

State of the City
Mayor Steven S. Choi, Ph.D.
Tuesday, February 26, 2013

- Good evening, and welcome to my first State of the City Address as your Mayor.
- President Reagan said: “If you are afraid of the future, then get out of the way, stand aside.”
- Well, I ask you, all of you, to join me for an exciting and challenging year.
- Today is my 78th day as your Mayor. Thank you for your commitment to me.

FIRST, LET ME INTRODUCE MY COLLEAGUES ON THE CITY COUNCIL:

- Mayor Pro Tem Jeff Lalloway
- Councilmember Christina Shea
- Councilmember Larry Agran, and
- Councilmember Beth Krom.

- Please stand.

- Thank you for your efforts to improve and support Irvine, America’s finest master planned community.

- I also want to recognize our City Manager, Sean Joyce, who leads our excellent staff.
 - Please stand.

- There are elected officials or representatives here tonight that I would like to ask to stand, including:
 - Supervisor Todd Spitzer

 - Scott Voights, Mayor of Lake Forest and Senior Assistant, representing Assemblyman Don Wagner

 - Lou Penrose, representing Congressman John Campbell

- Martin Paine and Betty Jo Woollett, representing state Senator Mimi Walters
- Joe Sturges, Field Representative, representing Assemblyman Don Wagner.
- Scott Peotter, Field Representative, representing Assemblyman Allan Mansoor.
- I would also like to take this opportunity to introduce Councilmember Lisette Lopez Godinez as well as Irasema Gallardo, who travelled from our Sister City, Hermosillo, Mexico to be here this evening.
- Also, a delegation from Korea is here tonight representing the Busan-Jinhae Free Economic Zone Authority. Commissioner Ha Myeng Keun, Director Lee Kyoungsook and Project Manager Moon Sung A. Thank you for travelling so far to be here on this special occasion.

NOW LET ME TURN TO A MOST SERIOUS MATTER:

- These past weeks have been painful for our community and the entire region.
 - One of the area's largest manhunts began, tragically, in our City of Irvine on February 3rd. And it ended, tragically, in the Big Bear area on February 12th.
 - I refer to the shooting deaths – a cowardly planned killing – of Irvine residents Keith Lawrence and Monica Quan. Two law enforcement officers also were killed, including one just two weeks ago.
 - My heart goes out to the families of those who died ... and to their memory.
 - I wish I had the opportunity to meet Keith Lawrence and Monica Quan in life.
 - It would have been my honor. Unfortunately, I only attended their Memorial Service last Sunday.
- Our Irvine Police Department's deep involvement in this case explains that our work is never done.
 - We care ... and we are vigilant.

- The time spent ... and the skill shown ... by our police officers is a story that I hope will be well-told.
- Our Police Department worked around the clock with other law enforcement agencies. Our detectives were deployed throughout Southern California ... and our officers were there on the final day, supporting the effort to end this violence.
- I thank each and every one of our men and women in uniform.
- When I say our work is never done, that is exactly what I mean. Public safety is our No. 1 priority.
 - Last December, I called an Irvine Town Hall Meeting for School Safety following the tragic shooting of children and others in Connecticut.
 - Nothing is more important than providing safety to our young people. School superintendents ... along with Police Chief Dave Maggard and others ... presented information to more than 300 people that night.
 - Our Public Safety Department uses many tools each day to protect our school campuses. And we coordinate training and communication with our public and private campuses.

OUR SCHOOL CAMPUSES ARE THE LIGHT OF OUR COMMUNITY:

- I would like to introduce Irvine Unified School District Superintendent Terry Walker and Tustin Unified School District Superintendent Dr. Gregory Franklin.
 - Please stand.
- I would also like to introduce those school board members who are here tonight.
 - From IUSD:
 - Paul Bokota, Lauren Brooks and Sharon Wallin.
 - From TUSD:
 - Francine Scinto.
 - Please stand and be recognized.

**ALONG WITH YOUR SUPPORT AS SUPERINTENDENTS AND BOARD MEMBERS,
WE SHOW OUR SUPPORT AS A CITY:**

- As many of you know, the citizens of Irvine last November passed Measure BB, the “Irvine Support Our Schools Initiative.”
 - The ballot measure will provide funding through 2015-16.
 - That is \$4 million annually to IUSD and TUSD through our Educational Partnership Fund and Challenge Match Grant. These City funds help support, among other areas:
 - school nurses;
 - college scholarships;
 - classroom supplies;
 - our School Resource Officers program;
 - and to maximize classroom instructional time.
- When Measure BB is implemented in the new fiscal year, the total financial support to our public schools will be more than \$8 million annually.
 - Unprecedented anywhere in the country! That’s my biased opinion ... but I say it anyway. That’s the Irvine spirit!
 - We are thankful to the many partners for their support, including the Irvine Public Schools Foundation.
 - I ask that Neda Zaengle, IPSF CEO, please stand and be recognized.
- Our public schools are so important to the attraction of Irvine.
 - Families, individuals and businesses contemplate moving to our City, and they say, ‘Wow.’
 - They ask:
 - Where do we want to raise our children?
 - Where can we find a job?
 - Where do we move our company?
 - Many look first for the best schools. And when they do ... they find Irvine.
 - Since education is a core value of our City, I plan to propose a Mayor’s Forum for Education this year. I am looking for ideas about how we can further help our children. I would like your feedback.
 - Let me say this: Our educational support is not talk, it is action.

