

STATE OF THE CITY To City Council

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FINAL

1,891 words = 14.8 minutes



Hello everyone. Thanks for coming.

A wise lady, “Granny D” Haddock, late of Dublin, New Hampshire, population 1,600, said:

Small towns make up for their lack of people by having everyone be more interesting.

So, I’ll try to be interesting.

Oregon is kind of at the hub of the universe these days



– things east of here seem to be shaking loose and rolling our way.

Oregon is 27th in population, but now the 9th fastest growing state in the nation - 57,000 new residents – like adding a new city



the size of Corvallis each year.

New jobs in Portland are the main attractant. Median household income in Portland is at a record high as are house prices.

Here is a typical Portland house:



And commute:



So, you see why they're moving down here - down Valley - to beautiful, safe, small towns like Dallas, America at its best, a city of sylvan charm. Kind of like a cross between



Mayberry RFD and

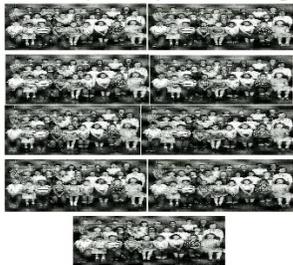


Bedford Falls.

Met anyone who regrets moving to Dallas?



In the past year we gained 225 residents,



approximately 9 nine times the size of a second-grade class at Lyle School. That's a whole neighborhood!

Like myself, Oregon is somewhat graying, but the idea that Dallas is full of old fogeys moving here is only partly true. Our median age is actually 39, a bunch younger than the statewide average of 39.1. I found these statistics on the internet so they have to be true.

Are we popular?

Oregon Employment Department
 50-Year Population Forecast
 August 2017

	2017 Estimated Population	2067 Forecast	Percent Change	Annual Rate of Change
Dallas UGB	16,414	33,208	102.30%	1.40%
Albany UGB	54,055	91,560	69.40%	1%
McMinnville UGB	34,293	62,803	83.10%	1.20%
Salem/Keizer UGB	246,576	407,263	65.20%	1%

Here's our population projection. Note we are the fastest grower and will be the size of McMinnville in 50 years. Given our ideal location and high quality of life, don't you think we'll grow faster than projections? Bet so.

Some rightly ask do we have the capacity for growth? Fun fact --- our



Water Treatment Plant has the capacity to add about 12,000 more customers.



And so does our Wastewater Plant. Demand on that plant will likely be even lower when we add the recycled water facility (purple pipes), now under design.



Ah, the Eclipse
 2017 was the Year of the Solar Eclipse sweeping across Oregon.



And particularly Dallas, a great chance for us to show off for the world.

And boy did we attract a crowd – thousands and thousands.



A big street fair.



Astronomers from China among folks from 21 countries and 31 states.



The ever-popular Beer Tent



Street art



Three days of concerts



And finally, as promised, on a crystal clear morning, the Eclipse. Anybody disappointed?

A word about our amazing schools.

A major attractant to a community is a great school system.



Here's our High School a few years back right on Main Street.



Now we have a modern system that's amazingly popular.

Proudly, our attendance rate at the High School is over 95% vs. Oregon's 75%, third worst in the nation. Kids here actually seem to like school.



Here’s our happy theater kids headed off to the Shakespeare Festival in Ashland. I’ve seen the energy during my “If I Were Mayor” talks at the school. The State actually calls us for tips how we do it.

Here’s one way.



It’s our Career and Technical Education (CTE) program.

Recall how a few years ago our school system - in favor of college prep - dropped all those “vocational education” classes? Welding, car mechanics, woodworking, the trades, etc.? Now, who are our employers crying the blues for? welders, car mechanics, carpenters, plumbers and electricians.

We are now fully stocked up with French History majors,



but workers are scarce.

So, Dallas is quickly working its way back to a modernized version of a hands on, practical skills trades education, creatively intertwined with appropriate academics and community college credits. This is our CTE Program. Students in our program have an astonishing graduation rate of 94% - Oregon is stuck at 80%. We are now expanding our program, luring in more students. 100% graduation rate anyone?



Go Dragons:

Another big draw is a creative internet presence - conveying the Dallas story to the world –



exemplified our very popular City Website,

Last year we had 209,000 visits – nearly 600 hits a day – peaking at 3,200 during Eclipse weekend. Average stay on the site was 2 minutes, 20 seconds. We even got 773 visits from our new internet friends, the Russians.



Here’s the countries visiting our website. Nobody from Mongolia –didn’t get the word I guess.

Last year, the Council crafted major three goals. Here’s the update.

First, Economic Development

Clearly the top goal for the past 3 years. However, in quantifiable terms, not much improvement since last year.



Commercially – we have 29 vacant spaces and many empty, buildable lots



Industrially – we have 4 vacant industrial buildings and 150 acres of bare industrial land in 7 parcels.

But, there is good news tonight. Based on Council guidance, in April the City created a new senior staff position, Director of Economic Development and staffed it with AJ Foscoli, one of the foremost economic developers in Oregon. You all know how hard and smart AJ works at this.

Commercially, vacancies are slowly decreasing, but at an accelerating rate due to the improved economy.

