



# *The Town of Apple Valley*

## 2017 State of the Town Address



*Delivered August 16, 2017 at the  
Apple Valley Chamber of Commerce Membership Luncheon*

### **Mayor Scott Nassif**

First let me say thank you to Bob Tinsley and the entire Apple Valley Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, staff and members. We appreciate your continued support of the State of the Town, and your leadership in matters important to the business community in Apple Valley.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Leadership is often times planting a tree under whose shade you'll never sit. Or planning a bridge that you may never drive across. Today the Town Council will share with you the seeds we are planting...the trees we are growing...the harvest we are reaping...that makes Apple Valley Strong to the Core!

#### **YUCCA LOMA BRIDGE**

Speaking of bridges – did you know this marks the 12<sup>th</sup> year in a row that the State of the Town address has mentioned the Yucca Loma Bridge? 12 years!

In 2006, we announced that the Council had identified the bridge as our Number One transportation priority.

In 2010, we said, “We may just miss breaking ground by the end of the year, but it’s virtually certain we will be turning dirt by summer.”

In 2011, we said “in less than three years you’ll will be able to drive from here...to there.” Then in 2013 – “We are confident this will be the year of the Yucca Loma Bridge!” But THIS year – THIS YEAR – we can finally say – the Yucca Loma Bridge is OPEN!



**[VIDEO: Scenes from the river before the bridge; plus ground breaking, ribbon cutting and opening to traffic]**

A bridge seed was planted more than 50 years ago, and in 2017 we harvested the fruit of that effort. We thank the staff, consultants and contractors that brought this project to life, and to the Council Members past and present who had the vision to see it through. It's a perfect example of the importance of always looking ahead – at planting now, for the harvest we will need in the future.

**INFRASTRUCTURE/ROAD MAINTENANCE/FUNDING**

Our roads and infrastructure are one foundation for stability – where we can navigate to work, live and play. As the Yucca Loma Bridge arose from the river bottom, we also tended to the rest of the system.

We budget \$2 million per year on micro-surfacing, with most roads falling into a seven-year treatment cycle. These address the roads identified as higher priorities based on traffic volume and other factors.



Micro-surfacing works for some roads that aren't too bad. The challenge is catching up on those roads in fair or poor condition, which need more expensive repairs. For that we would need nearly \$9 million per year.

However, our engineering team is constantly seeking the most cost-effective, life-extending solutions available. This year we micro-surfaced 21 miles, and will go out to bid this fall with another \$2 million to spend.

**BUDGET**

The Town may still be experiencing the effects of the recession of almost 10 years ago, but we are seeing signs of economic growth, including a 10-year high in single family building permits with 270.

Town staff continues to seek ways to be more efficient. Our full-time staffing level is at 92 employees – a 10-year low, and much leaner than you will find in any similar community. Apple Valley prides itself on taking innovative and entrepreneurial approaches to problem solving, producing some amazing accomplishments and services that belie our small staff.

We adopted a flat budget for 2017-18 – \$81.8 million across all funds, and a \$28.7 million general fund.

For 14 years we have earned a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting – granted to less than 5% of agencies nationwide. And we earned the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award from the Government Finance Officers of the US and Canada for the fourth year.

One way we do more with less is by taking advantage of grant opportunities. We contract with a grant management firm that, since 2014, has returned \$21 in grant funding for every \$1 we spend, for a total of \$3.7 million. You will hear about some of these projects throughout the presentation.

Even with these measures, we face some challenging times. Traditional revenue sources such as property and sales tax are not keeping up with the cost to provide services. Just like you, the Town faces higher costs of fuel, utilities and insurance to name a few.

You will now get a chance to hear from the rest of the Town Council as we look at other efforts to plant seeds and strengthen our core.

Please join me in welcoming the rest of the Town Council with us today –

- Mayor Pro Tem Art Bishop
- Council Member Larry Cusack
- Council Member Curt Emick
- And next up is Council Woman Barb Stanton

## Council Woman Barb Stanton

Thank you, Mayor Nassif.

### VVTA



Let's talk about our public transportation – VVTA - Victor Valley Transit Authority - our buses, small and large.

Another component of managing our infrastructure is through the use of public transportation. Ridership continues to increase transporting folks to work, school, shopping or the doctor.

