

State of the City  
Preston Troutman  
January 28, 2016

## **1) Introduction**

a. Good evening and welcome to the State of the City address for 2016. I want to express my thanks to the Canon City Chamber of Commerce, Touch of Love for the Stage decorations.

b. My name is Preston Troutman and I could not be more proud to announce that I have willingly accepted the role as your newly elected mayor of Canon City, Colorado. I am humbled and honored to represent you during my upcoming term. I'd like to introduce you to your new City Council. (Introduction by name). (At this point recognize dignitaries who are present: those present were City Administrator - Doug Dotson, City Attorney - John Havens, City Finance Officer - Harry Patel, Fremont County Commissioners, Bell, Payne and Norden, CC Police Chief Paul Schultz, Past Council Members Freda and Katchmar.

c. On April 3, 1872, a group of pioneers in southern Colorado incorporated the City of Canon City. During the last 144 years, Canon City has maintained a true western spirit and recently, Canon City government acknowledged our western heritage and adopted the slogan "Gateway to the Authentic West". I am here tonight to take my place next to this gateway and welcome all that choose to enter, into my favorite place on earth, Canon City, Colorado.

## **2) Thank You**

a. First and foremost, I would like to thank the citizens of Canon City for giving me the opportunity to serve this fine City. As your new mayor, I will be able to demonstrate my commitment to this community every single day. My continuing service will be a constant reminder to the Citizens of Canon City of how much I appreciate their confidence and support. Thank you all very much.

b. Next, I would like to thank the outgoing Mayor, Tony Greer. He has guided our city through good times and tragedy with professionalism and compassion. He has left the City in a better place and deserves much of the credit for the positive momentum we have generated over the last several years. Thank you Mayor Greer for your leadership and service.

c. City Council for Canon City also deserves a sincere thank you as well. Council has demonstrated a great deal of courage, enthusiasm and commitment to the City they have all had the privilege to serve. During the last two terms, City Council has drafted the outline for a new and vibrant image they hope the City will embrace. The work they have accomplished will act as the foundation for the new City Council and me to use going forward. Thank you to all that have served not only in the last several years, but even those going back to our founders in 1872.

d. And finally, let me thank the City staff. All of the work that gets done in the City is the result of a willing and capable assemblage of City Staff. Government exists solely for the purpose of serving the community and without the staff, nothing of significance would be accomplished. We have a fine team working for us.

### **3) History**

a. As many of you already know, Canon City has a rich and varied history. Originally it was a camping ground of the Ute Indians among other native visitors, but was ultimately settled by gold prospectors in the late 1850's. Later it was oil that drove the economy and Canon City served as a supply point for the nearby mines and oil fields. Then in 1868, Canon City vied with Denver to become the site of the Colorado capital. After narrowly losing that contest, Canon City was awarded a consolation prize of sorts - the Territorial Prison, which we now know as the Colorado Territorial Correctional Facility (CTCF) or Old Max, established here in 1871. Several years later the railroads arrived and the economy shifted

again, becoming a shipping point for agricultural products, livestock, minerals, quarried marble and in the second half of the twentieth century, Canon City became known for manufactured items like firebrick, concrete, hand tools, conveyors, and ore concentrates. Since 2000, Canon City's economy has once again evolved and increasingly depends on a successful tourism base along with being a regional hub for medical and other critical services. As you can clearly see, Canon City if nothing else, has been able to remain relevant by continuously reinventing itself. The pioneer spirit still lives on in all of us. During my term in office I hope to act as the catalyst for the future growth which will be required to keep our community connected to the positive changes we can anticipate in Colorado over the next decade.

2015 sales tax revenue increased 7.76 % compared to 2014. Attendance at the Royal Gorge Bridge increased to well over 300,000 visits. This resulted in a final lease check of a little over \$2 million dollars to the city. Corridor plans were completed and are now ready for committee review and activity. Trail systems have been expanded and ready for use. I expect modest increases in sales tax revenue and in attendance at the Royal Gorge Bridge.

