



City of Tombstone

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State of the City – January 10, 2012 – Mayor Jack Henderson

My Dear Citizens and Friends of Tombstone,

A year ago we could not imagine the ground we would have to cover to preserve the little city we all love. In December of 2010, a disastrous fire that could easily have destroyed our historic district was the first big challenge in a year full of such events.

Then later that winter we experienced a historic freeze which caused significant damage to the water system from burst pipes in dozens of locations, but we made it through.

Thinking we were past the adversity, and with summer approaching, a huge fire in the Huachuca Mountains and subsequent mud and rock slides devastated our major water source, leaving us at the mercy of two well pumps for all of our water. I am here to say that we have solid progress to report tonight.

They call us the Town Too Tough to Die and I am pleased to report that we have lived up to it.

Now for some specifics:

Economically, at all levels of government, we are struggling to deal with lower revenue, mandated services, and the need to maintain viable communities. This financial squeeze play has necessitated a fresh look at how we provide for our residents both current and future. We must do more with less. We must focus on those things which maintain critical services.

At the same time we must resist the idea that immediate benefit is the only benefit. I have heard some express this view. Immediate benefit is what you get when you don't pay your taxes, but we all know how that turns out. I have heard it said that the politician looks at the next election but the statesman looks at the next generation. We can't be all one or the other.

Within this framework I can report to you that much has been accomplished in the past year and all within our means.

Emergency Services

Our emergency services play a critical role in this community. We have been working to improve our ability to deal with emergencies and protect the public.

The Tombstone Fire Department now has paid personnel available for the day shift five days a week. We pay for this added presence using revenue from our efforts during wild land fire service. This has resulted in significant improvements in EMT and fire response times at no extra cost to the residents. We have responded to 56.9% more calls since the addition of on duty staff. Also, our Fire Personnel are updating three portable defibrillator units which will be installed at the Visitor Center, Boothill Gift Shop and the Courthouse and staff at those facilities will be trained on emergency use.

As soon as our water issues from the Monument fire have been addressed our on duty firefighters will be going through our fire hydrant system one unit at a time to test, repair and make ready these key assets should the ever be needed. It has been way to long waiting for this needed maintenance which we can now begin because the reservoir is now filling and can maintain a margin of safety.

Our Fire Department has benefited in the acquisition of a utility truck, a mobile command center vehicle and trailer which will become a water tender. Not only did these assets come to us free of charge, but they can be used to raise additional revenue during service at forest fires. We have also acquired an emergency generator, estimated at a value of over \$100,000 and capable of powering the fire department, landing pad lighting, clinic, food bank and more in times of emergency. This generator came at no cost to the city beyond transporting.

The Tombstone Marshal's Office has responded to 2758 calls for service in 2011. That's a 13% increase over the prior year and with two less personnel and an \$87,000 lower budget. They have also made several improvements. We now have a viable and dependable group of volunteer Marshal Assists providing additional presence.

Further, Marshal Cloud is entering an agreement with the Arizona Rangers which will provide even greater coverage on weekends when we need it the most. These force multipliers provide crime deterrence at little or no cost to the residents. Along with this added presence comes the ability to crack down on those whose lawless behavior endangers us all.

Whether the threat comes through violence, intimidation, the drug trade or burglaries, notice has been served that eyes are on the wrong doers. They are being prosecuted. The frequent flyers are going to jail.

Individual Services

There cannot be a person in this room who has not felt the financial pressures of this recession. We can compound this by the fact that we are not a wealthy community to start with. While we hope we are working through these global economic woes we also know

the solution will not come swiftly. It is imperative we help ourselves through these tough times.

This past year we have helped eighteen homeowners repair critical problems with their homes through our Community Development Block Grant Program at no cost to them and we hope to continue this program in the future.

Our Senior Center continues to expand services to our seniors. Their activity schedule demonstrates a full array of services and many take part in them. More significantly we have received grant funding which enables a congregate meals program that has grown to serve over a thousand meals a month, an amazing feat to say the least, and the most successful such program in the county. In December alone the good folks there served 1278 meals.

In another opportunity the Tombstone Library now has grant funded computer resources designed specifically to assist in job searches for our citizens.

City Fire and Police personnel will soon begin offering home health checks for those desiring this safety net. It won't cost anything for the service and for many it will grant peace of mind for our residents and their loved ones.

