

Lakewood State of the City Remarks Mayor Steve Croft

Thank you for those very kind remarks and your warm welcome.

It's good to be among friends, to be in the company of those who understand the values of our community.

Our values are even more important now than in 1954, when Lakewood began.

We are poised today between hope and anxiety, between the possibilities of the year ahead and our worries for the future.

As we have seen and heard this afternoon, Lakewood achieved much in 2008:

- Crime in Lakewood is down. Our city is safer today than in any period in the recent past.
- The Lakewood Sheriff's Station has been expanded, renewed, and made ready for the 21st century.

Our law enforcement team is strong, capable, and dedicated, thanks to Captain Guyovich.

- Public safety is strong at the neighborhood level, too.

We've recruited new block captains in support of Lakewood Neighborhood Watch, and brought more volunteers into public safety programs for landlords and business owners.

- We've trained volunteers in disaster preparedness and emergency rescue. They will be there for their neighbors if disaster strikes.
- We continued to invest in Lakewood's neighborhood, with more than 90 percent of residential streets repaved since the year 2000, with curbs, gutters and sidewalks repaired, with street trees planted and trees trimmed, with unsightly properties abated and homeowners assisted with loans and grants.
- As part of a mayor's initiative, we reached out to you and to your neighbors to become volunteers and strengthen Lakewood's tradition of volunteerism.

And Lakewood responded.

On Volunteer Day, 400 volunteers put in 1,600 hours of service at 22 sites across the city.

The Teens in Lakewood Care program and other teen groups worked on nine projects. The 94 young volunteers gave 209 hours of service.

Volunteers in park sports programs in 2008 gave more than 6,300 hours of their time.



Project Shepherd benefitted from more than 1,500 hours of volunteer service.

In city-sponsored programs alone, 3,356 volunteers gave 26,050 hours of their time.

Thousands more hours were given to organized sports programs, religious congregations, health support groups, and Lakewood charities.

Lakewood has a large and generous heart. And we should be proud that our community has so many willing volunteers.

Where would Lakewood be today without your care and your support?

We would not have passed Measure L by an overwhelming 79 percent in 2008 without the support of Lakewood residents.

Their vote made secure a source of local revenue that represents almost 1.3 million dollars a year.

We would not have made our streets cleaner and our neighborhoods better unless Lakewood residents moved their RVs from the curb and unless Lakewood drivers moved their car while their street was being swept.

Adjusting to new parking regulations were a challenge to some. I know, I heard their complaints. But Lakewood residents stepped up, did the right thing, and our community is better as a result.

Whether as volunteers, as voters, or as good citizens, Lakewood residents have sustained their city for 55 years.

Today, we're beginning the celebration of Lakewood's 55th anniversary. We're reflecting on the generations of residents who have built on the values of our community.

It's a bittersweet beginning, since we still mourn the loss in 2008 of John Todd and Jackie Rynerson – those legendary heroes of Lakewood.

We remember their contributions – the “great idea” of contracting for city services, the focus they gave to neighborhoods, families, and youth, the responsive and open city government they served, and the volunteer programs they helped to found.

Most of all, we remember their courage in difficult times.

Because of men and women like John and Jackie, we can look to the future with genuine hope, but also with sober reflection.

Our nation is moved by a different spirit today, a spirit of pragmatic compromise and cooperation. We hope this new spirit will lead us well.

California is in the midst of a terrible fiscal crisis: a \$42 billion deficit. We hope that hard choices will finally be made, that wisdom will prevail in Sacramento, but I remain doubtful.

The national economy is troubled by steep declines in manufacturing, trade, retail sales, and property values, all of which Lakewood has experienced.

We hope that stimulus programs and other economic improvements will reverse these trends, and get us on the road to recovery by the end of 2009.

Have no doubt; we are in a time of testing.

And some may ask, "Can the 'great ideas' of previous generations continue to benefit Lakewood today? Can we hand to new generations of Lakewood residents the benefits, and responsibilities of living here?"

