

Introduction - Mayor Barney

It is my honor to welcome you to the 2018 Queen Creek State of the Town; an opportunity to celebrate the many successes we enjoyed as a community over the past year, and highlight some of our major projects coming in 2018. On behalf of the Town Council, thank you for joining us this evening – as you will hear, many of these accomplishments would not be possible without the support of our residents, businesses and partners.

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

- (Reference to partners in attendance)
- I would also like to thank the families of our Town Council members... I understand the sacrifices you have to make in order for your loved one to serve on this council – thank you!
- I'd like to make a special presentation this evening. I have had the privilege to serve on this Council since 2002, and as Mayor since 2010. I owe my success to my wife, Pam. She has provided unwavering support over the years and continues to make the success of this community a priority. For all her love and encouragement, I'd like to present the 2018 Outstanding & Supportive Spouse Award to Pam Barney (present award to Pam).

Queen Creek is a community founded on our agricultural roots – and we're fortunate to have many of our founding families still actively involved with the community. This Council, and councils before us have made a concerted effort to honor our past. In 2017, we unveiled our first historical marker at Desert Wells Stage Stop. As we continue to find opportunities to celebrate our history, we also strive to support our agritainment destinations. Sossaman Farms, Hayden Flour Mill, the Olive Mill and Schnepf Farms continue to be outstanding partners and economic drivers for our community. Not only do they provide fantastic experiences for our residents, they draw people from around the world, and quite of bit of media attention! We were pleased to highlight these attractions on CBS's Field Trip Friday and again for their 20 Cities in 20 Days series.

Speaking of a video series, the Town launched a new effort, Why Wednesday, on our Facebook Page to answer frequently asked questions and increase community engagement. Our Town Manager will help explain why the Town was recognized for the third consecutive year as a Best Place to Work by the Phoenix Business Journal in a Why Wednesday.... [VIDEO](#)

Once again we were the only government entity receiving the recognition – and this year, I'm excited to report we made the top 10 in the midsize category! As a council, we appreciate the positive work culture the leadership within the organization has instilled that continues to make Queen Creek a best place to work. Having engaged and high performing staff results in increased productivity and a more positive experience for our residents and businesses.

While this is technically a 2018 accomplishment – I couldn't pass on the opportunity to share a recognition that I think is particularly important. Our very own Town Manager, John Kross, recently

received the 2018 John J. DeBolske Professional Excellence award from the Arizona City/County Management Association. This prestigious award honors an individual who has dedicated themselves to public service throughout their career, going above and beyond the organizations in which they have served.

On behalf of the Town Council, we could not be prouder of our Town Manager. John has been an outstanding leader for this organization during a very critical period. John continues to work tirelessly ensuring Queen Creek is a fantastic community for our residents and businesses, a positive work environment for our employees and an innovative organization. I cannot think of someone more committed to public service, making him extremely deserving of this award. Please join me in congratulating John (applause).

I would like to take a moment and thank our professional and dedicated staff. We task them with carrying out the goals of the Town Council, and I think they do an outstanding job. This past year, our staff also committed to helping others, raising more than \$25,000 for United Way and Community Health Charities through the Town's charitable giving campaign – thank you for your generosity.

This evening is structured around the five strategic priorities identified in our Corporate Strategic Plan, a five-year roadmap that we've established to provide policy direction to the Town Manager through priorities outlined by the Town Council. Council member Benning will introduce our first strategic priority, effective government.

Effective Government – Council member Benning

Thank you. An effective government manages the needs of the community through innovation and partnerships.

