



## **2016 ORO VALLEY STATE OF THE TOWN ADDRESS**

Mayor Satish I. Hiremath, DDS

Good afternoon everyone. On behalf of my colleagues and the staff of the Town of Oro Valley, welcome to the 15th annual State of the Town Address.

Let me begin by recognizing my fellow Councilmembers who are with us today:

Vice Mayor Lou Waters  
Councilmember Joe Hornat  
Councilmember Mary Snider

I'd also like to recognize our Councilmembers-elect, who will be sworn into office on November 16:  
Rhonda Piña  
Bill Rodman  
Steve Solomon

I would also like to thank the Greater Oro Valley Chamber of Commerce board of directors, President and CEO Dave Perry, and each of the sponsors who made today's event possible. Your ongoing partnership with the Town of Oro Valley is deeply valued and appreciated.

And a big thank you to the Hilton Tucson El Conquistador Golf and Tennis Resort, especially General Manager Ghee Alexander and his team who continue to set the bar in our region for hospitality.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is my honor to deliver to you my seventh State of the Town Address as your Mayor. I am proud to say the state of our town is strong.

Many of my previous State of the Town Addresses focused on either specific challenges we faced as a community, or on particular goals we had set for ourselves. And last year, I had the opportunity to talk to you about being a community by design.

A community by design is a community that doesn't happen by accident, nor does it happen by dumb luck. We don't stumble into success. And we don't have to cross our fingers and hope for opportunities. It happens because we establish a vision, we develop a plan, we take deliberate action to achieve that vision and we persevere.

I am very proud that during my tenure as your Mayor, we have taken some very bold steps toward that vision. We have invested five million dollars in our Aquatic Center, developed Naranja Park, and most recently, purchased the land and facilities that have now become the Oro Valley Community Center.

The rewards have been immeasurable!

But for all the amazing progress we've made, sometimes we get caught up in reaching those goals. We get so focused on achieving our vision, that we forget to talk about WHY we do what we do.

It seems an obvious question, but do we really know the answer? Can we explain the WHY?

In his Ted Talk many years ago, Simon Sinek drew three circles on a large note pad and the words "what," "how" and "why."

He then delivered some ground-breaking observations about human behavior and decision making.

He explained that most people get it wrong. They focus on the outer circle: WHAT we do, and then HOW we do it, without ever understanding or communicating WHY we do it. And this observation is universally applicable, whether you're a government agency, a small business or a busy parent.

As a municipality, we know "what" we need to do:

- Balance the budget.
- Build parks.
- Develop responsibly.
- Adequately staff our police.
- Maintain the roads.
- Provide clean water.

And we've hired expert staff who know "how" to do those things. And we do them well.

But do we understand "why" we do what we do?

Yes, we want to be fiscally responsible. But that's a result—not a reason.

Yes, we want to have places for our children to play. But again, that's a result—not a reason.

We want great roads and a police force that is properly equipped.

But WHY?

Is it because we're supposed to? Because it's what our voters, our employees or our families expect? What sets us apart from any other municipality who is providing those very same services?

The answer to the question WHY? is the soul of who we are.

WHY is what gives us our unique character and personality as a community.

WHY builds loyalty, creates confidence and inspires action.

Today, I'd like to share with you why I do this.

And believe me, I'm often asked that question--especially when we're facing challenges, controversies and election politics. At one time or another, the staff, my colleagues and even my family have looked me in the eyes and said: Why do you do this?

My answer is simple: It goes back to my childhood in Michigan.

I had such a great experience growing up there. It was the type of community where people knew their neighbors on their street. We looked out for each other. If neighbors were sick, the adults would cook meals for them while the kids would shovel snow, check their mail, rake leaves or mow the lawn. They did this because they knew that if the roles were reversed, the same would be done for them.

I'm sure many of you have experienced similar communities, perhaps in simpler times.

You felt safe. There were places for children to play. There were activities that brought the community together. In short, everyone took care of each other because they had taken the time to get to know one another.

We knew that whatever our struggles were, we would fight them together. And whatever our joys were, we would celebrate them together.

Sure, it all sounds like a long-lost forgotten place in time, but that childhood experience made such a lasting impression on me, when I moved here in 1990, it became a template I would try to replicate. And I would later have that opportunity when I was elected Mayor in 2010.

I want children who grow up in Oro Valley to feel that way about their experience here. I want adults who move here to feel that same sense of belonging. I want to create a community where everyone who lives here feels like our town was tailor made for them. The fond way I look back on my childhood in Michigan... I want people to have that same lasting impression.

THAT is why I do this.

