



State of the County 2010
Mayor Peter M. Corroon
State of the County Address
January 5, 2009

Mr. Chair, members of the County Council, elected officials, County employees, citizens: Good morning.

I am **honored** once again to report on the state of Salt Lake County. I am pleased to report that Salt Lake County is still standing! Despite some bumps and bruises, our County is leaner, more focused to the needs of our constituents, and standing on solid financial ground.

Make no mistake, 2009 was a very difficult year, possibly the most challenging experienced in any of our lifetimes.

But our government is still financially sound as represented by the reaffirmation of our AAA bond ratings from all three rating agencies and the upgraded ratings for our MBA bonds.

The rating agencies have endorsed our conservative fiscal policies and receiving these bond ratings sets this county apart as an organization that can weather financial storms; and it saves taxpayers' money in the long-run.

We are one of two-dozen out of over 3,000 counties in the United States to receive this distinction.

I am proud to say that we have all worked together so that Salt Lake County is on a solid fiscal foundation.

and I would like to thank our Auditor, Jeff Hatch, our Chief Financial Officer, Darren Casper, and each of you on the County Council for your partnership in implementing these policies.

As you know, we had to make some tough choices in 2009.

We made choices that share the burden of the economic downturn:

- We implemented the **largest** budget reduction in the history of Salt Lake County.
- We made the **tough** and **unpopular** decision to cut employee salaries and benefits.
- We **reduced** our workforce by 300 FTE's while minimizing layoffs.
- And, in response to a **collapse** in sales tax revenues, **we shifted** debt service payments from sales tax to property tax **and** we are joining many of our neighboring cities by asking residents to pay for police services based on usage.

We made these decisions because they were fiscally responsible and still protect vital services like public safety and services to our seniors and youth.

We have responded to these extraordinary challenges with extraordinary accomplishments. We focused on our priorities and made difficult choices in order to ensure the strength of our government.

While we still have a long way to go to economic recovery, there are positive signs all over this valley that recovery is beginning.

I like to say that it's always a good day when I have mud on my shoes; it means someone is building something in Salt Lake County. Based on the significant amount of time over the last several months I spent at groundbreaking and the mud I had on my shoes, things are getting better.

Meanwhile as businesses and individuals slowly help us climb our way to economic recovery, Salt Lake County has been marching forward.

Four thousand County employees went about the quiet work of providing services to the people of Salt Lake County.

These men and women took on the challenges of H1N1, cleaned up neighborhoods, **and** preserved the safety of our citizens.

These men and women paved roads and prosecuted criminals, and registered voters.

And, these men and women mentored teens, assisted seniors and aided small business owners.

As I have said many times before, our successes would not be possible without the hard work and dedication of our **employees, volunteers, and citizens.**

I would like to highlight some of the accomplishments that were **quietly** made in 2009.

Our core services center around improving the quality of our government, growing economic development, protecting our natural environment, bettering our quality of life, increasing public safety and providing better education for learners of all ages.

As part of our efforts to bring new jobs, our Economic Development team led by Dale Carpenter has provided resources needed to support business growth throughout Salt Lake County.

We have done this by financing small businesses, helping businesses find incentives, providing education, training, and networking opportunities, and acting as advocates for business development and expansion.

Salt Lake County's UPGRADE Small Business program partnered with SBA/SCORE to provide many daylong training sessions for over 300 small business owners during 2009.

Arterial Insight Inc. is an example of a Small Business helped recently by Salt Lake County's UPGRADE and Revolving Loan Program. With our help the Company has added 20 full-time jobs, \$1.2 million in new revenue and is now listed among the "Utah 100" fastest growing small businesses.

I am especially proud of this accomplishment because small businesses are the backbone of our economy. We need to encourage entrepreneurship. That keeps Main Street strong and keeps our young people here.

In addition, we located new businesses in Magna, Millcreek, and Kearns through redevelopment project areas and targeted marketing.

You may recall that five years ago, downtown Magna was losing businesses and buildings were left vacant. Today, Magna Main Street is a great example of how hard work and community involvement can begin the revitalization of an entire community.

