

City of Scottsdale
State of the City 2008
“Linking Our Tradition with Vision”

Mayor Mary Manross

(Delivered April 3, 2008 from the Marshall Way Trolley Bridge on the Arizona Canal)

Members of the City Council, Honored Guests and Fellow Citizens:

Tonight I am proud to report that the state of our city is strong, and getting stronger.

I chose this extraordinary location for the 2008 State of the City speech for two reasons.

- First, this place demonstrates in very real terms what we can do when we make a sustained commitment to a vision, but allow enough room for diverse and creative solutions to emerge. The success of our Downtown is the result of the work of many people, over many years. We did not always agree on every detail, but our vision was focused and far-sighted. Just 10 short years ago our Downtown was showing signs of real decline. Not anymore! Today our Downtown is what other cities aspire to!

- Second, this place ties our community together —literally and figuratively.

To paraphrase the words of President Ronald Reagan: Scottsdale is too great a city to dream small dreams.

We stand on a bridge that ties Scottsdale Fashion Square and the Waterfront development to Southbank and the rest of our historic and successful Downtown.

Recently, this bridge was the epicenter of a celebration linking Scottsdale to the world. ESPN broadcast here for a full week prior to the Super Bowl. Downtown Scottsdale was the location of choice for parties, fashion shows and festivals leading up to the big game. Our revitalized Downtown was viewed daily by millions of viewers worldwide. The Wall St. Journal, in talking about the focus on Scottsdale during the Super Bowl, said “What game?”

The view from here to the northeast ties together the striking diversity of this city. In the distance, you see the McDowell Mountains, the centerpiece of our beautiful McDowell Sonoran Preserve, a vast area, larger than the city of San Francisco, that represents one third of our entire city that we are committed to preserving for present and future generations. In the foreground, the Waterfront and Southbank developments flank a century-old canal. This is really where the old and new meet in the rebirth of an area that was once considered little more than a service alley.

Finally, to the north of this bridge is a sculpture that ties the character of this community's past to the character it will need moving forward. In the "Passing the Legacy" sculpture we see a rider from the Old West handing a saddlebag to a modern-day Hashknife rider. What a great piece of art! It conveys the tenacity that Pony Express riders needed to traverse a rugged land. The people who founded and built this community had that same sense of purpose.

We face a very different set of challenges in the New West. But we need the same grit, the same dogged determination.

As your Mayor, I am absolutely certain that we have it. There is a can-do spirit in Scottsdale that is just as much a part of our community as our clear desert skies and the silhouette of the McDowell Mountains.

I'm pleased tonight to have with us two very special groups of people who represent that Scottsdale spirit in very different ways.

First, I would like to recognize Scottsdale's Downtown Ambassadors, a group of residents who volunteer thousands of hours to welcome and give assistance to visitors to our Downtown. They provide that extra special touch of Scottsdale hospitality that is invaluable. Would the Ambassadors please stand so we can show our appreciation?

The second group includes three very special gentlemen who are with us tonight.

Mr. Howard Lien, a Scottsdale resident, heads up the Arizona division of Sentinels for Freedom, a private, non-profit foundation that provides scholarships and support to members of our armed services who have been seriously injured in the line of duty. It's an amazing organization and Howard has done an incredible job with the local chapter. The gentlemen with him are both recipients of Sentinels of Freedom support.

Both Staff Sergeant Donovan Spieth from the 10th Special Forces group, and Navy Seal Ryan Job, were deployed to Iraq. The Sentinels organization provides rent-free housing, medical assistance, educational opportunities, financial and personal mentoring and career-placement assistance and training all through contributions.

I want to thank Howard for bringing these extraordinary young men to our community. Ladies and gentlemen, we have two genuine American heroes with us tonight. They have earned our eternal gratitude and respect. Please join me in showing our heart-felt appreciation for their service to our country.

I also want to take a minute to recognize my fellow City Council members this evening. My colleagues represent a wide spectrum of views and philosophies, and let's say that we have found strength in our diversity. But there is a common theme, too. We all devote countless hours to the business of the city and take the job very seriously. Council members, thank you.

