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Welcome

Good afternoon everyone and thank you all for being here today. On behalf of our City Council, employees, and staff, I want to welcome everyone to our State of Turlock address. I am pleased to recognize my Council Colleagues here today:

1. Cassandra Abram District 3
2. Pam Franco Vice Mayor - District 4
3. Rebecka Monez – District 2

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all the elected officials and dignitaries Ron has mentioned earlier for attending today's State of Turlock Address. I especially want to thank Congressman John Duarte for returning to Turlock today to update us on what Congress is doing in Washington, D.C., to improve our lives.

It is wonderful to see so many Turlock residents, business leaders, educators, and city staff gathered here today to hear about last year's accomplishments and to learn about the City Council's initiatives and our vision for Turlock's future.

HUMAN RELATIONS

Last year Council approved 435 budgeted positions. Our Human Relations Division reviewed over 3,800 applications to fill these positions. As a result, we hired eighty new employees, leaving us with only fifty-five vacancies. To familiarize new City employees and Turlock stakeholders with various city services and departments, our HR division now arranges bus tours which have been well received by our community.

City Manager Wilson's executive team continues to deliver city services efficiently, effectively and within budget. New additions to his team include appointments of:

1. Chris Fisher - Municipal Services Director
2. Jennifer Figueroa - Housing Manager
3. William Morris- City Engineer

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Our IT department plays a crucial role in ensuring that all city departments function smoothly. Their work often goes unnoticed, but they are the backbone of our organization, providing essential support, keeping systems running, and enabling productivity. We recognize and appreciate their contributions. Throughout the year, IT staff continued to implement cybersecurity controls to enhance the security of our city.

Our Own Mobile Application

They collaborated with the Communications Officer and Communications Specialist on implementing a mobile “app” for the city called *My Turlock* which has been well received. I encourage you to try it out and let us know what you think.

Website

Our updated city website developed by IT will include artificial intelligence (AI) components as a test to see if that improves service to our customers.

FINANCE

Since becoming mayor, thanks in part to our residents' support of Measure A, we continue to reverse the earlier Council practice of deficit spending while at the same time increasing the city reserve fund.

A \$350,000 Covid 19 Payment Program grant made it possible for city staff to clear 476 Turlock residents past due utility accounts.

While many Stanislaus County cities saw decreased sales tax revenue, Turlock posted a 13.3% increase in part because of our business-friendly environment.

Thanks to Finance Director Isaac Moreno and his team, Turlock provides city services within budget while increasing city reserves. With higher reserves, Turlock is better prepared than other communities future economic challenges.

In healthcare, our partnership with the EMC Health Foundation Tower Pharmacy has brought residents a \$2 prescription drug program. Now families with a loved one who are insulin dependent can also fill their prescription for \$2. The City has partnered with Legacy Health Endowment to provide in-home respite care for family care givers. This program helps keep our seniors safe, independent, and out of nursing homes.

While some in the community criticize my consistent opposition to raising taxes – as you might know, I always vote against them, I welcome being singled out on this issue. Today, many American families are struggling. Some for the first time are living paycheck to paycheck, finding it hard to afford the basics like gasoline, milk, and groceries. Increasing taxes has not helped these families so I will continue my opposition to tax increases.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

As many of you know I have a passion for economic development. Economic Development Director Anthony Sims has been busy improving the business climate in Turlock. Our City's Economic Development priority is to create close relationships with the business community to encourage private sector job creation. We have provided monthly no-cost business workshops and seminars to our business community. Because of the skilled, available workforce provided by CSU Stanislaus and Modesto Junior College many new businesses have moved to Turlock.

Thanks to our downtown area merchants and restaurants, and the Monte Vista Crossings Shopping Center, (which sales tax revenue ranks eighth nationally and fourth in California), Turlock is the Valley's top place to shop, dine and do business. This year a Turlock landmark restaurant Latiff's by Pedretti reopened after fire damage while Home Goods, a nationally renowned retailer has also opened.

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES BUILDING, HOUSING & PLANNING

Building Accomplishments

Development services staff processed 205 projects through Minor Review (15 business days or fewer) and completed 149 projects through the six-week Plan Check process. They issued 1,437 business permits valued at over 1 million dollars, as well as 237 home and commercial business permits, while conducting 3,985 building construction inspections.