#### **4) Priorities for 2016**

a. In my campaign for Mayor, I identified priorities that I would pursue if elected. First, to discover creative ways to invest in the city's critical public infrastructure, particularly roads but also a downtown development authority and other programs that will help the city serve our citizens. To do so is not only necessary for public health, safety and welfare, but also for our future economic development. Secondly, to improve the political climate in the city and to build a collaborative relationship between the other governmental entities in the region including the Fremont County Board of Commissioners, the City of Florence, the Coal Towns and the towns in western Fremont County. Finally, I promised to aggressively promote new economic development. Quite simply, these priorities

were a reflection of the difficult issues Canon City has faced since the national economy collapsed almost ten years ago.

**b. Number One - Public Infrastructure**

i. When the local economy suffers as it has done here at least since 2006, the delivery of services by Canon City government suffers as well. Although the citizens of Canon City voted against a proposed tax increase to cover the roads, alternate measures must still be developed to manage our failing infrastructure. Just because the vote failed, does not mean the problem has been solved or never existed to start with. The problem is now worse than it was before because the issue is now very visible, but with no additional funding. In the competitive world of economic development, businesses look at many areas of a city before deciding to make an investment there. Roads, schools and other basic services are among the most critical items that occupy the checklist of every site selector. In order to compete and win these job creation opportunities, Canon City must work to improve their image outside the confines of the city limits. Infrastructure is very visible both here and outside the community and will be a continuous obstacle to economic recovery until we develop a new plan to resolve the issue in 2016.

ii. Today we find over 60% of our roads are beyond the normal ten-year resurfacing cycle, and are in a state of rapid deterioration. 53% of our roads need an overlay, and 8% of our roads need to be reconstructed. I will ask City Council to commit not only the \$400,000 that is currently defined in the budget, but to add to that sum to cumulate a total \$1,000,000 for street resurfacing. I will also ask the City Council to place a ballot issue for a sales tax increase specifically designated for road and street repairs, with a sunset clause.

**c. Number Two - Collaboration**

i. Canon City is the county seat for Fremont County. It is the largest population base in the county, and the largest commercial area in the county. It generates the most total sales and property tax. By default, Canon City is a focal

point for the area and whether it accepts the role or not, it is the de facto leadership for the 40k plus citizens that live in the county. Because of this responsibility, Canon City must embrace the leadership role and help guide the community toward mutual prosperity. Success in any form in any place in the County will have a positive effect on Canon City and thereby justifies continuous and effective involvement by Canon City government with all of our neighbors. Failing to align Canon City's priorities with others in the local community has the potential of making everyone fail or at least be less effective than they could be. As mayor, I intend to forge relationships with each of my peers and through a collaboration effort, ring the entire area back to prosperity.

I will engage the education community, Canon City schools and Pueblo Community College. let's face it, the decisions we make today will most likely affect our youth, they should be part of the decision making process. Hopefully to bring fresh new ideas for our Community. We need to cultivate and grow leadership. Involvement will create enthusiasm and excitement in being involved in Government. As this new relationship evolves, I will expect ot have student volunteers involved in committee work and decisions. Also, their aid will be sought for help with research on future planning.

We, myself and the City Council must be aware and involved with events that will be occurring in our town. I will ask all organizations that are going to have events, in town, to contact the city and give us information and contact information so that we can promote the event in the media that we use. This could be as simple as marketing them on the city web site and or promoting them in all the media that the city currently utilizes.

Canon City has recently completed four planning area concept plans. They are: The Royal Gorge area plan; The River corridor plan; The Highway 50 corridor plan, and the Downtown Development plan. These are good plans and should not be allowed to be put aside and never seen again. So, I will ask the council for permission to set up 4 new committees. Each one will be charged with the responsibility of reviewing the plans for the possibility of future implementation.