We are excited to announce a new VVTA bus route which just started this week! Route 42 goes from Victor Valley College to Jess Ranch, then up Apple Valley Road, with stops at St. Mary's Hospital, Los Ranchos Mobile Home Park at Waalew - with 400 residents. Then on to the Walmart Distribution Center, the Juvenile Detention Center, and finally the Victor Valley College Public Safety Training Center.

Also, VVTA launched a public safety mobile app - VVTA WATCH, a real-time reporting app, with a 911 button and ability to take pictures without flash. The app forwards the information to the agency, they review and take appropriate action. And, we are the first small transportation agency in the nation to use one.

## **PUBLIC SAFETY**

As we explore ways to connect our citizens to our sheriffs, who are the finest officers ever, we recognize the priority of public safety in apple valley.

Apple Valley is in initial discovery phase and creation of our own public safety app - APPLE VALLEY WATCH. We are exploring opportunities that will empower our citizens with a crime fighting tool and allow you to use your phone to report crime.

A safe, direct and smart approach to another layer of safety.... Simply Making A Report Timely... it's SMART.

We continue to ask Sacramento to assist our town in public safety....it doesn't always work, but we will keep fighting for safe neighborhoods, roadways, our schools and homes.

Our level of service by sheriff staff and volunteers is of the highest standard.

First of all, our crime rate last year was down by 10%, with reductions in all crime, including the more serious Part I crimes.

Fifty-one sworn personnel fielded more than 69 thousand calls for service – an average of 191 per day.

Deputies Troy Verral and Mike Cashion were recognized by Mothers Against Drunk Drivers for their exceptional enforcement efforts. Thank you, officers.



A Citizen on Patrol volunteer for 8 years, Judy Chabrowski was honored as the Victor Valley Footprinter Volunteer of the Year for 2016. She donated more than 2500 hours. Volunteers donated 14,000 hours to the town and saving its tax payers more than 1/2 million dollars.

There are plans for adding grant-funded bicycle patrol at James Woody Park, and also to increase enforcement efforts to reduce pedestrian/vehicle collisions.

Another program we can be proud of is the PAL program - the Police Activities League.

They have set the standard in youth intervention and engagement efforts. A boxing gym, a drop-in youth center and coupled with field trips, they all provide interaction between our youth and our deputies. Partially funded by grants and community donations, the S.H.O.C.K program - Self Discipline - Honor - Obedience - Character – Knowledge - just graduated their 20<sup>th</sup> class in May.

Our Police department, under the command of Captain Frank Bell, works tirelessly to protect our town. We offer our heartfelt thanks to our men and women in law enforcement, for all you do to keep our community safe.

## **WATER ACQUISITION**

Thank you for your vote on Measure F this past June. You sent a clear signal to the Council – pursue acquisition!

It began with citizens telling us their water rates were substantially higher than neighboring communities. The real estate industry told us water rates were hindering sales.



Economic development recruitment has become challenging because businesses and investors are concerned over the cost of water in Apple Valley. Our citizens conserve water - monthly bills rise. It's a backwards financial scale!

Water, this life sustaining source should belong to its citizens.

Currently there are two cases proceeding through the courts. A decision in the environmental or CEQA case – a challenge by the water company to our environmental review – is expected by first quarter next year. The second is the eminent domain portion of the case, which is expected to go to trial next year.

This council and town believe a judge, and ultimately a jury will see the greater good in the town and its citizens owning their vital resource, water. We can afford the water system ... we are equipped to run and manage the system ... while utilizing many current employees.

With the support of our citizens and our business owners, we are pushing forward for our right to purchase - to reduce rates - to stabilize rates and say, "Our citizens, our town - owns, manages, and delivers its water."

Next, please help me welcome Mayor Pro Tem Art Bishop.

## Mayor Pro Tem Art Bishop

### WATER RECYCLING PLANT

To fully control our water future, we must also factor in the use of recycled water.

The Apple Valley Subregional Water Recycling facility is 88% complete, with substantial completion expected on October 19th. Testing on individual components within the plant are underway even now, and landscaping will be installed at the end of September.

Following substantial completion, VVWRA will test the facility for three months. The plant should be ready for full operation by mid to late January 2018. Once completed, the facility can produce up to one million gallons per day of recycled water.