For me, the whole concept of WHY started with the partnership with the Heirloom Farmers Market, which is now held every Saturday at Steam Pump Ranch. While the obvious reason for having a farmers market is to bring farm fresh produce to our residents, it went way beyond that. It was an opportunity to create a gathering place reminiscent of a simpler time. It was that memory of simpler times that made me understand there is a deeper reason for what we do, and that needed to be the lens through which I viewed everything we did from that point on.

Another great example is the Children's Museum Oro Valley, which just celebrated its one-year anniversary. The obvious reason we would bring the museum to Oro Valley is to help promote early childhood education. But if we dig a little deeper, we discover that this unique place brings children, parents and grandparents together in a learning environment where quality time is spent and family connections are re-established. That is the soul of the place and the experience.

Speaking of grandparents, I want to recognize the fact that although our demographic has shifted, we are still one of the best places in the country to retire. We have two of the finest retirement communities and five assisted living and memory care facilities right here, with five more being constructed. Why is that so important?

Society is often quick to dismiss the senior population. But here, they are still part of a thriving community, and because Oro Valley is now a complete community, that means we are meeting the needs of multi-generational families who can live near one another and stay connected.

When you reflect back on your childhood, what are some of the places and experiences that helped shape you? Which ones have left a lasting impression on you as adults? Was it summer camp with your friends? Was it a family picnic at the local park? Was it watching the fireworks on the 4th of July?

I remember growing up being active in tennis and playing at our community YMCA. It was there that I learned about sportsmanship, leadership, and made lifelong friends. And now, as a father, I want my children to have these very same experiences when they reflect back on their childhoods.

When the Town of Oro Valley purchased the El Conquistador Country Club and converted it into the Oro Valley Community Center, our primary purpose was to finally have a place where our residents could gather for special events, programs, fitness classes and learning opportunities.

Why was this so important? We wanted to make sure there was something for everyone at every stage in life. Because sense of community and connection with others is critical at any age. And now the town finally has a place to support that connection.

Let me tell you how that's been working out so far.

Our summer camp offerings exploded, and attendance absolutely skyrocketed. There were 66 camp options and 97 swim camp options, with more than 1,300 participants. These are children who will have fond memories of attending summer camp with their friends in their own home town, instead of having mom or dad drive them 40 minutes across town to some other location.

Our adults are taking tango lessons, painting classes, personal training and participating in a grass-roots community music group.

And when it comes to Parks and Recreation, we're bigger and better than ever. There is obvious wisdom in investing in the development of our parks, as they will bring in competitions which contribute to our economic health. But that's just WHAT we're doing and HOW we're doing it.

The real reason is so that you can watch your son score his first touchdown. You can cheer on your daughter as she rounds the bases for her first home run. You can high-five your grandchildren after their

first soccer goal. These are lifelong memories--for children AND adults--and they're being made right here, in Oro Valley, in OUR parks.

This is why we do what we do.

Since my last State of the Town Address one year ago, Oro Valley Parks and Recreation has offered more than three thousand classes in more than 40 programs in everything from yoga to dog training. Archers visited Naranja Park 1,300 times to use our archery ranges. More than 2,000 athletes on more than 100 teams--including soccer, little league, flag football and lacrosse--utilized our fields this year.

At the Aquatic Center, there were more than 97 thousand daily visits, NOT including the thousands of swimmers who participated in the 35 different competitions that were held over the past year. Most of those visits are from local families and students on one of the 23 swim teams who train here.

These are young people building skills of a lifetime at a world-class facility right in their own backyard. This facility is also a place where children and families are having memorable experiences, whether it's zipping down the waterslide, playing on the splash pad or celebrating a birthday.

And I'm particularly proud to say that this year, we launched new programs for young people with disabilities. The "I Can Too!" programs modify activities and increase staff-to-youth ratios so that our special needs children get to play alongside their non-disabled peers.

These are people of all ages and abilities, coming together, building our unique character and personality as a community.

This is why we do what we do.

And whether young or old, resident or visitor, every time someone attends an Oro Valley special event, they're creating a special memory. How many special memories?

- 350 hikers explored our mountain trails at last year's Move Across 2 Ranges hiking challenge.
- 700 costumed kids and their parents attended our first-ever Halloween Spooktacular.
- 3,000 guests attended our Harvest Heritage Festival at Steam Pump Ranch.
- 5,000 people celebrated the 4th of July with us. I have a feeling that number is going to grow even larger, because for the first time ever, the Town of Oro Valley will be hosting its own fireworks show next year, and we're very excited about that!
- And an estimated 10,000 people celebrated the holidays with us at last year's two-day Festival of the Arts and Tree Lighting Celebration.

These are just a few of the dozens of special events and programs we hold each year, and a small sample of the thousands of community experiences that are being shared.

When we have an understanding of WHY we do what we do, and we outline a clear plan of HOW we're going to bring that vision to life, amazing things happen.

