

Introduction - Mayor Barney

It is my honor, as your Mayor, to introduce the 2016 Queen Creek State of the Town. This evening is a special opportunity to present the successes that we shared as a Town last year. Thank you for joining us tonight, as many of the accomplishments that we will discuss are in large part due to our wonderful community.

The Town is fortunate to have positive relationships with our neighboring communities, and with the various levels of government. I would like to recognize several important individuals who are joining us this evening:

- Andy Biggs, Arizona Senate President, Legislative District 12
- Denny Barney, Maricopa County Supervisor
- John Lewis, Town of Gilbert Mayor
- Kevin Hartke and Rene Lopez, Chandler City Council
- Kevin Thompson, Mesa City Council
- Mark Linder, Judah Notivio and Kenneth Brague, all members of the Queen Creek Unified School District Governing Board
- Kristina Reese, Higley Unified School District Governing Board President
- Patrick Banger, Gilbert Town Manager
- Jane Morris, PMGA
- Brian O'Neill, PMGA
- Ken Hall, CAG
- Members of our Town boards and commissions
- Citizen Leadership Institute participants and graduates
- Representatives from the Communiversitry and institutes of higher education
- And our other valued community partners
- I would like to take a moment to thank the families of our Town Council members... thank you all for giving up your family time to allow our council to serve this wonderful community.

It is a privilege to serve as your Mayor, and to share these exciting accomplishments; 2015 was another wonderful year of strategic growth for this community. I feel fortunate to serve with this Town Council. We have faced important issues over the year, and I believe we have done our best to make the best decisions for Queen Creek. The success of this community, in my opinion, has to do with the people. The Town Council and I appreciate the input we receive from residents; your feedback truly does help shape the future. I would also like to thank our staff. We are so fortunate to have dedicated, passionate and

professional staff working for the Town. The employees are instrumental in carrying out the day-to-day activities of the Town, and they do so with a positive attitude and to the best of their abilities.

Retaining talented and impactful employees is a challenging task, especially for local governments. We simply cannot, and would not, compete with the incentives offered by the private sector. Which is why we are particularly proud of our recent designation by the *Phoenix Business Journal* as one of the 2015 Best Places to Work. More than 600 companies submitted for the honor and 115 were recognized, with the Town being the only government entity receiving the recognition. Our organization's leadership is responsible for creating a positive working environment, which in turn attracts the most qualified, professional employees to serve our residents. I want to extend a special thank you to our Town Manager, John Kross. It is through his leadership, philosophies and guidance that the Town has received this important honor.

The Town received another important designation with regard to our mid-decade census efforts. The Town, along with six other valley cities, worked with the U.S. Census Bureau to update official population counts. State-shared revenues are distributed based on official population counts. As Queen Creek continues to grow, it was imperative that we update our population number to receive our fair share of revenues to pay for the operations needed to accommodate these new residents. Through the hard work of staff and an effective marketing and outreach campaign, Queen Creek was the first community to successfully complete the mid-decade census. Not only were we successful in completing the count, the Town will receive an additional \$1.8 million in state-shared revenues annually as a result of the updated population count.

Having more residents in Queen Creek is an opportunity for us to increase our connection with the community. The Town developed and launched a new mobile app, called Experience QC, for residents and visitors. The free app is focused on lifestyle, including shopping, special events, outdoor adventures and more. We have also expanded our use of social media by adding a Town presence on Instagram, Pinterest, Nextdoor and Periscope. All social media sites provide an opportunity for the Town to inform and engage with residents. We are able to effectively communicate information related to participation in local government meetings, services and programs, traffic closures and special events as well as providing emergency information. We are excited that the community is embracing this type of ongoing conversation on social media as we surpassed a milestone of 10,000 followers on the Town's Facebook

page. The Town Council and I appreciate all of the questions and comments posted on these pages, and are happy to see the interest in activities and events taking place in our community.

Expanded growth and programs requires that the Town is fiscally responsible. Another major milestone in 2015 was the bond rating upgrade that we received. One of the three major providers of credit ratings, Fitch Ratings, completed a routine review of the Town's credit rating and revised the Town's outlook from stable to positive. The change was attributed to the Town's reserve levels and conservative spending patterns that lead to further private sector investment in the community and jobs. The Council and I are committed to the conservative fiscal approach that will keep Queen Creek strong and sustainable for generations to come.

The updated Corporate Strategic Plan was another accomplishment of 2015. It is a five-year roadmap that includes broad-based focus areas with underlying goals and timelines. The document provides policy direction to the Town Manager through priorities outlined by the Town Council. Five strategic priorities are identified in the plan, and will be used to shape this year's State of the Town. Vice Mayor Oliphant and Council member Wheatley will cover the first strategic goal, effective government. An effective government is aware of the needs and services of a community. The following are examples of how the Town incorporated innovative practices, introduced new technology, and other exciting partnerships.

