

# Mayor touts city successes, urges realistic spending

By Beth Duckett  
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Scottsdale Mayor Jim Lane's State of the City address this week was decidedly upbeat, emphasizing the city's many accomplishments from the newly finished Tony Nelssen Equestrian Center to groundbreaking of the Scottsdale Museum of the West.

But the speech, delivered Feb. 12 at the Scottsdale Marriott at McDowell Mountains, also was realistic.

On the heels of the defeat of Scottsdale's bond election in November, Lane said Scottsdale must develop a plan to meet its long-term capital needs without bonds.

While it will be a challenge, Lane pledged that the city "will maximize every available dollar to minimize unnecessary spending" to achieve its goal.

During the 35-minute speech, Lane balanced the city's accomplishments with tough issues the city has tackled and will face in the future.

"Scottsdale has challenges and issues like every other community," Lane said.

He then added jokingly, "Well, let's be honest, we probably don't have as many issues as other cities."

Funding capital projects is a big challenge for Scottsdale. City Manager Fritz Behring recently announced the city needs an extra \$7.5 million a year to bankroll the top 13 capital projects for several years.

Vice Mayor Virginia Korte echoed that point.

"I think there are some critical things coming forward," she said. Now, the city is "faced with balancing its budget and also providing for its capital-improvement plan," Korte said.

## Several announcements

Lane made announcements on a variety of topics. Among them:

» A private group is forming with the idea of advancing the Desert Discovery Center in Scottsdale, an educational attraction that could be built at the city's McDowell Sonoran Preserve.

» Zivelo, a digital kiosk company, has started construction on its new 14,000-square-foot headquarters at Scottsdale Fashion Square and will have 70 employees by the end of the year, he said.

» Lane issued a proclamation forming a Downtown Enhancement Task Force.

» Private investment in downtown Scottsdale has reached nearly half a billion dollars in the last three years.



Scottsdale Mayor Jim Lane emphasized that, despite the city's many awards and accomplishments, one overriding challenge for Scottsdale is how to continue its capital program after the failure of the bond measures in November. MICHAEL SCHENNUM/THE REPUBLIC

» Residential real estate downtown has appreciated at double the rate as the rest of the city.

The speech, which included a reception and a luncheon, drew about 300 people, said Mark Dewane, president of the board of the Scottsdale Business Development Forum, which hosted the event.

Lane listed "award after award" that Scottsdale has received, including awards for fiscal and operations management, which caught the attention of Scottsdale Councilwoman Suzanne Klapp.

"How could you not feel good about Scottsdale after listening to him?" she said.

Still, Klapp agreed the "overriding challenge" for Scottsdale is how to continue its capital program after the failure of the bond measures in November.

"We're going to have to find ways to get money to set aside to do it much more slowly than we would have liked to," Klapp said. "There's a lot of demands upon capital needs right now ... it's very hard to take care of those kinds of problems with general-fund dollars."

Korte, who attended the speech, said Lane "made a great ambassador for Scottsdale."

"I thought his speech highlighted all

that is good about Scottsdale," Korte said. "I think that's what it should be."

## CPS cases reviewed

Lane said the Scottsdale Police Department recently completed investigating 143 reports of child abuse and neglect overlooked by the former Arizona Child Protective Services.

The police investigation was in response to the failure by CPS to investigate more than 6,000 reports involving child abuse or neglect, he said.

"Thankfully, only one of those required additional follow-up by CPS," Lane said, in reference to Scottsdale's investigation in its jurisdiction. Several other cities and agencies have taken Scottsdale's lead, he said, investigating cases that originated in their communities.

Gov. Jan Brewer abolished CPS in January, replacing it with a new cabinet-level Division of Child Safety and Family Services.

Scottsdale recently completed construction on the newly expanded Tony Nelssen Equestrian Center at WestWorld, which is hosting the Scottsdale Arabian Horse Show through Sunday, Feb. 23.

Lane touched on \$15 million improvements at TPC Scottsdale, home of the Waste Management Phoenix Open, saying they will improve the ability to host the tournament — the "most-attended golf event on the planet" — as well as benefit people who play the public course.

A lawsuit is challenging the city's investment in the course, claiming it's an illegal subsidy to a private operation.

Lane noted the city recently broke ground on the Scottsdale Museum of the West, northwest of Marshall Way at First Street.

The project has been on Scottsdale's wish list since 1964, Lane said.

"These projects show clearly how, by investing our tourism dollars in our tourism infrastructure, we can continue to strengthen Scottsdale's standing as the event and tourism capital of Arizona," he said.

Lane noted that 8.9 million people visit Scottsdale every year. In 2014, the number of visitors will surpass the combined populations of 11 states and the District of Columbia, he said.

Later in the speech, Lane turned his attention to a "threat" that he said needs

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to be addressed.

Citing the death of 27-year-old Tyrice Thompson, who was stabbed to death after a fight inside Martini Ranch in late January 2013, Lane said he committed to a "higher safety standard" for all the city's bars and nightclubs.

Scottsdale created a Public Safety Plan Ordinance, which he said is being considered as a model in the nation, "with more and more cities looking to use as a leader in this area."

He pledged to make all of Scottsdale "safe and fun for everyone to enjoy."

Paradise Valley Mayor Scott LeMarr, who was in attendance, told *The Republic* that he also went to last year's speech and knows Lane well.

"It's hard to not come away feeling upbeat from the presentation," LeMarr said.

"I think the city of Scottsdale and its residents ought to be proud to have a mayor and council that's been so proactive with making good business decisions in the recovery process," LeMarr said. "I know they made some really tough decisions three years ago. That's what it takes to turn a community."

Phoenix City Councilman Sal DiCiccio also called it "an incredibly upbeat presentation." Lane "hit on all the top things," DiCiccio said.

Lane praised Scottsdale's Cure Corridor, noting the nearly 20 percent of people who work in Scottsdale are in health and bioscience.

The Corridor is a concentration of facilities engaged in cutting-edge education, research, clinical trials and patient-care delivery. It stretches from the Scottsdale Airpark south to a stretch of Shea Boulevard, anchored by Scottsdale Healthcare Shea Medical Center and Mayo Clinic.

"The fact that Scottsdale is working hard on a strategic part of the Cure Corridor, that's something Phoenix ought to be working with them on," DiCiccio said.

John Berry, a Scottsdale zoning attorney, said Lane's "emphasis on the renaissance of downtown was right on target."

Berry said he liked the "concept of creating a public-private partnership to build on that success and really take downtown to the next level."

"Success breeds success," Berry said. "Scottsdale has done a great job of breeding political leadership."