

State of the City 2024

Written and presented by Tooele City Mayor Debbie Winn

Tooele City Council, department heads, staff and residents of Tooele City: I appreciate this opportunity to share with you the many improvements we have made in the City the past few years and also the challenges that we face in the future.

Tooele City Dowdle Puzzle

City Administration and Council have a responsibility to develop and preserve a sense of community and pride. People like to belong. Everybody needs a place to be from and a place to go home to. To recognize the 170th birthday of our City, we commissioned world-renowned folk artist Eric Dowdle to produce a painting of Tooele City. This beautiful artwork hangs in the entrance to City Hall. Puzzles of the painting were made and sold to the public to remind us of our past and the future of Tooele City. The puzzle creates a keepsake and opportunity to create memories for our residents as they sit down together and reminisce.

Employees

Every employee of each department of the City is important. Many of these people work behind the scenes, but their work is essential in providing services to our residents. Our Finance Department received a clean audit report for the financial records of the City, which demonstrates their ability to follow all laws and regulations.

The priority of our IT Department is to ensure that the services we provide remain safe and secure from digital threats and keep our data safe and secure.

The Human Resources Department provides a capable and competent workforce to serve the citizens. They oversee all aspects of employment and payroll.

The Attorney's Office brought more than 150 resolutions and ordinances to the City Council and our two assistant City attorneys handled more than 1,500 criminal cases during the last 12 months.

The City Recorder's Office has been instrumental in providing a live stream of City Council meetings on our YouTube channel in an effort to encourage more community participation in local government and provide transparency. This office processed 178 GRAMA requests last year and scanned and filed hundreds of documents including contracts, resolutions, ordinances, deeds, and other important papers so that they are easily accessible.

Thank you to all of the support staff in every department. The City could not provide the services to our residents if it were not for our exceptional employees.

New Website

Tooele City recently launched our new and improved website. The site now provides greater ease in finding information, additional transparency, and a more interactive functionality for our residents. You are now able to navigate on your mobile phones and devices with ease.

Economic Development

Economic Development efforts have continued to yield new job creation and increase revenue. Leitner-Poma, a facility that will manufacture ski-industry products, is under construction at the Tooele Business Park and will add 100 new employees. Central States Manufacturing, an employee stock option employer, will construct a metal roofing component manufacturing facility at the Peterson Industrial Depot, creating 90 new high paying jobs. Minova, a company specializing in mining equipment and technology, has also chosen to locate in Tooele City and will create 70 new jobs. Two new hotels are under construction and will add 178 additional rooms for visitors. Other buildings nearly complete include Burt Brothers Tires, Napa Auto Parts, Ford Performance Racing, and the new Salt Flats Sports & Fitness building, located next to Christensen & Griffith at the west end of Vine Street. We have received building permit applications for several businesses at the 1000 North Main location and are looking forward to progress on this site in the spring.

Business Licenses

Tooele City currently has over 2,000 businesses licensed in our City. We saw an increase in licenses this year: 180 new home-based businesses and 99 new commercial businesses.

Tooele Downtown

We continue to work with the Utah Main Street Program to secure grant funding for improvements in the downtown area. In March 2023, a National Historic District was approved for Downtown Tooele City which will allow property owners to apply for Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits to improve their properties. Just a few short weeks ago, the City Council approved a Landmark Ordinance where buildings in Tooele City can be designated as a Historic Landmark and preserve it permanently. With the recent donation of the Ritz Theatre by Aaron Peterson to the Tooele City Arts Council, this new ordinance will help to preserve this important part of Tooele's history.

New Town and Museum

We have recently completed a grant funded study of the Broadway New Town area which includes our Tooele Valley Museum. We will continue to make improvements at the museum and encourage visitors to the site to enjoy the history of our City.

Redevelopment Agency

Tooele City Redevelopment Agency efforts have proven to be highly successful in the past six years. With the recent sale of property owned by the RDA and the recruitment of new businesses, the RDA is able to pay off the entire bond debt that was acquired many years ago to fund the Tooele Technology College and several road and infrastructure projects. The Technical College has been a great asset to training individuals who are needed to fill the local job opportunities. They have already outgrown their facility and are in the process of expanding their space to nearly double what it is today. We will continue our efforts to expand business in our City to increase property tax and sales tax revenues to help offset the financial burden of our citizens.

Library

I'm sure that you will agree that the library is a vital part of our community and adds to the quality of life. We currently have 11,987 active card holders which is an increase of 1,485 new cards issued in 2023. Public computers were used over 19,000 times and 14,700 people visited the library and borrowed over 262,000 items.

Community Development

We continue to see strong growth and high activity in the construction of new housing units in our City. In 2023, the Building Division issued permits for 470 new single-family homes and our inspectors performed over 7,500 inspections. Planning efforts for our community are a constant and consistent effort between City staff, the Planning Commission, and the City Council who are all working very hard to provide guidance for the future of our community. We will do our very best to manage the growth and respond appropriately to the annual changes in law by the Utah State Legislature that require growth to continue.

