selection of you is certainly a highlight for me as the Mayor of Town of Oro Valley, so thank you.

KR: Thank you, very much. I appreciate that.

***** END VIDEO *****

I would like to thank Paul Keesler, Peter Abraham and Chief Riley for their time, and for allowing me to connect with them and learn more about what they do and how they and their teams work to improve the lives of Oro

Valley residents, the business owners, and leaders of this community. Would you please just join me in a round of applause for them and all they represent of the Town staff.

The pride we all take in this community is a big reason Oro Valley continues to be a desirable place to live, work and play. As you've heard, we are making progress on many of the goals and objective of the Council's Strategic Leadership Plan. Of the 58 objectives in the plan, 17 are complete and 34 are on schedule. We'll keep plugging away at those remaining seven. Clearly, the Town is well-positioned to face the challenges ahead. Much of this year has been 'virtual,' as they say. Out of necessity, video and video conferencing have been key components of how many of us have had to connect this year. The Town upgraded its website this year, adding several new enhancements for outreach and communication. It's important that the Town measure analytics and social media stats so we can ensure that we are casting a wide net to connect with our residents. But these tools do not, and should not, replace face-to-face human interaction. We simply cannot replace the value of a conversation with family, friends and co-workers.

In these unusual times, I urge everyone to connect responsibly, with your neighbors, your local businesses and your government. Over the next few months, the Town will be upgrading the Council Chambers to expand seating capacity and allow for better remote participation. When we are back to in person meetings, we will be able to accommodate more people in the Council chambers, and online. There is one more thing you can do to help us connect. Please make sure to vote November 3rd.

I would also like to thank everyone on the Town staff for their efforts this year. All of you have been rock solid, and I, along with the entire Council, are very thankful for all of you. I would also like to thank Town Manager Mary Jacobs for her commitment and leadership. Thank you, Mary. Please join me (applause).

This event, like all events, requires a lot of planning, coordination, and hard work. I would like to express my appreciation to everyone who has had a role in this year's State of the Town. Thank you!

It has been my good fortune to have been supported by many individuals this past year in a variety of ways, and I am grateful for each of them, but admittedly there is one person who stands above the rest and that is my wife Mariann. Thank you, sweetheart!

In closing, I urge all of you to stay connected with each other. Many of our small businesses are just starting to get back on their feet and it will be some time before they are back to where they were before COVID. Please support them. As you have already heard today, the Town is in solid financial shape. Our priorities: public safety, public works, water utility and parks and recreation are all in good hands, and we have the leadership and guidance we need to sustain the Town. It's a privilege to serve as your Mayor. And I look forward to connecting with each of you in the coming years.

I will leave you with a debut of our new promotional video created by Visit Tucson. During these times of social distancing, people are turning to outdoor recreation more than ever. This video celebrates the beautiful, wide open spaces right here in Oro Valley. Thank you.

***** VISIT TUCSON VIDEO *****