Housing Accomplishments

The city provided \$35,000 to seven families through the Mobile Home Park rent aid program, which enabled these residents to remain in their mobile homes. An added \$93,000 in grants was awarded to nine hundred and ten Turlock residents for rent/mortgage aid. Also, emergency food boxes went to 546 residents while staff awarded 5 first time homebuyer loans with an added 16 applications pending for the Montana Estates project.

Planning

Staff conducted 100 predevelopment meetings with potential developers, businesses, and citizens to make completing their projects easier and implemented the Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Ordinance consistent with State law.

PUBLIC WORKS

Our parks look amazing they are the welcome mat to our community.

Recreation

The Recreation Division held many successful events last year including:

1. Annual Christmas Parade
2. Holiday Lights Tour
3. Veteran's Day and Vietnam Veteran's Day Events
4. Turkey Trot

just to name a few.

Staff helped community groups secure \$50,000 in block grants for many different special events enjoyed by our residents and visitors. They also worked with the Stanislaus County Area Agency on Aging and Veterans Services to provide free lunches to senior citizens at our newly renovated Senior Center three days a week.

In 2023, Pedretti Park and the Turlock Regional Sports Complex hosted 41 tournaments across youth softball, baseball, senior softball, and youth soccer. The annual 3-day CSUS Softball Tournament of Champions at Pedretti Park drew teams from Canada, Washington, Montana, Hawaii, and California, becoming one of the largest NCAA Division II tournaments in the country that boosted local hotels, restaurants, and businesses.

We completed, with an assist from TID's "Powering Our Community" grant, the Pedretti Park Lighting project which replaced the old metal lights with state-of-the-art LED-efficient lights. The Pedretti Sports complex will serve its participants with improved lighting that saves taxpayers money through energy efficiency.

Engineering

Our engineering staff augmented our major roads initiative using asphalt and concrete road materials while installing accessible pedestrian curb ramps at many intersections through the:

1. Southwest Quadrant project.
2. Lander Ave project.
3. Pedras Rd project.

They also completed 700,000 square yards of Slurry Seals, plus 150,000 square yards of crack sealing of various local roads including downtown Main Street and portions of Golden State Blvd.

Sewer and Water Enhancements

Our infrastructure enhancements project successfully installed 2,800 linear feet of new water pipe and 3,900 feet of new sewer pipe. This project replaces over 5,000 feet of old, aging water pipe with new 8" PVC pipe thereby improving the existing distribution system ensuring clean and safe drinking water for our residents for years to come

Transit

Last year we received over 1 million dollars in added federal funds from the Small Transit Intensive Cities (STIC) program because of the efficiency and cost effectiveness of our Transit program. Over the past year, Turlock Transit has increased services and decreased fares while increasing ridership by 21%, making public transportation in Turlock more affordable and accessible to all residents. Finally, starting July first, our transit services will grow with support from the City's service partner: Storer Transit Systems.

General Maintenance

Our Maintenance Division consists of five teams:

1. Parks/Storm Basins
2. Public Facilities/Buildings
3. Streets
4. Assessments
5. Sports Complexes

They are the unrecognized daily heroes of city government, and I would like to acknowledge and thank them today. Along with several community groups, including the Turlock Mom's and the Rotary Clubs, our city staff helped the Adopt-A-Park program remove over 1564 tons of leaf materials from our parks and roadways.

Other noteworthy maintenance accomplishments included:

1. Using 75 tons of sand to fill 2,600 sandbags.
2. Installed Gurdwara Way rider sign on 5th street.
3. Used 205 tons of asphalt to fill 8,170 potholes.
4. Removed 120 tons of trash while cleaning up encampments.
5. Restriped 57 miles of road markings.

It is remarkable the amount of work they do!

MUNICIPAL SERVICES

There is one word that describes the activities of our Municipal Services Department: **Transformative**. Staff has as worked tirelessly for many years to transform and expand our drinking water supply with the introduction of the surface water plant.

In early 2023, Turlock agreed to run the new **Surface Water Treatment Facility (SRWA)** meaning rather than creating and staffing a separate agency at more cost, Turlock staff would complete the design build project and run the daily plant operations including performing required water quality tests. In addition to the disinfection improvements, treatment systems have been added to our wells that provide ground water to our residents. These projects provide a sustainable and resilient water supply that will allow the city of Turlock to meet our current and future water needs that will serve the valley.