I would also like to say “thank you” to our city staff, who are committed to providing the very best services to our citizens. They are proud of their service, and they should be. The new leader of that staff, Acting City Manager John Little, is with us tonight. As many of you know, John has been our Downtown Executive Director for the past four years and played a major role in bringing our vision for this area to reality. We are glad you said yes, John.

Since our founding 120 years ago, we have built a spectacular city and a strong, caring community. Look at our vibrant Downtown, Old Town, the art and entertainment districts, our beautiful neighborhoods, the spectacular Preserve, our golf and recreation facilities, our award winning resorts, and our revitalized McDowell corridor. We should all be proud that we played a role in building this great city.

Fortunately, Scottsdale has a tradition of planning not for the next election or the next economic cycle, but for the next generation. And as we move forward, we respect our past. In Scottsdale, tradition and vision are woven together.

This evening, I want to talk about four major challenges shaping our city, how we have responded to them up to this point, what actions we need to take in the coming months and years, and how our solutions and “can-do” spirit can shape our community far into the future. We must keep our eyes not only on today, but on our vision for the future.

- First, Scottsdale’s local economy is strong and resilient, and that is great news in times of economic turbulence on the state and national level. Making our economic base even stronger means more than just being business-friendly. It means working to reinforce our strategic economic vision.
- Second, we need to complete our transformation from a boomtown to a truly sustainable city — and I mean sustainable in every sense of the word. When we talk about revitalization in Scottsdale, we must think about a lot more than just replacing one building with another. We should strive for economic, environmental and community sustainability
- Third, we have a good start toward a truly 21st Century transportation plan, and we need to make it better. In the last century, a better system meant only two words: pave and widen. In this century, it means not only completing the final pieces of our system, but making smarter use and a lot better use of the roads, technology, transit systems and trails we have.
- Fourth, we have to keep fighting for land reform. It means more to Scottsdale than just a desert preserve. It means controlling growth, reducing infrastructure costs and bolstering tourism. For the state, it means an ability to more effectively use and preserve precious lands while the State’s population doubles in the next half-century!

Reinforcing our strategic economic vision.

Building a truly sustainable community.

Implementing a smart, 21st Century transportation plan.

Preservation of our beautiful Sonoran Desert

I believe these should be key themes for our city in the next year and in years to come.

BEING FISCAL VISIONARIES

Let me first address a question that is, no doubt, in the back of everyone's mind. Is this the right time to propose new initiatives for any government, even for Scottsdale? The national and state economies have slowed, the state budget is suffering, and Valley cities are facing major shortfalls. We must remain fiscally conservative.

Scottsdale is not immune from the cycles of the national and state economies, but I would argue that there are some crucial differences that set us apart and compel us to keep moving forward.

The city is well positioned to weather the national economic downturn. Our finances remain strong and fundamentally sound. I am pleased to announce that Scottsdale's budget is balanced, and it is going to stay that way!

Let me give you a few facts about the underlying strength of the Scottsdale economy, to give you some perspective. While other cities in the Valley have outpaced Scottsdale's residential growth for many years, Scottsdale has outpaced the Valley in the growth of its office and industrial markets over the last decade.

- Its share of office space has grown from 13.4 percent to 20.4 percent.
- Our share of industrial space has increased from about 5 to 7 percent of the Valley total.

In addition, we continue to have a very strong retail sector. Scottsdale's population is about 7.5 percent of the total population of the metropolitan area. Yet we produce 20 percent of the retail sales in the metro area.

Perhaps even more important is that the success of Scottsdale's business sector does not turn on the fortunes of a few mammoth firms or the fortunes of a single industry. Scottsdale issues about 28,000 business licenses a year to companies of all sizes. Where they are clustered together—as in the Scottsdale Airpark—they form one of the Valley's biggest engines of job creation, a real economic powerhouse. Since the year 2000 over 20,000 new jobs have been created in Scottsdale. SkySong alone will add several thousand high quality jobs.