This is what's known as a scalping facility. It skims liquid waste off the top of the stream headed for the treatment plant in Victorville. No solid waste will be treated at this location. The recycled water can be used for irrigation at parks, school and government facilities, as well as the golf course.

We were awarded an Urban Green Space Preservation Project grant for \$480,000 this year, from the California Natural Resources Agency. The grant will be used to retrofit irrigation systems at Brewster, Thunderbird and Civic Center Parks, and the Apple Valley Golf Course. This will let us deliver recycled water to sustain almost 170 acres of turf in these urban green spaces, reducing demand on our groundwater.

## APPLE VALLEY CHOICE ENERGY



In April, our Town became the first agency in San Bernardino County, and only the second individual city in California, to form a “community choice aggregate” program to lower the cost of electricity for businesses and residents.

Apple Valley Choice Energy launched in April and has a 92% participation rate. Customers receive a minimum of 3 percent savings on the generation portion of their bill. A Joint Rate Comparison chart is available at [AVChoiceEnergy.com](http://AVChoiceEnergy.com), which shows how much you save over Edison.

Besides lower rates, we also provide a 35 percent or higher renewable energy content, exceeding the current mandate for California. Competitive rates. More renewable content. Local benefits. Seeds planted for future success.

## PEG CHANNEL

I’m excited to tell you about our new PEG channel – Public Education Government channel – as we have launched our own Apple Valley-TV providing content to the residents of Apple Valley.

You can see us on Channel 29 on Frontier, or Channel 186 on Spectrum. If you have neither, or prefer to watch online, you can also access the content at [AppleValleyTV.com](http://AppleValleyTV.com).

Right now, you’ll find replays of council meetings. We also show business spotlights we feature on our Shop Apple Valley Facebook page, and have recently added a “Pet of the Week” feature.

On the website, you can view the current program, or search on demand. And we have plans to roll out much more over the next six months! Let us know what YOU would like to see.



Next up, please welcome Council Member Larry Cusack.

## Councilman Larry Cusack

### THE VILLAGE

As a lifelong resident of Apple Valley, the roots of our community hold a special place in my heart. The very early seeds of our business community were planted in The Village – that area on Highway 18 between Navajo and Central Road.



Caltrans recently added raised stamped concrete medians west of Navajo, which provides a nice transition to the landscaped areas we installed from Navajo east.

And this year, Caltrans has awarded the Town a grant for \$230,000 for a State Route 18 Corridor Enhancement Plan through the Village. The funds will pay for concept development of a “complete street” with provisions for cars, pedestrians, bikes, storm water and aesthetics.

At a public hearing on August 8, the ballots for the renewal of the Property

Based Improvement District were counted, and we're excited that the Village PBID property owners have voted to continue for another 5 years.

The businesses in the area are teaming up again to bring the Happy Trails Parade on September 30. This year the event will feature a street fair at the end, with a car show, vendors and live music.

Newt Bass and Bud Westlund planted the seeds of community involvement with steak fries, parades and pow wow days as far back as the 1940s. And it's these types of activities today that help us retain a small-town feel, even as we surpass 75,000 in population.

### PARKS & RECREATION

Our Parks and Recreation department also provides opportunities to connect with neighbors and friends, through a variety of high quality programming and facilities.



With 12 parks and budget challenges, our staff has been creative in maintenance and improvement efforts, with much of the work done in house. At Mendel Park in the southernmost area of Town, we added fitness stations and a basketball court, along with hopscotch and four-square play area. Community Development Block Grant funds and Healthy Apple Valley proceeds from the Heart Games and Reverse Triathlon were used to pay for the improvements.

We also added a permanent restroom at Thunderbird Park, and resurfaced the tennis courts at the Apple Valley Golf Course, as well as replaced the nets and windscreens.

And another success in our grant efforts – we received \$140,000 from CalRecycle to place 37,000 square feet of tires recycled into rubber mulch on playgrounds at Civic Center, Corwin, Mendel, Norm Schmidt and Thunderbird Parks. Rubber mulch increases the safety of our playgrounds with better shock absorption. It is longer lasting and less expensive. The project will divert more than 40 thousand passenger tires from California landfills.

From Archery to Zumba, nearly 13,000 program registrations were received last year. Along with 80,000 aquatic center visits and 12,000 park and facility rentals. And 97% of recreation customer surveys rate our programs as good or excellent!