We are also working with the Salt Lake Convention and Visitors Bureau to bring major events to the County. Last summer, the Calvin L. Rampton Salt Palace was host to the World Education Conference for Meeting Professionals International.

MPI members collectively account for over \$14 billion dollars spent on meeting every year and by hosting them in Salt Lake we have increased our chances of landing more of those meeting dollars.

Economic Development is important because it helps pay for our essential government programs like public safety.

As public safety is one of our highest priorities, we dedicated much time and resources to this effort. Our aim is to make Salt Lake County one of the safest urban communities in the United States. This year we saw significant progress towards this goal.

As the culmination of 15 years of preparation and planning, four days ago, the Unified Police Department became operational.

For the first time in their history, the cities of Bluffdale, Herriman, Holladay and Riverton will have full and equal voice in policing services in their communities. Great credit goes to former Sheriff Aaron Kennard, current Sheriff Jim Winder, and each of you on the County Council as well as Mayors Dennis Webb of Holladay, Mayor Russ Wall of Taylorsville, and former Mayors Lynn Crane of Herriman and Claudia Anderson of Bluffdale.

Their combined efforts have brought about stronger, more efficient law enforcement services to our County. In fact, law enforcement services will cost 6.1% **less** than they did in 2009.

I am proud of every one of our patrol officers. I thank them for their service as Sheriff's Deputies and I am grateful that they now protect our County as members of the UPD.

In 2009, we also enhanced public safety by reopening Oxbow Jail to prevent early releases from the Adult Detention Center, and making alternatives to incarceration a reality. We also completed the computer-aided transfer of information between our Valley Emergency Communication Center (which dispatches emergency calls) and the Sheriff's Office (which responds). This will save time and save lives.

I would like to thank Sheriff Winder and District Attorney Lohra Miller for their dedication to improving public safety in Salt Lake County. Our crime rate continues to drop and I believe that we are making strides in the right direction.

Living in a safe community is one of the most important aspects to a **great quality of life**.

Salt Lake County also enhanced the **quality of life** of our residents through our world-class arts venues, education at Clark Planetarium and entertainment at our parks and recreational facilities. Last year we had over 4.8 million visits to our County parks, golf courses, and rec centers.

At the same time, we have used Zoo, Arts, and Parks funding to begin construction of and improvements on several projects to meet the increasing demand for recreation services.

Construction has begun on the 107,000 square foot J.L. Sorenson Recreation Center in Herriman. This exciting facility is being built at the heart of the new Herriman City center and will serve residents in Herriman, Bluffdale and Riverton.

At the other end of the County, construction on the Northwest Recreation Center is nearly complete. The new facility will provide northwest residents with expanded recreation opportunities and drop-in child care.

The existing Northwest Community Center building received upgrades and will continue to house the Northwest Daycare, Senior Center, Food Bank and community multi-purpose spaces.

These projects and ZAP funded renovations to the Copperview, Kearns, and Central City Recreation Centers all have two things in common: One, they improve our quality of life and improve our health; Two, they put more people to work in good construction jobs.

These projects will have long-term benefits for our citizens.

I am proud of the role Salt Lake County has played in investing in our future.

If we want safe communities, cleaner skies and improved roads; we must invest to improve our infrastructure and protect the public and the **environment**.

Salt Lake County continues to be a leader in protecting our natural environment so that we can have cleaner air and water.

Through our conservation and recycling efforts,

- 119,000 trees were saved
- 2,660,000 gallons of oil were saved
- 21,000 cubic yards of landfill saved
- 28,000,000 kilowatts of energy saved
- And Water savings and energy savings are off the charts

Beyond our many efforts to bring common sense solutions to energy and air quality challenges, Salt Lake County is embarking on an Urban Farming Initiative that will literally bring new life to County lands currently lying barren. In particular, I would like to thank Councilman Jim Bradley for his leadership on this project and Julie Peck-Dabbling for overseeing the initiative.

In even the most challenging of times, the most valuable commodity is **knowledge**. Salt Lake County Library Services was recognized as one of the five most efficient and effective of the Nation's largest library systems.