Turlock has also received help in water savings efforts from our industrial users. We recently visited the Meyenberg Goat milk plant presenting them an award for a multiyear water conservation project which reduced their annual water usage by 55%!

The Meyenberg team worked with the city's regulatory affairs and water quality control staff to ensure that our programs complimented each other, ensuring we are all successful: a notable example of how a community is supposed to work! Every drop counts and efforts like this benefit not just Turlock but the entire groundwater sub-basin.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Keeping our residents, businesses, and visitors safe is a top priority for Turlock City government so your City Council will continue to support our Firefighters, Police Officers, and Public Safety Staff members who keep our homes, businesses, neighborhoods, parks, churches, schools, and workplaces safe.

TURLOCK FIRE DEPARTMENT

Council continues its commitment to our Fire Department by distributing funds to fully staff the department. Our administrative contract with the Modesto Fire Department augments Turlock Fire services by providing added resources and improved cooperation between all Stanislaus County Fire Departments. Another positive aspect of our partnership is that it allows access to their Arson Investigative team providing the Turlock access to trained and experienced Fire Investigators 24 hours a day as part of the Stanislaus County Fire Investigation.

The contract with Modesto Fire has reduced maintenance and repair costs for our fire engines and equipment by using the MFD fleet service mechanics instead of outside service centers. Last year our Fire Department responded to over 8300 calls for service. With near full staffing our Fire Department has kept a call response time at 5.1 minutes which continues to beat the national average for fire related call response times.

TURLOCK POLICE DEPARTMENT

I am now pleased to talk about the many things the Turlock Police Department is doing to keep us safe. Recruiting police officers is difficult due to a national shortage of qualified candidates wishing a career in law enforcement. To meet the challenge of finding new police officers, the Turlock Police Department Recruitment Team regularly attends community events and career fairs at our local colleges, and visits state police academies to find qualified police officers and support staff candidates. Successful recruiting efforts have allowed our police department to

reach eighty sworn Police Officers, just 8 short of the 88 officers goal which would be considered full staffing.

Code Enforcement

Turlock's Code Enforcement Unit ensures compliance with all city ordinances concerning quality-of-life issues. This Unit is committed to working in partnership with Turlock residents and business owners to set up Turlock's safe, clean, desirable living, working, and shopping environment.

Last year Code Enforcement:

1. Abated 1,295 pieces of Graffiti
2. Signs Abated 279 illegal signs
3. Recovered 1,218 Shopping Carts
4. Removed 370,395 pounds of waste and garbage from city parks

CARE Team

Last year the CARE Team contacted 160 individuals and to date have spoken with an added 100 people to connect these individuals with people who can make them productive residents once again.

License Plate Readers

License Plate Readers have been referenced in 121 reports since July 1, 2023. The top three types of reports include:

1. 38 Stolen Vehicle / Possession of Stolen Vehicle
2. 31 Grand Theft / Petty Theft
3. 10 Conspiracy to Commit Crime

This reader system has been crucial in combatting the continued cases of identity theft related to skimmers found at Turlock banks, auto theft, robbery, burglary, and several other crimes committed in our city.

Here is just one example of a case the license plate reader system has helped solve:

December 29, 2023: Oakdale PD issued a bulletin for a suspect installing a skimmer on an ATM to steal customer PIN numbers. Using the license plate reader, TPD located the suspect at West America ATM and recovered over \$3,000 in cash along with 30 counterfeit cloned gift cards leading to the arrest of a known repeat identity theft criminal.

Fusus

Last October Police Chief Hedden and Economic Developer Director Sims launched FUSUS. Fusus is a top-rated Real-Time Crime Center platform used by police and public safety agencies around the globe. With cameras, Fusus provides law enforcement access to video feeds from public areas and businesses when crime related incidents take place. Fusus provides TPD with the ability to react in real time and to respond swiftly as crime related incidents happen.