Making it easier than ever to enjoy “A Better Way to Play,” we just launched an online registration system. You can sign up for many of our classes, youth and adult sports, aquatics and more, at [AVRecreation.org](http://AVRecreation.org).



The Mojave River Walk is another example of sowing seeds for future success. With a \$963,000 grant, we built a 3-mile path along the shore of the Mojave River. Eventually, Victorville will connect to it north of Bear Valley with an uninterrupted path to the bridge and on to Mojave Narrows Regional Park.

## ANIMAL SERVICES



Now let's take a moment and look at pictures of cute animals – there is no shortage of ones just like these on any given day at our shelter. Come visit! Our staff would love to help you find your next best friend!

We recently started a “Pet of the Week” feature on social media and AV-TV. With this and other marketing, we reached a 77% live release rate for dogs this year – meaning they were adopted, returned to owner, or pulled by one of our 134 animal rescue partners.

Nearly 45,000 people visited the Animal Shelter and we offered six low cost vaccination clinics. And plans are underway for the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Paws and Claws Pet Fair on October 21st.

Animal Services Director Gina Whiteside was just recognized by Assemblyman Jay Obernolte for her dedication to serving the community, and giving a voice to our animal citizens. We are proud of the work she has done. Our shelter is recognized as a first-class facility with many innovative programs, all to the credit of Gina and her staff.



Next, please help me welcome Council Member Curt Emick.

## Councilman Curt Emick

### SHOP LOCAL/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

On behalf of the Town Council, I want to thank the Apple Valley Chamber and the businesses here for your engagement in our community. Election turn-out, public forums, surveys – we are always humbled – and other cities are envious – of the participation we get from our business community and residents.

We appreciate your role in “A Better Way of Life” through the shopping, dining and services you provide. And we are glad to be able to offer programs in support of your local business.

It doesn't matter who plants the seeds and who waters, it's working together that creates the harvest.

This year we issued the first Apple Seed Small Business Loan to Charmed Beauty Bar, which used the low-interest money to lease and remodel a salon and add more services and stylists. We are still accepting applications for this program, and loan funds may also be used to purchase equipment, obtain inventory or related capital needs, and finance closing costs or down-payments for another loan.



New this year are loans available to assist small business compliance with ADA accessibility. We also set aside CDBG dollars to fund an Entrepreneurial and Small Business Incubator Space and we are working to bring the Inland Empire Small Business Development Center to Town Hall once a week. Stay tuned for more information on both programs.

Our Economic Development Department received a Merit of Excellence Award this year from the California Association of Local Economic Development. It honored the Shop Local, Think Apple Valley campaign, which features the "stories behind the storefronts" through short videos and photos. The shops are highlighted on our social media outlets and now on Apple Valley TV.

We recently added a B2B element, sharing stories of business-to-business collaboration within our Town.

- For example – Off The Grid's "Cold Brew" – a lager infused with freshly roasted beans from Tonyan Coffee.
- Agio Real Estate, in business in Apple Valley since 2001, trusts Shred Your Docs for their document management needs.
- And Rebel Oil helps fuel Apple Valley Construction)

We'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate Jay Jeffs, owner of Jayco Industries, who was honored as a 2017 Small Business Person of the Year Finalist by the US Small Business Administration. Jay is hosting a 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary ribbon cutting on September 29 so mark your calendars.



And now, let's enjoy a quick video of some of our recent Shop Local features:

**[VIDEO: Compilation of Shop Local videos featured on the Shop Apple Valley social media accounts]**

Finally, I'll end with a few updates – recent store openings include Rebel Oil Co., Dickey's Barbecue Pit, 99 Cents Only Store, The Galley Fish Tacos, CrossFit One Society, Samaritan Animal Hospital, 3<sup>rd</sup> Generation Tacos at Apple Valley Airport, DeeDee's Hobby Emporium at Historic Apple Valley Inn, and Bear Valley Rock 'n Wood. Yogurtland just opened, and a 76 Station and Wing Stop will be opening up across the street from Town Hall.

And in an effort to increase access to quality health care for Apple Valley residents, St. Mary is under construction with a 12,500 square foot Urgent Care center adjacent to their hospital campus. It will be open for patients in November. The second floor will house physician offices and other clinical offerings.