Our City employees are our first line of defense against all daily challenges. We owe it to them to see that they are trained, that they have decent insurance coverage and work in a safe environment. To this end we have had numerous training programs attended by Marshal and animal control officers, water and waste water system operators, fire fighters, library staff, food bank manager and others. We are also now pleased that in addition to city health insurance we can offer availability of optional AFLAC supplemental insurance coverage to all city W2 employees.

Highways:

While there are always challenges in maintaining a municipal highway system we face an enormous challenge here. Years of insufficient maintenance has resulted in a citywide problem with potholes and roadway disintegration. We did some experimental repairs using aggregate and envirotac, the stuff we call rhino snot. It worked surprisingly well and got us through the summer. We also learned that this process prepares an excellent base for permanent surfaces.

It was obvious that waiting for state highway aid for more permanent repairs was not likely to bring any relief. Mayor and Council bit the bullet and appropriated \$100,000 from highway reserves with the commitment to pay ourselves back over the next three or so years. This will give us some real results. You may have seen some improvement already as we pressed increased personnel to the task of pothole repair.

We have started with cold patch for the potholes as this is the only repair that can be done until weather warms in April. By then Council will have selected a professional company

to make repairs that will last while we still have something to repair. Again here we must learn to be more self sufficient.

Of interest on some other Infrastructure Items

Twenty Seven notices of environmental violation from years past which could have resulted in \$169,000 in fines from the Department of Environmental Quality have been corrected. Our water filters in the purification building had become completely clogged have been completely replaced. All city facility fire extinguishers were replaced since the newest one we found was dated eleven years ago. Our children's play area near Medigovitch Field has been completed and now serves some of our younger citizens. Also added to youth services I am pleased to announce that the Boy Scouts of America have returned to Tombstone. The first meeting was this month in Schieffelin Hall.

Soon we will turn over the residential solid waste system to a private company ending this government's attempt to run this expensive, difficult and highly regulated business. Our residents will see professional collection service and new waste containers at only a fifteen cent per month increase. At the same time city forces will continue to maintain recycling efforts including the establishment of three recycling drop off centers around the city. We hope to recycle cardboard, paper, plastic and aluminum. By getting serious about recycling we are answering the valid questions of many here who wondered when we would join in responsible environmental management policy. Additionally the program will more than pay for itself.

The Water System –

Our first issue in late 2010 came from high arsenic in one of the city's wells. While not a new problem and still below the legal limit, the regulators were now pressing for a solution. We would have to obtain technology to solve this problem but at a very high price. Fortunately we located surplus equipment in the City of Goodyear and were able to obtain it at no cost beyond hauling. While other events we'll talk about have put this work on hold, we now have over \$250,000 worth of purification equipment available and on site.

Our biggest challenge came from a water system disaster in the Huachuca Mountains where the city obtains 50% to 80% of its water. Forest fire and subsequent mud and rock slides wreaked havoc on pipelines and water storage areas. The system which was in pretty rough shape to begin with, was now completely shut down. We needed to get some help fast.

We declared our state of emergency, and Governor Brewer did as well at the urging of State Senator Griffin and Representative Gowan. Emergency application for aid provided \$50,000 for emergency repairs to the system.

It was then we discovered that while the Bureau of Land Management and the State Land Department recognized our water and land rights dating back 130 years, the Forest

Service chose to ignore these rights. We have run the Forest Service gauntlet twice now for work on Miller and Gardner Springs and Carr is coming up. This has been a frustrating and unnecessary exercise resulting in delays to the emergency repairs.

During the emergency we learned another troublesome fact. When we pumped water from the wells into the 1.2 Million gallon reservoir for emergency reserves it was found to be leaking at an astonishing rate and had been for some time. It literally drained itself over 300,000 gallons a day, so we fixed the worst leaks and continue to patch others. Additionally, early 2011 we realized the roof on the reservoir was at the point of failure which would have had catastrophic results. That has been corrected now as well.

I can report to you now that partial water flow has been re-established from Carr Canyon and Miller Canyon. There is a long way to go but we see at least envision an end to the immediate emergency situation.

Of recent interest has been the search for green energy as we repair the water system. We have been in discussion with those who arrange projects which turn water power into electricity. We also believe there will be sufficient water pressure to actually generate electricity and make money for the city while being environmentally responsible. Somehow recent press coverage morphed this into the city giving away its water rights which I can assure you is certainly not the case. We own the water and the benefits we can gain from it.

