

Mayor Phil Goode Letter for February 1, 2023

Prescott State of the City - 2023

Recently I presented the State of the City address to business leaders at the Prescott Chamber of Commerce Annual meeting. As I stated in my presentation, the state of the City is strong. Here are some of the highlights from my presentation.

We have a new Mayor Pro Tem Brandon Montoya. I wish to thank Cathey Rusing for her service in this role during the past year, and I look forward to working with Mr. Montoya in this capacity. As you know we welcome Connie Cantelme as new council person, filling the role of Jessica Hall who resigned in 2022. Sadly, we also said goodbye to Councilwoman Billie Orr who passed away in January. We offer our condolences to her family and many friends.

The search is underway for a new City Manager. After six years, Michael Lamar announced his resignation as of February 14. Tyler Goodman was named interim City Manager while the City conducts a national search for Mr. Lamar's replacement. We wish Mr. Lamar well, and look forward to working with Tyler as we search for a permanent replacement.

The spirit of service is alive and well in Prescott. The City has 28 Boards and commissions of which seven have openings for the coming year. The City received 78 total applications from interested citizens. Three important commissions that will be working this year include the Water Policy Review Commission, the Charter Amendment Review Commission, and the General Plan Review Commission. Each of these commissions, along with the other Boards and Commissions of the City will play an important role in shaping City policy and actions in the year ahead. The newly appointed members will begin in March.

The overall financial health of the City remains very strong. Taxable activity and bed tax collections continued to see year over year increases, as of the latest reports. The .75% sales tax to pay down the Public Safety Retirement System unfunded liability has done its job. After just five years, the City's liability went down from \$86 million to about \$1.5 million. Therefore we were able to end the tax on January 1, bringing Prescott's overall sale tax rate down to 8.35%, the lowest in the area.

Prescott Regional Airport continues to be a focus for the City. Prescott Regional Airport has been consistently in the top 25 busiest airports in the nation. We will continue to work to encourage industrial and commercial uses around the airport, and make sure that residential development is located in appropriate areas, well away from potential impact zones and noise contours. We are also working toward the proposed runway expansion, to allow more effective operations at the airport.

Public safety infrastructure is a priority for the years ahead. We are taking a data-driven approach, to make sure we are placing resources in appropriate locations, to meet the demands of today and tomorrow. We are also taking a proactive approach to recruitment and retention of our public safety personnel, to ensure they are well staffed and ready to meet the needs of our growing city.

The city's revised water policy has been in place since spring of 2022. The revised policy is designed to appropriately manage water use and moderate impacts on our water portfolio. Council recently reaffirmed the policy for the next six months. Looking ahead, the Water Policy Review Commission will discuss the procedure for appeals when a development exceeds the allocation limit, then Council will decide how to proceed in those situations

I will close with a few exciting updates about commercial development. In late 2022 FedEx opened their 200,000 square foot Ground and Express facility near the airport. In the past two years, there have been 28 commercial industrial parcels acquired, with another 15 in escrow. Espire Sports opened a sports complex, centered around pickleball, at the former Sears location at Prescott Gateway Mall. Speaking of the mall, recently a new owner took possession of the mall. He will invest a great deal to restore and repair the facility, then will work to bring quality retailers, restaurants and entertainment venues back for our community to enjoy.