

## Mayor Cherie Wood's State of the City Address

March 20, 2019

- Thank you SSL Honor Guard and Police Chief Jack Carruth for a beautiful reminder of our freedoms and moment of reverence for our country and Officer David Romrell.
- Thank you Zeynep Kariparduc, from the Emerald Hills Institute, for bringing our community together.
- Thank you Rick Taggart for always being a classy emcee.
- Thank you to our guests and award winners for attending. Our accomplishments together as a City over the past year have again exceeded my hopes for South Salt Lake.

### Welcome to the 2019 State of the City Address and Best of South Salt Lake Awards!

First, I want to recognize the most important people in my life:

- My three sons, Jordan, Jayden and Jaxson
- My mom and dad, Lucille and Everett Taylor
- My siblings and support network

I also want to welcome other hard-working officials who represent our City and are here today: County Mayor Jenny Wilson, Murray City Mayor D. Blair Camp, City Council Member Ray deWolfe, County Council Member Shireen Ghorbani, Beth Holbrook – UTA Board of Trustees, Christian Mower from Congressman McAdam's office and Holly Sweeten from Senator Romney's office.

Today is my 10<sup>th</sup> year as Mayor sharing the State of the City Address. It's hard to believe, isn't it? State of the City is a big annual milestone and time to gauge where we've been and where we're going – as a community. But when we hit a decade, it really makes you think, "What have we accomplished? Where have we moved the needle?" From this vantage point, we can see nothing short of a transformation. This dramatic and unstoppable change is the result of our unwavering commitment to invest in people. From my first days in office, when we brainstormed about how to clean up neighborhoods, reduce gang activity, help our schools succeed, and rebound from a record recession – the solution was clear. We must – **invest in people.**

I take my job as a public servant very seriously. And as I see it, my job is to do what's best for individuals and for the community as a whole. Sometimes that can be a delicate balancing act. – I believe it is local government's job to lead individuals to the tools they need to succeed.

And now, today, surrounded by community members, city staff, friends and other leaders, we can all share a sense of accomplishment. We lead with our principles, act with compassion and believe in one another. Thank you for investing in the people of South Salt Lake.

2018 was most profoundly a year of highs and lows. It demonstrated the remarkable ability of a community to come together. This past year we experienced a tragedy – the loss of Officer David Romrell on November 24<sup>th</sup>. This was **the most** painful experience of my life in public service. And I venture to say it may be the one event that never leaves my memory or consciousness. I think it's evident that my entire staff thinks about it daily. Nothing can prepare a community for a tragedy of this magnitude. But we learned, there is light and goodness that rises from the ashes of pain. I had never before seen the outpouring of goodness, kindness and generosity that the loss of a family member can generate. David Romrell was our family, and was family to an enormous number of people who came to mourn with us and share the light of a truly remarkable person. He inspired people and brought them together. His memorial was evidence of this, and I have many people to thank who honored him with their generosity.

We are joined by a few of these people today:

- Draper City, who showed up and setup not one but two stages, tents and sound for a candle light vigil with a few days' notice, in a SNOW STORM.
- Utah Barricade, Sign-O-Rama, Diamond Rental, Utah Fraternal Order of Police, Black Rifle Coffee and jet Blue all came to aid our City in a time of mourning.

Countless businesses and citizens showed up in big and small ways to show support and mourn with us. Thank you to our community for standing with our Family in Blue!

There are many more examples of great people committed to South Salt Lake. One of the keys to running a prosperous City is to have a Cabinet full of professionals who excel in their fields. My department heads and division managers continue to set colossal goals and steadfastly achieve them. We are joined today by my dedicated team – Chief Jack Carruth, Craig Burton, Hannah Vickery, Kyle Kershaw, Alex White, Jim Hignite, Aaron Wiet, Scott Turnblom, Kelli Meranda, Jason Taylor, Dave Alexander, Corby Talbot, Tory Laws, Mont Roosendaal, Dennis Pay, Randy Sant, Antoinette Evans, Sharen Hauri, and Charee Peck. Time and time again you choose South Salt Lake and join me each day in Investing in People, for this I THANK YOU.

