



## The Town of Apple Valley

### 2019 State of the Town Address

*Delivered August 21, 2019 at the  
Apple Valley Chamber of Commerce Membership Luncheon*

Mayor Larry Cusack



Noam Bardin, CEO of Waze, described maps as living, breathing organisms that change on a daily basis.

During the 2018-19 budget year, the Town of Apple Valley embarked upon its annual journey to lead the community on its path toward a Better Way of Life. But as we know, great journeys are made of single steps, of daily choices. We must choose which fork in the road we will take in order to arrive at our desired destination.

One of the recent choices we made was to pursue water acquisition to avoid allowing this precious commodity to remain in the hands of a foreign company. We are staying the course to improve our historic business district, maintain our road system, help residents save money on their electric bills, and fund public safety. In some cases, we are still carving out new roads to get us to our intended destination.

Today, my fellow council members and I are going to unfold the map to show you where we've been, where we are, and where we are going in 2019 and beyond that will continue to make Apple Valley a destination for families, visitors and business.

#### **By District Elections**

Since the Town incorporated in 1988, your Town Council has been selected by an at-large voting system. This means that residents from the entire town cast their vote for all five of the council members.

In March, however, in response to a legal challenge that no city or town has won, this Town Council began the process to switch to a by-district election system in accordance with the California Voter's Rights Act. Case in point, Santa Monica was just sued for \$21 million in legal fees after losing their challenge of this law.

This system mandates that a council candidate reside within an election district and is elected by voters residing within that same geographic area. The council recently approved these new voting maps that will go into effect for the 2020 election.



### **Annexation**

These new voting districts also include more than 1,300 acres of newly annexed land in North Apple Valley. This action adds three miles of prime freeway frontage to the Town's boundaries. As development occurs in this area, the additional tax revenues will support Town services throughout the entire community.

### **Streets and Roads**

While council and staff map out the future of this newly annexed land, we are not neglecting our mission to provide better roads in *all* areas of Town.

### **Apple Valley Road/Highway 18**

At last year's State of the Town, we announced that we secured funding to widen and realign Highway 18 and Apple Valley Road. We are still on course! This project is in the engineering phase and we expect visible construction to begin in late 2020.



### **Village Corridor Improvements**

You will also see construction on the other end of Apple Valley. The Village Business District property owners have once again leveraged a private-public partnership with the Town. This new project will improve the drainage channels and medians along Outer Highway 18.

We encourage you to visit the area, especially during our big events like the upcoming Happy Trails Parade and Street Fair on October 5 that draws travelers from beyond our borders.

### **Bicycle Path Projects**

In July, the San Bernardino County Transportation Authority awarded the town more than \$281,000 toward the construction of sidewalks, crosswalks, and disability ramps in the area adjacent to Rio Vista Elementary School; as well as bike path upgrades in surrounding areas. The projects should be ready for construction by next summer.

### **Paving Projects**

We were also recently awarded more than \$1.8 million in SB1 road funds to micro-surface 44 miles of road. Add this to the 120 miles we've resurfaced since 2016, and you can see that we are committed to maintaining or improving our streets for residents, visitors...and even celebrities!

While all of the 420 miles of road are important, the focus of recent projects has been on arterial and collector roads that carry the most traffic.

### **Let us Know**

With that many miles of road to survey, Town staff may not be immediately aware of problem areas. This is why it is so important that residents help identify roads that need some tender loving care. The best way to do this is by using one of our reporting tools.

You can download the Apple Valley Watch app, or simply visit our website at [AppleValley.org](http://AppleValley.org) and click on the "Let Us Know" link at the top of any page.

For a little more on this and other annual stats, please welcome Mayor Pro Tem Scott Nassif.



Peter Drucker taught us that in business “if you can’t measure it, you can’t improve it.”

If you have ever used GPS to get you to your destination, you know this tool shows you the route, mileage, what roads you need to take, and how long it will take you to get there.

Similarly, if you look at the Town’s milestones, you can get an overall picture of where we’ve been, where we are, and where we are headed.