With deliberate action and careful planning since 2010, the Town of Oro Valley has built and acquired nationally-recognized sporting facilities. And in case you haven't heard--when it comes to sports tourism--we're kind of a big deal!

With the acquisition of the Community Center and golf and tennis facilities, the Town of Oro Valley is now proudly hosting national tournaments and championships.

This year in tennis, we hosted the United States Tennis Association Zone Team Championships and Junior Nationals as well as Tennis Congress.

Our golf courses played host to the National Collegiate Club Golf Association Tournament and the American Junior Golf Association Junior All Star Tournament, which will return in 2017.

At Naranja Park, two Major League Soccer Teams—Sporting Kansas City and Columbus Crew—used our fields for practice. And in 2017, thanks to our ongoing partnership with FC Tucson, the Hilton Resort and Visit Tucson, Major League Soccer will once again return to Naranja Park, with the New York Red Bulls.

Over at the Oro Valley Aquatic Center, we're hosting the 2016 US Masters Championships this weekend, and in 2017, we're hosting the USA National Synchronized Swimming Championships for the second time—the first was in 2014. They keep coming back. And it's not just the facility. It's the community.

How do these major sports tourism events relate to the all-important question of WHY we do what we do? As everyone in municipal government knows, parks and recreation don't generate revenue. That is something that is subsidized by taxpayer money. These events have tremendous economic impact on our community. Athletes and their guests stay in our hotels, eat at our restaurants and shop in our stores. And those bed tax and sales tax dollars stay right here in Oro Valley, helping us provide services to our residents. In fact, it is estimated that approximately one-third of our sales taxes are paid by non-residents. That is money that goes directly into the General Fund so that we can continue investing right here—in Oro Valley.

This year we learned some valuable information from nationwide market research called "Portrait of American Travelers 2016." In the Tucson subset of that research, it was noted that 86% of travelers who want to visit our region are coming here to celebrate milestones such as anniversaries and other important life events.

Why? Because they want a beautiful place where multiple generations can come together and celebrate a special moment or create new memories. With its growing number of hotels, restaurants, shopping and outdoor recreation offerings, Oro Valley is benefitting from this trend. And that is the spirit of tourism that our friends at Visit Tucson and Litter Films captured in this video I'm proud to debut today.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kxo1XzWuoZ0>

That video will soon see nationwide distribution through multiple channels in major travel markets. People around the country will get a glimpse of life in Oro Valley. And the 86% who are traveling to celebrate important moments may find themselves right here.

It's taken a long time to get to this point. It's taken deliberate planning and bold decisions. But we have become the community we want to be. And we're not the only ones who have noticed how special Oro Valley is.

I mentioned a few minutes ago that USA Synchro has decided to hold its National Championships in Oro Valley again next year. I'm proud to share something with you today that won't formally be announced until April 2017, during their Championships. USA Synchro has selected Oro Valley to receive the "USA Synchro Community Service Award."

And why did they select Oro Valley for this award?

Their exact words were—and I quote:

*"USA Synchro felt that Oro Valley as a whole has been a blessing to our sport. We go to many facilities and communities and nowhere that we have experienced has such complete support for our competitions. Complete meaning the community, the businesses, the facility, the restaurants and hotels and the metropolitan area."*

End quote.

National organizations are recognizing the complete community that we have become, and they are coming back for more of what we have to offer.

Another great example is the Oro Valley Music Festival. Last year, national radio network I Heart Radio identified Oro Valley as a community where a large-scale music festival would flourish, and believe me, it did. They decided to come back this year and expand into a two-day festival at the Golf Club at Vistoso. Not only was this a successful, multi-generational event; I'm sure for many Oro Valley young people, this was a first-time music festival experience they'll never forget.

Once again, the community we have built is opening the door to new events and opportunities. We are facilitating the important moments that make up a lifetime of memories.

And those important moments, whether experienced by residents or visitors, are proof positive that Oro Valley has no "holes" in its community portfolio.

We have the infrastructure.

We have a balanced budget with a surplus.

We've got the best roads in the region.

We have nationally-ranked schools like BASIS Oro Valley, and soon, the Amphi District will open the first elementary STEM school in the region.

We have nationally-recognized public safety that allows us to live our lives unimpeded by fear or danger.

We have an emerging arts and culture scene: Just this past year, the Town offered 37 FREE public concerts in partnership with the Southern Arizona Arts and Cultural Alliance.

We have a healthy business community, with a growing list of restaurants and retail. In fact, 40 new businesses opened their doors in Oro Valley just this year, and another 55 home-based businesses applied for a business license.

Our major employers and global corporations continue to provide a vast array of employment opportunities.

Together, we have built a complete community, for ages 1-100. Oro Valley has been thoughtfully crafted so that our residents and visitors could build the relationships and create the memories we fondly recall from simpler times.

