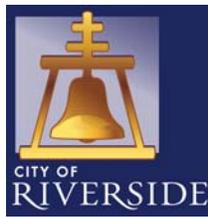


**January 20, 2011**

**State of the City Address**



**Mayor Ronald O. Loveridge**

**Riverside, California**

## **SEIZING OUR DESTINY AS A BEST CITY**

Thank you Cindy Roth and the Chamber for hosting the 34th State of the City.

Thank you Chamber for your hard work, and leadership, to secure State funding for the UCR School of Medicine. You play a key role in defining and shaping the economy, and thus the character and destiny of the City.

A personal footnote--this June, Marsha and I will celebrate our 50th wedding anniversary. Thank you Marsha for a wonderful half century as my wife and partner in this adventure of life together!

One 2010 event that history and this community will not forget is the senseless murder of Riverside Police Officer, Ryan Bonaminio. Let me read from a letter in the Press Enterprise:

Now a police officer in Eureka, the writer says:

Ryan Bonaminio "was 'A true American hero'! Thank you so much for sharing your story about this impressive young man who was a dedicated, loyal servant of the Riverside community and his country.

...I want to tell Ryan's father, Joe Bonaminio, how profoundly impressed I and many of my colleagues in law enforcement were when he stepped forward to share all his unimaginable pain and grief over Ryan. His words have made and will make a difference for many in this career both locally and across this great state."

Here are a few of the comments made by Joe Bonaminio at his son's memorial service at the Grove Community Church: go to clip....

Sitting at the Riverside Police Officers Association table, I would ask Joe Bonaminio to stand and receive our applause in respect for the life and service of his son.

Author Joel Kotkin explains in his book, *The City: A Global History*, "Cities must, first and foremost, be safe." Riverside is a safe city because of the work, and service, of the men and women of the Riverside Police Department.

Let me also recognize two other servants to this community whose good works have left an exceptional legacy in Riverside. In 2010 we remembered the ministry of Jerry Louder. He made possible a better community by helping so many of our residents in their quest for a good and decent life.

Vic Miceli made a lasting difference. His public achievements were historic, and remarkable. As Judge John Gabbert explained, "There is not a soul I can think of in my lifetime here in Riverside that did more for the community in a constructive way than he did. His contributions have just been beyond measure."

## **BEST CITIES TO LIVE**

This past November the City was in Chicago competing for a 2010 International Award for Livable Communities.

Riverside received a Silver LivCom Award in a competition that focuses on environmental management and the creation of sustainable cities. Stated differently, Riverside was on the international stage competing with the best in the world!

I read a recent Kiplinger story on the 10 Best Cities for the Next Decade. Austin, Texas led the list; noteworthy, there were no cities from California. The Kiplinger explanation for what makes a best city is “lifting good old American innovation to new levels.” Their innovation factor has three elements--smart people, great ideas, and collaboration. They argue that it’s the third element, collaboration, “that really supercharges a city’s economic engine. When government, universities, and business communities work together, the economic vitality is impressive.”

The Kiplinger story goes on to say, “And it’s no coincidence that economic vitality and livability go hand in hand.”

The obvious question is how could Riverside get on this list?

Early in 2010, we began Seizing Our Destiny, a “bold and far-reaching” economic strategy. The Plan presents timely calls for prosperity and compelling pathways for Riverside to be a best city in the region, state, and country.

Let me identify ten key characteristics that increasingly make Riverside a best city.

First, Riverside is a university community. In 2010, UCR, CBU, LSU, and RCC all had their largest enrollments--total number is now over 50,000 students. They are our largest employers. They distinguish us from other cities in Southern California.

Second, what we call Riverside Renaissance is transforming the City. Now in its fifth, and final, year, it is the largest “bricks and mortar” initiative--approaching \$2 billion--in the City’s history.

We completed important projects in 2010. City projects included the restoration of the Fox Theater--the premier performing arts venue in inland Southern California, renovation of the Downtown Mall, opening of the Arlington Heights Sports Park, renovation of the La Sierra Community Center; and the opening of the Arlanza Library. Let me read a letter I received from Kim Foreman:

“Earlier this month my husband and I had the privilege of attending the opening of the new Arlanza Library....This is a beautiful addition to this neighborhood and to our city.