It is time to assert the water rights of the City of Tombstone. We have filed briefing documents with the State Attorney General and with the USDA Inspector General. Also, on December 28th I authorized filing of a Complaint and Request for Preliminary Injunction in Federal District Court to force Forest Service recognition of our water and land rights and rights of way, and to enable us to make the necessary repairs without further delay. We expect the first hearing on these actions before the end of this month.

I do not take this action lightly. Our water rights will be strongly asserted on this watch. There can be no higher priority.

Historic Preservation:

Preserving our history here in Tombstone is more than just a passing fancy. It is, in fact, the reason over 200,000 visitors come here each year providing the economic force upon which we all survive. If we are to continue this draw we must first preserve our historic locations and records.

To this end we have done a thorough restoration of Schieffelin Hall where we sit now. Complete interior and exterior repair, painting, carpeting and window treatments will help this building shine well into the future.

We have made a number of repairs to the Boothill Graveyard. Repainted and re-varnished signs attract people to the historic site. New ocotillo fencing replaces the old. New

markers are now installed at the gravesites and reflect the atmosphere of a proper graveyard.

We have made an investment in the preservation of our historic documents. Early months of effort in salvaging, cataloging and preserving our most historic texts and maps paid off handsomely when we needed to relocate springs and pipelines obliterated in the Huachuca Mountains. Legal research which would have been impossible was done by our archivist and saved the city tens of thousands of dollars in legal research fees and enables a proper defense of our water rights.

More recently through the generosity of the Marlowe family we have leased the Marlowe House, a national register building to house the Tombstone Archives. So far the response has been overwhelming.

All of the office furniture has been donated, and I mean several thousands of dollars worth. The State Library and Archives has awarded \$3000 for digitizing documents. The Lions Club and other private donors have provided three computers for the facility, and we now have the commitment for a microfilm reader and printer from another benefactor. Most importantly, the archives will put us on the list of the finest western history repositories in the world and as a research facility enables a wide range of grants and other benefits.

Promoting Tombstone

In the past year we have completely modernized the city website. It now portrays a vintage atmosphere with modern usable technology behind it. Often times it is the first online contact people have with our city. First impressions count, especially on the web.

On a tougher note, we started the year 2011 with the revelation that our Chamber of Commerce, the main promotional arm of the city was on the verge of bankruptcy. The system of promotion had not been sufficiently monitored and had overspent far beyond their ability to pay. We all had to get this under reasonable control.

An audit revealed many areas for improvement and changes have already been made. There is a new operating model and a cooperative attitude which ties the city closer to the spending of public monies. We will soon hire a promotions manager to organize and carry out advertising campaigns both paid and free. The city will provide additional seed funding for events in the coming year, especially during the slow times.

There remains a lot to do here but we are confident that as the new process unfolds it will yield a closer relationship between the Chamber and the City government. Promotion and the flow of money will be transparent. Real results will be realized. It has been a difficult year for this relationship but from the struggle will come a better stronger and more productive promotion effort.

In addition to the work through the Chamber we have seen expressions of interest in two new attractions to be developed in the coming year. Tonight we hope to act on these opportunities which will add attractions of significant merit. The Arizona Rangers are proposing an annex of the Arizona Ranger Museum here and will later move the entire facility from Nogales to Tombstone.

The noted European author of old west stories Karl May whose museum is currently housed in Germany will be establishing an annex of the Karl May collection also to Tombstone.

The Buffalo Soldier organization has made the commitment to provide a larger than life bronze for the city park which memorializes the efforts of these valiant troops who were actually stationed at Fort Huachuca in times gone by.

These are the kind of attractions that bring long term interest in the city with little or no cost to us.

In Summary

The past year has been a challenge. Forces beyond our control tested us again and again. Throughout these times we have learned how to cope with adversity, to get equipment we need, to make critical repairs within our means and to protect the legacy of our famous city.

We have found wonderful friends in government who came through for us when we most needed help. We have found wonderful benefactors who have donated time, effort, equipment, furniture and money. We have seen the amazing talent of our people and those who help us on our mission.

Our city finances are challenged but sound. Our infrastructure is being repaired. Our safety net is serving our people. 2012 can be a great year for Tombstone. Why hell we're just warming up.

Thank you.