Effective Government – Vice Mayor Oliphant

Thank you Mayor Barney. It is exciting to share examples of how the Town is an effective government.

In 2015, there were many advancements to Town technologies that made systems more productive and efficient for our residents and employees. An application was developed to allow staff in the water department to access all of the water system data remotely through iPads and smartphones. This new technology, the ESRI Collector app, allows staff to be more efficient, reduce long-term program costs by equipping them with the leading edge tools to do their jobs with direct access to information in the field. An online irrigation program was also developed to allow residents to sign up electronically for irrigation services. As technology continues to advance, the expectation to have electronic options is also increasing, and the Town is committed to providing those electronic services whenever possible. The program will be expanded so that residents can receive real-time notifications of the irrigation process.

In another effort to effectively use technology, an electronic mapping of the wastewater system was completed to allow a more accurate accounting of the quantity of sewer lines in the system and water technology improvements that save water for the community. The electronic mapping will also result in improved maintenance plans and remote access to the sewer system by Town staff. Through technology advancements, we were able to save an estimated 1.2 million gallons of water. Smart clock technology saves in landscape water. The Town's watering system uses real-time communication with weather stations and local rain gauges to measure rainfall and other environmental factors to maximize irrigation water efficiency.

A major advancement in technology also includes the Virtual Desktop Initiative. This program saves taxpayer dollars by extending the life of the Town's hardware infrastructure, increasing the efficiency and speed of software upgrades, and making the Town's computer systems more secure and sustainable.

Technology advancements are often in line with best practices, which is the case in the Town's paperless initiative. With a goal of being paperless by 2020, the Town continues to move forward with reducing the number of copies and printed pages. The Town reduced paper usage by more than 21 percent, which is approximately 200,000 pieces of paper, or more than 40 boxes of paper.

Through the program, Town staff are working more effectively and efficiently with electronic resources. For example, work orders and receipts are completed in the field, agendas and handouts for staff meetings are posted on the Town's internal websites, and packets for Town Council and Town Planning & Zoning Commission meetings are posted online rather than printed out. And I can tell you, some of those packets are pretty large, so it's exciting to have these documents easily accessible online rather than printing out all of those maps and photos!

In an effort to ensure best practices, we approved a comprehensive update to the zoning ordinance and design standards. Established to guide development within the Town, the documents were modernized to include consistent language, clarity of regulations, graphic representations, and were reformatted to improve the organization and length of the overall document.

Increasing investment in the community is a key goal of the Town Council. To this end, we recently approved a revised Economic Development Strategic Plan. The robust document provides a framework to strategically guide investment and jobs by the private sector in the community. It includes key

initiatives and a series of implementation steps along with performance measures. The revised plan will strengthen the Town's financial condition and increase the number of employment opportunities for our residents. The Town continues to partner with the Queen Creek Chamber of Commerce, and supported their relocation to the municipal campus this past year. The Chamber helps promote, develop and retain area businesses, and their new location will enhance our ability to work together. Another development for the Chamber is the new partner that shares their space. Gangplank Queen Creek, a collaborative work space, was established to provide space for people to work, create and collaborate.

The Town instituted two new best practices that resulted in significant cost savings. By repairing Town vehicles in-house approximately \$63,500 was saved in parts and labor. Additionally, switching to bulk engine oils saved fifty-seven cents per gallon, a 7.5 percent reduction in engine oil cost. Using bulk engine oils is also a more effective, easier way to disperse oil and allows for more accurate record keeping practices.

I'm proud to share that the Town received several awards related to best practices and innovation. The Excellence in Financial Reporting Award was received from the Government Finance Officers' Association for our annual financial statement and budget.

Our 25th Anniversary campaign received a Copper Anvil award from the Public Relations Society of American Phoenix chapter. Additionally, we received a number of awards from the City-County Communications & Marketing Association, known as 3CMA. The Shop QC campaign, Pocket Park for Pups signage and Battle of the Badge competition each received an Award of Excellence; the Splash Pad signage received a Silver Circle Award; and the Town's historical documentary, "From Rittenhouse to the QC", received a SAVVY Award, the highest distinction from 3CMA. These awards are more than just pretty statues, they demonstrate that Queen Creek is setting new standards, performing above and beyond the average community, and that Queen Creek residents are receiving the best possible programs and services.

Now I'll turn it over to Council member Wheatley, who will cover how our innovative practices, quality employees and partnerships are helping the Town be an effective government.