- Also, there are special guests from our wonderful universities and colleges, so please stand as I call your campuses: UC Irvine, Irvine Valley College, Concordia University, Brandman University, and Cal State Fullerton-Irvine.
 - I also would like to double-introduce UCI Chancellor Michael Drake. Please stand. I look forward to exploring opportunities for our respective communities to work together.

NOW, LET'S TALK ABOUT MY VISION FOR AN IRVINE METROPOLITAN LIBRARY:

- For a long time, I have spoken of the need for a City library – a great Metropolitan Central Library.
 - We are deeply appreciative of the three county libraries that serve Irvine.
 - But, we need one that we can call our own.
- Just think of the library that you grew up with. They are places of learning. They are central gathering places. I have my master's degree in library science and my doctorate in library and information science. My wife and I run tutoring centers.
 - I love libraries!
- My two children, educated in our fine Irvine public schools, did not have a place to go outside of our home to study. So they ended up in coffeehouses and bookstores.
 - We need to do better for this generation.
- I am dreaming of a grand library with iconic and monumental architectural beauty. The library should be equipped with the most technologically advanced features:
 - computers for public use;
 - community seminar rooms;
 - many individual and group study rooms for all levels of our students;
 - quiet music listening rooms;
 - art exhibit halls;
 - even a food court and Starbuck's or Peet's coffee shops.
- We have already secured a library site at our Orange County Great Park, which is part of the Master Plan.

- So, already, we have the land!
- If we dream BIG, we can do it ... we can achieve it ... without raising a penny of new tax money.
- I will soon propose the formation of the Irvine Library Foundation for community participation in this endeavor.
- How about joining me and supporting my vision?

NOW, LET ME FOCUS ON CITY FINANCES:

- Whether you have a business or a job, Irvine is the place to be.
 - There are more than 200,000 jobs, and more than 21,000 businesses with a license in Irvine.
- But this City Council must always prepare ... as it has in better times ... for the worst of times.
- The City Council has adopted a policy to increase the Contingency Reserve Fund balance to 20% over the next three fiscal years.
 - And we are on our way. At the end of FY 2012-13, we will have an estimated \$20.8 million, or 15% of general operating funds, in reserves.
- Setting a reserve of 20% is being prudent. A stronger financial position means we can move forward with purpose.
- How do we reach these goals? Through the improving numbers we see today in our sales tax, property tax and hotel tax.
- I am also keeping my eyes on the employment numbers. When people have jobs, the whole economy is lifted. As of December, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported Irvine's unemployment rate was 5.1%. That was down from 5.8%, 12 months earlier.
- Can I brag a little bit more about our City? Over the years, we have received our share of accolades, and 2012 was no different.
 - Money Magazine: Irvine ranked No. 6 in the Best Places to Live in the United States. (By the way, that is No. 1 in California!)

- Wall Street 24/7 picked Irvine as No. 2 in its list of Best Run Cities; and
- For this next achievement, I need you to smile with me:
- Forbes magazine: Irvine is No. 6 among U.S. cities with the Happiest Young Professionals!

ACCOLADES, OF COURSE, REFLECT OUR CAREFUL MASTER PLANNING:

- Let me touch upon community development in one of the best cities in which to live:
 - There are two major homebuilders in Irvine, among others. And it seems that there is a “sold” sign on every new home.
 - Congratulations for that.
 - The Irvine Company sold more than 1,400 new homes in the City’s villages just last year.
 - The new year is starting very strong for the company.
 - I ask that Mr. Mike LeBlanc, Senior Vice President, please stand and be recognized.
- FivePoint Communities is another major homebuilder in Irvine. Let me introduce them.
 - FivePoint Communities is the development manager of the Great Park Neighborhoods.
 - Groundbreaking occurred in January 2012. FivePoint Communities will open models this year for the first phase in its Great Park Neighborhoods.
 - This neighborhood, located north of Irvine Boulevard, will consist of 726 homes. New homeowners may move in by the end of 2013.
 - I ask that Mr. Emile Haddad, President and CEO, please stand and be recognized.