Water

Water is one of the most important and life sustaining resources essential to the welfare of Tooele City citizens. It is easy to take for granted this important resource as we turn on our faucets and receive clean water without thinking twice about the important work of our water department staff. They work tirelessly to protect our water resources and ensure our drinking water meets the highest standards.

Wells

The Red Del Papa well and pump house are now completed and this water will be implemented into our system in the next few months. The one-million-gallon storage tank near the Berra well has been completed and we expect the pump house to be up and running by the

summer. We will continue our efforts to inform and encourage residents to conserve water. Our City engineer and public works director continually search for viable well sites and expect to begin test wells in the next few months. This past year we have completed an enormous task of fencing and protecting our well sites. We have recently received nine generators which will provide a backup power source in providing and pumping water in case of a power outage. This important project was funded through a \$980,000 state grant.

Reclamation Plant

The Water Reclamation Division or wastewater treatment plant, has begun construction of the new Headwork's Facility in order to increase productivity and to replace aging equipment and infrastructure. This \$8,000,000 facility was funded through proceeds from the America Rescue Plan Act, impact fees, and sewer enterprise funds. Final completion of this facility is expected by the end of this year. Our challenge for the future will be to secure the funding needed to make repairs on the 20-year-old facility and increase capacity as our City grows.

Streets

The streets division has implemented a tree trimming schedule for the park strips in areas where the trees are overgrown and impede the access for fire trucks, garbage trucks, and the street sweeper to properly respond to the needs of residents. Several road projects were completed this year including portions of North 7th Street, 1220 South, Lisa Way and Clifford Drive. Each of these projects also included new culinary water line and storm drain replacements. Storm water improvements were made to Southwest Drive. Road maintenance and striping will be added to the schedule this year along with road widening and improvement projects. Tooele City was awarded a \$2,100,000 grant to complete a road widening and walking trail project on Droubay Road between Vine Street and Smelter Road. This project is out to bid and is expected to begin construction in the early spring.

Sidewalks

Tooele City implemented the 50/50 sidewalk program in January 2022 to work with property owners to replace damaged sidewalks for the safety of pedestrians and for improved neighborhood appearance. We recently installed a large section of sidewalk on west Vine Street to provide a safe route to school for hundreds of students. This project was 100% grant funded.

Police Department

I am extremely grateful and proud of the men and women who serve as Tooele City Police officers. They are well trained men and women who put their lives on the line each time they begin their shift. They respond to extremely difficult situations every day to protect the lives and safety of our citizens.

During the last 12 months, our officers were dispatched to 17,570 calls; that is an average of 48 calls per day.

Traffic accidents increased from 546 in 2022 to 631 in 2023. Written citations also increased to 3,772, which is up 49% from last year. Adult arrests increased by 8% while juvenile arrests increased 39%.

The police department received 4,420 GRAMA requests, which is up nearly 200% from last year. It takes a tremendous amount of staff time, not only for the police department but the attorney's office, to respond to these requests.

Police Recognition

I am honored tonight to recognize three Tooele City Police Officers: Officer Andrew Wood, Officer Mike Madrid, and Sargent Chris Thompson. On Saturday, June 3, 2023, these exceptional officers rescued a 12-year-old girl who was trapped in a sinking car in the Settlement Canyon reservoir. Although the young girl was unconscious as she was pulled from the reservoir, these officers were able to revive her and she has made a complete recovery. Please join me in expressing our thanks to these heroes.

First Responders

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my deep appreciation to all first responders in Tooele City who diligently and courageously serve our community every day. They are all heroes in every sense of the word. Not all calls have a happy ending. In the past year these brave individuals have experienced two tragic accidents that resulted in the untimely death of two young men. Many individuals experienced the chaos and trauma on November 3, 2023, as a runaway truck coming down Main Street resulted in many personal injuries, the destruction of numerous vehicles, and the fire and damage to the Tooele Motor Company building. Let us continue to support and pray for those who were injured, our first responders, and the many volunteers on the street who assisted with the injured that day.

Fire Department

We have another group of heroes in our community that I am extremely proud of. The Tooele City Volunteer Fire Department is one of a kind for the state of Utah. There is no other municipality of our size that is still operated through volunteer firefighters. Our 55-member team of volunteers respond 24/7, 365 days a year to fire calls, alarms, vehicle accidents, and other emergency calls. They were dispatched and responded to 481 calls in 2023. These men and women train on a weekly basis and many have completed certifications for Firefighter 1 and 2 as well as instructor and officer training certifications.

Firefighter Recognition

I would like to introduce to you the two longest serving active firefighters currently serving on our department: John Curwen and Ron Baum. John is a past fire chief and current battalion chief of the department and has been responding to fires for over 43 years. Ron has been active on the department for over 40 years and has been the heart and soul of the fire prevention program for school children his entire firefighter career. Please join me in thanking John and Ron for their many years of service.