Quality Employees – Council member Wheatley

Thank you Vice Mayor Oliphant. Our professional staff continues to find innovative ways to save time and money. For instance, our Development Services Department has held their staffing level to below 50 percent of the level it had before the recession. Despite limited staffing, the team has increased work levels and improved processes and efficiencies. This is especially crucial because the number of permits issued in 2015 were nine times the number that were issued in 2011, which marked the depth of the recession.

As a Town Council, we approved modifications to the planning approval process by delegating some authority to the Planning commission. The change reduces the process time, resulting in savings for both the Town and the development community. The improvement allows investment to happen more efficiently, increasing job and shopping opportunities for residents. While we feel the change has been beneficial both to the Town and the community, the Planning Commission has also expressed their satisfaction with the new process. We appreciate the Planning Commission taking on the added responsibility, which positively impacts our residents and the development community. With the increased duties, the Planning meetings are now recorded and streamed on the Town's uStream channel.

The Town is always looking for opportunities to connect with the community and keep residents informed. An innovative program implemented in 2015, designed to keep residents up-to-date on important topics, was the Facebook Question and Answer segment. Three sessions were successfully held in 2015 with Public Works discussing the Town's Capital Improvement Program, Economic Development discussing new businesses and developments coming to Queen Creek and the Traffic Engineering Division discussing traffic signals, traffic coordination and bike lanes. Who knew Mohamed would be one of the Town's Facebook stars!

As Mayor Barney shared, qualified, passionate and professional employees are at the core of the Town's success. As a council, we feel it is vital to provide opportunities for staff to continue to improve as professionals to better serve the residents of Queen Creek. In June, two Queen Creek Fire and Medical firefighters advanced their certifications. Calvin Millyard and Brandon Athey are now Certified Emergency Paramedics. We now have 19 certified paramedics, representing 70 percent of the entire department!

Additionally, five employees successfully completed Arizona State University's Certified Public Manager Program. Special Projects Manager Amy Shackelford, Senior Human Resources Analyst Michele Brown, Technology Supervisor Mike Black, Financial Service Analyst Traci Polk and Fire Services Specialist Angie White enhanced their leadership skills through the program's education and activities. In an effort to help more Town employees further their education as it directly relates to their employment with the Town, a partnership was initiated with Rio Salado and the Queen Creek Community. Town employees have the opportunity to obtain a Public Administration certificate upon completion of six courses, with over 35 employees attending the initial classes. The courses cover important topics including public policy, finance administration, organizational behavior and human resources, all related to the public sector. We are excited to offer this opportunity to staff, because having educated, professional employees means better service for our residents.

The Town also launched a successful Mentorship Program that will assist in the Town's succession planning efforts. The program aims to acclimate new employees to the Town's culture, provide a clear road map of expectations, identify employees who possess the necessary skills to move up, develop high performing employees, increase employee morale and ease knowledge transfer. Mentors gain personal and professional fulfillment while the Town benefits from improved work relationships, increased productivity and employee retention. The first graduating class included nine mentor/mentee pairs. I am so pleased that we are able to offer this program, and look forward to future graduating classes.

The Town is fortunate to have so many wonderful partners, both locally and regionally. Successful partnerships have endless potential to enhance the services provided by the Town. Two notable collaborations from 2015 include Queen Creek Unified School District and our dedicated volunteers. The Town saved over \$31,000 on 93,000 gallons of fuel through a partnership with the Queen Creek Unified School District. The Town and the school district worked together to purchase fuel in bulk for public vehicles.

We also benefited from various volunteer efforts throughout the year. Individuals and groups donated over 81,000 hours of service in 2015, with an estimated value of \$1.8 million. Volunteers assist with the Town's youth sports programs, the senior program, special events and Public Works projects. We truly appreciate the time, passion and expertise of our volunteers. Thank you to each and everyone one of you who contributed your time to help make Queen Creek a wonderful community.

Being an effective government includes so many details. There are many ways we work towards that goal every day. Thank you, Mayor Barney, for allowing Vice Mayor Oliphant and I to share some of the examples of how we strive to provide an effective government for our residents.

Mayor Barney

A government cannot be effective if it is not safe. Queen Creek has historically had low crime rates, and it is this Council's highest priority that we continue to be a safe community as we grow. We have highly qualified emergency service personnel working to make safety a priority in this community. Council member Turley will share our accomplishments related to a safe community.

Safe Community – Council member Turley

Mayor Barney, thank you so much. We are truly blessed to have the Queen Creek Fire & Medical Department serving our residents. Not only do I feel safe and secure knowing they are my first responders, but their excellence was further validated by earning Premier Provider designation from the Arizona Department of Health Services during 2015.

