

2017 State of the City Address

By

Richard D. O'Brien
Mayor of Riverbank

Good evening. I want to thank you for being here tonight. It is always a great honor and a pleasure to present the state of the city especially to such an intelligent group of civic minded citizens. Thank you and to all who participates in the many different aspects for our city. From Authority Members, Planning Commissioners, Fire Boards directors, Advisory Committee, Representatives to the various groups and organizations that help develop policies and they in turn protect Riverbank's interests.

Local elected officials have contributed greatly to our community – Congressman Denham direct involvement with Caltrans solved an access issue along Hwy 108. He is working directly with the City and the Army to resolve ownership issues at the Riverbank Industrial Complex. His staff are also working with us and BNSF to resolve easement issues along Patterson Road. Resolution of these two issues will be a great benefit to our city.

Senator Galgiani has continued in her efforts to bring some sanity to the states mandates and water grab. We are not lost on the true intent of the Water Board mandate for increase flows down our rivers and the Senator is standing by us in our fight.

We say farewell to Supervisor Bill O'Brien whose leadership and skills has made a positive difference in our region, county and our city. His 18 years of leadership has provided a common sense approach to the complexities of the federal and state regulations. We welcome Supervisor Kristin Olsen who will continue in the same vein as Bill. Kristin provided superb leadership over the last six years while in the assembly and we look forward to her leadership in the county. Welcome.

We welcome Heath Flora as our new Assemblymember.

We say Goodbye to Councilmember Jeanine Tucker whose dedication and council helped all to understand the issues and attain solutions that minimizes unintended consequences. We welcome Councilmember Cindy Fosi to the dais and all of your Councilmembers have the best interest of the City whether they are on or off the dais.

We said goodbye to Ms. Jill Anderson and welcomed Mr. Sean Scully to lead our team of the most dedicated, resourceful and skilled staff. There was a lot of need for patient and calm while transiting systems and the staff performed brilliantly. I also commend the public on their understanding on the transitions especially those whose water bill was in excess of 100k,

Our Legal Team of Churchwell White continues with their sage advice steering us clear of legal quagmire by providing clear analysis of pending and enacted legislation, and staying focused on protecting the city. At this point in time there are no outstanding law suits for or against the City.

We have been very successful in retaining those contractors of the highest integrity such as our City Engineer Bill Kull, Traffic Management expert Ken Anderson and our Contract Planner John Anderson who are solving issues and actively involved with our annexation strategy, transportation issues and complete streets. All of our contractors are well respected throughout the region and they are integral to the city's wellbeing.

We have a great group of non-profit and faith based community religious leaders, our Riverbank Unified School District and Community Service organization that augment many of the City functions. We all have one cause – the betterment of our great city. I applaud and personally thank all of you.

Historic Drought

The drought continued during last year even though we received higher than average rain fall - our Sierra snowpack was less then desired.

Since the end of 2012 our efforts to conserve water continued to be successful despite some reports – the state set Riverbank goal to reduce average water consumption by 20% from our 2010 Urban Water Management Program. In 2016 we exceeded the state mandated goal and currently are at 28% conservancy from our 2010 Plan. The City's goal is to be at 38% by 2020. While this year's rainfall and snowfall may end this drought we realize that California is never far away from the next drought.

To meet our goals of water use reductions there are many steps that can be made by home owners and property owners. Drip irrigation systems can be installed, artificial turf if green is your favorite color, gray water systems for the home and rain water catch system can be installed for very little monthly cost. We are a HERO community and I encourage all property owners to use this program to save cost and resources. Repayments of loans for these improvements are made through your property taxes over a 20 year period.

We have reviewed our water policy to reflect appropriate management measures. Although many feel that their lawns need to be water three – to – four times a week to be green – lawns can stay green with weekly watering during the summers but we allow for a twice weekly watering.

We have installed Smart Water Meters throughout the city and residences will be able to view their usage very soon. These meters are now saving over 2200 hours of meter reading time to allow more concentrated effort in repairs and maintenance in the areas of greatest needs. We are restoring sections of neglect to fully operational systems.

We continue to look for ways to capture all the water possible for continued reuse. We are looking at systems that will clarify the waste water so it can be used for agriculture or other non-potable water use. Our goal is to reuse all of our water.

We are developing a regional storm water storage system which will take most of the storm water runoff and recharge the Aquafer. Our vision is to have a total system that can pipe water from one area to another while using additional lateral drainage systems to augment our basins capacities.

