



The Town of Apple Valley

2015 State of the Town Address

*Delivered August 19, 2015 at the
Apple Valley Chamber Membership Luncheon*



Mayor Larry Cusack

I believe in building connections. Whether over a cup of coffee, over the phone, or even through a post on Facebook. Whether it's between the Town and our citizens, from one neighborhood to another, or from Point A to Point B. By connecting, we help address the needs and priorities of those we serve, and build the connections that help us reach our goals.

One such connection is the Yucca Loma Bridge across the Mojave River. Now 18 months into construction, Phase 1 is nearly done. This video will show you the latest progress:

[{Yucca Loma Bridge Overview Video - Aerial footage of construction and on-site view of the concrete pour.}](#)



The bridge is expected to be complete by the end of this year. You'll have to hold your horses – or at least your horsepower - just a little longer, though, before we can drive over.

Before we open to traffic, we must complete Yucca Loma Road improvements from the bridge to Apple Valley Road. Funding just became available for this phase this year. We will go out to bid for this phase in the next 60 days and it will take about a year to complete.

Then all that will remain is the final piece to connect drivers to the corridor leading to the I-15. For that, we are once again connecting to our federal representatives, seeking a \$19 million dollar TIGER grant. After two years of making the SHORT list then being cut at the final round, a contingent of high desert leaders descended on Washington D.C. in May, armed with plans.....and persuasion.

Some efforts just require a simple, yet critical, face-to-face connection. We are cautiously optimistic and look forward to hearing good news in September.

MAYOR'S WEIGHT LOSS CHALLENGE

This year I also had the opportunity to connect on a very personal level with about 200 citizens who joined me for the Mayor's Weight Loss Challenge. I had my own goal of embarking on a healthier lifestyle, and decided to invite Apple Valley along. Conducted under the umbrella of our Healthy Apple Valley Initiative, at the end of the four months, 61 challengers remained. Altogether, 1,800 pounds were shed.

The first place man – Glenn Bonde – lost 28.8% of his bodyweight, and Valerie Forker, first place for women, lost 20.73%. \$3,750 in prize money was given, including \$1250 out of my pocket! I lost almost 48 pounds, just short of my goal of 50.

Programs like these are part of our commitment to connecting our citizens to a Better Way of Life in Apple Valley.



Mayor Larry Cusack



Glenn Bonde



Valerie Forker

Councilman Curt Emick

BEST OF THE DESERT

Brene Brown defines connection as “the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard and valued.” That is a connection we strive for with our citizens.

In 2015, the Town of Apple Valley was recognized again in a poll of Daily Press Readers.

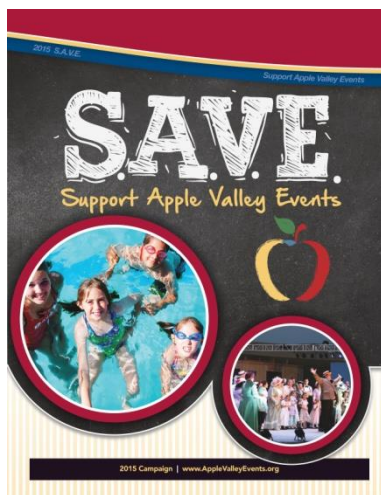
For the 4th year in a row, we were voted “Best City to Live in”, and for the third year we were recognized as “Best Live Music” for our Sunset Concert Series.

For the first time, our golf course also took the top spot in their category. Our recreation department received a “Best of” nod for kid’s entertainment as well.

It’s one thing for us to proclaim that we offer “A Better Way of Life,” as our motto states, but when our citizens rally together and vote, that’s when we know we have a good thing going. That’s when we know we are connecting in a meaningful way.

Our recreation programs and events continue to attract regional participation and recognition. They connect us in a personal way to our citizens as we watch and participate along-side them. Let’s watch a short montage:

{VIDEO - Special Events & Recreation}



All of this is made possible in part by partners in our Support Apple Valley Events (SAVE) Campaign, and we thank you. A new undertaking this year will be a capital campaign for upgrades to the Civic Center Park Amphitheater.