In order for the Town to manage the needs of the community, we must be in a financially stable position. This past year, we paid off two development agreements saving an estimated \$11 million. Recognizing our continued efforts to make fiscally responsible decisions, two of the national credit ratings agencies, S&P and Fitch Ratings, affirmed the Town's AA rating with a positive outlook. In addition to making good decisions with taxpayer dollars, we're also committed to maintaining an accurate budget and financial records. As a result, the Town received the Distinguished Budget Presentation award with special recognition for performance measures, and a certificate of achievement for our Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, or CAFR. Here's Dan Olsen, the Town's Finance Manager to help explain the importance of the CAFR... [VIDEO](#)

An effective government also identifies opportunities to improve processes through innovation and technology. Last year, the Town expanded the use of iPads in the field for our utility personnel. The new, interactive electronic maps not only increase the efficiencies of our staff, it helps reduce costs and enhances services. Another process improvement aimed at enhancing our customer experience and optimizing staff time is our transition to a lockbox service for utility payments. Last year we transitioned our utility payments to a lockbox through Chase Bank, which integrates with the Town's utility software.

The bank now receives and processes payments, with utility staff having access to real-time information online.

You may have seen our first energy renewing, self-sustainable electric car out and about. In an effort to meet alternative fuel requirements, save money and be good stewards of our environment, the Town purchased a Chevy Bolt; it can travel 238 miles between charges and is 100% ecofriendly.

The Town also expanded online permitting services through Accela, an electronic permitting software. Let's take a look at how the software increases efficiencies for the Town and our customers... [VIDEO](#)

While technology is certainly an important driver for innovation, our municipal grounds division has been working on their own state-of-the-art practices. Staff built a 700-plant capacity nursery using reusable pots, automated irrigation systems and a greenhouse. The process increases the survival rate of the plants, saves money and will enhance the user experience along the Sonoqui Wash expansion – where the trees will ultimately be planted.

Of course partnerships are a crucial piece of an effective government, allowing us to enhance programs and services. For example, we partner with instructors to offer a variety of classes at the Recreation Annex. In 2017, we had more than 7,400 participants in our recreation programs, a 49 percent increase. We were able to offer several new programs through partnerships including our first Martial Arts Tournament with Lim Family Karate and a new adult softball league with Paladin sports. Partnerships with generous sponsors and our committed volunteers are core to the success of our community events and activities. Our volunteers not only help with events, they also help keep Queen Creek beautiful through clean-up efforts, and safe through preparing sandbags. In 2017, volunteers donated 85,201 hours of service – an estimated value of \$2 million!

As you can see, there are many facets to being an effective government, which we will continue to strive towards every day.

Mayor Barney

Being an effective government directly impacts our ability to ensure a secure future, which is our next priority. From strategic planning to protecting our environment, Council member Oliphant will share how Queen Creek is ensuring a secure future.

Secure Future – Council member Oliphant

Thank you, Mayor Barney. A key element of a secure future is planning – and 2017 was quite busy from that perspective. We continued updating our General Plan, which will go to the voters in a special election this May. Updates are completed every 10 years to ensure the plan still reflects the needs and direction of the community. We spent 2017 gathering community input and updating the plan based on that feedback, best practices and industry standards. Let's hear about why the General Plan update is so important [VIDEO](#)

The plan includes 10 elements, including the environment and water conservation, both essential in Queen Creek's future. In an effort to educate our youth about the importance of recycling and water conservation, we conducted 100 Preserve the QC presentations, reaching 2,780 students and 40 Our Water Our Future presentations, reaching 1,000 students. Of course, we also want to offer educational opportunities for our adults! We hosted seven free, water-saving workshops for our utility customers helping ensure water sustainability for the future. I have to say, I'm quite impressed with our community's commitment to the environment – in 2017 our residents diverted 244 tons of material from the landfill through our various recycling events and opportunities – that's a six percent increase from last year! Our community also diverted more than 1,000 gallons of oil from the landfill and the Town's sewer system, a 36 percent increase from last year, which is important to avoid safety hazards and damage to our sewer system!

We also completed an update to the Town's Water Master Plan and Wastewater Master Plan ensuring current and future generations have safe drinking water and reliable wastewater services.