Not only do they work really hard in their service, they also work hard to ensure they have the best equipment to serve our residents, and one of the ways they do this is through innovative funding sources. Thanks to their efforts and the generosity of the Gila River Indian Community, the Town received \$200,000 grant which covered the cost of a fully equipped Community Para Medicine vehicle.

The Town was also awarded a grant from the Firehouse Subs Foundation to replace an aging thermal imager. A thermal imager is a life-saving device that facilitates the rapid recovery of those who may be lost in low visibility environments and also may be trapped.

They also purchased new cardiac monitors. These monitors are the latest technology and allow our paramedics to acquire and transmit vital information directly to the hospital physicians, decreasing the time between identifying cardiac emergencies and definitive treatment at the hospital.

A new command vehicle was also placed into service to more efficiently deploy on scene resources during emergencies through improved communication capabilities. The improved mechanical reliability and increased fuel economy will result in lower operating costs.

A safe community also requires prevention. The Queen Creek Fire and Medical Department offers a Child Passenger Safety Seat Program to teach parents and caregivers how to properly install child safety seats. 46 inspections were completed last year, meaning 46 children were ensured safety in their car seats.

Residents were also engaged through the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) basic training course hosted by our fire department. 7 individuals completed the 20-hour training so that in an emergency situation, they will know how to respond. CERT educates citizens in giving critical support to our first responders, providing immediate assistance to victims and organizing volunteers at a disaster site.

43 community members also completed a free weather spotter training last year. The Queen Creek Fire and Medical department partnered with the National Weather Service to offer the training which is part of the Skywarn program. Additionally, the fire department hosted a railcar safety class provided by the Department of Homeland Security, which was attended by firefighters and police officers from across the state.

In the midst of the various emergency response programs, advancements in technology, and ongoing education and training, the Fire Department also completed an update to the Fire and Medical Master Plan, which was adopted by the Town Council.

Our Queen Creek deputies were also busy keeping the community safe in 2015. District six of the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office is located here in Queen Creek's Town Center, and dedicated to our community. In early 2015, MCSO District six moved onto the Town's municipal campus. This move came with increased staffing, a fifth patrol beat, an additional sergeant, a detective, two community service deputies and a crime analyst. Other additions to the Queen Creek district included ATVs, bicycles, TomCars and foot patrols.

In effort to be more accessible to residents, MCSO Queen Creek deputies participated in more than 2,000 community outreach activities, events and field based community relations activities. The department also created 10 new neighborhood watch programs.

I know we are all concerned about traffic safety. In an effort to further address this concern, MCSO Queen Creek created a comprehensive traffic management plan with components of enforcement, education, engineering, technology and community outreach.

District six is also increasing safety with the use of body worn cameras. All sworn deputies and detectives assigned to Queen Creek will wear the cameras to help minimize risk, lower use of force incidents, reduce complaints, and increase transparency.

Beyond our first responders, there are other ways we keep our community safe. The Town has a partnership with the Town of Gilbert for household hazardous waste. Through the partnership, 258 vouchers were issued, resulting in over 4.7 tons of hazardous material diverted from households and the landfill. The Town's cooking oil collection campaign diverted over 100 gallons of cooking oil from the landfill and sewer system.

The Town maintained more than 700 acres of public street right-of-ways. The maintenance included the abatement of trash, debris, and weeds, to protect the safe use of the easements by the public and maintain roadway aesthetics. To ensure safe roadways, approximately \$1.7 million was spent on pavement maintenance of over 5.5 million square feet of roadway.

Mayor Barney, as you know, safety is a priority for this council, and we will continue to work towards a safe community. Thank you for allowing me to share some of our accomplishments related to safety in 2015.

Mayor Barney

The next strategic priority is a secure future, which requires strengthening the Town's financial condition, protecting the environment, developing a prosperous local economy and preserving our water supply. Council member Brown will share examples of how Queen Creek is ensuring this is a wonderful community for many generations to come.

Secure Future – Council member Brown

Thank you Mayor Barney. Water is a vital aspect of securing our future success, and we need help from our residents. During 2015, five water saving workshops were provided at no cost for utility customers. With topics like water-wise gardening and rainwater harvesting, the workshops were well attended and provided residents with valuable information that will help them save water and money. Through a partnership with SRP, residents also had the opportunity to participate in a shade tree program, receiving free desert-adapted shade trees along with planting recommendations. This is an excellent program, as shade trees help reduce home cooling costs and improve air quality without using a lot of

water. Residents were encouraged to learn more about using water wisely last year during water awareness month. This year, we will celebrate water awareness month in April, and I encourage residents to visit QueenCreek.org/Water to learn more about how they can provide a secure future through low water use, save money on their bills, and enter to win exciting prizes!

