

Taylorsville State of the City address
Mayor Russ Wall
Feb. 1, 2012

I remember when I turned 16. That was a milestone in my life. That was the magic birthday when many new opportunities opened up for me. That was the age I could finally drive a car! And I was allowed (officially) to start dating girls, and have a little more leeway in my evenings and weekends hanging out with my buddies. It was also the time to get a part-time job and start considering what I would do with my future. I also learned more about responsibility, respect, and relationships, and consequences. I also learned that while playing and having fun were important, I had to learn to put balance in my life. I made many decisions at 16 that have impacted, both good and bad, the rest of my life. I'm sure many of you can recall those same experiences.

Taylorsville turns 16 this year and our city, like we were at that age, is at a crossroads in its young life. The effects of decisions made now, good or bad, will impact this young city for many years.

I would like to talk about some of the issues facing our teenager in the coming years, as well as some things that have been accomplished.

Transportation

Teenagers love cars. We want our roads to be safe and efficient for our teenager. In 2011 the city saw many road improvements including 5400 South Redwood Road, 5400 South Bangerter Highway, 4700 South Redwood Road, 4700 South Bangerter Highway and 6200 South Bangerter Highway. We are looking forward to additional traffic flow and safety enhancements on 5400 South and are anxious to find alternative modes of transportation including a Bus Rapid Transit line on 4700 South that is now in the environmental stage of development. We are asking the State for funding to start engineering work this year. One huge road problem that we have is 1300 West at 5400 South. This has been a difficult project because it is not only a road project but also a very complicated utility project and potential disaster. We are happy to report that reconstruction will begin in the spring. We have also completed some major storm water projects, which were very timely, preventing much of the flooding that other cities in the county experienced this year.

Economic Development

"Get a job!" I can still hear those words from my Dad. I needed a job to pay for my needs and wants. The city also has needs and wants. Because of the economic downturn the city has struggled to keep up with the basic needs of the city, let alone wants. The best way to turn this around is to invest in our business community, much the same way a parent will invest in a child's education to ensure that they can earn more money in their chosen career. We appreciate and acknowledge the City Council's support as we continue to work with potential new businesses in our city. Last year we created a fantastic Economic Development team. They are currently working with 48 new potential businesses. In 2010 we had 839 storefront businesses. In 2011 we

increased that number to 845. We also participated once again in the International Shopping Center show in Las Vegas. I, along with two city council members and our economic development director, represented our city there and made new contacts as well as reinforced some of our existing relationships.

Our new ESRI software has shown that Taylorsville residents have more disposable income than most communities. Since Taylorsville is the most densely populated city in Utah, and located in the center of the Salt Lake Valley, we have an edge that is unmatched.

Although the economy has affected our city, we are excited to see that sales tax revenue in 2011 increased 3.5 percent over the prior year. Our financial audit for 2011 was a clean audit opinion with no audit exceptions. We have maintained our AA+ bond rating - one of the highest bond ratings of any city in Utah.

Community Development

We, as citizens, have a responsibility to maintain our properties and use them as intended - as single-family homes or apply for licensing through our Good Landlord ordinance. We now have 496 rental properties licensed in the city and 292 are participating in the Good Landlord training program, which has been beneficial to the property owners as well as the city in keeping properties maintained and crime free. Our massive Land Development Code is nearly complete and it will be a positive and complete change in the way we do business with developers in our city.

Law Enforcement

A teenager needs to learn responsibility to obey and respect the law. We have an excellent Police Department. They are hard working and dedicated officers who care about this community.

Property crimes were reduced by 21.8 percent in 2011, which was the most significant reduction of any municipality within Salt Lake County. This can be attributed to better cooperation with neighboring and Federal agencies, changes in the initial response, canvassing of the surroundings, and increased internal cooperation in our own department.

We added two more Police Officers to our department, easing some of the workload and providing better service to our residents. We also secured a Violence Against Women grant that added a half-time detective to our violent crime unit.

