

Town of Apple Valley "STATE OF THE TOWN"
Speaking Notes for Mayor Rick Roelle
Delivered to the Chamber of Commerce, July 9, 2007



Back in 1988, tired of being overlooked by the forces down the hill, a group of folks got together and decided..... there has to be a **better way**.

A **better way** to get roads paved. A **better way** to keep a lid on crime. A **better way** to shape and govern a small but growing rural community.

And that **better way** was through incorporation. We took a stand and took control and became the Town of Apple Valley, home to "A **Better Way of Life.**"

COUNCIL

My fellow Town Council members have shown themselves to be champions of quality and good stewards of a **Better Way of Life**, and it is my pleasure today to introduce them:

Mayor Pro Tem Tim Jasper. Tim is our transportation and housing guru. As our representative to the Southern California Association of Governments, Tim insures that our needs are kept in the forefront of this regional planning agency.

He has also been leading the charge in Sacramento to bring a DMV office to Apple Valley. Our proposal was very well-received. They have visited the proposed site, and we are waiting to hear back.

Councilman Peter Allan. Peter is the new guy on the block, but coming from a 2-year term on the Planning Commission, he is already very familiar with our community's values, and has been a strong force in preserving the high standards he helped shaped as a planning commissioner. He also serves as our delegate to the Victor Valley Economic Development Authority.

Councilman Scott Nassif sends his regrets that he cannot be here today. Scott has been the face of Apple Valley this year at the state level. Most significantly, he traveled to Sacramento a number of times to testify on AB370, legislation which would provide us greater control of group homes. Scott also serves as president of the Desert/Mountain division of the League of California Cities, overseeing a coalition of 15 cities across four counties.

Councilman Bob Sagona. Bob is our senior member, having been first elected to the Council in 1998.

He serves as our delegate to the Victor Valley Wastewater Reclamation Authority, an important commission as we try to bring a treatment plant to the Town. Bob is an advocate of water conservation and the use of reclaimed water for parks and golf courses, and is working tirelessly to make this goal a reality.



Gentlemen, it is an honor and a pleasure to serve with you. The accomplishments I will speak of today are a reflection of your hard work and dedication.

THANK YOU, CHAMBER

To Chairman Bill Greulich, the Board of Directors, members, and to President and CEO Janice Moore, thank you to the Apple Valley Chamber of Commerce and the entire business community for hosting our State of the Town address each year. The Town and Chamber share many common goals, and I am glad we can unite on this occasion to share our successes.

Now, it is my pleasure to present “The State of the Town”. Nearly 19 years after incorporation, Apple Valley has continued to expand the ideal of “**A Better Way of Life**” as our community grows, through commercial, industrial and residential avenues.

RETAIL PROJECTS

Steve Jobs, CEO of Apple and Pixar Animation Studios, said, “*Be a yardstick of quality. Some people aren't used to an environment where excellence is expected.*” And this certainly holds true in Apple Valley. When developers approach us with a project, we expect excellence ... and they aren't used to it! Our Economic and Community Development Department staff hear things such as, “we've never had to do this in another city,” or “we've never spent this much on construction before.”

The Town of Apple Valley has a **better way** of doing commercial development. Not willing to sacrifice good planning for immediate results, we held out for the quality projects we wanted, and just look at the results. No where in the high desert, and in few places elsewhere, will you find the attractive design, colors and architectural interest and quality you see in our new retail projects.

It is a good feeling to stand up here and have our commercial development represented as current attractions, and not sneak previews. For so long, retail was “coming soon”, but it is here now. While you can see the results of our **better way** of doing business just by driving around, let me bring you up to date on our major retail centers.

APPLE VALLEY & BEAR VALLEY ROADS



Jess Ranch Marketplace at Apple Valley and Bear Valley Roads is moving along quickly. Applebee's opened in June, along with Panda Express and PFF Bank and Trust. Also underway are Oggi's Pizza and Brewery, Staples, and the 99 cent only store. The Automobile Club of Southern California will be opening on July 16th. Phase II, also under construction, includes Mervyn's, PetSmart, WinCo Groceries, Big 5, Famous Footwear, Fashion Bug, Lane Bryant, Bank of America, Rite-Aid... and others! ... with store openings expected to start this fall.