We are looking at adding shade for the stage, lighting and possible permanent seating in some areas. We hope you will join us.

Finally, connecting our community for bicycle traffic, we have begun a master plan to upgrade the bike lane network throughout Apple Valley, with some new signage, striping and placement.

This was made possible in part by a grant from Highway Safety Improvement Program, as well as funds from Measure I and Traffic Impact Fees.

This project is not the only one to bring grant money to Apple Valley.

Mayor Pro Tem Barb Stanton

PARTNERSHIPS

Just as we connect to local resources for partnerships, we also do the same at the state and federal levels, actively seeking grants that will add or supplement existing services. This year we received more than \$400,000 in grants for programs that will do things like:

- Help eliminate the blight of abandoned tires
- Create a master plan for safe routes to school in partnership with the school district
- Install two electric vehicle charging stations at Town Hall
- And contribute to the purchase of the Hilltop House property.



We are excited to connect forces with the Apple Valley Legacy Trail, a group which has been pursuing the acquisition of the Hilltop property, and has been successful in landing several very competitive grants. The Town has pledged up to \$160,000 for matching funds required by one of the grants.

We also serve as the conduit for funds from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. This year we have \$531,000 in CDBG and \$208,000 in HOME funds which have been allocated to various social service agencies that perform important work in our Town, as well as improvements to parks and infrastructure benefitting low and moderate income residents.

Of those funds, \$260,000 is pledged to provide zero-interest loans for owner-occupied residential rehabilitation. We have also used State funding through the CalHome program grants to assist low income households with down payment assistance for the purchase of 30 homes.

This year we connected moms and children displaced due to domestic violence. They have been placed in safe, transitional housing through our connection to the Family Assistance Program. With federal funds we were able to purchase a four-plex which was rehabilitated and now serves as living quarters for this group.

APPLE VALLEY ANIMALS SERVICES

When we talk about connecting our community, there are few connections that run deeper than those we have with our animal companions. To that end, I'd like to share some information about a new undertaking by Apple Valley Animal Services:

VIDEO - Apple Valley Animal Services: Building on a strong history of strong connections with rescue organizations and community leaders, Apple Valley is proud to announce the formation of the Animal Services Coalition. A cross section of staff, community volunteers and advocates, we'll work together to solve the problems of pet overpopulation. Work in three key areas: policy, placement and population, will be lead by the values of humane animal sheltering, and a commitment to professional collaboration, community involvement, accountability, integrity and respect.

I couldn't be more proud of the Apple Valley Animal Services crew. I'm also excited to announce that just this week our shelter was notified they will receive a \$15,000 dollar grant for spay-neuter programs! Received through a program of the California Department of Food and Agriculture, the funds will serve more than 150 dogs and 200 cats.

And on August 15, Animal Services participated in the nationwide "Clear the Shelter" campaign. The event drew more than 450 visitors to our facility and resulted in the adoption of 35 animals to permanent, loving homes.



Councilman Scott Nassif

H2OURS - WATER ACQUISITION

Possibly the most critical connection this year has been on the issue of public ownership of water. We considered and discarded the idea in 2011, then took a second look in early 2014 with the onset of a rate increase request.



In a survey done in July 2015, 70% of ratepayers surveyed support the Town's efforts to acquire Apple Valley Ranchos Water Company. We believe community ownership will provide greater local control and bring stability to double digit rate increases. This acquisition will connect the most critical commodity in human history to community not corporate hedge funds.

While the Council has not decided to proceed with any eminent domain action, and may only do so at a hearing on a resolution of necessity, we have taken the follow steps:

- We protested rate increases, the sale of Park Water to Algonquin, and the purchase of the Yermo Water system
- We contracted for an expert appraisal and issued an offer of just compensation of \$50.3 million to purchase AVR
- We conducted two statistically valid citizen surveys, nearly a year apart, which show increasing support
- We switched to well water at the golf course, which will save up to \$450,000 per year
- We initiated the CA Environmental Quality Act (CEQUA) process for an Environmental Impact Report

Community ownership of water is important, not only for our citizens, but for economic development as well. Competitive water rates is just one of many factors a site selector may look at. We encourage you to visit AVH2Ours.com to learn more.