While we're planning for future areas, we're also ensuring our developed areas are meeting the needs of current and future generations. Town staff worked with Swaback Partners, Gruen Gruen and Associates, and Dibble Engineering on the Town Center Update. The plan focuses on Ellsworth Road, south of Ocotillo – creating a walkable space in the heart of the community with unique uses.

We also issued a request for proposals for a piece of Town-owned property in Town Center. All of the proposals were for hotels, and we're excited to move forward with that process in 2018!

While our Town Center is one of our primary economic drivers, we're also committed to diversifying our revenues and industry clusters identified in the Economic Development Strategic Plan. We were excited to welcome Banner Ironwood Medical Center to Queen Creek, one of the target industries of Healthcare and Biotechnology.

We also annexed several other areas from our municipal planning area into the Town, increasing our incorporated limits to 30.2 square miles. Through these annexations, the Town will also include a future auto dealership, diversifying the Town's retail sales tax, and a future assisted living facility, providing additional housing options.

Welcoming new businesses to Queen Creek is always exciting! The talented students at Queen Creek High School produced a video highlighting some of our new businesses in 2017. [VIDEO](#)

We appreciate the commitment from our residents to help ensure a secure future as we continue to move forward as a community, and I encourage all of our residents to vote this May.

Mayor Barney

As we plan for a secure future, we must also ensure we're providing superior infrastructure. Council members Wheatley and Hoffman will share our investments related to improved utilities and transportation, both core components of having superior infrastructure.

Superior Infrastructure – Council member Wheatley

As a council, and as residents, we know improved transportation continues to be one of the greatest needs of our wonderful community. While the Mayor will highlight our upcoming roadway improvements, I'm excited to share the critical roadway projects that were completed in 2017 – to help me out, let's hear from our Public Works Director Troy White... [VIDEO](#)

Those were some big projects – and we know we need more! We recently hosted a groundbreaking ceremony for Crismon Road, the one-mile extension from Queen Creek to Germann. This extension will provide an important north-south connection for our residents. Stay tuned for a ribbon cutting ceremony in late spring.

The Town faces geographic challenges when designing and building our major roadways – we have two washes and a railroad that run diagonally through our community – which often means increased costs and creativity.

We've partnered with the Maricopa County Department of Transportation, or MCDOT, to improve Riggs Road. The multi-phase project includes important safety improvements from Recker to Ellsworth, and a new roadway extending Riggs from Ellsworth to Meridian. This critical extension will be the second roadway connecting our east and west boundaries, providing enhanced connectivity within the region. The first phase of the extension, from Ellsworth to Crismon, is nearing completion.

With our population continuing to grow at a steady rate, roadways will be a focus for this Town Council and many councils to come. Last year an estimated 2,700 new residents moved to Queen Creek, making our population nearly 44,000. And it's not just residential interest in Queen Creek. Last year, an estimated \$430 million construction value was permitted, which is important as we invest in our infrastructure – ensuring we equitably distribute the cost of these important improvements.

While building and expanding roadways remains a priority, we also must ensure we're maintaining these important assets and evaluating opportunities to enhance safety. Throughout the year, pavement preservation was conducted to extend the life of our roadways, turn lanes were added and extended at key intersections, safety features were added in school zones and reflective tape was added at traffic signals.

Now I'll turn it over to Councilman Hoffman, who will share how our investments in utilities and public safety are ensuring we offer superior infrastructure.

Councilman Hoffman

Thank you, Council member Wheatley. When we talk about infrastructure, we tend to go right to roads – but building an efficient community also means ensuring superior infrastructure for our most basic necessities – like water. Last year, we installed FlexNet meter reading towers and began transitioning our utility meters to the FlexNet technology. The new technology allows real time, two-way communication between water meters and the towers, resulting in more accurate information and cost savings through efficient use of staff time and longer lasting equipment. The completed implementation will also include a customer portal that will allow customers to access their account information, water usages and set parameters for notifications of any changes.