HOMEBUILDING IS AN IMPORTANT COMPONENT OF OUR BUSINESS WORLD. AND THERE ARE OTHERS:

- Among our key partnerships are the Irvine Chamber of Commerce, Orange County Business Council, and Southern California Edison.
 - At this time, please let me introduce:
 - Tallia Hart, President and CEO, Irvine Chamber of Commerce;
 - Lucy Dunn, President and CEO, Orange County Business Council;
 - and Steve Nelson, Regional Manager, Southern California Edison.
 - Please stand and be recognized.
- I am forming a Mayor's Advisory Council on Business, and these are the types of people I will be asking to actively participate.
 - I think the formation of the Council on Business is a good idea to hear directly from business people. It will be a forum to hear the voices of the public, the business owners, landlords and consumers.
 - Helping businesses open in our City means the creation of jobs and the increasing of tax revenue.
 - So, when I reach out to you, I hope that you will accept my invitation. I will count on you.

AT THAT FIRST ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING, THIS IS A QUESTION YOU MIGHT ASK ME:

- Should you move your company to Irvine? I would vote 'yes.' And, here is an example:
 - Meggitt Sensing Systems has relocated to Irvine: 400 employees will be in place by the official grand opening this summer.
 - Meggitt provides high technology products and systems for the aerospace, automotive, defense, industrial and medical markets.
 - This is a special moment for me because the company president, Mr. Peter Huber, is here from Switzerland!
 - Mr. Huber, please stand and be recognized.

- Thank you so much for attending.
- With him are Thomas Tillotson, vice president of human resources, and
- David Lin, vice president of site operations.
- If you two will please stand and be recognized.
- I was invited to walk through the two-story, 190,000-square-foot building with executives who are preparing a wonderful workplace.
- Thank you.
- Another company that I would like to introduce is one of our major employers. In fact, they are the Chamber of Commerce's 2012 Business of the Year: Edwards LifeSciences.
 - Would Ms. Leigh (LEE) Volkland, Senior Director of State and National Advocacy, please stand?
- For everyone else: If you own a business in Irvine, would you please stand now? THIS is your moment!
- This is the kind of value that I am talking about. Good companies ... diverse companies ... and all of them calling Irvine home.

NOW, LET ME TURN TO A TOPIC THAT YOU HAVE BEEN WAITING TO HEAR ABOUT: THE ORANGE COUNTY GREAT PARK:

- Yes, you have seen and read about a lot of changes and restructuring made in the Great Park Board operations.
- My colleagues and I have spent a great deal of time streamlining the governance of the Great Park.
 - Why? To ensure the absolute best use of our limited resources as we focus our efforts on making the Great Park a reality.
 - We now need to carefully build what has been planned.
 - And 2013 is an important year:

- A 30-acre expansion will be completed in a few months and includes four soccer fields, four basketball courts, a permanent Visitor Center, and other amenities.
- The U.S. Department of Energy Solar Decathlon 2013 is coming to the Great Park.
- Twenty collegiate teams with 800 students will design, build and operate solar-powered houses from October 3rd-13th.
- We will see the houses of the future ... as designed by the talents of the future.

WE ARE AWARE OF THE CHALLENGES AHEAD:

- Our anticipated Great Park stream of revenue from redevelopment is gone ... the next steps in this area are still in the future.
- We have a monumental task ahead of us, to work together, to form public-private partnerships, to find answers.
- As you know, the 9-member Great Park Board last month was streamlined to the 5-member City Council.
- Remember, any public member has the opportunity to hear or make your voice heard at the Great Park Board meetings and/or the City Council meetings.

IN IRVINE, WE ARE SO PROUD THAT OUR COMMUNITY IS TOTALLY INTEGRATED, CULTURALLY AND ETHNICALLY:

- In fact, let me personally invite you to participate in activities that reflect our City.
- As a City resident, or as a visitor, take advantage of our many offerings and events. For example:
 - The Irvine Global Village Festival recently celebrated its 11th anniversary. And it will return on September 28th.
 - And the 4th Irvine Korean Cultural Festival will be held on May 18th right here at the Civic Center.

- These are annual events that showcase our City.
 - But there is more to be done.
- With globalization occurring at a rapid pace, I intend to take a proactive approach to promoting the City internationally, strengthening existing relationships with Irvine's Sister Cities and Friendship Cities.
 - For example, you may have seen the Irvine-Tsukuba Student Art Exchange Exhibit that is on display in our lobby. Both cities have exchanged artwork to promote our close ties.
- Innovative thinking ... and building relationships ... make Irvine stand apart.
 - As a 'City of Innovation,' we are connected to a connected world.
- So, there are three simple things, really, that form my vision for the City of Irvine.
 - First, we love living in a safe community.
 - Next, we appreciate and support our excellent public schools.
 - Lastly, we love the way Irvine looks and feels. This is a beautiful City.
- Thank you for making Irvine wonderful.
- Good night.

THE CITY COUNCIL MEETING IS NOW ADJOURNED.