



Mayor gives State of City talk

2006-02-02 03:00:00

Mayor Bob Bouer proved that, contrary to cityhood naysayers, Laguna Woods not only survived its first seven years but is looking forward in a fiscally solid way to many more.

Bouer was the featured speaker at the South Orange County Chamber of Commerce State of the City Breakfast Jan. 26 in Clubhouse 2.

The event attracted dignitaries from neighboring cities as well as Laguna Woods Village leaders and city contractors like Ware Disposal, which was also a sponsor.

Bouer pointed out that although the city started with less than 70 businesses it now boasts more than 220 in its four square miles, that grew since incorporation by the addition of Woods End Park (where Aliso Creek Road "T"s into El Toro Road).

There are five residential developments (soon to be six with the construction of the Mayer Corporation's 134 unit condominium compound which will replace the old Leisure World Administration Building behind Long's Drugs).

Bouer said the County Health Agency has given Awards of Excellence to five of the community's refreshment establishments like Starbucks-Valencia, The Olive Garden, Carl's Junior and Jack in the Box.

The city has a five person council led by Bob Bouer as mayor and Milt Robbins as mayor pro-tem. The balance of the council includes Bob Ring, Bert Hack and Brenda Ross (the latter both members of the charter city council).

And the city is represented on nearly a dozen local, regional and state agencies including the El Toro Reuse Planning Authority, the Local Agency Formation Commission and the Laguna Canyon Foundation.

The day-to-day operations of the city are in the hands of charter city manager Leslie Keane who heads a 10 person staff which is bolstered by more than 75 volunteers who serve on committees and assist staff in a variety of ways.

The city also has more than \$6 million in general fund reserves.

One of the city's major achievements is making it easier for residents to access services and participate in local and state government.

It acquired a centrally located city hall which houses satellite offices for the state Fish & Game, the Senior Corps of Retired Executives, 70th District Assemblyman Chuck DeVore and the Orange County Public Library.

Those who remember the cityhood fight will recall that greater police protection was a key selling point. The city contracts with the Orange County Sheriff's Department for such services and is now rated by the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) as the "safest city in California with a population over 10,000" and the 37th safest city in the United States.

Bouer said that the city is making its streets safer to drive with a red light enforcement system at two

intersections with Moulton Parkway to nail drivers who drive through red lights or fail to stop at right on reds.

The city also subsidizes a variety of transportation, hazardous and enhanced recycling waste removal, notary, low income weatherization, 911 ambulance (with low cost insurance coverage) and social service programs for its residents and is in the process of beautifying the city's two main streets. Currently, work is in progress on El Toro, from Moulton Parkway to Paseo de Valencia, to provide a 14-foot pedestrian sidewalk and the first-ever golf cart access to the Willow Tree Shopping Center via a path that crosses El Toro Road between the Lutheran Church of the Cross and St. Nicholas Church.

The city also added a golf cart crossing between Gates 10 and 11 and is trying to make all major shopping areas golf cart accessible.

The city has consistently provided building, planning and other fees at reduced prices, said Bouer.

What's next? Bouer said to look for a City Center Park, further improvements to Woods End Nature Preserve and a Linear Park along Ridge Route near the city's first public works project, a Place for Paws dog park.

Bouer said perhaps one of the most stunning financial figures of all is the determination of what cityhood has brought to the community in terms of revenues since its incorporation. These are dollars that largely would have been diverted elsewhere if the city remained an unincorporated step child of the County of Orange, he said.

From March 24, 1999 to the end of fiscal year 2005-6 Laguna Woods revenues will equal \$48.5 million.

© Copyright 2012 Freedom Communications. All Rights Reserved.
[Privacy Policy](#) | [User Agreement](#) | [Site Map](#)