The third phase is expected to be under construction after the first of the year, and will welcome Best Buy, 24 Hour Fitness, and Bed Bath & Beyond, as well as a Cinemark state-of-the-art movie theater and restaurants.

Across the street at the Mojave River Crossings, Home Depot will soon be joined by Starbucks, Juice it Up, and Quiznos.

APPLE VALLEY PLAZA

At Central and Bear Valley Road, Apple Valley Plaza is moving right along. How many years have we stood at this podium talking about movie theaters? Well, not only is UltraStar Cinema under construction, but we are within weeks of an official grand opening date! So skip the crowds when *Harry Potter 5* opens this week. Just wait awhile longer and see it in the comfort of a brand new all-digital theater right here in Apple Valley!

APPLE VALLEY COMMONS

Finally, Super Target, anchoring the Apple Valley Commons, is on target for opening on July 29th. This will be the first ever Super Target to open in California, which speaks volumes to the national recognition of our local market here in Apple Valley. Work is



also underway on many of the outlying buildings, and the second Lowe's in Apple Valley recently began construction at this location.

But enough about shopping. I know what you're wondering - which restaurants are coming to Town?! Well...we want to know, too! The problem...and it's a good problem to have...is that the restaurant game is like musical chairs. You won't know exactly which restaurants will land where until the music stops. Much of this is related to having more than **two million square feet** of retail under construction. The restaurants are pitting developers against one another, all in the name of competition.

As I said, this is a good problem to have. Believe me when I tell you that over the next several months, Apple Valley will be THE "dinner and movie" location of choice for the entire Victor Valley. This time next year, you will be able to fill most all of your shopping, entertainment and dining needs without ever leaving Apple Valley!

Putting fewer cars on the road to Victorville, and putting more sales tax dollars in our bank account..... that's definitely a **better way** of shopping!

RESIDENTIAL

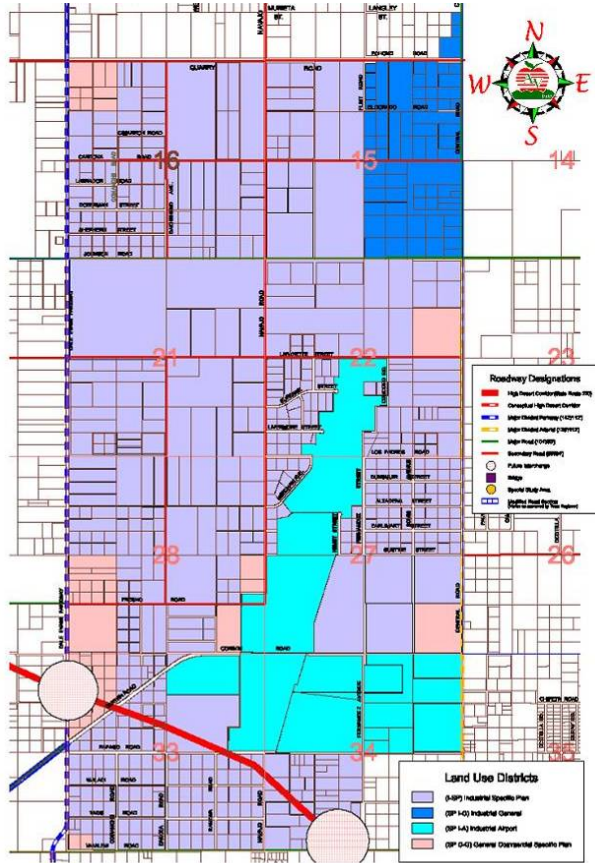
The Town of Apple Valley has always been known as the premier residential community in the High Desert. When faced with the prospect of higher density housing, our citizens took to the voting booth and enacted a **better way** of residential growth, with minimum half acre lot sizes.