I have never been prouder to be a Riversider, and I marvel how much my beautiful home town has blossomed through years, especially with the Riverside Renaissance. I just wish my parents were here to see all that you’ve accomplished.”

There were likewise important projects completed in partnerships; they included the UCR Culver Center, RCC Aquatic Complex, and RUSD Ramona Stadium.

Third, Riverside is a smart city. We have had the distinction for the past three years of being chosen a Smart Community, marking us as one of the world's top 21 tech savvy cities. Breaking news: just yesterday Riverside was named to the Top Seven Intelligent Communities of the Year. Riverside is among only three U.S. cities identified as global leaders in innovation and municipal technologies. Kudos to Chief Information Officer, Steve Reneker.

Fourth, Riverside is a leading green city. Selected as the State's First Emerald City, an ambitious Green Action Plan was developed jointly with the California Department of Conservation. The Department Director said, "The goals for Riverside are as high as any in the State." And we are on target to meet its goals, going green to save green.

Many green things are happening. The City's goal for the past decade was the planting of 100,000 trees; our count now is over 125,000. Kudos are in order to Ramon Alvarez for becoming the North America Distributor for ZAP, Advanced Technologies Vehicles and for the Spiel's, Tom and Candy, for building the greenest McDonalds west of the Mississippi.

Fifth, Riverside is a city of arts. This was the year of the Fox, and its first year of performances. Also this year, we began branding Riverside as the City of Arts & Innovation. You have seen the iconic images; they have appeared in many publications and on many web sites.

Sixth, Riverside is a safe city. 2010 was the year when an outstanding new Police Chief was appointed, Sergio Diaz, and when Chief Diaz appointed an outstanding senior management team.

Seventh, Riverside has a Downtown that is alive and well. Three major buildings are under construction: Hyatt Place, Fox Entertainment Plaza, and Citrus Tower. The Festival of Lights was again a major success as a celebration of place and the holiday season. Perhaps most importantly, Riverside passed Measure V to increase our Transient Occupancy Tax. It passed 66% to 34% at a time when many cities were voting against any tax increases. As a result of Measure V, a major expansion of the Convention Center will begin in 2011.

Eighth, Riverside is a primary retail center in Southern California. Good news--for the first time since 2007, sales taxes are up. Excepting Los Angeles and San Diego, Riverside trails only Anaheim, and sometimes Ontario, in sales tax revenues.

Ninth, Riverside is the employment center of Riverside County. These jobs are increasingly white collar, located in office buildings across the City. Riverside has more office space than any city in inland Southern California.

Each month, Council members highlight an economic success story in their wards. These individual stories are impressive; and they illustrate a diverse and vibrant economy in Riverside.

To improve international trade and investment, the City signed a MOU to work together with the County. We look forward to expanded international commerce in 2011.

And tenth, Riverside looks good. It is the verdict I hear from residents and visitors. Unlike a nation, state, or county, you can eyeball a city. It is a powerful measure, personal and comparative, of how a city is doing.

Next, I would emphasize that we have a balanced budget with \$40 million in reserve. Many cities in 2011 are unable to meet their service needs. In Riverside, services are being delivered well, and notably so.

City Manager Brad Hudson recently wrote to the Council and Mayor. He began by noting that the workforce has been reduced about 18% since November, 2007, from 3,000 employees to 2,500. He continued, “Despite this reduction, the number of service units has increased ... In addition, the Council has added a variety of important strategic initiatives; increased the number of libraries and parks...; and provided a much higher level of basic city services....I am unaware of any other city in the nation that has reduced staffing to this degree and increased service levels so dramatically.”

In 2010, our 311 answered about 200,000 calls, and even more importantly, the City effectively responded to most of these calls. For example, graffiti responses are remarkably timely. In Riverside, 311 is a national best practice.

The rains of late December tested the City. It was our snow removal time. Led by the exceptional leadership of Siobhan Foster, Public Works Director, the City resolved hundreds of flooding problems. Kudos to the supervising leadership and to the men and women who worked so hard, under difficult circumstances, often late into the night.