We are blessed with an excellent and diversified economic base, the result of targeted strategic economic policy. But we cannot take this for granted. The entrepreneurs who locate in Scottsdale are here by choice. Their businesses are here for the same reasons that visitors flock to our resorts. They expect a clean, well-maintained, attractive place with safe streets and excellent, reliable services. We deliver.

Fortune Magazine recently canvassed the country to find cities with the best mix of business advantages and lifestyle appeal. Scottsdale was chosen as one of the perfect places to build your dream.

We must keep investing in our city and keep delivering, whether the economy is booming or slowing.

In those years when Scottsdale has additional revenue for the short-term, we don't count on extra dollars to be there forever. Instead, we channel them to one-time capital uses. When the economy slows, the share of revenues going to these one-time purposes is reduced. This approach helps keep our basic services insulated from shifts in the economy.

This is one of the reasons why Scottsdale has achieved the highest possible bond ratings starting in 2002. These natural AAA ratings will save us about \$26 million over the life of the bonds. Conservative fiscal management is the key. In the last ten years, we have voted to reduce the combined property tax rate every single year, taking it from \$1.57 to \$.79. Scottsdale's property tax rate is less than 50 percent of the tax rate of neighboring Phoenix, which is \$1.82.

With the City of Scottsdale's great fiscal track record and our delivery of wonderful services even in difficult economic times, does the city need to be more deeply involved in shaping Scottsdale's economic future? Why not just issue business licenses, keep the streets paved, and let the rest take care of itself?

Well, the problem is, that's not the Scottsdale Way. In this city, we have a proven tradition of being visionary — in land use, in economic vitality, in everything we do. We are, after all, Scottsdale. Let me give you an example of what I mean.

Last year, Old Town faced what many of us considered a threat to its distinctive Western ambiance and history.

The 4020 building, located in Old Town was scheduled for renovation. The contemporary architecture had been approved by the Development Review Board. But many merchants felt the architecture did not fit with Old Town.

We took input from residents, merchants and the developer. The Council decided to send the project back to the DRB. It will be a better project today because it respects our vision for Old Town.

Let it be clearly understood, as your Mayor, I will continue to work to protect the architectural integrity and historic nature of Old Town.

And in the coming weeks we will be presented with the updated Downtown Plan. I look forward to its adoption to help guide our decisions in the coming years.

In the words of management guru Peter Drucker “The best way to predict the future is to create it.” This has been Scottsdale’s philosophy from its beginning and is true today.

The “Scottsdale Way” is rooted far back in our history. At the first Scottsdale City Council meeting in 1951, one of the main topics of conversation was the Western design of buildings in the Downtown. They were talking about an economic vision for the Downtown -- as a Western-themed district that would draw tourists. They wanted businesses and government to work together to achieve that vision.

The rest, as they say, is history. The idea worked so well that Scottsdale’s resort and tourism industry today is world famous.

That’s an enormously important lesson to draw from our past. From the very beginning, this community has seen its city government as a partner for strategic collaboration.

Fast-forward a half-century, and today we are standing in the middle of another example of the same philosophy. This canal now forms the centerpiece of a Downtown renaissance because the city, property owners and creative developers held on to a vision, despite economic downturns and a heavy dose of cynicism about the future of this area. It took city leadership willing to disband improvement districts, but also willing to step up to the plate to improve Downtown services, invest in parking structures and infrastructure, establish business incentive systems and invest in these canal banks. It was well worth it.

There is no doubt we will reach the same conclusion — even sooner — about another visionary project: SkySong. The vision for the canals took 20 years to come together. SkySong has moved from idea to its ASU grand opening in less than four years. It is becoming a global center for innovation and is drawing firms from around the world. Is it worth it to invest in a project that taps directly into the new global economy and is putting southern Scottsdale on the global map? We are competing globally, not just locally. Is it worth it to provide a foothold in our city for the state’s largest university? Is it worth it to create thousands of high quality jobs for Scottsdale residents? The answer is a resounding “absolutely!”