I like to encourage employees to lead and find creative solutions. Each year we honor those employees who step up and go beyond their daily duties to serve South Salt Lake; we call them “Rock Stars.”

When I call your name will you please stand?

- Kaylee Milliner – Promise SSL

- BJ Allen – Finance and IT
- Tom Anderton- Public Works
- Karla Slick- Community Development & Engineering
- Gabriel Zuluaga- Police
- Layne Schoenfeld- Fire

Our employees are empowered to bring new and better ways to achieve our goals, and work with our community. They care for people, they are committed to progress. Some grew up here, some now reside here and they all call South Salt Lake their community. Here are a few examples of their good work from the past year:

- 200 residents, employees and volunteers from jetBlue worked together to fundraise and build a much needed playground at Lions Park
- Fire Department employees worked with our elderly residents at the Columbus Senior Center to write and implement a plan for fire prevention and evacuation
- Promise Family Liaison team members volunteered on their days off to assist residents with immigration paperwork to help them on their path to success
- Youth City Council, Promise SSL, Heart and Hands and community partners generously supported the Sub for Santa and Angel Tree which provided gifts and necessities in December for 71 families and 378 individuals
- South Salt Lake Arts Council teamed up with local artists and businesses and held the 1<sup>st</sup> annual Mural Fest & and the first ever CraftoberFest to raise awareness and enjoyment of our Creative Industries Zone
- Promise SSL team saw a need to help get kids on bikes, they started a program to both train them on safe cycling and found donations to give them free bikes, helmets and locks
- Our Arts Council Coordinator got residents engaged in creative expression in 14 classes taught by local instructors in the new Creative Arts for Life program
- Community Connection staff organized 1,500 volunteers to revitalize neighborhoods, which saved the City \$107,000 in Volunteer Value
- A Police Officer noticed a stranded vehicle blocking traffic and took quick action by spending his own money to buy fuel for the resident, then cleared out the traffic around them

In addition, our great employees:

- Held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Veterans Appreciation Reception which gave our community an opportunity to honor our veterans

- Kicked off Neighborhood Nights throughout the city in an effort to hear from more of our residents, an example of your city government coming to you
- And supported my Bike the Jordan River Trail and Float the Jordan River events -- introducing residents to the little hidden oasis in our community

**So what is in store for 2019?**

We have exciting projects planned throughout the City that are the culmination of years of planning with city staff, partners, and developers. The construction cranes are out in full force, and you will soon see:

- A new fitness park on Parley’s Trail
- A large expansion to Fitts Park, with an new fitness course, bicycle course, adventure playground and new lighting
- A new and improved State Street crosswalk at Gregson Avenue
- A renewed vision for the Jordan River neighborhood that makes the most of this community asset and defines how this neighborhood will grow and connect to the rest of the City
- Best Buy Teen Tech Center – I recently had the opportunity to see one of these in Denver and I am excited to bring it to the teens of South Salt Lake, this creative maker space will provide an environment for our teens to discover their passions. A big thanks to Best Buy for their generous grant!

.....

As you can see, there are lots of ways to invest in people. But in 2019, I will put extra emphasis in three key areas.

The first way we will invest in people in 2019 will be to encourage quality economic development that benefits our residents. We have many plans for ways to improve our City, and they often center around taking an old, empty property and making it new and vibrant again.

Here are a few examples of transformation:

- Salt Lake County will break ground on a new, state-of-the-art Library at the Granite High School site. Thank you Salt Lake County!
- Tracy Aviary and Salt Lake County are working on a nature center near the Jordan River that will bring additional recreation options and environmental education programs to our community.
- Excitement is continuing to build about downtown with both our residents and potential developers.
- We are creating an “urban village” with housing, jobs, and services. There is an entire block of new development coming to the downtown area which will include office space, a hotel and a future residential phase. The developer is making a significant investment in the City because they were drawn to our vision for creating a walkable, livable downtown.

Now that our downtown is roaring along, we are putting new attention on another area of great opportunity - the Jordan River Neighborhood at 3300 South. New development at Riverfront, a new elementary school and community center, and significant interest from developers are reshaping this neighborhood. The City's Redevelopment Agency has made this a priority, and for good reason. Things are ripe for change and the City will begin working on a new master plan and studying how to create incentives for investment in this neighborhood.