I believe we can.

The lessons of past generations have taught us that neighborhoods are the heart of our community.

To keep our neighborhoods safe in 2009, we'll join with the Sheriff's Department to make use of advanced technology that will make crime suppression smarter and more efficient – including automatic license plate identification and digital video surveillance linked directly to the command center at the Lakewood Sheriff's Station.

To keep our neighborhood parks at their best, we'll construct three new picnic shelters at Del Valle Park to replace shelters that were decades old. These "Craftsman" style shelters will give the park a whole new look.

We'll replace the old, 1950's A-frame building at Mae Boyar Park. The new building will have an activity room, park office, meeting room, and covered patio area.

The "footprint" of the building will remain the same, retaining its "neighborhood feel."

The Boyar Park building should be complete by January 2010.

To help our children succeed, we will continue working to provide resources for students and parents – resources like our after-school programs, homework help, and youth centers. And we will continue working to improve our schools and assist our teachers.

To prevent neighborhood decline, we'll continue to focus on properties in distress.

Since 1999, the Nuisance Property Abatement Team has worked nearly 1,000 property code violation cases.

We will continue to offer grants and loans to eligible owners for home repairs. The Fix Up Paint Up program – which offers grants of up to \$3,000 in exterior repairs – processed 27 grants in 2008. The Home Improvement Loan program – which lends up to \$18,000 for home improvements – funded 14 loans in 2008.

To preserve our neighborhood quality of life, we'll continue to repair and replace the city's infrastructure of streets and water systems.

Two and a half miles of aging water mains will be replaced in 2009. A new water treatment plant will complete the installation of a new well – a joint project of Lakewood and Long Beach that improves our system capacity. Six more miles of residential streets will be repaved. In the process, we'll recycle even more used tires into rubberized asphalt. We've already recycled nearly one million old tires into city streets since 2000.

Turning old tires into new streets is only one way Lakewood is learning to live green.

We've recently completed the installation of a solar power system on the roof of our largest water reservoir. The new system generates 250 kilowatts of electrical energy during to power water system pumps.

The system has another benefit. It will cut carbon dioxide emissions by more than 425,000 pounds a year. During the 25-year working life of the system, almost 13 million pounds of carbon dioxide won't go into the air.

Clean fuels are cutting greenhouse gas emissions from city vehicles. The city fleet includes 25 cars, vans, and trucks that run on clean-burning natural gas.

The state Department of Conservation recently approved a \$211,000 grant to expand recycling at eleven multi-family complexes in Lakewood with over 4,500 residents.

City construction projects are being built green.

We've incorporated the use of sustainable materials, energy efficiency, and the recycling of demolition debris into all of our construction plans.

And we're showing Lakewood how to be green.

Our recycling programs are safely disposing of used oil and old oil filters.

Our greenwaste drop-offs have made recycling easier. Over 36 tons of greenwaste were recycled in 2008.

All of these efforts – and there are many more – are part of Lakewood's "Climate Action Plan" for greenhouse gas reduction.

In 2005, Lakewood was a founding participant in the U.S. Conference of Mayors "Climate Protection Agreement." In 2008, we formed the city's "Green Team" to develop an action plan to address climate change.

When the plan is adopted in 2009, it will lay out the city's strategies for greenhouse gas reduction, sustainable use of natural resources, and protection of the environment.

And we are turning to our residents to learn new "green" habits.

Among them is water conservation. We asked residents to voluntarily cut their water use in 2008. They did, by 8 percent. Our goal for voluntary conservation in 2009 is 10 percent.

Building a greener Lakewood, expanding the city's resources for families, and maintaining parks and city facilities requires the fiscal resources to do the job.

We actively seek creative opportunities that will help extend the benefits of Lakewood to future generations. We are working to take advantage of the federal economic stimulus package proposed by President Obama. We are ready to go if these funds come our way – to preserve our environment and to keep Lakewood a great place in which to live and work.