Using water wisely isn't the only way we can provide a secure future for our children and our children's children. Recycling and education are also crucial to these efforts. More than 41 tons of material was diverted from the landfill through the Town's environmental efforts like Bench-the-Bag, a plastic bag recycling program, Earth Day and America Recycles Day events, Christmas Tree recycling program, a textile collection program and e-waste collections. An additional 167 tons of recyclable material was diverted from the landfill by our residents at the Neighborhood Recycling Drop-off Center throughout the year. We are working hard to educate our youth about how recycling works, and the impact it has on the environment through an educational program we call Preserve the QC. Through a partnership with the Environmental Education Exchange, 51 presentations were provided to over 1,500 Queen Creek area middle school students. The innovative program received the Excellence in Recycling Award from the Arizona Recycling Coalition.

Long-term planning for land use will also be an important factor in providing a secure future. We recently approved two significant long-term planning documents, the North and South Specific Area Plans. These plans define the two primary areas of undeveloped land remaining in Town. They also provide an outline for future development, transportation, open space and economic sustainability. The North Specific Area Plan focuses on industrial land while the South Specific Area Plan focuses on preserving, and expanding the agritainment corridor, anchored by Schnepf Farms and the Queen Creek Olive Mill. The unique characteristics and small-town feel that make Queen Creek a special community are preserved in both plans with residential development emphasizing high-quality design. Additionally, there are buffers from other uses, and we've worked hard to ensure design compatibility across all development to make each area a signature characteristic within the Town.

Having quality plans in place for future land use is vital as the community continues to grow. The value of construction permits grew 16 percent, from over \$366 million dollars in 2014 to \$436 million dollars in 2015. Permits for single family homes increased nearly 31 percent, from just under 700 in 2014, to nearly 1,000 in 2015. Growth not only serves as a strong economic base, it also indicates that the Town is a desirable community, and as a Council, we have to plan strategically for the continued growth.

In collaboration with Visit Mesa, we are expanding our domestic and international presence in the tourism community. We all know what wonderful opportunities we have here in Queen Creek, and we have been making efforts to share those opportunities with over 100 major tour operators in England, Germany, China and Taiwan. Not only does the increased exposure benefit our local businesses, tourism also serves as an economic driver for the community at large.

Another sign of economic growth in the community is when a business chooses to relocate or expand to Queen Creek. We were excited to see Harkins open a 14-screen theater in the Queen Creek Marketplace last year, and we were equally excited to celebrate Thompson Thrift breaking ground on phase I of the QC District in Town Center. This significant commercial development is located at the southeast corner of Rittenhouse and Ellsworth Loop roads and will provide additional shopping and retail options for our community. The QC District will enhance Queen Creek's Town Center and pave the way for additional growth in the region.

How businesses choose to locate within the Town can be a long and complicated process; each business has criteria and requirements that are analyzed prior to deciding on a location. To help reach even more potential businesses, the Town works closely with the Greater Phoenix Economic Council (or GPEC) to attract quality businesses to the area. The Town's Economic Development Staff are recognized as GPEC Certified Ambassadors. The Ambassadors are an elite group that serve as an extension of the GPEC staff in their outreach and engagement efforts, benefitting Queen Creek through additional exposure and connections.

A secure future cannot be realized without being financially wise. As your Town Council, we work hard to make fiscally responsible decisions with residents' tax dollars that balance the current and future needs of our community. In 2015, we paid off part of the outstanding debt related to Ellsworth Loop Road. As a result, the Town will see savings of \$2.2 million. We are also the first member of the Public Safety Personnel Retirement System (PSPRS) to adopt a Pension Funding Policy. This policy resulted in the Town paying off \$1.5 million in unfunded pension liability for firefighters, saving \$140,000 annually.

Thank you, Mayor Barney, for the opportunity to share how we are working towards a secure future for our current and future residents here in Queen Creek.

Mayor Barney

Having quality streets, lights, utilities and parks are essential components of having superior infrastructure, our next strategic priority. Council member Benning will share the exciting accomplishments that are helping us achieve these goals.

Superior Infrastructure – Council member Benning

Thank you Mayor Barney. Infrastructure is the core of a successful community, from delivering water to treating waste and developing parks to improving our roads. The past year has been an extremely busy time; making improvements in all of these areas.

In 2014, the Town acquired the privately owned H2O Water Company to help ensure that there will be ample water supply and uninterrupted water services within the Town. This purchase also serves to assure that the Town's drinking water continues to meet all state and federal quality standards.