.....

My second strategy for investing in people is to update needed infrastructure that residents use every day. Safe and beautiful neighborhoods have efficient utilities, safe streets and sidewalks, comfortable lighting, and of course parks, trees and natural green spaces. South Salt Lake's infrastructure is literally the solid ground that we need to sustain and grow.

In 2018, we made improvements to infrastructure, including:

- Increased recycling to weekly pickup
- A new traffic signal at the 400 East S-Line Crossing
- We rebuilt 2700 South for safer vehicle and bicycle travel
- We cleaned 32 miles of wastewater pipe;
- Added playgrounds, restrooms, walking paths and lighting to parks;
- and planted trees all over the City!

I appreciate Public Works and Public Assets and their hard work on projects to keep our residents safe and healthy. But we continue to face infrastructure challenges in our City, due to both aging infrastructure and new standards and regulations. We can't continue with the status quo and expect our systems to be sustainable. Our stormwater system is a good example. Water quality is one of the most important issues along the Wasatch Front. It is essential for the health of our residents and for healthy plants and wildlife along Mill Creek and the Jordan River. Our two-person stormwater department fends off flooding, odors and pests that result from clogged catch basins and drains. They are responsible for making sure all new development complies with strict regulations and addressing new runoff so we don't overload the system.

This cannot happen with the same tools and funding levels we have used in the past. Cities all over the nation have been kicking the can down the road in terms of maintaining infrastructure for decades. South Salt Lake has to break this habit. We must invest in our existing infrastructure and the staff to maintain it to ensure the City's future success. We need to find solutions to storm water and other issues as soon as possible.

.....

My third strategy for investing in people, is to invest in keeping our residents safe.

When people ask me what the **single** most important issue to residents is, I can unequivocally say “safe neighborhoods.”

I’m sure we all agree that our amazing Police and Fire Departments do an excellent job – every day. South Salt Lake neighborhoods are safer than ever thanks to these committed men and women. They are sworn to protect our community and are the most dedicated and best trained employees you will find anywhere. Let me give you some examples:

- A police officer was first to arrive on a scene where a man was unconscious and not breathing. Officer Zuluaga jumped into action and began performing chest compressions for several minutes until Fire could arrive. The medics took over and the man eventually regained consciousness. This is the level of commitment of the officers who work for South Salt Lake Police.
- A Fire Captain and his crew responded to an individual whose electric wheelchair had fallen into a broken sprinkler box. The gentleman had fallen out of his wheelchair – and though his mother was with him, she was unable to lift him. This Fire Captain and his crew helped him back into his chair. Captain Schoenfeld then reached into his own pocket and paid for a motel room so the gentleman could get cleaned up and rested before heading to a doctor’s appointment in the morning. These are the type of people who work for South Salt Lake Fire.

It is easy to see why I’m so proud of our public safety employees. However, our South Salt Lake Police and Fire Department employees are paid significantly less than surrounding cities. I am not proud of this. It creates huge challenges when it comes to recruiting and retaining our officers and firefighters. It also impacts morale and job satisfaction.

My first campaign promise was for a “safe, clean and beautiful” city. A decade of work has changed our image and our outcomes, and we have these employees to thank. It is now time for us to return the favor.

**My number one priority for 2019 is to create a sustainable funding source for public safety** – to continue to keep our residents and our businesses safe. I know our departments can appeal to recruits with their reputation for experience, professionalism and camaraderie. But in order to grow and thrive, we must fix the issue of pay. Let’s not put our success and our safety in jeopardy. I hope you’ll work with me this year to make this happen.

**I want to repeat my commitments to you and our entire community. In 2019, we will invest in people through:**

- **Economic Development that adds dining, shopping, housing and jobs to the City**
- **Invest in infrastructure to makes our lives better**
- **and Keep our community safe by paying public safety a competitive salary**

Now we get to my favorite part of State of the City – recognizing the incredible people who make South Salt Lake simply the BEST!