And, of course, to keep Lakewood a great place to shop.

As you know, the new Costco store is nearing a late February opening.

Costco is another demonstration of the strength of our regional shopping center.

When completed, the 160,000-square-foot store will be the first Costco located in a regional shopping center in California.

For 55 years, Lakewood has been a city of "firsts."

The first to incorporate as a "contract city" , the first to fly a day-and-night helicopter patrol , the first to have an all-volunteer coaching program , the first to host a festival of Pan-American friendship , the first regional shopping center in California , the first planned community in California with parks and schools at the heart of every neighborhood. And there are many more "firsts" in our history.

Each of these was a "great idea." Each is part of the Lakewood story, part of the reason why Lakewood has prospered.

Generations of Lakewood residents have built on these "great ideas" , raised families , found security from crime , trained sons and daughters on sports teams , shopped in comfort and safety , made friendships and built relationships, and reached for even greater things because of the "great ideas" of Lakewood.

With the help of these "great ideas," and with your help, we have real hope for our future and Lakewood's.

State of Public Safety
Captain Christy Guyovich
Commander of the Lakewood Sheriff's Station

I've had the privilege of working at Lakewood Station on and off for the past nine years and I've come to know many of you on a personal level. As you just heard, I served here both as a sergeant and lieutenant, and since this past April, I've had the honor of serving as the station commander. I feel very fortunate to be back at Lakewood Station, which in my humble opinion, is one of the premier sheriff's stations in the county. The "Lakewood Model" has been the hallmark for other cities to emulate.

Before I continue, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Lakewood City Manager Howard Chambers, Assistant City Manager Sandi Ruyle, Mayor Steve Croft and the entire City Council for their steadfast leadership and dedication to the residents of the city of Lakewood and to the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. Working in collaboration, we have been able to meet the many challenges we face to ensure the highest quality of public safety service is provided to the citizens and visitors of the city of Lakewood.

At this time, I would also like to recognize and thank Assistant Sheriffs Paul Tanaka and Marv Cavanaugh, and Division Chief Tom Angel for their presence here today and for all of their support.

Thanks to the leadership of Supervisor Don Knabe, who secured \$20 million in funding, and the leadership of the Lakewood City Council, who oversaw the project, the Lakewood Station

renovation and expansion project was completed in the beginning of the 2008. On February 23rd, we had our ribbon cutting ceremony honoring the official grand opening of our new state of the art sheriff's station. Since then, we've been the envy of all the other patrol stations. In fact, almost on a weekly basis the Department's Duty Commanders and Captains make a point of touring the facility and leave dreaming that some day they, too, might be as fortunate as we are.

At this time, I'd like to show you a couple of photographs and give you a quick overview of our new station.

As you can see, the new lobby is very inviting to the public, visitors, attorneys, bail bondsmen, and family members visiting those incarcerated. This beautiful picture speaks for itself.

The new dispatch area is much more spacious and conducive to handling emergent calls for service. To give you an idea of how busy the dispatch area can get, in 2008, dispatch personnel received more than 220,000 telephone calls on the business line, more than 64,000 911 calls, and total incoming and outgoing telephone calls was just shy of 350,000.

The new EOC is ready to be staffed at a moment's notice to address any emergency. Each work station is equipped with a computer and there are five large screen televisions to view the event. In November, the EOC was activated for the Great Southern California Shake Out drill and we got a glimpse of its capabilities as we participated in this emergency preparedness exercise.

The renovation and expansion project also allowed for the proper housing of the OSS Team, which is comprised of 1 sergeant and 7 gang detectives, the Gang Enforcement Team, which is made up of a sergeant and 4 enforcement deputies, as well as a Narcotics crew comprised of 1 sergeant and 4 narcotics detectives. These investigative and enforcement units greatly assist in having a significant impact on the quality of life enjoyed by Lakewood residents.

Overall, the project added more than 19,000 square feet to the facility and has been a fantastic success that we are all extremely proud of.