Animal Services

As children, we are taught the responsibility of owning pets and to respect life in any form. As a city, we have those same obligations. We are doing many great things to assist our animal residents. Animal Services participated in Taylorsville Dayzz with an educational booth highlighting adoptions and sterilization. They also hosted a PetFest festival in September with the same messages.

But, we need to find better ways to deal with animals that have been cast off by their owners and are left to our care. Recently, we have been asked to review our policies at the facility we share with our partner, West Valley City Animal Services. I want to use this forum to challenge our city and West Valley City to seriously consider alternate solutions to animal euthanasia of any type, except when it is absolutely unavoidable. To that end I would propose that we commit to certification as a no-kill animal shelter by the year 2015. With the help of volunteer groups who are ready and willing to help, I think this is an attainable goal.

Court

One of our judges, Judge Marsha Thomas, was recognized for her tremendous contributions to the judiciary with the Quality of Justice Award. This is the highest award given by the Utah Judicial Council to a Justice Court Judge. In addition, Judge Thomas was also awarded Justice Court Judge of the Year by the Board of Justice Court Judges.

Judge Michael Kwan received a scholarship to attend a judicial education course at the National Judicial College.

The court applied for and was granted re-certification for another four-year term. They also received grants to fund technology upgrades.

Emergency Preparedness

We have a responsibility to be prepared for emergencies so that we may be able to sustain ourselves and assist others in a disaster.

We have completed our joint emergency operations plan, the blueprint for how the city and county respond to an emergency situation. The city also received five grants for emergency operations equipment, communications equipment and 72 hour kits for staff responders. We completed many hours of training including FEMA required employee training, awarded 53 citizen CERT training certificates, certified 16 Red Cross shelter training volunteers and one additional HAM radio volunteer. Our city continues to be an example for others throughout the state in emergency preparedness.

A teenager needs to have respect. Our young city has many examples of proper respect.

Respect for our health- Our Healthy Taylorsville Committee has been working hard to make our city residents healthy and safe. Their efforts have helped us to be awarded the Gold Level Healthy Community Award by the Utah Department of Health. They have worked with schools and the community promoting sports safety, health screenings and promoting healthy behaviors.

Our Ordinance Review Committee recommended and the City Council passed an ordinance that helps prevent people from being exposed to second-hand tobacco smoke in public places in the city.

Respect for the environment- Our Green Committee first met in January of 2011. They are working on ways to educate our city on the benefits of being green, including energy saving ideas as well as promoting recycling and other environmentally-friendly practices.

We are also continuing to be green in removing the garbage created in our homes and businesses. Taylorsville, working with our partners in Sanitation, continues to be a leader in recycling, collecting an average of 495 pounds of recyclable material per home in 2011. We also collected 420,000 pounds of green waste that did not go into the landfill. Some of the green waste was recycled and returned to our own dog park as mulch. All this was done with a 97 percent satisfaction rating from residents. In addition, 100 percent alternative fuel used for the area cleanup program.

We also this past year, for the first time ever, qualified as a "Tree City USA" city. Thanks again to our great volunteers for making this possible.

Respect for the community- The city was a beneficiary to several Boy Scout, religious, business and civic service projects, including a massive cleanup project on the Jordan River that had over 1000 participants from one LDS Stake and a service project by City employees to paint benches and buildings at Valley Regional Park prior to Taylorsville Dayzz.

We are excited to announce the acquisition on the Labrum Park on South Jordan Canal Road. This will be a multi-use park for Taylorsville residents and groups to enjoy.

We need to focus on Neighborhood Revitalization, both through enhanced code enforcement and through investments in beautification projects. Pride in community increases property values, retains good residents and businesses and adds to an increased quality of life that our constituents expect and deserve.

Volunteers are the epitome of respect to a city. The lifeblood of our community continues to be enhanced by the many volunteers who do untold hours of service to the city simply because they love their community. Please stand and be recognized.