Take a moment and think back on your first date. Or your first job. The birth of your child. Your first home. A special birthday party. Your 50th wedding anniversary.

We are working hard to make sure you can have each of those experiences right here, in Oro Valley.

This is why we do what we do.

And how do we ensure that we stay on track as we move into the future?

We accomplish that with a strong general plan that was created by our community and focuses on being a complete community. Oro Valley residents will have an opportunity to vote on that 10-year plan on November 8. If you are a resident, I urge you to learn more about this plan before the vote by visiting us online.

The *Your Voice, Our Future* General Plan was developed over the course of THREE years through community conversations at places where residents live, work, shop and play. Resident committees then shaped the action-oriented plan. It includes topics important to the community, like safety, natural beauty, creating a complete community and being family friendly.

I would like to point out that this is the first time in the Town's history that residents told us they wanted the term "family friendly" to be included in the general plan. This represents a shift in demographics, perspectives and needs. And we are constantly growing and evolving to meet those needs.

One of the ways we're evolving is through a concept plan called Oro Valley Main Streets. Today is probably the first time many of you have heard about Main Streets, so let me give you a quick overview.

When surveyed in 2013, Oro Valley residents said we lack a real downtown area, and there's no central location to meet people. They wanted a place to go, which would serve as a heart of the town.

Oro Valley Main Streets is a project designed to create areas for gathering, dining and shopping that serve as a town center. These walkable and unique areas will enhance the lifestyle and economy.

Since the town is largely built-out, we had to get very creative.

The concept plan is looking at two areas, where currently, 85% of the developed space is dedicated solely to parking and circulation. That's a lot of underutilized space! Those two intersections are La Cañada and Lambert, and Oracle and First.

By re-imagining the existing layout of these areas, we can create opportunities to make room for new services, shopping and attractions, along with better transit and bike connections.

At this point, the Oro Valley Main Streets is just a concept plan, and it will go out for public discussion and input in the new year. But this opportunity for public/private partnership is an important first step toward realizing a possible future for our town and the way we engage and connect with one another.

This is why we do what we do.

As I previously stated, our town is developed by design.

While it is true that Town Council sets the policies and provides direction, the vision is carried out by the dedicated staff here at the Town of Oro Valley. The work they do and the services they provide each and every day are done with the utmost diligence, expertise and care for our residents.

I would like to ask the staff to please stand and be recognized.  
Thank you for your service.

These men and women are among the 300-plus employees who are led by an incredible man in a challenging year of transition. Earlier in 2016, our former town manager departed for another job, and our very own Police Chief Danny Sharp stepped up to fill the role of interim town manager while we conduct a search for a new manager. Chief Sharp has done a remarkable job, ensuring a seamless transition and carrying out his duties with grace and dignity. No amount of thanks could express my gratitude for the stability he has provided our organization during these times of change.

Mr. Danny Sharp, would you please stand.  
Thank you.

I would also like to take a moment to recognize my family who has put up with me over the past six years that I have served as Mayor. It hasn't always been easy, and we've had some rocky roads, but they have stood by me through thick and thin. For that, I can never thank them enough.

This has been a year of many challenges. I lost some personal friends and some long-time dental patients. I'm sure we can all think back on someone we loved and lost. Sometimes I wonder what they might have been thinking about in their last days, and if they were reflecting on memories of the past and a life well-lived. And I often wonder if I was part of some of their best memories.

You see, at some point in time, I believe we all reach that moment where we sit back and reflect on the things that have occurred in our lives. When we do, the majority of those memories will be positive. They will be thoughts of important milestones such as our first kiss, our first love, the birth of a child, a proud moment as a mother, father, sister, brother or friend. And those memories are as much about the place as they are about the people.

Through thoughtful planning and bold vision, Oro Valley is now a place where any of those memories, at any stage of life, can happen.

This is why we do what we do.

And now I'd like to ask a bold question of each person sitting in this room. Regardless of your status, position or profession, ask yourself why YOU do what you do.

The first things that come to mind--like making money or earning respect among your peers--are merely results. So push those aside and dig a little deeper.

WHY do you do what you do?

If you're having difficulty answering this question, you're not alone. Many of us fail to look beyond the results we want. We're so busy thinking about out HOW we're going to get those results.

The answer to WHY? is the soul of who you are.

WHY is what gives you your unique character.

WHY builds loyalty, creates confidence and inspires action.

When you can answer that question for yourself, you will be truly engaged in your family, your business and your community. I am proud that Oro Valley is now a community where memories at any age can be created... right here.

So my challenge to you is simple: Let's be the kind of people who strive to be each other's BEST memory. THAT is the type of community we are building together.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is my privilege and honor to be your Mayor.

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