We need to do a better job of communication. In today's world, it's vitally important that the City has a modern presence with an attractive/inviting web site and involvement in other social media. In order to help accomplish this, I will be proposing to Council that a Public Communication Committee be formed to aid with media communications. The members will be volunteers with knowledge of web site and other media functions.

#### **d. Number Three - Economic Development**

i. While Canon City has continued to grow in population over the last ten years, the economy has not grown proportionately. Private sector job growth has been almost nonexistent and wages are near the bottom of the list for the State. Any of the growth we have seen in the community was in lower paying retail or service industry jobs. Today the Canon City economy is largely dependent on government jobs, service industry jobs and to a lesser extent tourism. In order to grow the economy something must be added - new businesses, capital, intellectual property or some other component that adds value to the community. Our success in 2016 and beyond will be determined by how effective we are in interfacing with economic drivers, both in the community and beyond. We must form alliances with FEDC, the local Chamber of Commerce, the State Office of Economic Development and International Trade and any other organizations that can help us build our economic base.

ii. As to my third priority of promoting new job creation in our region, I am growing increasingly optimistic. We are experiencing improvement in many of the indicia of economic growth. The city's unemployment rate was 5.9% in 2015. Visits to the Royal Gorge Bridge are up 30% over last year. These are signs of a growing tourism business.

### **6) Vision**

a. When I travel West on US Highway 50, begin down the hill into Canon City, I see layer upon layer of mountains backlit by the sun representing one of

the most beautiful and idealistic settings anywhere in the State of Colorado or the United States of America for that matter. When I witness this place from outside, I cannot help but be reminded of exactly how privileged I am to live and serve in this community. When I allow myself to dream about what could be, I see a happy and vibrant place where young families can come to begin their lives and baby boomers can come to live and retire. I see people with jobs and an economy that rivals any in the area. I am reminded of why this is the place I call home.

I was going to promise you that the Mayor's office will have an Open Door policy, but the Mayor doesn't have an office. So, I'm going to propose to City Council that we create an office for the Mayor, which could also be used by Council members as well. I enjoy seeing and visiting with people. Currently, they have to meet me in my place of business, or meet me at a coffee shop. Meeting at my office is disruptive and there's only so much coffee I can drink. If the Mayor had an office at City Hall, we could meet there and I could have office hours there during the week. I also will ask City Council to have a monthly Town Hall meeting beginning at 5:00 PM prior to a council meeting and ending at 5:45 PM so that residents can come in and talk with City Council and Mayor. In addition to that I will have "Coffee with the Mayor" to be held at different locations. The first meeting will be at Mugs/ Canon Coffee on February 11, 2016 at 9:00 am.

## **7) Summary**

a. In summary, there are encouraging signs in all aspects of the Canon City economy. We need to translate that momentum into new jobs and economic opportunities for the citizens of Canon City. In my remarks when I was sworn in as Mayor, I asked all the citizens of Canon City to take renewed pride in our city and look for ways to contribute to its success. And, I renew that request today. Perhaps you can volunteer to help beautify our city, to improve our trail system, to pick up trash or cut weeds, to mentor our youth, to assist our sick or elderly or to support the arts. There are unlimited opportunities to become involved in making Canon City an even better place to live, work and play. The City of Canon City has the support of thousands of volunteers and I am grateful to all of you. I

am also grateful to the outstanding employees of the City. In my first ??? days in office, I have learned that the city is in very good hands.

Ladies and gentlemen, I hope you understand and agree with my assessment that the State of our City is good and the potential for our City is great. I love Canon City and am working hard to promote our city everywhere I go. Canon City is full of talented people in business, government, the arts, and all endeavors of life. It's full of outdoor enthusiasts. As a City we've got everything we need to grow and prosper. We are truly vibrant, rugged and exceptional. If we set realistic goals and work together to achieve them, we will be successful. Let's join together to continue building a shining city at the foot of a great mountain, and creating a society that matches our scenery.

Thank you very much.