These acts of service reach into virtually every department of our city. From shoveling snow at the senior center, to designing programs for the Arts Council, to supervising parking at Taylorsville Dayzz, to visiting businesses in the City, to overseeing the budget process, to planting trees, to reading for school kids, to pulling weeds, to painting over graffiti, to handing out groceries at the Taylorsville food bank, to walking dogs at the shelter, to guiding at the museum, to looking through volumes of ordinances, to sitting through endless meetings, to help improve our young city.

Youth City Council and Ambassadors

Our youth continue to amaze me with the service they provide to the community. In 2011 they held a Community yard sale with proceeds going to the Veterans Memorial. They sponsored a special needs arts festival, a "freeze" flash mob at Walmart to

highlight pedestrian safety, and distributed Thanksgiving meals to the needy. This, in addition to individual projects that served children and seniors throughout the community.

Most importantly, as a city, we have shown respect to those who serve us every day in difficult conditions and dangerous situations - always willing to serve their country and sometimes giving the ultimate sacrifice. Our Veterans Memorial is partially complete and is a fitting monument to those in uniform past and present and also honors the families left behind. We were honored to have Governor Herbert speak at our last Veterans Day celebration. This annual celebration is a direct result of city staff working with the veteran's community to honor our veterans.

Communications

We all know what happens when communication breaks down between teenagers and their parents! No one wins when the two parties do not have a clear understanding of each other's thoughts and intentions. The same is true for our city and its parents, the taxpayers.

In 2011, the city contracted for the services of a Communications Director. We now have a city Facebook page, YouTube channel, Twitter account, (I have one too), and a city-sponsored blog. We have also redesigned and streamlined our webpage to provide better communication and customer service to our constituents and businesses. We are looking at ways to improve our communications using our public channel 17 through Salt Lake Community College. We hope to soon have live streaming of our City Council and other meetings on the website as well as on SLCC-TV.

I would also like to propose that we create community councils in each Council District, comprised of citizens who want to look at ways we can improve the city. There is an ordinance that allows for such and I believe that we can use them to get information to the community as well as feedback from the community.

Communication is a big part of Customer Service and we continue as staff and volunteers to keep customer service as a priority in our contacts with those we serve.

Last but not least, a teenager needs to have some fun. Man do we have fun!!

Our LARP Committee (Leisure Activities, recreation and parks) sponsored many events during 2011 including: Planting of trees on Arbor Day as well as at two elementary schools, the first annual Taylorsville Urban Iditarod, Taylorsville Dayzz 5K run, YMCA Earth Day, Bountiful Baskets Food Co-op, and are in the process of expanding the garden club to the city center.

The Historic Preservation Committee added to the fun by hosting Saturday with Santa, holding a Halloween event and providing hundreds of elementary school kids a visit to the history of Taylorsville at the Heritage Center.

We have a legacy of great baseball in Taylorsville. This year the 11 and 13-year-old teams took State in their divisions.

The Senior center held many events including a Valentines Day Dance, line dancing instruction, billiards and ceramics.

The Arts Council has been busy with plays and concerts but found time again to help with Taylorsville Dayzz both in entertainment and booth management and have been very helpful on the Veterans Memorial project. They also presented the first annual "Taylorsville's got Talent" event. I was proud to be a part of a 60/70's rock band lipsync entry with Senators Waddoups and Mayne as well as Representatives Harper and Anderson. Needless to say, we did not walk away with an award.

Our Taylorsville/SLCC orchestra continues to grow and is led by former Taylorsville High student, Adam Larson.

I propose that we start a new budget line item this year and start saving for a Multi-Purpose Center. Let's start putting money aside to save for the Multi-Purpose Center that we've needed for years.

There is no time to list all of the good things happening in the city. Suffice it to say that the state of the city is excellent. We have some difficult decisions ahead regarding funding and philosophy but I am confident that working together as citizens, staff, elected officials and partners, we can overcome these trying "teenage" years and emerge as a full grown, beautiful, respected and admired city of the future. I am proud to live and work in this city. I am proud of volunteers, staff, elected officials, businesses, and partners. Thank you.