In 2015, we enhanced the connectivity between H2O and the Town's water systems by installing 1,200 feet of water line on Combs Road. We completed the latest update of the Town's Water Master Plan to provide strategic direction and ensure we are planning to provide superior water infrastructure for our current residents and for generations to come.

We also developed and implemented a Water Storage Agreement and Licensing Agreement with the Roosevelt Water Conservation District so the Town will be able to begin to take its proportionate share of reclaimed water and earn long-term storage credits. Studies indicate that this will save our community approximately \$20 million.

Just as water is an essential service for residents, having a seamless trash and recycling program is also an important public service. In 2015, the curbside trash and recycling program added nearly 750 household accounts, bringing the total to over 10,100 accounts.

Beyond essential services, superior infrastructure also includes improvements necessary for a healthy and happy community. Queen Creek has a rich heritage rooted in the farming and equestrian lifestyle. We added 20 new RV parking stalls at Horseshoe Park & Equestrian Centre to increase our ability to serve our event clientele.

And we opened two new miles of the Queen Creek Wash Trail from Desert Mountain Park east to the Crismon Road alignment. This new section of trail is designed to accommodate pedestrians, bikes, and

equestrians with the appropriate separation. We are excited about this added connectivity because the five-mile trail now links many more amenities and neighborhoods. We were able to complete this project in an extremely cost effective manner as a joint partnership with the Federal Highway Administration and the Arizona Department of Transportation. The \$1.2 million project was funded primarily through grants, with the Town funding only \$30,000 of that total.

One of the most exciting accomplishments in 2015 is our commitment to improving the roads. Building and improving roads is a tedious process requiring study, design, funding, and finally construction. This process can take from one to three years and involves gathering input from the experts as well as the residents. Over the past ten years the Town Council invested \$115 million in road improvements and traffic signals.

This year we have completed several major road improvements such as widening Ocotillo Road over the Union Pacific Railroad from two to four lanes; and widening Ellsworth Road from Ocotillo Road north to Rittenhouse Road.

We have also started construction on many new projects such as widening Rittenhouse Road from Queen Creek Marketplace northwest to Sossaman Road. This project includes street lights, sidewalks, bike lanes and realignment of the Hawes intersection.

We are finishing up the widening of Rittenhouse Road just in time for start the Ellsworth Road widening project. This project includes half-street improvements along the west side of Ellsworth Road from Ryan Road north to the Germann intersection. A third southbound lane is being installed along with a center turn lane, sidewalks, and landscaping. We anticipate this project being complete in the fall.

We are improving the intersection of Sossaman and Chandler Heights; we are widening the intersection, adding left and right turn lanes, upgraded the traffic signals, and making drainage improvements.

And we are beginning construction of a new two lane road extending Ocotillo Road west from Power Road to Recker Road. Ocotillo will be the first road in Queen Creek that connects our east and west boundaries! This new section is anticipated to be complete this summer.

As I mentioned, improving and building roads is not a quick process, and it shouldn't be. Roads are a large investment, so we need to ensure they are done correctly, and as safely as possible. We currently have several projects near completion of the design phase, and will begin construction later this year.

Ocotillo Road from Ellsworth Loop to Heritage Loop will be expanded from a two lane road to a five lane road with bike lanes, sidewalks, and access management controls in place.

Ocotillo Road will see half-street improvements on the south side from Crismon Road to 218th Place, including sidewalk and bike lanes which will significantly improve the flow of traffic near the Queen Creek High School.

And the intersection of Ellsworth Loop Road and Queen Creek Road will be realigned to modify the compound curve and make the intersection safer. At the same time, we will be making improvements to Old Ellsworth Road from Barnes Parkway north to the San Tan Historical Society to provide parking, a cul-de-sac, and landscaping so it does not appear to be a shortcut to the Loop Road.

We continue to work with the Maricopa County Department of Transportation in partnership on projects which when constructed in the not too distant future, will greatly benefit our residents such as widening of Riggs Road from Power Road east to Ellsworth Road; construction of a new section of Riggs Road from Ellsworth east to Meridian; and demolition and reconstruction of the Rittenhouse Road bridge over the Queen Creek Wash.

Finally, we recognize that road construction can be inconvenient, and frustrating for our residents, so we have developed and implemented an informational campaign to educate and inform residents about all of this road construction. The Better Roads Ahead campaign is designed to last several years, and contains messaging that can be customized throughout the life of each improvement project. It also serves as a reminder to our residents that the dust will settle, and that better roads are ahead for Queen Creek!

As you can see, there are a lot of infrastructure improvements going on in our community. Queen Creek is getting new utilities, new park plans, and new roads. We will continue to improve and look forward to serving our residents with superior infrastructure.