The bottom line is that we will conserve our water resources and we must keep a close eye on the Water Resource Board attempt to increase flows down the Tuolumne, Stanislaus, San Joaquin. The true intent is not to save the fish, it is to keep Southern California green. Their goal is to divert the Sacramento River from flowing into the delta by using the tunnel system. To replenish the amount diverted requires equal amount of water to flow in to protect the Delta. If our flow of water down our rivers is increased 40% during times that should be filling our reservoirs much of the farmland will be denied the needed surface water which in turn will require increased pumping from the aquafer. The aquafer will then become overburdened. If this should happen I believe the State will then manage the aquafer and we all will suffer. Small farms will not be able to afford the State Requirements and an increase in Corporate Farming will take place.

Public Safety

The law of elasticity proved too much for the RPS to continue to decrease their response times for service. While the City of Riverbank enjoys a relatively safe atmosphere, there are many that live without the standard rules of our society. Realignment and prop 47 have almost given permission to break the law. In some surrounding cities, police do not come when called for a violation to property or trespassing are involved. Many of those individuals who violate these laws believe it is permissive in Riverbank. But it is not.

In 2016, Riverbank Police Services handled approximately 14,000 calls, made over 450 arrests. Many weapons and drugs were seized and much stolen property recovered as a result of these arrests.

Despite having one of the lowest staffing ratios in the county and a consistent number of annual calls for service, over the past few years Riverbank Police Services Patrol Deputies have consistently provide a much higher response still averaging below 3 mins 35 secs.

Riverbank Police Services realizes that as our challenges are much greater and difficult to contain.

Our continued successes as a community are largely dependent upon timely and effective communication and its resulting response. Riverbank Police Services continued use of Nextdoor.com and Facebook which are fantastic tools in pushing information out to the public. They have used it in matters ranging from; solving armed robberies, to simply pushing out informational bulletins advising about the latest scams. They will continue to use this medium when it comes to information exchange.

While there are many wrongful activities that are not considered dangerous, violent, or predatory, I urge our state legislators to help put the term Criminal back into criminal acts. There has to be consequences for behavior that violates the rights, property and safety of our citizens. There are several initiatives that can be bipartisan and substantive being discussed now – let's not let this opportunity slip by.

Our Police Services will continue to invest in technology as this is a sound solution to sustaining productivity when challenged by staffing shortages. Riverbank Police Services was able to secure a \$62,700 grant for the city from the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. With those funds the Riverbank Police Services secured 3 'Zero' electric motorcycles which are environmentally friendly, stealthy and have very low operating and annual maintenance costs associated with them when compared to traditional, combustion engine motorcycles. The Zero's will be used primarily for traffic enforcement, however they will also be utilized for proactive patrols in our parks, alleys, business complexes and residential areas. While they are stealthy they don't have a vroom vroom factor.

We all have compassion for our fellow human beings and that compassion extends to concerns for the health and wellbeing for those in need. The homeless and homelessness is being addressed by this community. There are activities that can help the homeless on an institutional and individual level. But there are realities in that the City of Riverbank does not have the ability to tend to the needs of homeless individuals and homelessness. Facilities in Riverbank do not exist-and institutions and individuals tending to the wants of homeless are not necessarily providing the best tools to end homelessness. Our community will be asking the county to provide services during community events that will involve those at risk of becoming homeless and those who are homeless.

Passive panhandling may be considered a form of free speech and should be conducted in a safe and non-obstructive manner.

Aggressive panhandling can be frightening to shoppers and passers-by and should not be visited upon our citizens. Panhandlers are now knocking on doors asking for money. We will not allow panhandlers to accost individuals and to interfere with people's activities.

Urban camping is becoming a sanitary concern and this activity should be abolished within our city limits. Public defecation and urination should not be tolerated and should be considered illegal. If the individual is not of sound mind we will direct them to institutions that can help them with counselling and provide medical treatment.

Loitering on sidewalks interferes with pedestrian traffic. Sitting on, sleeping on sidewalks should be prohibited.

Reports from our citizens indicates-homeless are walking the streets. That in its self is not a crime. However, going through unlocked cars or taking property is illegal and will be addressed.

We must also address the activities from those residents of Care Home Facilities that are unsafe or illegal. Over the last few years, residents from Care Homes in Riverbank were wandering in the streets and have been struck by vehicles. These collisions have resulted in serious injury or death. While wandering in an alley one care home resident murdered another. Care Home

Providers must be accountable for those entrusted in their care. While I am not an expert in this system I do know some of you have been awakened with knocks on your door or people from these facilities coming into your home for a visit. I ask our legislators to update the regulations for these facilities, provide clearer guidelines, and provide boundaries for providers and law enforcement to protect the community while providing the proper care to those residing in Care Homes. Because after all, helping to ensure basic safety should factor into the act of care-taking.