The result has been high quality housing projects, as well as citizens of a... certain character. From the hardy souls who came here 50 years ago, to the relative "newcomers" of 20 years ago, to recent transplants from down the hill. What they have in common is a fierce loyalty to our rural heritage and a love of breathing space between them and their neighbor.

Housing in Apple Valley has slowed considerably over the last year, following the trend across California. However growth is continuing at a manageable pace, and a number of exciting projects are in the pipeline for the coming years, symbolized by Bridal Path Estates in north Apple Valley and

two other proposed Specific Plans the Planning Commission will be considering this month. Our current population of nearly 75,000 residents is projected to grow at a rate of 6 – 8% over the next few years, primarily in north Apple Valley.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT



Retail and residential make up two components of a thriving community. The third part of the triad is industrial development, a source of high-paying jobs for the people who live here. And, of course, we have found a **better way** to do this, too!

Late last year, the Town Council adopted the North Apple Valley Industrial Specific Plan. This 5100-acre surrounding the Apple Valley airport has been pre-zoned for industrial projects. The specific plan provides design standards and permitted uses that can be approved administratively across the counter. A quality project, meeting all requirements, could go from submittal to construction in as little as 120 days – virtually unheard of in today’s building environment.

We aren’t talking about corrugated metal or even plain concrete tilt up buildings, either. Just like with retail, we are sticking to our standards. And just like with retail, the quality projects are coming in. First to open under the new plan will be a kidney dialysis distribution center that I mentioned here last month, with the grand opening scheduled for sometime later this month.

Fresenius is #1 in their industry in terms of both total revenues and market share. This Fortune 200 company relocated their Southern California operations from Orange County to Apple Valley, recognizing a **better way** to get their product to their customers.



Additional interest has been coming in from all over the country. The **largest industrial developer in the country** recently took down 600-acres. The **largest industrial developer in Los Angeles County** is also pursuing a project here, and we are working with another user looking to build a 1-million square foot facility.

In a prototype program through Southern California Edison, the Town was recently notified that land owned by Watson Land Development Company will be designated as an SCE Certified Site. A certified site means the site is immediately ready for development and that the typical two-year due diligence process has been reduced to 30-45 days. Watson Land is the largest industrial land holder in the Los Angeles and Long Beach ports.

Apple Valley staff has been working with SCE for some time, and we were the only incorporated community selected. In fact, after analyzing the entire Southern California Edison service area, Edison’s consulting team selected only two locations, one in Riverside County and the other here in Apple Valley. The State of the Town address next year should include significant progress on

industrial developments. Wal-Mart Distribution Center laid the ground work when they opened in 2004, and the Town has followed up to insure a quality industrial center.

VISION 2010/TRANSPORTATION



None of this has happened in a vacuum. As you know, life can't go according to plan if you have no plan. And our Town Council has a plan – Vision 2010. Four years since adoption, many of these goals have become reality, and the residents of our community can count on a consistent, unified vision, even though the faces on the council may change.

Economic development encompasses five of the ten goals of Vision 2010, but the number one priority remains transportation and circulation.

One of the accomplishments I am most proud of this past year is the progress we have made on the Apple Valley Road Improvement Project.

Now stretching nearly 10 miles from Tussing Ranch, all the way north to Falchion Road, only a 3-mile segment remains to be widened, and that work will begin by the end of this summer. The north extension opened in May and is already used by many drivers looking to avoid traffic in the Narrows on their way to the Interstate-15.

Under the guidance of Vision 2010, this year we have earmarked \$31 million for various road projects, including completion of Apple Valley Road between Sitting Bull and Yucca Loma. We will also see major improvements to Kiowa, Navajo and Corwin Roads.

YUCCA LOMA BRIDGE

But we all know that north-south movement isn't the issue. What we need are more roads west. What we need is a **better way** to cross the Mojave River.

Since recommitting our resources to the Yucca Loma Bridge last year, we hired a consultant to lead us through the preliminary environmental clearance and entitlement processes, which are on track to be completed by December of this year. We are continuing to build consensus among neighboring cities and the County, and won't rest until the bridge becomes a reality.