Thank you, Mayor Barney.

Mayor Barney

As you can see, there are many components necessary to have a quality Town. While it is important to be an effective government, provide a safe community, ensure a secure future and develop superior infrastructure, it is also important for residents to enjoy a quality lifestyle. Council member Barnes will share the various events, opportunities and businesses that are helping Queen Creek provide a quality life for residents.

Quality Lifestyle – Council member Barnes

Thank you Mayor Barney, I am excited to share what we have done in the past year to help enhance the quality of life we enjoy here in Queen Creek!

Being healthy is a good start to enjoying a quality lifestyle. The Queen Creek Fire & Medical Department partnered with Chandler Regional Medical Center to host a flu shot clinic, where more than 160 people received their flu shot at no cost to the public or the Town. Additionally, we are working hard to help educate the community about fire safety. We reached residents of all ages these events that were held throughout the year, as well as speaking with students in their classrooms. In 2015, nearly 1,600 adults and 4,100 children received fire safety information.

When we think of all the things that make living here so much fun, our minds immediately go to our parks, trails, delicious restaurants, our fantastic movie theater, and more. But in order to enjoy the fun, it certainly helps if we are saving some money on essentials! In 2015, the Town was able to cancel the sewer rate increase that was previously approved to take effect in 2015 and 2016. The cancellation equates to savings of approximately \$105 annually per home, based on the average monthly sewer bill for a single-family home. Raising fees is always a very difficult decision, so being able to cancel previously approved increases, without jeopardizing our financial situation, was very gratifying.

As our community grows, residents have many new and exciting restaurants and businesses to visit. One of those businesses, Oregano's Pizza Bistro, was especially exciting for our community. The Town owned a key piece of land in Town Center, giving us more control over what would be built on it.

We were happy to see Oregano's successfully complete the purchasing process, offering another quality dining option in Town. Having things to do is just as important as having good places to eat, and we

were very excited to learn that our Town was honored with the 2015 Playful City USA designation. You might have seen some of the signs around Town. Presented by KaBOOM!, the national recognition program honors cities and towns across the country for making their community more playable. This designation was very exciting for Queen Creek, and I encourage everyone to keep playing here in QC. We are committed to making play an integral component of the community. The organization “Arizona Talent in Event Concepts” even recognized the Town with awards for the Battle of the Badge competition and Roots N’ Roots last year!

The Town is playful in many ways, including offering a number of special interest classes at the Recreation Annex. There are programs and classes to meet a variety of needs. Individuals can get fit in a Zumba class, learn to play guitar or become a fairy ballerina. Little ones continue to prepare for their academic future in ABC 123 and kids are staying active in our many youth sports programs.

We also offer a free program for people 50 years of age and older. The Senior program offers activities and leisure opportunities that enhance quality of life. For our annual Senior Appreciation Day on Aug. 19, Rockpoint Church donated 90 food baskets to give to the participants of the senior program. Rockpoint volunteers also donated their time to set-up, serve food, and take-down; making the program participants feel very appreciated!

Being playful is also about having quality events that residents can enjoy. We celebrated the 2nd annual Founders’ Day event in September with an estimated 2,500 participants in attendance. Our Trunk or Treat event grew again this past year with an estimated attendance of 9,500. That’s a lot of candy! We appreciate the generous sponsors and partners who help make our events successful! Cornerstone Fellowship Church enriched Spring into QC and Trunk or Treat with more volunteers, activities, entertainment and an overall enhanced experience for our residents.

We were also happy to host the inaugural QC Block Party last February. The exciting event was produced by R Entertainment and celebrated the grand re-opening of Ellsworth Road. The second annual QC Block Party will be this Saturday, from noon to 6 p.m. on Ellsworth Road in Town Center. We invite all our residents and their friends to celebrate at the circus-themed event with us!

In addition to having beautiful parks, an extensive multi-use trail system and great recreation programs, the Town opened a splash pad in 2014, which was one of the many reasons we received the Playful City designation. And the Splash Pad has been a hit! In 2015, we had over 36,000 people enjoy the fun

amenity. To make it an even more enjoyable experience, we added anti-slip deck that does not get as hot, shade structures and tables. We also enhanced the filtering and recirculation capabilities, resulting in an extremely effective water treatment system that has the capacity to handle the high demand of this popular amenity.

Another popular destination is the Horseshoe Park & Equestrian Centre, hosting 330 event days in 2015. Two hundred and thirty-six were equestrian events including Arabian horse show, reining cow horse, team roping, cutting, bull riding, cowboy mounted shooting and gymkhana. But Horseshoe Park isn't just for horse lovers! Ninety-four of the event days were non-equestrian events, including flat track racing, Vintage and Vino, church services, and even midget car racing!