As a member of the Arizona Bioscience Task Force, I know well the importance of research, bioengineering and new technology to our future. All three State universities, the Mayo Clinic, Scottsdale Healthcare, and several research institutions, some in Scottsdale, are engaged in very significant research in these disciplines. I also believe that the emerging industry of sustainable technologies holds huge potential for future growth as our nation and others seek sources of clean and renewable energy, ways to treat and recycle water, and better ways to reduce and recycle waste products.

We must even more aggressively target the recruitment of high paying jobs in the bioscience and sustainable technology fields. We will be positioning ourselves and our economy for the future.

Already five solar energy firms, including two at SkySong, are in Scottsdale or have announced plans to set up offices here.

Another sector of our economy which historically has defined the character and quality of our community is tourism. One of my goals is to strengthen Scottsdale as a pre-eminent destination for tourism, for the long term. This past year, as reported in the press, I have held discussions concerning moving forward with a long-term vision for tourism. What types of investments will we need in the future to sustain our \$3 billion tourism industry?

Tonight I am very pleased to say that a proposal has been accepted by the Tourism Development Commission for a "Destination Scottsdale" Visioning Project beginning this summer. The process will include input from a broad cross-section of the community, and will be designed to develop the shared values, framework and long-range goals that should guide the community's investment in this vital industry.

My vision is for all stake holders, including the Scottsdale CVB, our residents, hoteliers, restaurateurs, our signature events such as the Barrett Jackson Auction, the Arabian Horse Show, the FBR and many more to be at the table. I am very pleased that this very important initiative will be moving forward.

As we are all aware, with the current economic conditions in the state and the nation, 2008 clearly is not the year to take a bond proposal to the voters. But we can position ourselves for the future.

Tonight I propose that we begin the planning to identify specific projects and needs in our community. They range from tourism venues and events as I just mentioned, the Desert Discovery Center, the Museum of the West, additional theatres, public safety, transportation and other infrastructure issues to be considered in a bond election to be held in 2009 or 2010. We must continue our community investment or risk falling behind. By taking these initial planning steps we will be poised to move ahead when the economy does improve.

LINKING REVITALIZATION TO SUSTAINABILITY

Let's turn now to our traditions and our vision for neighborhoods, especially in the mature parts of our city.

When we opened the Granite Reef Senior Center, the facility received a lot of attention because it was the first municipal building to meet the city's new green building requirements. The design is remarkable. But I wonder how many of us recall that the

Granite Reef Center was a revitalization project, constructed on the site of a closed grocery store?

When most of us think about revitalization in Scottsdale, we probably picture this Downtown and probably this very spot on the canal. With good reason. Scottsdale's revitalization program has been a spectacular success.

An all-time record \$3.3 billion has been reinvested south of Chaparral Road in the last five years.

It's had a truly wonderful impact on our community.

But what happened on the site of that old Smitty's store on Granite Reef is also very important for the future of revitalization in the southern area, and as a model for the rest of the city. The site became a mixed-use development, with new senior apartments, some neighborhood retail space and the senior center next door. While we were striving to make the center environmentally sustainable as a building, we were also looking to make the site economically sustainable and offer needed social services to our community at the same time.

This represents the deeper challenge facing our community as we look toward an updated General Plan that will go to the voters in 2011. What will be needed to meet the needs of our residents in the future? We must always resist the temptation to gauge our success simply by the number or value of building permits issued. Far more important is the long-term health of businesses and neighborhoods, the quality of schools and the overall quality of life.

For instance, the recent report that Scottsdale's violent crime rate is today the lowest it has been in 23 years is wonderful news. It confirms the great work of our Police Department, as well as our social and neighborhood services. Since being a member of the City Council, I have continued to push to increase the number of sworn officers in Scottsdale. Today we have 33 percent more officers than we did in 2000 and we are safer because of it. The creation of a new Downtown police district is another example of Scottsdale staying ahead of the curve.

Public Safety will continue to be my Number One priority in this city!

I am especially proud that Scottsdale was honored for the third consecutive year as one of the nation's 100 Best Communities for Young People by General Colin Powell's America's Promise – The Alliance for Youth. This is what quality of life is all about.