And we are about to take another step closer to that reality. At tomorrow's Council meeting, we will award a \$2.9 million dollar bid for the environmental study and structural design of the Yucca Loma Bridge. This will include environmental engineering studies, excavation of construction areas, obtaining environmental permits, designing a construction plan, and preparing specifications and engineer's estimates. From there, the Town will be prepared to bid and select a contractor for the construction of a new bridge. As we have seen time and time again, having shelf-ready plans greatly increases our success at securing funding for projects, and we expect this to be no exception.

BUDGET/LAW ENFORCEMENT

The \$31 million in road funds I mentioned earlier is part of a \$117 million budget adopted by the Council for fiscal year 2007 – 2008. This represents a 63% increase over last year. Our general fund budget is \$19.4 million dollars, up from \$17.7 million dollars last year.

As public safety continues to be a priority with this council, 49% of our general fund is earmarked for our contract with the San Bernardino County Sheriff.

This year we brought a new two-member gang unit on board. These two deputies are already making their presence known in Apple Valley, working closely with gang units in the county and neighboring cities to identify gang members and share information across jurisdictional borders.

Additionally, Councilman Scott Nassif worked with Assemblyman Anthony Adams on state legislation to give local government more control over group homes. While the legislation has become a two-year bill, it cut a deeper swath through partisan politics than any of us thought possible. Next year we will be back in Sacramento again, continuing the fight for safer neighborhoods.

OTHER PROJECTS

Other major projects in the budget include expansions of public facilities. It has been over 5 years since we moved into our Town Hall, and we are out of room. More residents mean more services which require more people and space, and there is just no place to put them. Council is considering possible expansion of several facilities, and will discuss options at tomorrow night's meeting. These include a Town Hall Expansion, to be located at the southwest corner of Civic Center Park, near the Town Hall parking lot entrance. Second is a Public Works Facility and Yard that would be built on Town-owned property located on Navajo Road near Waalew Road. Third involves our Animal Care and Control Department. When we took over Animal Shelter Services two years ago, we squeezed offices into a former house, and placed animals in a converted warehouse that is not cut out for that use. Construction of a purpose-built animal shelter at Tonikan and Outer Highway 18 would provide a healthier environment for our strays.

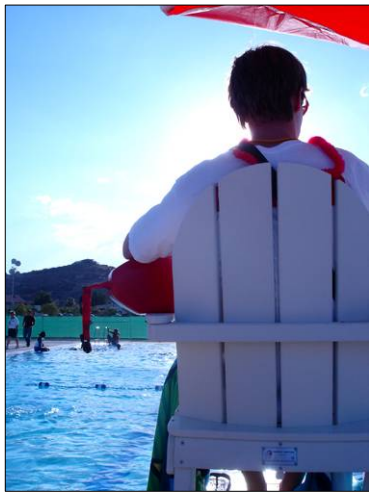
PARKS & RECREATION

In parks and recreation, work will continue on Civic Center Park. I hope some of you were able to make it to the grand opening of the amphitheatre two weeks ago. Nearly 1000 people did, bringing lawn chairs and blankets, and enjoying the music of Phat Cat Swinger in our beautiful grass amphitheater.

Listening to live music under the desert night sky is an opportunity many thought they would never see in our community. But what an amazing feeling it was that night to look around at people from every walk of life...from seniors to young families and teenagers. People were picnicking and dancing. The feeling of community was a tangible sensation, and one I can't wait to



experience during the rest of our summer event season. Civic Center is truly shaping up to be our flagship park and the heart of our new downtown.



The aquatic center is open for its first full season, and is no longer just a pool of water in the middle of a dirt field. Now, grass, trees and shade canopies create an inviting escape from the desert heat.

Soon to join the pool and the amphitheater are playgrounds, a dog park, tennis courts, and additional landscaping. Later down the line we hope to build a new community center and additional swimming pools at that location.

It has been just six years since the Town absorbed parks and recreation services from the former district, developing a **better way** to deliver recreation, and we have so much to show for it. However, as many heard in Council discussions earlier this year, Parks and Recreation activities and facilities are subsidized by the Town's general fund.

