

CITY OF WILDOMAR – STATE OF THE CITY SPEECH

Media Edition

By Mayor Bridgette Moore
(Word count 2,633 – 16 minutes)

Welcome and good morning. It's so good to see so many of you here today. And welcome to our many friends on Live Streaming Video.

I know that it isn't always easy to attend so many events but your presence here today and, your support of the City of Wildomar is deeply appreciated.

Participation is the essence of our democracy.

Our diversity can be our strength. Our different perspectives give us a wide range of viewpoints.

Just like all of you here today.

Perhaps you are a long term resident; maybe even own a horse;

Or maybe you moved here recently and have grown to you love your community;

And more than a few of you own a business here.

The bottom line is you are all welcome; appreciated; and your input is vital to our future as a City.

I would like to ask Supervisor Bob Buster to lead us now in saluting our flag.

Please allow me to recognize some of the dignitaries in the audience. If you would hold you applause to the end, I'd appreciate it.

Paula to provide list & names of the following:

Wildomar City Council

Elected officials or their representatives

CEO's & City Managers

VIP's from major businesses, chamber of commerce

On July 1, 2008 the City of Wildomar opened its doors for business in an historic event of becoming the 25th city in the County of Riverside.

We became a city because so many of the residents felt it was time to stop being a forgotten corner of the region.

It was time to start dealing with local issues on a local basis and not by people who didn't even live here.

It was time to take charge of our destiny and to guide our community into the future.

Some 20 months later I'm proud to report to you that we've taken exactly that path of self-determination.

The City Council has listened to what the residents are saying and worked hard to implement policies and strategies that have Wildomar's best interests at heart.

I call Wildomar the *Little City with the Big Heart*, and it's really true. We started this City just before one of the biggest financial downturns in decades hit.

A financial downturn that crippled many businesses and raised our unemployment rate nationally to over 10% and, over 14% here in Riverside County.

A difficult time to start a new City for sure, but what was the alternative?

To fall back on an equally cash strapped County for help?

Hope that things would work themselves out?

No, difficult as it was, we really had to tackle the problem of self-governance and make it work.

We had to have had a lot of heart, and determination, and the conviction to know that we were doing the right thing.

I'm here today to tell you that not only have our efforts been successful but in many cases they have exceeded our expectations.

Six months ago the entire Council unanimously voted to hire our first City Manager.

We wanted someone that not only knew about how to manage a newly incorporated City but someone with a track record of success.

We found that person in Frank Oviedo.

Frank is extremely focused on customer service and is working hard to bring about the vision of the Council.

The Council worked together to set Frank's goals for the coming year.

While there are a number of goals the Council asked him to accomplish, one of the most important priorities for everyone on the City Council is to get the Clinton Keith Overpass widened.

This is a must do and Frank is working hard to make it happen.

I recently wrote that the City Council and staff challenge themselves everyday to not let tough financial times be an excuse to not serve our community with enthusiasm and care.

Our goal is to not be just another government agency. Rather, we are concerned with every local issue and how we can be of the best assistance.

We didn't fight so hard for incorporation to merely provide the same level of service as previously existed; we wanted to provide the best municipal services possible and to use our limited resources in the most strategically advantageous ways.

We on the City Council are well aware of these difficult economic times.

We have governed from day one knowing our fiscal responsibilities are huge.

We have been conservative in our budget deliberations and as your Mayor I will continue that policy.

We have a healthy reserve balance that we keep for rainy days.

Many cities in California have had to dip into their reserves. Wildomar has not.

Wildomar understands what it means to “live within your means.” And that’s just what we’re doing.

We are now part of the larger regional governance system.

Naturally, we still have to work with other agencies and of course, we still have to work within our legislated authority.

That doesn’t mean however we have to settle for second best.

It doesn’t mean we can’t ask for timely responses, accountability, and a fair portioning of State and local resources.

We now have the political standing to do just that, and we are.

We wanted from the start to build strong working relationships with other government agencies in the region.

A strong friend to Wildomar both before incorporation and after has been Supervisor Buster.

Bob has been a great working partner for us and with his support and the support of his senior staff, we have made great strides.

We are well positioned to represent our resident’s issues when the need arises.

We’re no longer looking from the outside in, wishing we could have a seat at the table. We are at the table.

We know who the key decision makers are and we are developing positive working relationships with them.

We are blessed with strong representation too with support from legislators like Assembly members Kevin Jeffries and Brian Nestande. State Senators Dennis Hollingsworth, and formerly John Benoit, now County Supervisor. And in the

United State Congress by Darrell Issa. They care about their districts and that includes the interests of Wildomar.

Additionally Wildomar is well represented on our regional boards and advisory committees.

Every Councilmember is assigned to multiple boards and is charged with watching out for Wildomar's best interests as well as the region as a whole.

Every committee and board from transportation to regional planning to major capital projects has a representative from Wildomar present. That's a very good thing for Wildomar.

Other important relationships that we needed to develop and enhance as a new City were with two of the most visible service providers: Police and Fire.

Now that we were an incorporated city, we had to negotiate new contracts, with clearly defined service levels within a budget that we could afford.

We wanted to work with those agencies to develop a customized service model that worked best for Wildomar.

For Law Enforcement, we wanted to work towards a community based policing model that exposed our Deputy Sheriffs to our residents in a positive way.

It's important in law enforcement for residents to begin to recognize the Deputies that work in our community.

We want local businesses and their patrons to see patrol units cruise by their storefronts.

We want Deputies to know and understand the area and proactively take steps to prevent crime before it happens.

We want young people to see law enforcement in a positive light. To feel comfortable in talking to Deputies and recognizing them as a friendly resource, not as someone to avoid.

The Fire Department is, of course, an important community asset as well. We wanted to help insure their future success while saving lives and property.