I would call special attention to the brochure of City Awards for 2010. One or two awards would be outstanding. The variety and number of awards underscore the comparative excellence of our work at City Hall. For example, Riverside received an unprecedented two awards for excellence from the California Parks and Recreation Society, one for Arlington Heights Sports Park and the other for the Universal Playground at Fairmount Park.

Let me also celebrate one other award. It is for the 2010 California State Firefighters’ Medal of Valor. It was presented to Riverside Police Officers Dawson Smith and Brett Stennet for their successful rescue of a barricaded suspect in a burning house.

Two final success stories--first, we had the opportunity to showcase our City to local leaders who head major national and state organizations. Look who came to dinner in Riverside in 2010. And as President of the National League of Cities, I told the Riverside story in forum after forum across the country.

Perhaps our most important time on the national stage was the Community Learning in Partnership Grant. CLIP is a three million dollar grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to increase post secondary education in Riverside. Listen to the announcement....

It is good to be in the company of New York, San Francisco, and Mesa, Arizona.

How can we lay claim to being a best city in America? The reasons I identified get us on the playing field--we are, in my view, competitive!

As we start 2011, Riverside has the promise and the opportunity to become a city comparable to the best in California and in the United States. Our success is not because of extraordinary geography or extraordinary resources or extraordinary luck. Rather, it is the result of civic will, political vision, and social capital.

## **PROSPECTIVE LOOK AT 2011**

2010 was a difficult year for cities. There needs to be a new play book. Stimulus pay outs are waning, and local governments are making major cuts in employees and services.

Where then do we go for help, what next? From a Congressional perspective, the primary message is that cities will be on their own. In 2011 we will be playing defense, for the D.C. agenda is cuts rather than stimulus or new programs.

One other message is clear, cities cannot look for much help from the states. They take our money to balance their budgets and too often pass unfunded mandates. In California the budget deficit, as you know, is \$25 or so billion.

Let me emphasize that Riverside will forcefully oppose the Governor's budget proposal that closes down redevelopment agencies. For Riverside, redevelopment is necessary for jobs and economic recovery, for revitalizing downtown and major commercial corridors, for "bricks and mortar" projects, and for affordable housing. For us, as a large and older urban city, it would be extremely difficult to be a best city without redevelopment.

Taking a big picture perspective, I believe the 21st century is the century of regions. For us, the policy agenda of the Southern California Leadership Council deserves review, and support. To ensure the Region's economic vitality and quality of life, they offer three top priorities: "First, Southern California must retain and expand its manufacturing and R&D base; second, ... must 'beat the Panama Canal' when it comes to international trade; and third, ... must compete as the leader in the entertainment industry." In my view, to "beat the Panama Canal," the City needs to join with Southern California rather than sue the two ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles. The real economic competition is global, and competing effectively requires regional collaboration.

I personally think the investment in high speed rail needs serious attention as a source of jobs, infrastructure, and technology. Why not transform the transportation system of the nation, and catch up with other countries in Asia and Europe? We did it in 1958 with the Interstate Highway System. And if High Speed Rail happens in California, there should be a stop in Riverside.

This summer I gave the plenary address to the International Economic Development Council. Economic development is essential, complicated, and highly competitive. There are winners and losers, and the outcomes are not accidental or random. As Joel Garreau, author of *Edge City*, explains "Go invent your future."

What is our future in 2011? It is clear that we cannot turn to Washington or Sacramento for help. We are on our own. It is indeed cooperation time between the City, universities, and the business community in Riverside!

In 2011, pension reform must happen. Fiscal prudence requires change in the ways that our pensions are funded and set. If there is no pension reform, the ability of Riverside to deliver satisfactory services will be severely handicapped. We must reform here in order to invest in the economic programs and services of the City. We are not alone; as the Los Angeles Times reported, "Across California, state and local leaders are moving to confront the cost of public employee retirement packages--an escalating financial burden that threatens to choke off funding for other government services." I will join with the City Manager, Council, and employee groups to look for solutions that are fair, significant, and timely for Riverside.

Subject to Council approval next Tuesday, we have reached an important agreement on pension reform between the City and the Riverside Fire Fighters and Fire Management. As a result, over the next twenty years, millions of dollars will be saved for general fund investments in economic growth and city services.

In inventing a "best city" future for Riverside, there are at least four overarching keys: Economic Growth, Better Education, Good Neighborhoods, and Arts & Innovation.