Fusus technology has proven to deter and decrease crime, increasing safety throughout the community and business centers. Fusus is so robust that it can even take in artificial intelligence to analyze video, and connect to license plate reader cameras, as well as drones. Recently

footage obtained by Fusus lead to the arrest of a suspect involved in a homicide on Wayside Avenue.

We are proud to announce that TPD has successfully deployed this valuable resource into our community. With the implementation of new law enforcement initiatives and technology, violent crimes in Turlock are down by 8.4 percent. Most importantly, overall crime in our city is down 9.5 percent making Turlock one of California's safest cities.

Finally, despite responding to over 55,497 potential criminal incidents resulting in 2,201 arrests, Turlock Police Officers use of force was recorded at less than 1 percent way below the national average of 6.6%. Our police department's integration of advanced technology, including predictive analytics and real-time video, has significantly enhanced our ability to prevent and solve crimes. By using these innovative tools, we are not only improving public safety but also fostering stronger relationships with local businesses.

Roads

In the fall of 2020, I announced the **Turlock Roads Initiative** program with the goal of improving the quality of ALL TURLOCK ROADS. After multiple public meetings, it was clear that the community wanted the Roads Initiative Program accelerated.

Under Council's direction, staff has developed a plan to spend over \$27.2 million on road repair, construction, and maintenance this fiscal year.

Since beginning the **Turlock Roads Initiative**, we have:

1. Completed fifteen streets that we designed in late 2022
2. Designed twenty-two streets over the past year that are currently in the construction phase for this year
3. Completed the design for Geer Road (from Golden State Blvd. to Taylor Road applying for four grants totaling \$4.8 million - Project advertising will begin in Fall 2025
4. Sixty-two streets, totaling 12.8 miles, have been approved by council for rehabilitation and are currently in design
5. This year we have completed seven miles of road construction
6. An added five point four miles of roads will be finished this year
7. 15.4 miles of road are in design for construction through 2026, totaling 27.8 miles

To date, a total of 36 million dollars has been committed to the Roads Program.

We are also developing a comprehensive maintenance and repair program schedule for all roads, a practice which has not been done for over thirty years. As you can see from the information above, we heard your concerns and will continue to make great progress fixing our roads.

FUTURE GOALS

Last year, with the help of our residents and city staff we addressed many of the concerns raised by our community however there is still much to do.

During this fiscal year with support from my fellow council members we plan to:

1. Secure funding to modernize and improve the Turlock wastewater treatment system, which has been neglected for over thirty years
2. Continue enhancing Fire and Police services to keep Turlock as one of California's safest cities
3. Spend \$150,000 for improvements to the Marty Yerby Center building making it ready for use by the youth after school program
4. Complete construction of Columbia Pool expected to open by the end of summer
5. Complete Montana Park Phase 2 improvements including installation of two shade structures, picnic benches, new basketball courts, pickleball courts, a multi- surface area, ADA playground swing set, and outdoor fitness equipment
6. Continue improve our roads
7. Maintain our commitment to public safety through cybersecurity

I want to personally thank Fred Pezeshk, our Road Dr., and Police Chief Jason Hedden for their efforts to fix our roads and keep our community even safer. Both men epitomize how committed our staff is responding to our residents' concerns making Turlock a wonderful place to live.

Thank you, Fred, and Jason.

THANK YOU

Thank you, Turlock residents, for trusting me as your mayor. You have my promise, that as a Council, we will always work with staff to implement policies that improve the quality of life for all Turlock residents, businesses, and visitors. Holding an event like today's State of Turlock address involves many people and a lot of demanding work. In addition to the people Ron recognized earlier for making today's event successful, I want to thank him for continuing to serve as our Master of Ceremonies for today's State of Turlock address.

I also want to thank:

1. Pastor Ron for his inspiring messages and his staff, and especially Shelby for hosting today's event
2. Texas Roadhouse Managing Partner Marc Beckwith for supplying today's delicious lunch
3. Vanessa Gonzalez, General Manager Nothing Bundt Cakes of Turlock for supplying today's deserts.

I would be remiss if I did not thank my husband, Dr. Milton Richards, for his unwavering support.

Turlock's strength lies in our community of faith, blessed with dedicated spiritual leaders who offer steadfast guidance and support to all. Once again let me thank you for allowing me the privilege of serving as your Mayor. God bless the United State of America, the State of California, and the City of Turlock.