This year we also welcomed the start of construction on a water recycling plant by Victor Valley Wastewater Reclamation Authority. Located at Lenny Brewster Sports Center, it is expected to generate one million gallons of non-potable, recycled water per day.

With use at parks, schools and other public facilities between Brewster and the Apple Valley Golf Course, there is tremendous potential for saving not only taxpayer money on our water bills, but also saving this precious resource in California.

Councilman Art Bishop

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In June, the Town Council acted to connect jobs to our economy by approving an Owner Participation Agreement with AVDC, LLC, for the development of a 1.35-million-square-foot distribution center project in the North Apple Valley Industrial Specific Plan area.



The proposed \$115 million dollar project will employ 400 to 500 permanent jobs and another 300 construction jobs. AVDC is expected to break ground this fall and open in early 2017. The Town's financial investment of \$965,000 will help fund construction of public streets. The funds will come from Traffic Impact Fees and infrastructure funds, set aside just for this type of opportunity. The 106-acre project parcel is located south of the 1.2-million square foot Walmart Distribution Center and the Victor Valley College Public Safety Campus, and is just west of the Tru Blu Logistics Center for Fresenius Medical Care.

The project quite literally paves the way for future industrial development in Apple Valley by enhancing nearby infrastructure. The roads we help build, will connect more projects to our doorstep, and showcases the area as a competitive alternative to the Inland Empire.

Finally, HD Surplus, a wholesale auto parts reseller was recently granted a conditional use permit to revitalize three industrial buildings on Central Road and Highway 18 in The Village.

In retail news, WaBa Grill just opened this week, and Les Schwab Tires will soon open a 12,000-square-foot facility at Apple Valley Commons. And Jimmy John's recently signed a lease at the Mojave River Crossings near Home Depot and Starbucks at Apple Valley and Bear Valley Roads. Pieology opened in that same center in April and has become a favorite of many.

SHOP LOCAL

This year the Town launched a Shop Local awareness campaign. With social media accounts and an electronic newsletter to help spread the word, Town staff has also set up booths at local events and created buttons and window decal to help remind people to "Shop Local. Think Apple Valley." That's just the start.



One of our newest efforts, being unveiled here today, is a series of flash videos – quick visits to local businesses to showcase some of the unique offerings and home grown stories available here in Apple Valley.

[VIDEO - Tonyan Coffee Flash Video - Mom and daughter Co-owners Rachel and De De Tonyan, explain how their small coffee roasting business in an industrial building has grown into an expanding coffee house.](#)

We will promote these videos through our Shop Local social media channels and share them with the businesses so that they can use them to connect with their customers.

Mayor Larry Cusack

As you can tell, it has been an eventful and successful year in the Town of Apple Valley. I want to thank the Chamber of Commerce for again providing the Chamber lunch as a forum for this presentation, and the opportunity to connect with our business community. We have a few things coming up in the next few months that I want to tell you about.

On September 9, we are co-sponsoring, along with Board of Equalization Vice-Chair George Runner, a free Small Business Tax Seminar here in our Conference Center. This seminar will include presentations from the Board of Equalization, Internal Revenue Service, Employment Development Department and Franchise Tax Board, connecting local businesses with important support resources.

On November 13 we will present the Second Annual Mayor's Youth Leadership Summit, which gathers students from each of the high school programs in Apple Valley to connect with the Town Council and staff on issues of importance to our community.

Douglass Conant said, "Even a brief interaction can change the way people think about themselves, their leaders and their future...Each of those many connections you make...has the potential to become a high point or a low point in someone's day."

Community can be defined by the people and relationships that keep us connected. So whether over a cup of coffee, over the phone, or even through a post on Facebook, I invite you to build connections. With your neighbors, with your community, and with us. Thank you for attending the 2015 State of the Town address!