In addition to making improvements to our metering technology, we identified an opportunity to more efficiently meet the Town’s obligation for reclaimed water. Utility Director Paul Gardner will explain how the lake at Mansel Carter Oasis Park is designed to ensure we have superior infrastructure... [VIDEO](#)

The design for a 16-million-gallon addition to the Greenfield Wastewater Treatment Plant was also completed. Not only does this effort help ensure superior infrastructure for our residents, it was done in an efficient manner through partnering with our neighboring jurisdictions, ensuring a secure future for generations to come.

In fact, we coordinate engineering and installation of our new major water and sewer lines, when possible, with impacted landowners. The coordination helps our economic development efforts by making Queen Creek open for business. It also eliminates the need for another round of utility construction once the site is ready for development, reducing the impact to the public.

Superior infrastructure also requires we have adequate facilities, which is particularly important for our first responders. As a community, we made several key investments related to infrastructure to ensure our public safety personnel are positioned to do their job safely and efficiently.

Last spring, we celebrated the opening of Fire Station 1, the state-of-the-art building just north of us. The building is a vast improvement from the original Fire Station 1, incorporating important safety features for the community and our firefighters:

- Bi-fold doors, which open faster than standard rollup doors, in the front of the station where engines exit for emergency calls
- Sealed, ground concrete floors that reduce exposure to biohazards
- Isolated storage for protective equipment to reduce contamination from the turnouts to other materials, and reduce exposure to exhaust, and
- Built-in exhaust ventilation in the bays

Thank you, Mayor Barney. Vice Mayor Turley will share our other infrastructure improvements related to safety.

Mayor Barney

A key element of an effective community is safety – and safety continues to be a top priority for this Town Council. Vice Mayor Turley, please share the accomplishments of our outstanding public safety departments.

Safe Community – Vice Mayor Turley

Thank you so very much. As Councilman Hoffman stated, Fire Station 1 was designed with many state-of-the-art features that enhanced the safety of our community. Fire Station 3 was our first permanent, neighborhood fire station, and will serve as the prototype for future neighborhood stations. Adapted from the design of Fire Station 1, Fire Station 3 includes all of the same safety enhancements, and is strategically located in the northwest area of Town. We were so pleased to celebrate the opening of the new station with our residents... [VIDEO](#)

You may have noticed some new faces in the video. In order to staff three stations, we hired 15 new firefighters in 2016, and they graduated last year after completing 640 hours of firefighting skills and team building – congratulations Academy 2017-1.

And it wasn't just our new firefighters who completed important training to ensure they are prepared for special operations and live fires, in 2017 our firefighters completed more than 32,300 hours of training!

Not only did the new stations help reduce our average response time from 4 minutes and 49 seconds in 2016 to 4 minutes and 35 seconds in 2017 – which is crucial when seconds matter – the investment also helped reduce our insurance service office rating, or ISO rating, from a four to a two. The ISO rating is an industry standard that analyzes statistical information related to risk and assigns a number from one to 10, with one being the best. Better ratings result in decreased insurance costs – which is important for our residents and businesses.

Our Queen Creek deputies from Maricopa County Sheriff's Office, District Six were also busy keeping our community safe in 2017. We are fortunate to enjoy low crime rates here in Queen Creek – and our deputies are taking important steps to help continue those low rates. In 2017, they initiated a department comp-stat meeting, which uses trends to effectively deploy resources. They also continued important efforts aimed at keeping our community safe:

- They continued their enhanced traffic enforcement initiative to reduce vehicular incidents and keep our roadways safer, a key outcome identified in the Town's Law Enforcement Strategic Plan
- They hosted two DEA drug take back events – successfully disposing of 220 pounds of prescription medication
- In an effort to reach our youth, they conducted trainings at our local schools including K9 demonstrations, opioid trainings and school threat trainings
- They continued engaging with residents and businesses, through community policing, another outcome of the Law Enforcement Strategic Plan. Efforts included Coffee with a Cop events and

offering volunteer opportunities. District 6 posse volunteers contributed more than 6,000 volunteer hours and the District 6 Explorer Post was established with eight participants

The new Law Enforcement & Community Chambers Building also opened this year. [VIDEO](#)

This past year was extremely exciting for our community when it comes to public safety. Thank you, Mayor Barney, for the opportunity to share these important accomplishments.