Californians believe we are smarter and wiser than everyone else. The passing of prop 64 – the AUMA (adult Use of Marijuana Act) - recreational use of marijuana will, proponents believe, have very few impacts because we are more responsible. In the real world the selling and growing of marijuana will consume a large portion of our activities this year as we weigh the impending impacts on our community and how to best mitigate them. The state will be taxing the substance @ 15% and the county is coming up with a plan to tax an additional 15% with a “to be determined” split between the county and cities. Code enforcement must be reinforced to be proactive for the safety and security of the neighbors, parks, and monitor indoor marijuana grows so they remain safe and legal. Any revenue for the cities from the sale of marijuana will be quickly absorbed due to the consequences of this proposition.

Riverbank needs the help of all to address the activities that are illegal. We need to find the revenue to fully fund our police services, code enforcement and staff so that they can provide additional eyes on our community without being invasive. I am asking this City Council and the City Manager to come up with an additional funding source that will meet our complete needs in safety. I want this added to our strategic goals and presented for consideration by October this year.

City Activities

Last year, the City held a Memorial Day Observance. The first in over seven years and it will remain an annual observance.

People are visiting our parks and participating in recreational programs in record numbers. Parks and Recreation opened the additional overflow parking lot at Jacob Myers Park and installed additional picnic areas in the back section of the park. Gazebo activities have significantly increased and controls were placed in order to coordinate access.

Increased usage of the sports complex was realized by partnering with AYSO (American Youth Soccer Organization) in efforts to increase soccer programs in Riverbank. We submitted a grant proposal of \$1,000,000 for the development of an artificial soccer field to be constructed at our sports complex.

Our 40th Annual Cheese and Wine Exposition was a success and will continue for at least the next few years.

Strategic Financial Planning

We conducted our annual Financial Review where again, we looked out to the next five years identifying our revenue sources and obligations. We analyzed the threats to our income as well as our opportunities to increase revenue streams.

Our Assistant City Manager/Director of Finance identified a number of additional concerns that are playing a role in our fiscal balance; and continues to be concerns in the following two areas:

- 1) Just two weeks ago, the Governor said the R word. If the discussions of a recession within a few years is realized it will significantly affect the City's revenue with a possible decrease of sales tax by almost 7% or approximately \$200,000 to the general fund.
- 2) PERS Retirement costs will continue to increase significantly in the upcoming years. We are currently paying an additional \$280,000 in unfunded liabilities to Calpers and their recent investments are reported to be less successful than anticipated which lowers our discount rates reduced to 7% meaning an additional increase in contributions is expected of the general fund.

A large percentage of the General Fund is used for salaries, benefits, and CalPers management practices. The City's Reserve is the remaining funds available after obligations and designated towards emergencies and one-time strategic expenditures. It is in the City Council's purview to accept a low reserve level but at some point will need to replenish this reserve given the anticipated deficits in future fiscal years and especially if a recession is to occur. Part of the discussion with this Council will include a decision on capital expenditures and alternative funding possibilities.

Riverbank Industrial Complex

There are many changes in the Riverbank Industrial Complex that support building local business capacity and fostering economic development.

An environmental services cooperative agreement (or ESCA II) was awarded by the US EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) that allows the removal of roofs and siding on most of the original production buildings due to trace contaminants. This \$39.5m+ project will change the look and feel of the old facility, will utilize many local companies and employ some 50 people over the next several years.

We are reaching out to other communities and brining in their businesses. Recently we Received \$900,000 grant from Housing and Community Development for economic improvement and in support of moving a company from Colorado to Riverbank.

We are successfully managing a \$21M budget and have a \$3M reserve for capital improvements.

There is an area of the Industrial Complex that needs to be highlighted.

The Federal Governments namely Department of the Army - BRAC and the Army Corps of Engineering cannot discuss, communicate nor cooperate with themselves and solve the issues surrounding the conveyance of the property. It is now seven years of promises, almost there, maybe soon and still we are no closer to the MOA (Memorandum of Agreement) than seven years ago. Thousands of man hours have been uselessly wasted on our end. Combine that with the Army wasted man-hours and it is disappointing. I have asked that our Congressional Representative to intervene and the closest his has been able to achieve is pushback. Just recently, Congressman Denham has agreed to intervene and in less than two weeks he will be meeting with the decisions makers and I believe resolution is much closer.