We must also remain committed to the continued expansion of our after school programs. These programs are a key element in keeping young people safe, focused on positive activities, and free from harm.

If we look most closely at the southern area, where we have concentrated our revitalization efforts, we see more evidence that our efforts are paying off in many ways. For example:

- The demographics of the area are changing. Population is up by about 7.2 percent since 2000, median incomes are up more than 20 percent and the median age is lower than the median for the city as a whole.
- We are also seeing improvements in quality of life categories, such as a lower crime rate, and a rise in educational test scores. Consistent with citywide results, the police district in this area saw a reduction in property crime of 28 percent and violent crime has decreased as well. The Scottsdale School District has invested millions in remodeling schools in the area, and the district has more “excelling” schools than any other district in the state.

This is a great start, but there is much more to do.

Last month, the City Council received a report on the southern area from the respected economists Claude and Nina Gruen. They took a look at the amount of land currently zoned for commercial uses in the area, analyzed the market and concluded that the city needs to take a serious look at more flexible uses of older parcels of land. The market may support what is there now. But it would be far more sustainable with additional residential development to help support neighborhood businesses.

Let’s look to the Downtown as a model. We supplied the framework for positive revitalization at any scale — large or small — by giving property owners more flexibility, and we added incentive programs and made investments and built new infrastructure to support revitalization. The market took it from there. We need to take the same approach, tailored specifically for the southern area. We can encourage more reinvestment, while building a stronger market for existing businesses.

But challenges also face us farther north, at the Scottsdale Airpark, where some buildings are nearing the end of their useful lifespan and owners are looking at the economics of replacing them under zoning rules as old as the structures. The case for more flexibility is just as compelling here, too.

In fact, our staff has prepared a draft proposal for a Planned Unit Development designation that would be designed to give property owners more opportunity for realistic and creative approaches to revitalization.

Tonight, I am asking the Acting City Manager to bring this proposal to the Council soon so we can have a serious dialogue and decide how best we might be able to use this planning tool to further our important revitalization efforts.

And let's add one more, very important element to our revitalization efforts. Let's take a cue from the Granite Reef Senior Center and move our ultimate goals up a few notches from there.

I challenge all of us to make "green" revitalization the centerpiece of plans for the entire southern area, for the Airpark, and for any area where revitalization is emerging as a major issue.

New green buildings are becoming commonplace, as builders and their clients understand the long-range cost savings and the overall benefits of sustainable construction. But no community has seriously tackled the idea making sustainable revitalization a hallmark of entire neighborhoods or business districts. Let's do it here in Scottsdale!

We must ramp up our commitment to environmental sustainability, citywide.

As a municipality, we have consistently led our peers in our commitment to environmental preservation and green building. This past June I was honored to attend the U.S. Energy Association forum in Washington D.C. and was awarded "The Mayors Award for Energy Efficiency" in recognition of our city's efforts in this area. We were the first city in the nation to require LEED certification for our municipal facilities. We were the first city in the nation to be recognized by the EPA in its rigorous Environmental Performance Track program.

Tonight I propose that the City Council support, through the budget process, the creation of a high-level Office of Environmental Initiatives to oversee Scottsdale's commitment to green building, energy efficiency and environmental leadership. The elements are in place right now, but in various departments. We can consolidate them in one office without adding any new employees or added costs. This will give us a more focused, more effective, more comprehensive approach to environmental management and provide even greater savings for Scottsdale taxpayers.

I also want to see the city continue to be an example to the private sector and prepare to take the next step beyond our current requirement for LEED Gold standards for new municipal facilities.

Tonight I propose that we adopt a long-range goal for "existing buildings" – and work toward an EB LEED program — as we renovate our municipal facilities. The long-term return to the city in energy savings and environmental benefits will be significant.

I strongly encourage my Council colleagues to support these important initiatives.

Let me take a moment to mention another significant effort just begun. Last week, the city launched a blitz of public involvement sessions to gather input on the Southern Area Plan, one of six area plans that will be incorporated in the 2011 General Plan Update. In May, we'll start meetings on the Airpark Area Plan, as well.