### On-line Reporting Tools

The number of reports we have received through our on-line reporting tool is a good indication of what areas of service we are focused on by request of our residents. In the last fiscal year, we received nearly 1,500 inquiries online. The use of this handy on-line tool is critical to our ability to manage and improve public services.

### Population & Property Taxes

In recent years, our population has steadily increased to more than 73,000, and property taxes have yielded a higher than expected return at 3.6% over the last budget year.

Housing continues slow but steady growth with 84 home starts in the 18-19 budget year. In December, the Town gave the green light for the completion of 96 remaining single-family homes in the Vista Del Sol community in north Apple Valley that will attract buyers seeking Apple Valley’s rural lifestyle and dramatic landscapes.



We are grateful to the builders, investors and real estate professionals who share in our journey to create a thriving community that attracts everything from business...to bears...to Beyoncé!

It’s true!

### Social Media Statistics

Apple Valley is so beautiful that even Beyoncé fell “Crazy in Love” with our “Irreplaceable” landscape at Horsemen’s Center, which was featured prominently in the video production for her song “Spirit” from this year’s Lion King live action movie.



While our Social Media channels are already a robust source of communication, news of the Queen B’s visit spread on Facebook as if royalty had descended upon our town. More than 120,000 people engaged with our post on Beyoncé’s visit, which was covered by ABC7 news; and TMZ called in as well.

This year, we surpassed 15,000 followers on our main Facebook Page and have thousands more engaging on our Shop Local, Animal Services and Recreation pages.

### Animal Services

Another of our most engaging social media posts occurred in June when a bear wandered into town, perching itself in a tree in a residential neighborhood. Animal Services partnered with the California Fish and Wildlife department to safely tranquilize, remove, examine and release the animal back into the wild.

This was just one of more than 5,000 calls for service handled by our Animal Services Officers in the last year. The shelter saw nearly 40,000 people walk through its doors seeking assistance with everything from pet-adoptions and exams, to micro-chipping and vaccines. Many of which will be offered at our upcoming Paws N' Claws Pet Fair on October 19.



And here are a few more Animal Services facts.

In the last year, Animal Services staff has facilitated over 1,000 dog adoptions and more than 500 cat adoptions. Our technicians have administered more than 6,500 vaccines, examined 5,300 animals and microchipped 1,600 pets.

We also partnered with local veterinarians to provide low-cost services for our residents. While Councilman Bishop comes up to talk to us about some new developments, let's take a look at this short video on our shelter's vaccine clinics.

*<Vaccine Clinic Video>*



Will Rogers said, “Even if you're on the right path, you'll get run over if you just sit there.”

### Development

Well, Apple Valley certainly isn't sitting still!

New and expanding businesses in Apple Valley are creating jobs, offering up new places to dine and shop, and investing in our community by keeping capital and operating expenses local. They also pay impact fees and sales taxes, which fund essential services for our residents.

### Big Lots Distribution Center

For example, take the new Big Lots Distribution Center. It will employ up to 500 people once fully operational in late 2019. And, upon completion, Big Lots will have contributed more than \$800,000 in school impact fees to Apple Valley Unified School District to develop future school sites and more than \$130,000 to the Apple Valley Fire Protection District.

They also partnered with the Town to improve Navajo Road and pave La Fayette Road. It is easy to see that Big **Lots** has made a Big **Impact** on Apple Valley.

...And more development is coming!

### Corky's Kitchen and Bakery

Corky's Kitchen and Bakery will employ 60 to 80 people to serve their guests at the former Jonnie D's at the corner of Bear Valley and Apple Valley roads. You may have seen remodeling has already begun!



### Chase Bank

Just a few weeks ago, Chase Bank broke ground on a 3,500-square-foot branch office with drive-thru services at the south east corner of Apple Valley and Bear Valley roads.

### Kaiser Clinic

Across the street from Chase Bank in the Jess Ranch Marketplace, Kaiser Permanente opened a medical clinic to serve patients inside the Target store;

### Eye Surgery Center

And Doctor Chandramohan is developing a 2,900-square-foot eye surgery center on Kamana Road.