Mayor Barney

Council member Brown will share how each of these important priorities are helping ensure a quality lifestyle for our residents.

Quality Lifestyle – Council member Brown

Thank you, Mayor – it was another exciting year of great excitement here in Queen Creek. The 2017 Citizen Survey affirmed that our residents appreciate our trails and parks, and the great lifestyle those amenities support. 85% of residents rated the availability of paths and trails as good or excellent, a significant increase of 9% from 2016. Last year, an estimated 360,000 individuals visited our parks and trails, which kept our staff working hard to maintain it all. In 2017, grounds maintenance staff repaired nearly 133 incidents of graffiti or vandalism on Town properties, all of them within 24 hours or less. Staff also rebuilt 3.8 miles of equestrian trails along the wash bottom. As a Council, we appreciate the hard work of staff – and I'd like to note a particularly important recognition for one of our staff members. Grounds Superintendent, Rich Purcell, who deservedly received the Outstanding Parks Professional Award from the Arizona Parks and Recreation Association.

While we encourage being active, events provide another excellent opportunity to enjoy the outdoors and mingle with fellow residents. Our signature fall event, Trunk or Treat, was quite popular drawing more than 12,500 people to our Town Center... [VIDEO](#)

In addition to continuing our already established community events, we also hosted an inaugural event, Cycle the Creek, in honor of Valley Bike Month. Eighty-five participants took part in the five-mile bike ride along the Queen Creek Wash.

We also continued honoring our equestrian heritage. Last year, 350 event days were hosted at Horseshoe Park & Equestrian Centre – that's only 15 days without events!

We were particularly excited about breaking ground on our new community park, Mansel Carter Oasis Park, near Sossaman and Ocotillo. The 48-acre park will help meet the need for additional park and recreational amenities in Queen Creek and will open this fall!

As a result of these recreational opportunities, we received the Playful City designation from KaBOOM for the third consecutive year!

All of this great news resulted in the most positive response we've received on our Citizen Survey...

VIDEO

Thank you, Mayor Barney for the opportunity to share why Queen Creek is an outstanding place to live and play.

Things to Come - Mayor Barney

Thank you for sharing the important accomplishments of 2017. It has been another fantastic year, and I know we are all excited about the years to come.

As my fellow council members have shared, there is a lot to look forward to in 2018. We will be celebrating the new park with a grand opening this fall along with a variety of new businesses including a Salad & Go, Sodalicious, Planet Fitness, Nando's and more! An interesting note – Sodalicious actually started as a food truck at the Food Truck Festival before starting their brick-and-mortar store.

As our community continues to grow, we will continue to make roadways a priority. The following road improvements will begin in the coming year:

- Widening Ellsworth Road to three lanes in each direction from Walnut to Ryan and softening the curve at Queen Creek Road
- Widening Power Road from Ocotillo to Brooks Farm Road
- The final phase of Riggs Road will also begin, building a new roadway from Crismon to Meridian.

The completion of the Riggs Road project will allow us to begin the Rittenhouse Road improvements from Village Loop to Riggs. The project, currently in design, will widen Rittenhouse Road, including the bridge over the Queen Creek Wash.

Those are just a few of the items to look forward to in 2018. Thank you for joining us this evening, and to everyone who helps make Queen Creek such a wonderful place. Together, we will continue to make our community a special place for generations to come.

Now I'd like to invite everyone to join us for refreshments in the lobby. Meeting adjourned!