The Library System set **five** all-time records in 2009:

- A record 4.5 million library visits
- Over 15 million items checked out
- Additionally, the system broke records for the number of items placed on hold, for computer use and program attendance.

In addition, the Sandy, Riverton, Taylorsville and Kearns Libraries underwent significant remodels, improving efficiency and addressing pressing infrastructure needs.

And, new library building projects in Magna, East Millcreek, Herriman and West Jordan are underway.

We have continued to provide educational opportunities for youth with two new afterschool programs at Kearns and Kennedy Jr. High Schools.

We also use the Planetarium Astrovan program to educate students about space and science.

(PAUSE)

From junior high gyms in Holladay, to people on Magna's Main Street; from our communities in White City and Willow Creek to locally owned businesses at 9th and 9th I've met citizens who are **deeply concerned** about their future; and their kids' futures; and their grandkids' futures.

I share those concerns. But, together we will forge a path to find common sense solutions to our challenges.

We are going to implement the lessons learned from 2009 and build on our model of smaller, more flexible County government. Focused on getting our core services right.

We will find ways to ensure that taxpayer dollars are spent wisely.

In addition to maintaining strong fiscal accountability, we will continue our leadership on the issue that matter most to County residents.

We have set ambitious and visionary goals and made them the standard and we will continue to do so this year.

2010 PRIORITIES

In 2010, we will continue to focus on:

1. Quality Government by improving how we do business. For example, our Planning and Development Services is undergoing a complete reassessment of how it does business.

We have also placed our townships in the driver's seat of their long-range planning through the Millcreek, Kearns, and Magna General Plans. These plans will give the townships the power to set their own priorities and update them each year.

And, we will continue to collaborate with the 16 cities in Salt Lake County through the Cooperative County Plan. This ongoing process brings planning and political leaders from each of our cities and the County together to make long-range planning decisions that will determine how we grow over the next several decades.

2. We will focus on **Economic Development** through redevelopment projects in areas of Millcreek and Magna, and collaborating with other governmental and private agencies to bring new jobs to Salt Lake County.

We will also work with other government entities to continue the implementation of Foreign Trade Zones and Tech Parks to keep high-paying technology jobs **here at home**.

3. We will increase our **Quality of Life** by completing new parks, recreation centers, senior centers and libraries. We will work with our municipal partners to bring increased art and cultural opportunities to our residents.

4. We will protect our **Natural Environment** by continuing conservation measures and working to make renewable energy more affordable and more accessible.

Earlier this year, we learned that Salt Lake has been chosen to host the 2010 Solar America Cities Annual Meeting in April. This is a direct result of the strong effort that Salt Lake County has made in developing Solar resources this year.

The County is planning an 800 kW solar PV installation on four County facilities in 2010. Just to compare: In 2008 only 200 kW of new solar PV installation was reported in the entire state of Utah; we plan 4 times that much this year.

Salt Lake County is also working to create an Energy Improvement Property Assessment Program (EIPA) so homeowners can make voluntary **energy efficiency** and **renewable energy** improvements to their homes. We believe this program will help stimulate the economy, save homeowners' energy **and** money, and increase the value of Utah homes.

Salt Lake County will also continue to oppose the importation and disposal of foreign or high-level nuclear waste into our state.

5. We will focus on **Public Safety** by completing our Information Justice Integration System and continuing efforts to coordinate Emergency Operations valley-wide.

6. We will focus on **Education** by opening a new after-school program in Magna.

(PAUSE)

In our government we have four thousand county employees, each providing dedicated service to the people of this County. Each of them brings their own set of talents and experiences to work every day. Once again we are asking them to do more with less. I thank them today for their service as they quietly touch people's lives in countless ways.

I believe our greatest accomplishment in 2009 was to find the true focus of what Salt Lake County is about: "Together we are growing a better place to live and work."

With this focus, our model of smart, smaller government and our community partnerships, we will continue to move Salt Lake County forward and in the right direction.

As I've said many, many times, I love this job and appreciate our workforce and our great citizens of Salt Lake County.

Thank you.