Last year at the State of the City ceremony, Lakewood Station Commander Dave Fender shared that total Part I Crimes for the year 2007 were up 10% from 2006 statistics. Although we were disappointed, he pointed out that 2007 still marked the fourth lowest year in overall Part I Crimes in fifteen years, and 2007 Part I Crimes were down 7% when comparing 2007 to 2005 statistics. Nevertheless, we vowed that we would work hard to bring the trend back down.

Thanks to the collaborative effort of the City, City Council, its residents and the Sheriff's Department, I am happy to tell you that Part I Crimes in 2008 did in fact fall.

When we provided statistical information for print deadlines for this event, we compared statistical data from January 1 to November 30, 2008 against the same time period for 2007, due to year end data input not having been completed yet. Those statistics revealed that crimes against persons, which include homicide, rape and aggravated assaults, tumbled almost 29%; Property crimes, which include robbery, burglary, thefts and arson, fell nearly 14%; And, total overall Part I Crimes fell nearly 15% from 2007 totals (LARCIS report December 15, 2008).

Since providing the aforementioned information for print publication, we have been able to assimilate the data for 2008 calendar year end totals. I'm happy to report these statistics are even more positive.

We in the Sheriff's Department cannot take all of the credit for this decrease in crime. This decrease in crime can only be accredited to a partnership between the City, City Council,

residents, business owners, and the Sheriff's Department. Our successes in fighting and deterring crime and in keeping the community safe are only a result of this collaborative effort.

Crimes of opportunity continue to be difficult to combat. Hopefully, through education and training, we can reduce these crimes even further from this year's reduction.

In the calendar year 2008, robberies were down a little more than 11%. Many of the robberies committed were street robberies where cell phones and iPods were targeted. We need to continue to increase the public's awareness and educate our youth about this crime of opportunity in which our kids are walking down the street talking and/or texting on their cell phones or utilizing their iPods in plain view. The criminal element sees the victim is distracted and unaware of those around them, which makes them more vulnerable to the preying eyes of a criminal.

We will continue to work together to reduce the occurrence of these types of robberies.

The Lakewood SAO Team, which is made up of one lieutenant, two sergeants, one detective, four field deputies, one abatement deputy, one mall deputy, and a fingerprint technician targeted special areas of concern and interest and worked hard to help reduce crime in the city and improve the quality of life of the residents.

In 2008, the Lakewood SAO Team authored and served ten search warrants for robbery, burglary and narcotic related offenses. Additionally, they assisted the OSS gang unit and other headquarter detective units with the service of eight other warrants related to cases with suspects tied to the city of Lakewood.

The SAO team also conducted a "bait car" operation in an effort to curtail auto thefts and auto burglaries. The operation resulted in three arrests for vehicle theft.

Team members have developed an improved working relationship with County Probation and State Parole officers, and assisted in more than 20 parole/probation compliance searches, which resulted in numerous felony arrests.

The Criminal Nuisance Abatement Team handled 104 cases this past year, completing investigations on 75 of them. In 2008, there were a total of 69 relocations and 26 arrests. Since the Team's inception in 1999, total relocations have surpassed 700 and they've made more than 500 arrests.

In 2008, the fingerprint identification unit conducted more than 370 investigations. Lakewood is very fortunate as they are one of the few cities where law enforcement routinely lifts prints from non violent crime scenes.

At this time, I would like to acknowledge your SAO Team and ask them to stand up and be recognized.

Not to be outdone by their crime car counterparts, Team Lakewood traffic enforcement deputies continued their focus on poor driving habits. Their attention paid off in 2008 with fewer traffic collisions. As mentioned early, at the time of our print deadline, we were only able to provide statistical information through November 30, 2008. At that time, non injury traffic collisions were down almost 22%, injury collisions were down 4% and total traffic collisions dropped more than 18%. Now that year end totals are available, our statistics show an even greater decrease in all three categories.