I urge you to get involved in these efforts, especially if you are a resident or a business owner. We need your insight and input.

BEING SMARTER ABOUT TRANSPORTATION

As I said, revitalization should be defined in terms of economic, environmental and community sustainability and that includes transportation.

Did you know that Scottsdale citizens were the first in the Valley, in 1989, to approve a dedicated local sales tax for transportation? Our city truly has been visionary in financing transportation needs. We have continued to invest heavily in transportation, with nearly \$200 million in capital projects since 2000. Nearly \$200 million in investment is recommended over the next five years in the proposed capital budget now being reviewed by the City Council. In addition, we spend about \$10 million a year on average to operate our transit systems buses, trolleys, Dial-a-Ride services and other special services.

As you know, we have just approved a new Transportation Master Plan. It gives us better tools to plan for long-range investments. The aim was to produce a document that would yield practical, real-world results.

And it did.

The plan was the first complete, coordinated study of the city's transportation system since the 1980s. As I said earlier, it was not based on the premise that we can pave and widen our way out of all congestion. We have to be strategic about new roads, technology, trail systems, transit and trolley. We also have to be smart about how we use the streets and transportation system we already have. We will continue to make improvements at intersections, adding more turn lanes and new medians in strategic locations to greatly improve traffic flow. Our Intelligent Transportation Systems, the sophisticated signal timing systems now monitored at our Transportation Management Center, can speed trips by 8 to 25 percent and improve the carrying capacity of existing roads. We will continue to improve our Intelligent Transportation System capabilities.

Let's not assume that we have to tear down homes and destroy neighborhoods to improve our transportation system.

The city's plan identifies about \$1 billion in transportation projects that will be needed over the next 20 years. The Transportation Commission is now prioritizing those projects. The major question is not surprising — how do we pay for them? A significant amount of the funding will come from the current two-tenths city sales tax dedicated to transportation. But we will also need other sources for funding. And we will continue to look for all opportunities to speed up regional, state or federal funding for projects that serve our city.

On the Pima Freeway, for instance, as the Vice Chairman of the Maricopa Association of Governments – or MAG, I was able to help in getting the time frames moved up for

construction of HOV lanes, funded by the countywide half-cent sales tax. The lanes should be completed next year. Because they will move more people during peak periods, the lanes are expected to improve the peak- hour capacity of the freeway by 33 percent.

The state also is planning to add two more general purpose lanes to the Pima Freeway. Fortunately, the design work has also been expedited and is occurring now. In addition, we are scheduled to receive regional dollars to help with some of our planned solutions for congestion in the Airpark area. That is a priority!

But the timing of construction is always an issue. Funding to build these many projects is scheduled years in the future. In the past Scottsdale has been creative and able to get some acceleration of regional funding for projects. In my role at MAG I will continue to look for all opportunities to accelerate projects beneficial to Scottsdale.

As you may know, earlier this year we were able to make more improvements to the Scottsdale Trolley system.

Scottsdale's trolleys are incredibly popular, and an attractive way to conveniently transport our residents fairly short distances. I definitely support the continued expansion of this system.

That leads right into bus transit and how we can increase ridership. We must offer a positive, comfortable environment with consistent service if more folks are to choose transit. We need to offer transportation choices for our residents.

But transportation is one of many issues that Scottsdale cannot resolve alone. We are part of a large metropolitan area, where the issues of traffic, air quality, water supplies and adequate social services are not confined to city boundaries. For that reason the Council recently voted to join the regional metro rail organization to have a seat at the planning table. We must understand what other cities are planning and how we will be able to seamlessly connect our transportation system to our neighbors. We cannot isolate Scottsdale.

This summer, I will have the honor of becoming the Chairman of the MAG Regional Council, the main regional policy-making body in the Valley. I look forward to working with my fellow mayors, the leaders of our Native American communities, and leaders in the business and non-profit sectors.

Many of my fellow Council members also are involved in MAG committees and other regional groups, and I commend them for their work. Scottsdale historically has always provided strong regional leadership. I am proud that we are carrying that tradition into the future.