In an effort to improve the economic well-being of the community and increase the quality of life for residents, the Town initiated a new Festival Partnership Program. The program was instrumental in bringing several new and exciting events to Queen Creek including Lemonade Days, the Food Truck Feastival, Vintage & Vino, and Bacon, Brews & Blues.

We have many wonderful opportunities for our residents in Queen Creek, and we look forward to all of the great businesses, events, and activities that will be coming in the future that will further enhance the quality of life in our great community.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to share all of these exciting accomplishments, Mayor Barney.

Things to Come - Mayor Barney

Thank you Council member Barnes, and all of my fellow council members, for sharing the exciting things we have accomplished in 2015. It is hard to imagine that 2016 could be any better, but I am confident that it will be another great year of growth and advancements for Queen Creek.

The accomplishments that we have shared this evening have been framed around the Town's Corporate Strategic Plan, which is a five-year organizational plan. The overall road map that guides development, manages growth and conserves natural resources is the Town's General Plan. It is important to update the General Plan to reflect the needs of the community, and we have plans to do just that over the next 12 to 18 months.

The General Plan is a vital document that outlines the vision and growth, and we are going to want to hear your opinion as we go through the updating process. Throughout the year, we will be offering multiple opportunities for community input, and then we will ask you to take part in a public election to adopt the updated document in 2018.

While the General Plan provides broad direction for the Town, it is also critical to have specific plans in place for items like transportation and parks. In 2015, a draft transportation master plan was initiated that encompasses the current transportation network, focuses on mid-term and long-term needs to improve transportation and reduce congestion. It will also take into account the Town's growth that is expected to continue over the next several years.

Transportation will continue to be a focus with a number of projects that will improve the traffic conditions around town, for example adding or improving bike lanes, intersection improvements, and assessing the timing of the traffic signals to better manage traffic patterns.

We are also in the early stages of updating the Parks, Trails and Open Space Master Plan. The updated document will complement the Transportation Master Plan and General Plan. Together, the documents will bring together the various elements and provide a clear path for managed growth in the community. The plans will provide an emphasis on quality of life for current and future residents.

We are also implementing a new permitting and plan review software, Accela Automation. The software will offer enhanced services including online permitting and submittal for electronic plan review. Efforts like the Accela Automation do not just streamline our process, they save our taxpayers money. Once this is fully rolled out, Queen Creek's development services department will be the leader in the valley for efficiencies and customer convenience.

We can also look forward to an expanded trash and recycling marketing campaign called Shut Your Lid. The campaign is designed to help residents understand the impact of trash and recycling violations like plastic bags in the recycling cart, overfilling the trash cart and as the name implies, not shutting the lids. The information in the campaign will help us all work towards a secure future.

We will continue to see exciting events in our community during 2016, such as the weekly food truck "Festival" in Town Center, our upcoming Block Party, Roots N' Boots Rodeo, and plenty of other opportunities to have fun with our families and neighbors. I am also excited that we have lots of

opportunities to honor our farming and equestrian heritage at fun events taking place at Horseshoe Park, Schnepf Farms and the Queen Creek Olive Mill. We're fortunate to have such strong interest in offering fun, family friendly special events throughout the community!

To better serve current and future residents, we are expanding the municipal complex. Yesterday we broke ground on a new Town Center fire station 411 to replace the current fire station across the street, and a new public safety building that will include a community chamber for meeting and training purposes.

2016 will also include exciting commercial growth. The QC District is expected to open this summer; anchored by Sprouts Farmers Market and HomeGoods, phase I will also include Starbucks, the Original Chop Shop, Red Robin, MOD Pizza, Café Rio, Orange Theory, Pet Planet, Supercuts, AT&T, Massage Green Spa and Visionworks. Beyond the QC District, we anticipate new opportunities throughout Town Center, including a Mountainside Fitness. We are also looking forward to a new shopping center on Ellsworth and Riggs, which will include one of my favorite places, a Tractor Supply Store. Those of you who know me, know that my family and I are farmers, so I am sure you can appreciate how excited Dad and I are about Tractor Supply coming to our community!

Those are just a few examples of things to come in 2016. We look forward to the continued success of this community. We appreciate the engagement from our residents, and the support of our partners. Thank you for joining us this evening to celebrate our successes. Our hometown is a wonderful place to be and it is thanks to all of you!

Thank you again for all of your participation, communication, questions and feedback throughout the past year. Together, we will keep Queen Creek an incredible place to live, play, and do business!