I would also like to express my thanks to all of the members of our fire department who serve unselfishly while risking their own lives in the service of their fellow man.

Dow James Memorial

In August of 2023, a Memorial was placed at the Dow James Building to honor and remember Danny James and Loren Dow, two residents of our City who lost their lives while fighting a wildland fire near Stockton in 1975. The memorial was funded by generous donations from the community. I especially want to thank the members of the fire department that put forth their time and effort to complete the concrete work in preparation for the placement of the memorial. This memorial will stand as a tribute to remember all who serve as first responders.

Fire Station #3

We were excited to break ground last October to begin construction of Fire Station #3. The building is expected to be completed by the end of the year. This new facility will enable our firefighters to respond efficiently and swiftly to the north area of our City as well as the industrial depot. The building has been designed to accommodate the future needs of the department as our City continues to grow.

Fire Inspectors

Our certified fire inspectors completed nearly 1,300 inspections in the past 18 months reducing fire risk for local businesses. Inspectors were able to inform and educate these businesses on the importance of fire safety, not only to protect their businesses, but the safety of their employees and patrons.

Parks and Recreation

Recreation is a vital part of providing a good quality of life. Tooele City maintains 15 park facilities which can be enjoyed by all residents and reserved for special occasions. Our Community Engagement division offers free family activities twice each month and opportunities to meet your neighbors through the year-round neighborhood block parties. Use of

the Dow James Building offers indoor walking, basketball, pickleball and is a great place for family gatherings. The former teen center located on 7th Street, is now called the Tooele City Community Center. This facility can be reserved for family, neighborhood, or small group activities. Hop scotch, shuffle board, 4 square, corn hole, connect 4, checkers, gaga ball as well as roller skates and blades, scooters and small balance bikes are some of the many activities that are available at the center. Residents can even play a giant chess game that was donated by Rocky Mountain Power!

Wigwam and Settlers Park

We have completed the pavilion and restroom at the Wigwam Park and provided a trail head for the new three-mile Skyline Ridge trail constructed by Tooele County.

A new restroom and parking area have been completed at Settlers Park. We will continue to improve and provide the recreational facilities that are used extensively by youth recreation programs that are an essential part of our community.

Tree City USA, Oquirrh Hills and Aquatic Center

During 2023, Tooele City became a member of Tree City USA. This year we will offer residents the opportunity to purchase trees at a discounted rate and we will continue to plant trees at our parks and golf course. Established in 1949, the Oquirrh Hills Golf Course will celebrate their 75th birthday this year. This 18-hole course is known throughout Utah as one of the very best municipal courses statewide. The Pratt Aquatic Center celebrated their 20th anniversary in 2023. As part of the celebration, the lap pool was named in recognition of Mel Roberts to honor his many years of service at the pool.

England Acres Park and Trail

I am thrilled to announce the completion of the second phase of the England Acres Park as well as the one-mile England Acres paved trail. This trail begins at the corner of Droubay and Smelter Road and continues along the FEMA channel and through the park. The new amenities at the park include a fabulous new playground, pavilion with restrooms, additional parking, and a dog park that will be open in the spring.

Plans are underway to complete the remaining areas of the park which will include a basketball court that is being built in memory of Jayden Davis. We are working with his family on this project as a way to honor Jayden and keep his memory alive. Our thoughts and prayers continue to be with his family.

Volunteers and Veterans

People are what make a community. I am proud of the many volunteers who give of their time and talents to serve others. Each month during our City Council Meetings, we recognize those who serve our community with the Mayor's Community Recognition Award. This evening I would like to recognize Mr. Fred Barker. Fred is a veteran of the US Army. He has walked in nearly every Tooele City 4th of July parade that I can remember. He also participates in every military honor guard ceremony held at the Tooele City Cemetery. He displays his military collection at the annual Memorial Day and Veterans Day ceremonies. Please join me in thanking Fred and all of our awesome volunteers and veterans in our community who continue to serve others.

Partnerships

Collaboration, partnerships, and working together as a team is the only way to accomplish great things. I am grateful for the opportunity to work with the City Council and our tremendous staff. I am proud of each employee and thank them for their commitment to make our City better.

The council members and I continue our commitment to being transparent and accountable. We are committed to making our community a place that residents can be proud of.

Proud of Our History

Residents of Tooele City can be proud of our history. We recognize and honor the diversity of our residents. Whether your grandparents lived in Tooele City or whether you are a first-time resident, you are an important part of our community.

Tooele City- A Hometown to be Proud of. I hope that each of you will feel as I do about our City and take pride in where you live.

I am honored to serve as your Mayor. Thank you for your support in my effort to continue serving this City that I am so proud of. I am blessed to work with dedicated employees who understand the importance of public service. May God continue to bless our community.
Thank you