### **Legacy Family of the Year**

### **The Laws**

Rich Laws purchased their home on Truman Avenue in 1973, because he knew this was where he wanted to settle. Rich and Tonya married in August of 1977, and have four children - Raina, Ryan, Tory & Jeromy – and eight grandchildren.

- Tory began working for the city 18 years ago and has worked in nearly every division of Public Works, rising to the prestigious position of Wastewater Division Manager... not a job many of us could handle, but he does so with a beaming smile.
- Jeromy has worked for the city for 14 years and is our Fleet Shop Foreman, and keeps over 250 vehicles running smoothly.
- When not keeping our City on the Move, the family enjoys drag racing. Collectively with their kids they can be found on the track racing their 4 dragsters!

**This hardworking, dedicated family truly is the 2019 South Salt Lake Legacy Family!**

### **Education Leaders of the Year**

- State School Turnaround is an improvement program designed to help schools improve performance. In 2015, Woodrow Wilson, Lincoln, and Roosevelt Elementary schools were identified as turnaround schools. Based on 2017-2018 results, the Utah State Board of Education announced that all three schools raised their grades and met the criteria to exit school turnaround!
- The many hours of hard work and commitment from the administration, faculty and staff of these schools is admirable. These efforts reinforce a thriving educational culture for our community and bright futures for South Salt Lake Youth! I am proud to honor:
- **Christine Christensen**, principal at **Woodrow Wilson**,
- **Milton Collins**, principal at **Lincoln Elementary**
- **Valerie Bergera and Malynda Cloward**, the **current and former principals** from **Roosevelt Elementary**

I thank these dedicated educators for a job well done. **Congratulations to our Education Leaders of the Year!**

### **Young Leader of the Year**

### **Abdul Bari Ayubi**

Abdul Bari is a senior at Cottonwood High School and active in our Promise Afterschool Program.

- Abdul and his family moved from Afghanistan just over a year ago, and Abdul has not only adjusted to the challenges of resettlement and learning a new language, he has excelled and thrived in all areas of life.
- He leads the MESA (Math, Engineering and Science Achievement) Team and the first Robotics Club at Cottonwood. He volunteers each week mentoring refugee youth, and assists with a robotics club for 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> graders.
- Abdul will be graduating this spring and I cannot wait to see where his leadership abilities and determination take him!

**Congratulations to Abdul Bari, you are the Young Leader of the Year!**

**United Way & Promise Partner of the Year**

**Chevron**

- Three years ago United Way introduced Chevron to the Promise South Salt Lake Meadowbrook STEM Center, which focuses on Science Technology Engineering and Math activities.
- Chevron now provides funding to promote high quality STEM activities citywide at all the afterschool programs. Now, more than 50% of youth surveyed each year report greater knowledge and skills in STEM, and more than 75% report greater interest in pursuing a STEM-related education and career. Thank you for your support of our South Salt Lake Youth!

**We are pleased to award Chevron with the 2019 United Way – Promise Partner of the Year Award.**

**Employee of the Year**

**Leonela Robles**

Leonela began working for Promise four years ago, and has since moved to Urban Livability as a Code Enforcement Officer.

- She quickly made an impression on employees, residents and businesses alike. She can make the most tedious task lively and tackles difficult projects with a smile!
- She assists departments throughout the city. She cleans the Animal Shelter on weekends, hauls debris for the police department and picks up leaf bags for the Streets Division. She continues to go above and beyond her job duties to ensure that our City is clean, safe and beautiful!

**Leonela is a joy to work with and her work ethic makes her the Employee of the Year!**

**Council Champion**

**Ray deWolfe**

Ray began his service on the South Salt Lake City Council in January of 2018. Prior to this he served on the Planning Commission. From day one, his commitment has been to community and progress. Ray doesn't just say this, he lives it! Each and every day he looks for ways to better our City.

- Ray donates every penny of his City Council salary to non-profits and those in need. Last year he donated \$11,425 to Equality Utah, Utah Harm Reduction, Granite Park Jr, the International Rescue Committee, United Way, 4th Street Clinic, The Inn Between, the Bike Collective, U of U Engineering, Police Athletics League, Best Friends Animal Society and more. He and his supportive wife Megan are continually investing in community!
- Ray seeks creative, thoughtful solutions to the challenges we face. He is an advocate for residents, contributes to valuable discussion, and frequently brings compromise to multifaceted issues.
- Ray I look forward to your continued service and investment on the council. **Our Council Champion Ray deWolfe!**

**Volunteer of the Year**

**Brynley Graham**

Our youth Recreation programs are successful because of the dedication of volunteer coaches like Brynley Graham.