With the completion of the Yucca Loma Bridge, the Quail Ridge Plaza is now in the early planning stages. Mal Riley, developer of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> phases of Jess Ranch Marketplace, is inviting interest in the mixed-use concept, including restaurants, offices, town homes or multi-family and senior living.

The Planning Commission has approved the Apple Valley Gateway Center, a 10-acre site at the northeast corner of I-15 and Dale Evans Parkway. The proposal includes a hotel, retail shops and restaurants.

And now, let's turn it back over to our Mayor Scott Nassif, as we wrap things up.

## **Mayor Scott Nassif**

### **CONCLUSION**

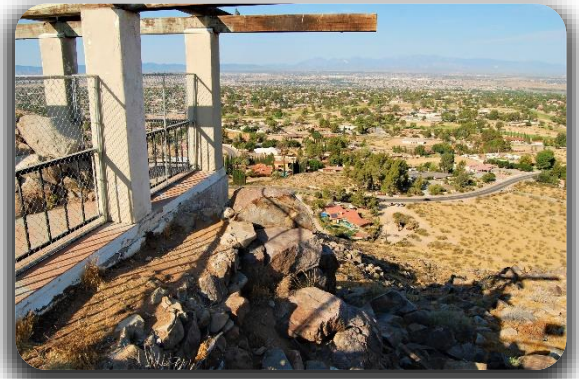
To add to the Economic Development update, we are excited to be able to say we are "this close" to seeing the Big Lots Distribution Center become a reality. It was approved last year, but a challenge to the environmental review delayed the project.

However, a resolution is near. We expect it to be settled by the end of this month, at which time Big Lots can submit building plans and get the project started. The 1.3 million square foot facility will bring 500 jobs to the area.

After years of litigation, Wal-Mart is ready to pursue development of the southeast corner of Thunderbird and Dale Evans. We will be talking more with Wal-Mart soon on the next steps towards their project.

And a quick update on the Hilltop House property. Long-time Apple Valley residents see history. For newcomers and visitors, it's a mystery!

Now part of the Town park system, the Town Council is excited to embark on the next segment of our journey up the trail. As grant funds and partnerships continue to accrue, we have formed an Ad Hoc committee to guide us through a master plan and initial opening as a community use trail.



This community effort will allow us to build on the work of the Apple Valley Legacy Trail Organization and provide us, and future generations, with a place – 3,100 feet up – to reflect on our Apple Valley heritage as we look towards the future.

As we close today, I want to acknowledge our hard-working Town staff, and there are many in the room today. The Council provides direction, and it is the staff that makes it happen. In particular, I want to recognize our Interim Town Manager, Lori Lamson. Lori has been with us for 12 years and is well-equipped to oversee the day-to-day operations. We have begun the process to recruit a new Town Manager, and expect to have someone on board by the end of the year.



We will be conducting a citizen satisfaction survey in the coming weeks – so respond to the call or email if you get one!

That information will equip our Town leaders to review Vision 2020, and see what 2030 and beyond should look like, based on your input and priorities.

At this time I would like to invite the rest of the Council to join me on stage, as well as Captain Frank Bell. And I'll let Council Woman Stanton lead us in this next part.

**[Council woman Stanton/Captain Bell]** We are very proud of our Mayor, and want to take a moment to honor him for an award he received this year - Mayor Nassif was recognized as the WeTip Mayor of the Year. The award is bestowed upon only one mayor in the entire nation!

Scott was nominated because of his dedication to preserving the quality of life and keeping safety a top priority in Apple Valley. Since 1995, Apple Valley has had more than 7,000 tips reported resulting in 184 arrests and 77 convictions. Because our WeTip success comes from the tips our citizens offer, we share this honor with all of you as well.

*Mayor Nassif continues:*

I would like to thank my colleagues on the Town Council, for taking part in today's State of the Town. It is a pleasure to work alongside all of you. This group has led this Town through some challenges over the last few years, and presided over some amazing achievements, with even more on the horizon.

Thank you all for coming today. At our very core – the heart, the soul, the strength of our community – is you. Our business community. Our citizens.

Every decision, every undertaking, reflects our core values, as we strive to fulfill our Vision of a premier community. A Better Way of Life.