Typically, municipal recreation programs are not self supporting in most cities, and are subsidized to one degree or another.

However, we know that our budget cannot absorb increasing costs indefinitely, and we need to look at other options. Council recently hired a consultant to gauge community support of parks and recreation services, and determine whether there would be support for any level of assessment. A telephone survey will be conducted in the coming months and I ask you to find a few minutes to answer questions should you be called.

Your input will be critical in determining what steps we take next.

At the same time, we are also examining all costs associated with parks and recreation, as we could not in good conscience ask for taxpayer support without first using any cost-containing measures available to us.

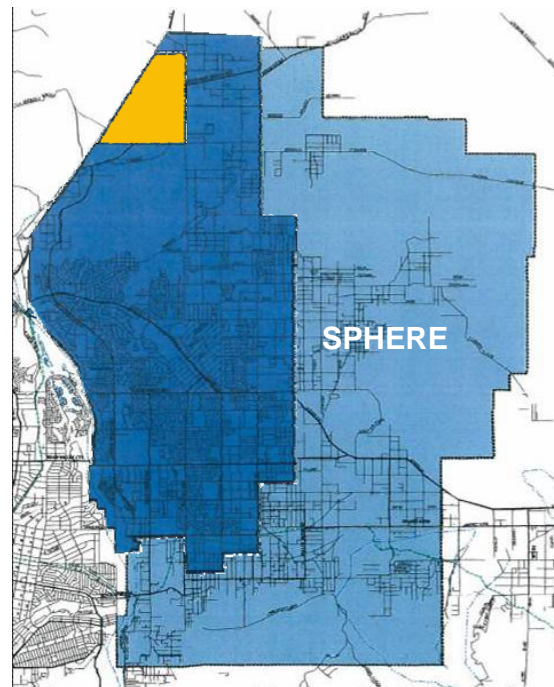
LOOKING AHEAD

Let's turn our focus forward now, to what else lies ahead in the coming year. A major project that is already underway is the updating of the General Plan. This will be the first comprehensive General Plan update since our initial plan was adopted in 1991.

Already, staff, consultants and the Planning Commission are hard at work on this major project.

To insure our Sphere of Influence develops in conformance with our General Plan and Development Code, the Town will also be pre-zoning its entire 130 square mile Sphere of Influence. First District Supervisor Brad Mitzelfelt has committed his assistance to the Town on this important project.

A Memorandum of Understanding has already been developed by Town planning staff, and Supervisor Mitzelfelt is circulating it among County staff in preparation for adoption by the both agencies.



Another related project is the Habitat Conservation Plan for the Town and its Sphere of Influence. Once adopted, approvals now processed by the state Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife, will be able to be processed and approved by the Town.

The third major land use project the Town has embarked upon is the annexation of the Golden Triangle; that area bordered by the I-15 freeway, Johnson Road and Dale Evans Parkway.

This 4-square mile area is strategically positioned, with vital freeway frontage. As residential and industrial development occurs in north Apple Valley, Town control is important. Other annexations will occur adjacent to the North Apple Valley Industrial area and, possibly along the Town's eastern and southern borders. These efforts will ensure our **better way of life** occurs not only within our 78 incorporated square miles but also the 130 square miles that comprise the Town's Sphere of Influence.

A BETTER WAY (conclusion)

We know that there is always another way of doing business. For example, advances in electronics and communications have created instant access around the clock. All of you with vibrating, buzzing electronic devices in your pockets can attest to that. Computers have created a nano-second mentality – we want it all and we want it fast.

But “another way” is not always the better way.

Sometimes quality accounts for more than quantity.

Sometimes thoughtful deliberation accounts for more than immediate gratification.

In our old council chambers, the following saying was painted on the wall behind the dais, “*We will not sacrifice quality for the sake of expediency.*”

This still holds true today. We have not, and we will not, settle for less than a **better way...** for the sake of a quick fix. High standards no matter what. It's the Apple Valley way. It's “A Better Way of Life.”