## **ECONOMIC GROWTH**

The view of cities as providers of basic services, while important, has been replaced by one in which cities must first facilitate the connections and innovations required to grow the economy.

Job growth must have the City's highest attention, for the pain of 14% unemployment is real and extensive.

Seizing Our Destiny is Riverside's strategic plan for economic growth. With its emphasis on collaboration and improving the quality of life, there is no other comparable effort in Southern California, or even in the State.

The challenge is to make happen the 100 or so policy priorities of Seizing Our Destiny. It is a work in progress—for an update, go to an excellent link on the City's web site.

2011 is truth or consequences time for Seizing Our Destiny. Best of intentions must be translated into the best of results. I will tell you how we did next year at my final State of the City.

## **BETTER EDUCATION**

We compete for residents as well as for business. Competition here is likewise serious.

Success depends on what happens in our two school districts, Alvord and RUSD. K-12 schools are the center of virtually every residential real estate decision.

Chancellor Tim White came to Good Morning Riverside with the message of wake-up Riverside. The wake-up call centered on improving the performance of K-12 education. His call was that current directions work against the future of our economy and our quality of life.

CEO's for Cities is a national leader among groups advocating for change and innovation. Their most important call is the Talent Dividend. For Riverside, a one percent increase in college attainment could mean a \$185 million increase in annual per capita income.

CLIP provides a once in a life time opportunity for this City to increase our Talent Dividend. A three year plan is in place. Its focus is on ages 16 to 26. Widespread cooperation is pledged, and many are involved. Let's do it in 2011!

We need to tell the success stories of our two school districts, and they are many. Kudos are in order for the national high rankings in Newsweek of three of the City's high schools--Poly, King, and North. At Home in Riverside can provide timely information to home buyers and relocating families about Riverside's schools, neighborhoods, and resources for home ownership.

Our universities and RCC should work more closely with the two K-12 school districts. We are a university community, and as such, greater connections should be made. UCR's ALPHA and FACE Programs, both led by Dr. Pamela Clute, offer a good opportunity.

Community schools, or what I have called the Lighted School House, offer a way for schools and communities to work together. A nonprofit group, New Schools/Better Neighborhoods, makes this call, "Schools should be places...to encompass early learning and adult education; where learning occurs 'after hours,' at night and on weekends; where links with businesses and collaboration with higher education are encouraged and supported."

K-12 test scores must improve. The API statewide target for schools is 800. In RUSD, 15 out of 30 elementary schools met the 800 target. And for Alvord, only three of 14 elementary schools scored 800 or higher. Norte Vista High School was ranked in the bottom 10% of high schools state wide, requiring extraordinary action to be taken by the Alvord District.

For better educational opportunities and to save public monies, the merger of Alvord with RUSD should be carefully considered. A serious review of the costs and benefits should be undertaken. It is a critical parent and community issue. Discussion should go beyond the two school boards, and public forums should be held.

## **GOOD NEIGHBORHOODS**

Best cities are made up of good neighborhoods. Quality of life is experienced in neighborhoods. It is where we live and raise our families. And the home is our largest personal investment.

Over my years in elected office, I have focused considerable attention on good neighborhoods. And I take special pride in Mayor's Night Outs, now numbering 157.

As a city, we compete for residents, we compete for the middle class, and because of many choices in other cities, the competition is intense. And the residential choice is a neighborhood choice--location, location, location.

In 2010, the percent of owner occupied housing units is the lowest in the City's history, and the percent of free lunch students is the highest in the City's history, and strikingly so. We must do better.

We should market Riverside as a good place to live. We have a good story to tell, and we should tell it. It is time to work with residential realtors.

Every month, the Riverside Neighborhood Partnership reports on good things happening in our neighborhoods. The Wood Street's Green Team is one such example. When asked in a recent survey, residents said overwhelming, 75% to 17% that their neighborhood was on the right track. Our best advertisement is the testimony of Riverside residents.

Riverside neighborhoods should be fit, fresh, and fun. The City should support, actively and imaginatively, walking, cycling, community gardens, and fitness efforts, such as the Junior League's fitRiverside program. Growcology could become a national best practice.