- Not many moms can raise 4 little boys and still find time to coach sports. As a mother of 3 myself I speak from experience!
- Brynley has been a volunteer coach for the past 4 years and has invested over 100 hours in our youth. She is frequently requested by parents to coach their kids. She positively engages youth and adults alike. Her husband Dean also coaches when time allows.

**Brynley Graham you are the 2019 Volunteer of the Year.**

**Community Builder**

**Lesly Allen**

**SSL Arts Council**

Lesly started with South Salt Lake in December of 2014 as our Arts Council Coordinator.

- Working part-time hours with no budget and no committee, she started from nothing, as all real artists do. She has since recruited an Arts Council Board, raised the annual budget to over \$100,000 a year, and created new events that are the envy of the local arts world.
- South Salt Lake is now recognized for its Creative Industries Zone, Mural Fest, new breweries and distilleries, creative place making, and a thriving arts scene.
- Lesly has developed opportunities for local artists to teach, create and perform.

Art is alive and well in South Salt Lake because of our **2019 Community Builder Lesly Allen!**

**Equity Champion**

**Michelle Love-Day**

Michelle is currently the Associate Director of Education Equality for Granite School District and has been an educator for 16 years.



- A previously abandoned restaurant on State Street has been brightened with this fully remodeled, charming café. You know you have arrived as the smell of fresh baked goods wafts from the kitchen.
- Open from breakfast until dinner – this is the perfect stop for a morning pastry, lunch with friends or business meeting.
- Chef Jean-Jacques “JJ” Grossi was trained as a chef in France before coming to Utah in 1977.

In 5 short months they have established the **Best Bakery in South Salt Lake!**

### **Best Creative Industry Business                      Beehive Distilling**

Nothing says Creative Industry like – small batch & hand crafted. Beehive is passionate about their craft and started with the notion that gin wasn’t being given the love it deserved.

- The owners come to distilling with skills in advertising, photography and woodworking. Beehive distilling launched the state’s first gin distillery since 1870 with the work of three friends: Matt Aller, Chris Barlow and Erik Ostling
- Their space features a 450-gallon still and they will soon be offering distillery tours.

**Congratulations Beehive Distilling -- you are the 2019 Best Creative Industry Business!**

### **Best Local Art Advocate                                      Derek Dyer**

As the Executive Director and founder of the Utah Arts Alliance Derek has helped establish art facilities and events all over town.

- As an artist himself, he has incorporated his passion into his daily work.
- Derek serves on the South Salt Lake Arts Council Board and supports local art and local artists
- Derek works on a large scale, in fact he has even been featured in the Guinness Book of World Records for his World’s Largest Disco Ball art Piece.

**Derek Dyer you are the Best Local Art Advocate!**

### **Citizens of the Year    The Massey Family**

Codie and Travis Massey chose SSL as their home in 2009 because they liked the location, central to everything. As outdoor enthusiasts they knew they could be sailing on the Great Salt Lake or rock climbing in the mountains within 20 minutes. The Masseys have made their community a high priority as a family, and are always ready to give back:

- They assist with PAL Thanksgiving Meals
- They rally neighbors for monthly Neighborhood Watch meetings
- They led our resident volunteer efforts for the KaBOOM! Playground build. Their children Lucy and Johnny affectionately refer to the new Lions Park playground as **their PLAYGROUND!**

- Lucy is ready to take on the whole city and was honored last fall as Mayor for the Day at our 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration!

**It is an honor to present the Massey Family as our 2019 Citizens of the Year!**

**Congratulations to all our award winners.**

You are the reason that South Salt Lake is such a great place to live, work and play. And there are many more of you in the audience today. Please know that your commitment to our city is so appreciated.

As we end today, I want to leave you with a quote:

**“There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about.” ~ Margaret Wheatley**