The City will take possession of the property six months after the MOA is signed. At that time all operations and debts will be the City's responsibility. It is imperative we take possession of the Riverbank Industrial Complex soon. There are two companies that want to build large plants at the Riverbank Industrial Complex that will employ many of our residences.

Annexation Strategy

Over the next year our annexation strategy will be brought before LAFCO. We are anticipating the North County Corridor will affect the Riverbank Industrial Complex and requires careful consideration to circulation issues. The North County Corridor will have an urban interchange at Eleanor which will open up many possibilities for the east side of Riverbank.

As we build to the west we are working closely with Consolidated Fire District to construct an additional fire station that will lower the response times and continue to provide the best in services to our community.

Over the last four years we have updated our planning documents and Nexus fees structure so we could grow when the timing is right. All the surrounding cities are struggling to attract new growth and commercial development. Riverbank is the only place that is accomplishing expansion. Our sphere of influence expansion was approved by LAFCO this last July. We have over 300 permits or plans for new housing construction that have been pulled. Additionally, Riverbank Central Apartments (Pacific West) – 72 units of affordable housing is under construction and should be occupied in April. Additional housing developments on the east side are planned and several are under construction.

Horizons Medical Group – improvements are complete and awaiting the grand opening. The Del Rio Theater was sold and the Planning Commission approved the Site Plan Review. Del Rio Offices (Reeds Garage) – was demolished and plans are being reviewed for 2 – 2,500 square foot office buildings. The Galaxy IMAX was completed in March 2016. Riverbank Hotel – Sold and an internal Demolition Permit was issued. The Crossroads West Specific Plan is completed and the EIR (Environmental Impact Reports) is being conducted. This project will virtually double our retail and add an additional residential neighborhood.

Finalized ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) Transition Plan was Formalized, a Community Facilities District (CFD) was formed in all undeveloped areas within Riverbank and that will

ensure all future development will pay for all needed services, we Removed Ash Trees and repaired sidewalk along Crawford Road. Replaced irrigation with Techline and landscaped with drought tolerant plants and trees.

Completed Slurry Seal Project, which consisted of 79 roads. Adopted the City's Expenditure Plan Project list for local streets and roads, traffic management, and bike and pedestrian improvement project.

Measure L passed @ 71.5%. I thank all that approved this measure and it will have a positive impact on our streets and roads. Many of our project cost will not only be absorbed by the sales tax but additional funding from state and federal programs can make these projects the highest of quality. Our roads, sidewalks, bike/pedestrian paths plans will become reality. We are actively seeking a Resident of Riverbank to participate in the Measure L Oversight Committee to ensure we do what the measure is designed to do.

I have pointed out what we are doing – with great pride. There are areas that still need attention, work and yes money. I chose this community center for the SOC to highlight the needs for updating - updating that was needed long ago but there are no funding to do so. Our staff – namely Sue Fitzpatrick – has looking at OPM (other peoples money) – to upgrade this facility, pool, parks, city hall (well the buildings of city hall) Scout Hall and the many other buildings in need of work. She has been successful in that these buildings are still standing. She is close to securing funds for the improvement of some of these projects and we have plans for the improvements for the remaining.

WHAT TO EXPECT

These next few years we will increase our use of social media. We will use youtube as instructional videos on interface with smart devices and water meters and many other functions. We will continue to push information out to you on safety related matters.

Over the next few years we will remain vigilant and defend our rights as a community from the State grab of funds, water or any other undue burden that does not provide a clear benefit to this community and build a place we can be extremely proud.

We will continue to provide the best in our parks and activities for our youth to enjoy so they can grow in a safe environment. We will seek funding to improve existing facilities.

We will identify new sources of revenue to complete the staffing of our police force - to establish and maintain a full 10% general fund reserve and - to fully staff the city requirements in the Planning department, Human Resources, Economic Development, Code Enforcement, and in Parks and Recreation

We will continue with quality developments and forming partnerships with businesses locating in the Riverbank Industrial Complex.

We will continue to develop communications with commercial property owners who have vacant buildings or parcels in our City to facilitate discussions regarding future use or reuse.

You can see that there is a vision for our future as we continue to move forward in planning, development, and improvements. Our city is strong because of YOU and those protecting our City interest – All of us who work together so we can succeed! –Thank you and good night.