### Town's End

Also, in development in the village is a Stillhouse and Grill called Town's End. It will feature the High Desert's first handcrafted artisan spirits, made in small batches right here in Apple Valley. The property will also feature a local farmer's market, and a small barbershop.

### **Apple Valley Gateway Center**

Also, in the design phase and seeking tenant interest is Apple Valley's first freeway-frontage commercial center. This is an entitled 10-acre property that will include, 80,000-square-feet of retail, restaurants, and fuel stations, at the northeast corner of I-15 and Dale Evans Parkway.

### **Coffee House**

Caffeine addicts will be pleased to know that a major coffee house is being developed in the Nico Plaza at the southwest corner of Kasota Road and Highway 18, caddy-corner from St. Mary's hospital. The approved project has an additional 1,300 square feet of space for a quick service restaurant.



### **Awake Juice Bar**

And if coffee isn't your thing, you should check out the new Awake Juice Bar. Located near 24-Hour Fitness in Jess Ranch Marketplace, they use raw, healthy and organic ingredients to create cold-pressed juices, salads, and bowls.

### **Tractor Supply Company**

Also new this year was Tractor Supply Company. This purpose-built store on the corner of Bear Valley Road and Braeburn has done a booming business since opening in May. Tractor Supply Company was one of our recent Shop Local features. In fact, let's take a look at it right now while Council Member Kari Leon comes up to tell you about our public services and amenities.

*<Tractor Supply Video>*





The sales tax these businesses generate, along with property taxes, fund much needed services to our community, such as our public safety officers.

### Public Safety

This year, the Apple Valley Police Department launched a proactive traffic safety campaign. The increase of traffic citations resulted in a decrease of accidents. In 2017, Apple Valley Police issued more than 1,700 traffic citations and reported 731 accidents. In 2018, the number of traffic citations increased to more than 3,000, and accidents decreased to 528.

This is not a revenue generator for us. The Town doesn't get a cut of these proceeds. The point is, proactive enforcement helps keep Apple Valley residents safe and spares lives. With fewer than 140 accidents reported in the first six months of 2019, it looks like collisions are continuing that downward trend.

We appreciate the work of the Apple Valley Police Department on this proactive traffic safety.



### Events and Recreation

In addition to providing a safe environment for our residents and visitors, we also want to provide a sense of community...a place for recreation...a place to enjoy life, which is why we are so grateful to partner with our local businesses and other agencies to provide fun, free concerts and special events all year long.

We do not want people to only live here. We want them to play here as well, and our business community has rallied to support that effort by contributing to our S.A.V.E. Campaign.

SAVE stands for Support Apple Valley Events –



Support for our 2018-2019 campaign tripled from the previous two years because businesses see the value in bringing our community together for everything from Community Clean Up Days to helping pets find their FUR-Ever home...to enjoying live music at Civic Center Park every Thursday night in the summer.

If you aren't a part of our SAVE community, you should be. You can talk to any of the council members and they will get you in contact with staff.

And if you're curious about what our events and activities bring to the community, here's a portion of a video that we aired at the beginning of summer.

<Special Events video>

It's no wonder Apple Valley has been voted Best Place to Live in the High Desert eight years in a row by readers of The Daily Press.

And we are constantly striving to improve services and amenities to make Apple Valley a Better Way of Life.

Some of these improvements and services aren't visibly noticeable.

### **Customer Service**

For example, led by our Town Manager, staff recently created a customer service statement highlighting their commitment to provide quality attention and service to our residents and customers.



### **RRLP Program**

We expanded our low-income Residential Rehabilitation Loan Program to qualified residents living in multi-family housing.

It offers a 0% interest loan to make health and safety improvements.

### **Accessory Dwelling Units**

In May, we made it easier for families to build an accessory dwelling unit, also known as a granny house, by loosening the size allowance and utility restrictions on these properties.

### **HHW Contract**

Our Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility is now contracted with Burrtec Waste and is now open every Saturday. Here, you can dispose of old paint, medications, electronic waste, and new this year...you can also dispose of tires.