The "Traffic Enforcement Index," which is a measure of hazardous citations and injury collisions, was slightly greater than 30. The goal is to have an index in the range of about 20. So as you can see, that goal was not just met, it was exceeded.

Thanks to the leadership of the City Council, new regulations were adopted on how and when "Safe and Sane" fireworks could be sold and used. The City Council took a strong anti illegal firework message to the community in a coordinated campaign. A special sheriff's enforcement team was deployed a few weeks prior to the Fourth of July weekend to deal with any problems and keep the residents safe, with a massive deployment targeting fireworks' violations occurring on July 4th. During this time, approximately 90 administrative cites were issued for illegal fireworks and no major incidents or injuries occurred.

The mall continues to be an area of special interest for all of us, with the goal being to ensure a pleasurable and safe shopping experience. Team Lakewood's hard work resulted in a 20% decrease in robberies at the Lakewood Center Mall, a 19% reduction in burglaries, and an overall 16% decrease in Part I Crimes from 2007.

One newly deployed crime fighting tool in the Lakewood Center Mall, the T3, allowed the deputies to maneuver quickly and easily through the crowded mall and parking lot. The T3's increased visibility and allowed deputies to cover a broader area and respond more quickly to any potential emergencies within and around the mall.

We found that not only did the T3s have a positive effect on lowering crime, there was a significant public relations benefit as kids and adults alike thought they were "cool" and would often ask deputies about them.

Another crime fighting tool utilized at the mall on a regular basis was the Advance License Plate Recognition vehicle. During the vehicle's use this past year at the mall, there were 96 total hits on vehicles that were either stolen, felony wanted vehicles, vehicles with lost or stolen license plates, vehicles with outstanding Los Angeles County warrants associated to it, or Amber Alerts.

A positive example of its effectiveness occurred most recently in December when there was a hit on a stolen vehicle in the mall parking lot. The information was quickly relayed to deputies working bike patrol. Those deputies were able to maneuver their bikes in and out of the busy holiday mall traffic and apprehend four suspects and recover the stolen vehicle.

Though we are proud of the decrease in crime at the mall, we cannot and do not take full credit for this decrease. A very close working relationship and partnership with Macerich Mall management and security personnel, which I might say are outstanding in patrolling the mall and in providing customer service, is the reason for this decrease.

The Lakewood Sheriff's Community Safety Center in the mall has been a huge benefit to the sheriff's department and the community alike, as it has hosted more than 2,500 attendees for either sheriff or city sponsored programs and training sessions throughout the year

Technology is forever changing our daily lives, as are the methods by which criminals victimize the law abiding members of our society, as well as the technology we use to suppress crime.

Currently, we are working with local entities and have a commitment in partnership to install Advanced Surveillance and Protection or "ASAP" cameras as they are known. These ASAP cameras feature a variety of technologies such as high definition digital video surveillance, acoustic gunshot detection, automatic license plate recognition, and other advanced wireless components integrated into a command center functioning with station dispatch. Other nearby

sheriff's stations have had great success with these cameras, and we anticipate installation of ASAP cameras at Cal Bowl and the Pacific Theaters sometime this year.

According to Operation Safe Streets personnel, I'm happy to report there are still no criminal street gangs who claim Lakewood as their "turf." It's very important for all of us to continue to work together to ensure a watchful eye is on the gang members from neighboring cities.

Team Lakewood will continue to work hard and hand in hand with our gang unit to ensure the safety of our residents, as well as in combating and finding those responsible for graffiti.

In closing, let me assure you the men and women of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department and Lakewood Station will continue to identify innovative ways to fight crime. We will continue building partnerships with the community. We will continue working hard in 2009.

We thank the leadership of the Lakewood City Council for helping us meet the challenges over the years.

On behalf of Sheriff Lee Baca and all of the men and women of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department and Lakewood Station in particular, thank you for allowing us to serve you as your law enforcement agency.

Please continue to join us in our efforts to keep Lakewood safe!

#