Industrially, the large-scale project we’ve told you about is still moving forward, encouraging because these tend to be multi-year processes and we are still in the running. Be confident that the city is working relentlessly with all parties, including local

brokers, regional economic development partners, and state agencies, to ensure that Dallas remains at the highest level of consideration. Stay tuned.



The second concern, streets

Our streets remain a large problem. Our repair deficit is now \$13,767,000, 88% of which is in residential streets. Annual maintenance money has improved considerably. It now consists of the usual \$300,000 (largely from traditional gas state and federal gas taxes), \$50,000 moved by the Council from contingency funds and about \$300,000 from the new gas taxes recently passed by the Legislature. It appears that this amount is enough to stabilize our streets in their current condition.

Late last year the Council appointed a 9-person Streets Advisory Committee whose purpose is to recommend allocation of scarce street maintenance dollars around the system. These are remarkably complex decisions. The Committee will be meeting soon to start the process. Wish them well.

Third, Public Safety Facilities



Our Police and



Fire facilities are badly outdated, fragmented, dysfunctional and inadequate for our growing community. These problems are not easily or inexpensively addressed. The Council has been working closely with a consulting firm to gauge community support for funding a solution. To date, there is no clear path forward.

Downtown revitalization.

Sadly, in the City's February survey of nearly 500 of our citizens, the most disappointing rating of all was for our historic downtown. Folks rated its "vibrancy" – economic vitality - as 75% fair or poor, mostly poor.

But thanks to collaborative work between the Urban Renewal District, and others such as the Dallas Downtown Association and the Dallas Vitality Connection, some pretty good work is being done to reverse this image.

To illustrate, here's the restoration saga of just one of our prominent buildings completed last year with the help of many players, the newly named, Dallas Cinema.



There is the building on the left, built in 1890, then a furniture store. The photo is taken around the turn of the century.



Here it is now circa 1917, the tall building in the middle – a car has replaced the horse-drawn carriage



Here is my great-grandfather in front of the furniture store holding my father up.



Here is the building, now the Rio Theater, circa 1948:



Here is the building a year ago, at this point the Fox Theater in need of repair shall we say?



And finally, the restored Dallas Cinema. Shows first run movies all week, lately Star Wars Episode VIII.



Thanks to Jeff Mexico for his faith in us.

Before I close up, I want to have a mad-minute – complexities reduced to a few words:



The Blazers Rip City came to town – Tall folks. Told us it was the best reception they'd gotten in Oregon



Christmas Cheer – Unique to Dallas – puts our words about caring for each other into action – fed 310 families this year.



Glow Run – Second year – big success. Folks from all over.



Synthetic Turf Project – Amazing volunteer fundraising effort by the Booster Club. Raised \$560,000 so far of the \$800,000 needed.



Christmas Lights – Notice all the Christmas lights this year all over town? Seems like a big sign of the revival of optimism and community spirit.



The Carnegie Building – Hope we can get something going with it this year.



Noon Siren - Back by popular demand after a few month hiatus for repairs after being stuck on for an hour or so at 6:00 am one morning.



Pickleball Courts – Eight new, incredibly popular pickleball courts opened up by the Aquatic Center



The Murder Mystery Downtown – More to come



We Lost Noah's Ark



And the Drive-In



But, Urban Renewal bought the Armory lot



And the City purchased 400 acres of the watershed (hopefully more to come)



And we generally had a good time:



Every year I honor a few whom we have lost in the past 12 months who gave a lot back to our community during their lives.

So sad to lose them and have their voices fade from memory, but we'd like to send them on their way with our eternal gratitude

Delbert Fredricks – A 65-year Veteran Volunteer Firefighter Battalion Chief of the Department. Responded to thousands of fires and incidents from major and minor starting in June 1951 when a loaf of bread cost 16 cents. He was the

quintessential volunteer in an amazing Department of stellar and dedicated volunteers.

Arlie Holt – Polk County’s foremost amateur historian for many years and our English teacher for us down at the High School. He brought amazing life – worldly culture - to Bridgeport Oregon with his ramshackle, artful home, library and colorful choice of guests. Sitting on the naming committee at Dallas High in the 1930s, when they selected the Dragon theme to replace the “Dallas Prunepickers,



he was the first to sketch Dexter Dragon.
Goodbye Arlie.

Parting words.

In the last few weeks the Council, by its actions and words, has said it wants to move the City in a “New Direction.” Many folks have asked me what that means. Watching this play out, here are my thoughts.

In several ways, these changes – people and priorities - are a shock to the system because they come with new demands and responsibilities. Leadership involves going some new places, not simply managing existing assets. I’m seeing fresh eyes and a fresh commitment to achieving prosperity and a sense of collaborative teamwork to get there.

I frequently hear that Dallas is a “conservative”, risk-averse place. But low-risk equals low-reward. In an economy and society as dynamic and innovative as Oregon’s, our risk is being left behind. This high tide of Oregon’s economic boom won’t last forever. What happens when the gold ring comes around and we hesitate to grab it?

You have been gifted in assembling a team of real experts who are brilliant at embracing increased risk and opportunity for their consummate rewards. There will be setbacks and foot-dragging, but clearly, prosperity now beckons. You have the right team.



Be Strong!