### **Community Enhancement**

With the accessibility of our Household Hazardous Waste program, combined with our free clean-up events, there is no reason for illegal dumping in our beautiful desert.

And now, to talk a little bit about the road ahead, please welcome Council Member Curt Emick.





Lewis Carroll said, “If you don't know where you are going, any road will get you there.”

This quote rings true, especially for my wife, Val, and I, who have been doing some traveling lately. We don't just jump in the car and go. We prefer to have a plan when we set out for any destination or goal...as does the Town.

As Apple Valley sets a course for the future, your Town Council must go through the same careful planning procedures if we are to arrive at our intended destination successfully.

### **Parks & Rec Visioning Workshop**

Take our park and open space infrastructure for example. In June, the Parks and Recreation Commission held a Visioning Workshop to assess what additions, expansions and improvements our community would like to see for our parks.

We received a variety of ideas that we are excited to bring to fruition in the coming years.

We have not detoured from our plan to incorporate the Hilltop House into our park system. You could say the project is sitting at a bit of a rest stop while we explore funding options, but we look forward to the project gaining momentum down the road.

We have members of our Parks and Recreation Commission with us in the audience. Please stand and be recognized.

Thank you for attending today.

### **Homeless Workshop**

We are also exploring the impacts of the homeless issue in Apple Valley. Next month, on September 9<sup>th</sup>, I invite you to join me here in the Conference Center from 9 a.m. to noon for a collaborative workshop with professionals, community leaders, non-profits, concerned citizens and the faith community to brainstorm ways that we can tackle this issue and develop strategies that will lead to positive change.

Bring your pen, paper and ideas as we participate in an open dialogue. You can RSVP with the Town Clerk's office.

### **High Quality Staff**

Implementing change and maintaining our current facilities takes dedicated staff. Fortunately, Apple Valley employees put their heart and soul into the work they do. Like Grounds Service Worker Andy Paul who was recently featured in a video on Apple Valley TV.

[\*< Show Andy Paul "We Serve" Video >\*](#)



### Joint Council and Development Committee Meeting

Changes are also coming to the Development Code thanks to a joint meeting held between the Town Council and the Planning Commission in May. That meeting resulted in a long list of action items staff is implementing to make our development process more flexible.



These changes will make it easier for businesses to gain compliance while maintaining Apple Valley's high-quality standards as we grow. We have some of our Planning Commissioners here today. Please stand up to be recognized.

Thank you for attending today.

### Water Acquisition Update

We are also on course for the acquisition of the water system.

Beginning September 30, we will be defending our right to acquire the Liberty Utilities Water System by eminent domain. The trial by judge will be conducted in San Bernardino County Superior Court and may last a couple of months.

The legal question before the judge is whether the Town's proposed acquisition and operation of the Water System is in the public interest.

Liberty Utilities is challenging this presumption and will have the burden of disproving it. If the judge determines that the Town has the right to acquire the Water System, there will be a subsequent trial on the amount to be paid for the acquisition which will go before a jury at a later date.

Now, let's welcome Mayor Cusack back up here to wrap up this year's address.

## Larry Cusack - Conclusion

As you can tell, we have a lot going on in the Town of Apple Valley.

### PEG Channel

We invite you to keep up to date on all the news and activities that make Apple Valley a premier High Desert destination by following us on Facebook, visiting our website or subscribing to our new monthly E-newsletter, a condensed version of our award-winning Our Town newsletter.



### Staff Thank You

At this time, I'd like to thank Town Manager Doug Robertson....please stand and be recognized....and any Town Staff in attendance please stand. On behalf of the council we all thank you for your hard work and dedication in helping us serve the residents and businesses of Apple Valley.

### Chamber Thank You

I would also like to thank the Apple Valley Chamber of Commerce President Janice Moore, and the Chamber State of the Town Committee members Sabrina Schneider, Jacqueline Eldridge, and Bob Tinsley.

### Closing

I would like to thank my colleagues on the Town Council for taking part in today's State of the Town presentation. It is a pleasure to work alongside all of you on this journey to provide A Better Way of Life in Apple Valley.

<End of Presentation>