MAKING PRESERVATION RELEVANT

The last major topic I want to discuss this evening is one of the best examples of the way our traditions are so firmly tied to our community vision.

The best records we have of the very first State of the City address trace this tradition to April 5, 1988, when Mayor Herb Drinkwater delivered his remarks just after being sworn in for his third term. In that address, one of his main points was the need for state land reform to protect significant parts of Scottsdale. Does that sound familiar!

Almost 20 years to the day later, we are still working at it and I am sure Herb is looking down on us with approval. Talk about perseverance...we've got it!

I want to thank Senator Carolyn Allen, who is one of the most influential voices for land reform at the Capitol and one of the key advocates who has been working toward a resolution.

Also the Governor, who took up the cause this year and has tried to hammer out a compromise among the primary interest groups. Unfortunately, the effort now appears to have stalled. I have reason to be encouraged, however, about the discussions of an initiative process for the November ballot, which would have great benefit to Scottsdale. We are fighting, on behalf of not only our McDowell Sonoran Preserve, but for the beautiful Arizona wilderness throughout the state.

It was President John Kennedy who said "actions deferred are all too often opportunities lost, particularly in safeguarding natural resources."

The Trust for Public Land last year released a series of white papers summarizing research that shows a strong relationship between open spaces and the overall health levels in a community. In Scottsdale, we also know that there is a strong economic link between preservation and tourism. Visitors come to enjoy the unique landscapes of our communities.

In Scottsdale, we recently quantified some real savings resulting from preservation of land. The Transportation Master Plan found that due to our plans to preserve a third of our city, we are able to downsize previous plans for some roads in the northern area. About 83 lane-miles that had been in the old plan won't need to be built. At a rough cost of \$2 million to \$3 million a mile, the city will be saving up to \$200 million over the years. That is significant.

As we continue our quest for State Land Reform, there is plenty of work ongoing in our Preserve.

- Since 2005 the city has constructed two access areas and a third, the major Gateway to the Preserve, will be under construction with a tentative opening date in 2009.

- The Lost Dog Wash Access Area has been the recipient of numerous awards for the sustainable building and systems technologies incorporated into the design and construction.
- Over 45 miles of trails have been constructed and are open in and around the preserve for the public to enjoy hiking, equestrian and mountain bike use.
- We also have installed trail signage throughout the Preserve to assist visitors, and an emergency marker system has been installed to augment potential search and rescue situations.

We also must continue to forge ahead with our plans for the Desert Discovery Center, to be located at the Gateway to the Preserve. Right now we are working on creative ideas for that center to help visitors more fully appreciate the amazing Sonoran Desert.

In addition to continued land acquisition from the Preserve tax, donations of land from individuals, and land dedications, we will continue to explore other creative ways to acquire land for our McDowell Sonoran Preserve.

CONCLUSION

Scottsdale is a special place because our citizens are not afraid to take risks for the things they believe are truly worthwhile, and they are not afraid of long-term commitments. The McDowell Sonoran Preserve, the Indian Bend Wash, SkySong and revitalization of Downtown and southern Scottsdale are fine examples. We have come so far as a community because we don't give up. We stay in the saddle.

Like the riders in "Passing the Legacy," we reach back and draw from our past. We look ahead with a clear vision and purpose, and we work to carry our traditions into the future.

I chose this place on the bridge to add an exclamation point to tonight's address. I believe Scottsdale's greatness and Scottsdale's future are tied not to a single set of events or decisions, but to a common vision carried out over many years as is the case in the remarkable transformation of this canal bank. The results speak for themselves.

Going forward, our challenges are clear:

Implement our strategic vision for our economic future.

Continue to build a truly sustainable community

Implement a smart, 21st Century transportation plan.

Complete our one-of a kind McDowell Sonoran Preserve

These are all within our grasp, if we remain focused on our vision of the future.

We can do it. The energy that drives this city is like the water below us. It is always flowing, never standing still. It is an electric sense that our potential is still untapped here in Scottsdale. Our best days do lie ahead.

Thank you. And God Bless America.