While we have taken many important steps over the past thirty years, the City's future neighborhood agenda should include enhancing specific neighborhoods, funding an annual report card, reenergizing crime free housing, developing an updated neighborhood watch, and supporting neighborhood governance and the Riverside Neighborhood Partnership.

One specific proposal--there is a section of the Eastside, filled with older and for the most part poorly maintained apartments, that calls out for improvement. For too many years, we have considered but not acted on major steps. As Anaheim did with the Jeffrey-Lynne neighborhood, we should do likewise.

## **ARTS & INNOVATION**

Riverside is the City of Arts & Innovation.

Successful branding requires commitment, ingenuity, and hard work. As emphasized in a National League of Cities column, "...branding is more than a marketing buzz word of the day. It is more than a tag line or ad campaign. A strong brand is the best of your city. It is a revenue-producing asset. And, trite as it may sound, it is vital to compete and win."

The marketing of our brand that has started, must continue and accelerate.

There was much to celebrate in 2010--Fox Theater, Culver Center, and Festival of Lights.

The weekly Fifteen Favorite Things To Do puts the spotlight on the varied arts and culture in Riverside. And welcome to Tomasz Golka, new Music Director/Conductor for the Riverside County Philharmonic.

Noteworthy also, the Fox Entertainment Plaza construction has started. And the RCCD Coil School of the Arts will happen--thank you Henry Coil for your extraordinary gift to honor your parents.

The Arts & Innovation agenda is, however, not finished.

Beyond facilities, City Hall should provide leadership to branding Riverside as the City of Arts & Innovation. We must tell our story of Arts & Innovation and connect its importance to our economy and quality of life.

In 2011, we should bring a Levitt Pavilion to White Park. It will be an exceptional arts and entertainment venue. Across the country, Levitt Pavilions form a network of performance settings where free concerts are offered.

This year I propose we begin the planning for a 2012 Fremont like arts festival in the Downtown. The Fremont Festival focuses on local artists; it works there, and it should work here.

Riverside Renaissance will end in 2011, but no funding is included for three major Downtown cultural landmarks: Library, Museum, and Auditorium. They need to be rebuilt, improved, and/or restored. We need to complete Mission Inn Avenue as the most special cultural place in any downtown in Southern California.

## **ROLE OF MAYOR**

Finally, let me say that I am honored to be Mayor of Riverside. I am excited every day by the variety of issues and opportunities to make a difference. The next two years will be a sprint to the finish.

As to issues and opportunities outside the City, I serve in 2011 on many local, state, and national boards. These positions offer a way to represent Riverside in budget issues before the state and nation and in the implementation of AB 32 and SB 375.

One specific objective will be to pass state legislation for the California Citrus Park to be leased and operated by the City of Riverside. My thanks to Assemblyman Kevin Jeffries for his leadership and support. We believe the City is better able than the state to tell the citrus story, to encourage greater public use, and to maintain and enhance the Park.

State issues go well beyond City of Riverside, and on these I hope to participate and make a difference. Issues of devolution, deficit, region, economy, and environment are in the center policy ring in 2011. I will do my best to influence local reforms that help and protect cities, that will encourage and support the economic growth of Southern California, and especially jobs, and that will connect green initiatives and regulations with economic growth and recovery.

Inside the City, I have targeted my sprint to the finish as 12 by 2012. The twelve are as follows:

Make Seizing Our Destiny happen.

Champion Community Learning in Partnership.

Enhance the arts.

Continue greening the City.

Promote Riverside's neighborhoods.

Emphasize Riverside as a university community.

Compete in the global marketplace.

Secure a High Speed Rail stop in Riverside.

Brand Riverside as City of Arts & Innovation.

Increase social capital.

Encourage a "creative community."

And complete the Santa Ana River Trail.

My commitment as Mayor--these twelve goals will be at the center of my attention and best efforts to make a lasting difference in the economy and quality of life of Riverside.

In closing, thank you for everything you have done to make Riverside a best city! Now, join me and let's sprint together to insure that Riverside continues as a best city into the next decade. Success comes from collaboration, from working together. I look forward to your support in 2011 and 2012. In the words of William Shakespeare, "It is not in the stars to hold our destiny, but in ourselves." Thank you and God speed.