As always, response times, emergency medical services and fire suppression were foremost to us in importance.

But also, we wanted our Fire Chief and his staff to be part of our community as well.

It's great to see Firemen helping out with local activities, school events and charities where possible.

I'm delighted to report that both of our contracts with these two agencies were successfully negotiated in a mutually supportive environment.

No small task when you consider that Wildomar was under very tight budget constraints.

They have also taken their community service obligations to heart. They are frequent participants in a wide variety of community and charitable events.

I tip my hat to both of these agencies, and in particular to Police Chief Joe Cleary and Fire Chief Steve Beach, for sharpening their pencils and working with us to help keep Wildomar safe.

We all know we live in an area that is prone to potential natural disasters. If you've lived in Southern California for any length of time you know we have everything from Santa Ana whipped wild fires to flash floods to earthquakes.

No city, including Wildomar, has the resources to insure that every household is totally prepared for every disaster.

However, that didn't stop us from thinking outside box.

We've created partnerships, initially with the faith based community, to disseminate information, create contact lists, identify community resources and establish strong relationships with folks that can be powerful communicators in the community.

Now, it's not just the City of Wildomar talking about how to be prepared but organizations that have contact with thousands of residents.

Our next step is to include all of our community service organizations with similar kinds of relationships. The costs are minimal but the payoff is potentially enormous.

Incidentally, I see some of our emergency preparedness partners in the audience today, and I want to express my gratitude for your willingness to help others even if they're not in your own congregation.

See, that's the kind of "heart" I'm talking about when it comes to Wildomar.

This past year was our first venture into park and recreation.

With modest beginnings, we were able to partner with our neighbor Lake Elsinore, and deliver a really nice series of events including the very popular concerts in the park.

This year promises to be even better with a Certified Farmers Market and more seasonal, family events.

Our super popular Egg Hunt event is scheduled this year for March 27. I look forward to it every year and hope to see all of you there.

I want to remind you that we are doing all these things within our budget, mindful of every cost. That's what you can do when you're in charge of your own City.

Wildomar is an active participant and planner in the United States Census.

Every ten years Congress has mandated that there be a head count of all residents. This is a particularly important census for Wildomar.

As a new City, Wildomar is working off of ten-year-old data when it comes to portioning out regional, state and federal allocations.

This isn't a new "give away" government program but rather an important tool to insure that we are receiving our fair share of resources at all levels of government.

Please help Wildomar in making sure that we are accurately being counted by filling out your Census forms and mailing them back right away.

In difficult financial times it's even more important to look at the potential for Economic Development.

We need more jobs, more shopping, more local opportunity for goods and services, and more construction of the right kind of development.

All of us in the private sector know all too well that our businesses live or die by our customer base. When you spend your discretionary dollars locally you are directly supporting your friends, your neighbors, and your community. I urge all of us to buy locally whenever possible.

The City Council added an Economic Development Sub-committee with that exact purpose in mind. The sub-committee will help address the pressing issues of the business community.

We've also planned this spring for a business roundtable so the City can hear directly from businesses.

As we speak, planning staff is already discussing with developers a renewed interest in previously dormant building projects. And engineering is seeing success in grant applications that will benefit a variety of traffic and pedestrian projects.

We're very excited about the Barons Marketplace and their membership into the Wildomar Chamber of Commerce. Barons will offer many new shopping options and a diversity of products for our residents.

We're grateful as well for our existing businesses that have weathered difficult economic times with the resolve and courage to look forward to a brighter future.

I see many of our local businesses represented here today and I want to personally thank all of you for choosing Wildomar to do business.

I also want to thank Angela and D'Canter for hosting us today. They always do such a great job.

As we look to the future, I know one of the highest priorities our City Manager has on his plate is to go into the business sector and sell Wildomar on its wonderful opportunities. I'm confident that he can do that. Because Wildomar *is* a wonderful place.

Some of you may know that we are in discussions with the Mt. San Jacinto Community College District to see if we can locate a major satellite campus right here in Wildomar.

President Roger Schultz has embraced Wildomar as a great site and has been a wonderful partner to work with.

Our discussions also include Southern California Edison and exploring technology studies and the potential for partnerships.

Our polling indicates that there is over an 80% favorable rating for a college to be built here.

In addition to a solid college curriculum, there is overwhelming support for a strong professional program in the medical arts.

This would be a beautiful fit for a campus located adjacent to our local hospitals that may include internships and hands on experience.

I would be remiss if I did not also mention the tremendous heart we have in our many service organizations as well.

These caring individuals who belong to organizations like the Rotary, the Elks, the Wildomar Community Council, and many others continue to give unselfishly of their time and resources on so many worthy causes. Please join me in giving them a round of applause.

Let me mention that the Rotary will be holding their BBQ on April 17 at Marna O'Brien Park. I hope to see you there.

Some thoughts on my first two years as an elected official and now as your Mayor.

Politics and political deliberations are by no means a perfect process. Sometimes they're not even very pretty.

But let me share with you that robust debate and the give-and-take of passionately sharing ideas is exactly the strength of our system not its downfall.

The future of Wildomar is at stake and debate is a very important component of airing out difficult issues and making good decisions.

Our greatest strength is that we care about this City and at the end of the day, we all have the City's best interests at heart.

In conclusion, I just wanted to share with you how optimistic I am about the City of Wildomar.

It's a wonderful place to raise a family, of course; it's also full of potential as a wonderfully vibrant place to do business.

Our public safety resources are some of the best in the region and our crime rate is very low.

Yes, Wildomar is the *Little City with the Big Heart*, and I'm proud to be your Mayor.

Thank you for coming today and I will be here afterwards along with other Councilmembers and City staff to answer questions about the City...again thank you for coming...God bless you and God bless America!"