

**Mayor Todd Rogers' remarks at**  
**March 26, 2019 Lakewood City Council meeting**

I want to thank my City Council colleagues for this opportunity to once again serve them and my fellow Lakewood residents as mayor. I take the trust that you've placed in me very seriously.

I want to give a special thank-you to my predecessor, my colleague and my friend, Steve Croft.

Steve did a great job as mayor this past year.

He was a solid leader for us. As I said earlier tonight, Steve made a special effort to emphasize our community's longstanding appreciation for our veterans and military service members.

He also made us all more aware of the lifesaving gift and legacy that we can provide...when we're no longer here...by adding that pink dot for organ donation on our drivers license.

Thank you for that Steve...and like Steve said earlier, thank you Maria Jimenez for sharing your life story with our community...and for being such a powerful ambassador for organ donation.

I also want to thank my other city council colleagues...Diane DuBois, Ron Piazza and Jeff Wood. Each one of you brings a different set of life experiences and expertise to the job...and each one of you has given a tremendous amount of time, energy and dedication to our city.

And I want to thank my lovely wife Sally and my other family members here tonight. Thank you for your support for my work on the Lakewood City Council over the many years...and especially for the 12 busier months ahead.

As I like to remind people, we on the City Council are Lakewood residents too. We pay the same water rates and trash rates as everyone else....and if we're not careful...parking tickets too.

And so, when we make decisions that might sting a little bit financially, we feel it too, and we only do it because we're convinced it's really necessary and it's really in the best interests of our city and all of us as residents.

As I think most of the people in this room have heard by now, we're starting to face a budget deficit in Lakewood.

The causes include having \$2 million in redevelopment funding we are owed taken away by the state government every year...having rising fees imposed on us by the state-run retirement system...and seeing a flattening of sales tax revenues as more people shop online instead of at Lakewood stores.

We're not alone in facing this kind of structural budget deficit. Cities across our region and across California are facing the same sort of situation.

And while the causes for the deficit may not be our fault...the responsibility for solving it in Lakewood falls squarely on us as a City Council...and on all of us as city residents.

I don't want to get into a policy-wonkish kind of speech tonight, so I won't go into more of the details on our budget. But I will say that this is a serious issue for our city.

And I'll say that it's not the first time that Lakewood has faced financially challenging times.

And just like city councils and city residents before us made tough decisions and met those challenges, so will we. I'm confident of it.

There's one other challenge that I want to emphasize during my year as mayor...and that's public safety.

As many of us have noted over the years, being in a safe city and working together to maintain public safety is one of those community values that most, if not all, Lakewood residents cherish. I like to think that it's one of the core values most people think of when they see our city monument signs, proclaiming "Times Change, Values Don't."

But we don't live on an island here in Lakewood.

For better and worse, we're part of a big, busy urban area and state that has tons of wonderful attributes but also has its unfortunate share of criminal activity and public safety challenges.

As you know, I spent a 32 year professional career in law enforcement with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. So I know a few things about the challenges we face with public safety in our state, our region and our city.

For the past two years, I've served on our council's Public Safety Committee along with my colleague Ron Piazza.

And I've been honored to work with Ron, our city staff and our Sheriff's Department staff to zero in on some of our particular public safety challenges in Lakewood and to look for ways to make improvements here at the local level.

We recommended to our council colleagues that we fund an extra burglary suppression team. We also worked with our staff to expand the flow of information to residents on ways they could better protect their homes and vehicles from theft.

I want to build on that work and make Lakewood neighborhood security and safety a top priority during my year as mayor.

It will be a team effort...with my council colleagues...our Sheriff's Department partners...our staff...and our residents. We won't be able to solve all of California's public safety challenges

that affect us here, but we can...and should...do everything we can in our own corner of the world to keep Lakewood just as safe as we possibly can.

So thank-you to everyone here for what you already do day-in and day-out for public safety in Lakewood...as either a public safety professional, a city staff member, or a resident.

I look forward to working with you more in the year ahead on upholding one of our community's timeless values.

Another one of our community's timeless values is a fun one...and that's celebrating.

This year is Lakewood's 65th anniversary as a city, and I look forward to helping lead some of the festivities we have in store.

As you know, we save our big celebrations for our 10-year anniversaries, but even on this 5-year mark, we're going to have some fun. Stay tuned for details on when and where the fun will happen.

I think there might even be some anniversary fun in just a few minutes at the reception after the council meeting... but I'll keep that a secret.

The last time I was mayor, in 2014, Lakewood was named California's "Most Boring City." We decided to make lemonade out of that lemon by reminding people that sometimes "boring is a good thing." Like when you want a good night's sleep, you want to live in a quiet city that might even be called "boring" at midnight or 2 a.m.

I know it made quite the splash when Justin Timberlake announced that he was bringing sexy back. So I joked about making "Bringing Boring Back" my mayoral theme this year. Hollywood hasn't called me yet about that...

But over the past five years, I don't think Lakewood ever stopped being "boring...in a good way." Thank you Steve and our previous mayors for that!

We've remained boring when and where it's good to be boring...and playful and fun in just the right amounts too...for a community that prides itself on being a safe and family-friendly place in which to live, work and play.

In closing, I look forward to working with my City Council colleagues, our city staff and all our residents in the year ahead to meet the challenges we face and to keep Lakewood the great community that got started 65 years ago and that has many many great years ahead of it.

Thank you all very much.

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